

Dog Days of Summer Bring No Relief for Stanislaus County’s Low-Income, Unhoused Residents

By TOM PORTWOOD

A couple of Saturdays ago, a man and a woman lay on the grass beside each other in the deep shade of the First Methodist Church in downtown Modesto, a shopping cart filled with their belongings parked on the sidewalk nearby. I saw them as I was walking to the library that afternoon, dusty sunlight slanting across I Street in a way that was quite peaceful. They both seemed to be asleep, as uncomfortable as it was with the temperature still in the mid-90s and only an occasional light breeze stirring the branches of the old oak that offered a bit of canopy to

them. It was a gentle scene, a momentary respite for this couple whose unhoused existence is undoubtedly usually fraught with fear and uncertainty. Later that same day, as I sat on a bench by the old Southern Pacific Depot building at the Regional Transit Center, the elderly woman sitting next to me began fidgeting with her long wooden walking stick. But then the woman turned to me and told me that she was paying \$35 more at Walmart than she used to, and she was on Social Security, and she didn’t know what she was going to do. She became emotional as she talked about her

grocery bill and some of her other financial woes. I commiserated with her as best I could about higher prices but I’m afraid I wasn’t much help. Real life spills like this out all the time on the buses and on the streets. Façades fall away, fakes are ferreted out and dismissed out of hand - there just isn’t time or patience for anything that’s less than real – and what’s very real these days is that many, many people in Modesto are hurting. I’ve just learned that one of my neighbors is being evicted from the unit he has lived in for the past fifteen years. In his case, he’ll

be able to move in with a friend, but a lot of folks faced with the same situation aren’t as fortunate. Another acquaintance of mine has recently been told by her boss that she should start looking for other work because his business has been falling off. Of course, as she tries to regroup, my friend worries about paying the rent and other bills. One need only log on to the Facebook group Renters in Stanislaus to see how desperate many of our neighbors are in their

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Photo: Eric Caine



Here’s the progress on our mural featuring Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez. Joel Aguilar will be returning to continue his work. Please donate:
<https://www.gofundme.com/f/justice-mural-fundraiser>

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

An opportunity: The California Audio Roots Project (CARP) is designed to involve community members in recording stories, poems, and songs about their lives and living in California. The upcoming season is focused on social justice and community engagement.

Modesto Sound is looking for people to interview and will pay interviewees \$150. The interviews are playing on KCBP 95.5 FM and are archived on Sound Cloud, Spotify, etc.

To participate, call 209-573-0533, or visit www.modestosound.com

Modesto Junior College Science Colloquium: Fall 2023 Speakers

Wednesdays 3:15-4:15 pm, Science Community Center, Room 115, Modesto Junior College West Campus, Parking Free. (Recorded for later viewing on Science Colloquium YouTube.)

Sept. 20: John Holland, Reporter, Modesto Bee: *Modesto Bee's Reporter's View of Climate Change* Close to Home. John Holland's work at the Modesto Bee has involved several efforts to avert climate change. They include storing carbon in orchards and forests, recharging groundwater through floodplain restoration, and making passenger rail more useful for residents.

Oct. 4: Dr. Jamie DeRollo, Head Athletic Trainer/Faculty. *Environmental Considerations in Sport*

When participating in sports or playing outside, there are environmental considerations to take into consideration. Topics covered include exertional heat illness (EHI), dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, exertional heat stroke (EHS), exertional hyponatremia, cold-related injuries, and lightning safety.

Oct. 18: Carlo Vasquez, Health Educator, Stanislaus County Health Services Agency. *Contagions in Your Community.* Water, Wealth, Contentment, Disease? Learn more about Valley Fever, West Nile Virus, and Congenital Syphilis, and Stanislaus County's unique conditions that help make them especially common.

Nov. 1: Andrew Hayes, Anthropology Professor, MJC Medical Anthropology. Learn what medical anthropology is and how it helps epidemiologists understand health situations like Covid and Mpox.

Nov. 15: Diedre J. J. Bush, NASA/JPL Solar System Ambassador. *NASA's Role in Advancing Climate Change Science.* NASA is developing the Earth Science Observatory [ESO] to provide critical data on climate change, including severe weather, wildfires, and global food production. The core of ESO will focus on five areas: Aerosols; Cloud, Convection, and Precipitation; Mass Change; Surface Biology and Geology; and Surface Deformation and Change. The presentation will describe the real-world applications of this research.

Colloquium Committee: Richard Anderson, Daniel Chase, Jill Cross, Elizabeth McInnes, Denise Godbout-Avant, Troy Gravatt, Deborah Martin, Michael Shirley, Catherine Tripp.



The **Modesto Area Partners in Science (MAPS)** lecture series fosters science education in our community for youths through adults. Once a month during the academic year, MAPS offers stimulating free science programming, bringing educators and local citizens into contact with scientists and mind-expanding ideas.

Fall 2023 Schedule

Presentations will be held LIVE in the MJC West Campus Sierra Hall 132 at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, September 29: Dr. Stephanie Dole (the Beetlelady) educates the public about insects. She will talk about the biodiversity, ecological roles, and the importance of our local arthropods and how they are connected to the greater world. The Great Valley Museum will feature a pop-up bug exhibit in the Science Center Lobby on Saturday, 9/30/23 with many activities for families. <https://www.beetlelady.com/about/>

Friday, October 27: Dr. Justin Siegel and Ashley Vater, UC Davis, talk about modified enzymes, protein modeling, and "crowdsourcing" their research to undergraduates. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2022.908936/full>

Friday, November 17: Elizabeth (Liz) McInnes. "Encountering Breast Cancer."

Friday, December 1: Ari Friedlaender, Ph.D., UC Santa Cruz Principal Investigator, Biotelemetry and Behavioral Ecology Laboratory. "Whales." <https://btbel.pbsci.ucsc.edu/people/principal-investigator/>

MAPS receives funding and support from Modesto Junior College, MJC Foundation, Stanislaus County Office of Education, Modesto Teachers Association, Great Valley Museum. To make a fully tax-deductible donation in support of MAPS, please click [here](#) and select Modesto Area Partners in Science (MAPS) under "My donation is for..."

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Housing Inequity Series Featuring Author Leah Rothstein of *Just Action* at Modesto Junior College

A series of free events open to the public, *Housing Inequity: Past, Present, and What You Can Do*, will be held at Modesto Junior College (MJC) this fall.

The series will kick off with a September 28th film screening of the PBS documentary *Owned: A Tale of Two Americas*, which examines the nation's recent history of redlining and housing with a panel discussion to follow.

In October, the series will pivot to local housing equity issues featuring four Monday events covering topics such as local leaders on our current housing crisis, housing and environmental justice, recent research on local redlining by MJC students, and stories of housing segregation in the Valley.

In November, community book discussions will be held at MJC and at local libraries. The series will culminate in a November 16th discussion with nationally noted author Leah Rothstein on her recent book *Just Action: How to Challenge Segregation Enacted Under the Color of Law*, which references Modesto's history of restrictive housing covenants.

The events will examine, at both the national and local level, the causes of housing segregation and inequities and what can be done to create accessible, quality, low-income housing throughout Stanislaus County.

About the Housing Inequity Series

The *Fall 2023 Housing Inequity* series is organized by MJC's *Civic Engagement Project*, the School of Behavioral and Social Science's *Democracy in the Public Space*, the Library & Learning Center, and the UMOJA Program. * Community partnerships include the Stanislaus County Library and NAACP Modesto/Stanslaus.

Leah Rothstein is co-author, with Richard Rothstein, of *Just Action*, a sequel to *The Color of Law*. Ms. Rothstein has a Master of Public Policy Degree from the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC Berkeley. Her expertise in housing policy stems from more than two decades of experience as a consultant to affordable housing developers and local governments and as a community and union organizer.

Annual Library Foundation Fundraising Gala Celebrates People, Pets, and Books

Tickets on sale now for "Pawsitively Tail-Wagging" event to benefit Stanislaus County Libraries.

EVENT DATE: Sept. 23, 2023-Tickets on sale through September 8.

The Stanislaus County Library Foundation, which raises funds and awareness for all 13 branches of the Stanislaus County Library system, will host its annual Author's Garden Gala on Saturday, Sept. 23.

The evening includes a social hour at 6 pm, dinner at 7, followed by a Fund-A-Need auction and author interview. This year's speaker is local author, literacy advocate, and animal lover Hillari DeSchane. Ms. DeSchane writes "fatally fun" family-friendly novels that combine her favorite things: mystery, humor, and animals.

Proceeds from this year's Fund-A-Need auction will be used to purchase books in the teen-favorite manga genre. Manga is an umbrella term for a wide variety of comic books and graphic novels that are popular with young readers. Library staff can attest that manga, which draws in young

Fall 2023 Housing Inequity Events at Modesto Junior College

Thursday, September 28, 7 pm, Forum 110, MJC East Campus - *Owned: A Tale of Two Americas* - A Film on Housing Inequalities - Film and Panel discussion.

- Sharon & Dave Froba, NAACP Modesto/Stanslaus
- Dr. José R. Díaz-Garayúa, Associate Professor of Geography, CSU Stanislaus

Monday, October 9, 1 pm, Forum 110, MJC East Campus - Our Housing Crises: Local Leaders Weigh In - A Panel Discussion

- Kristen Doud, Deputy Director, Stanislaus County Planning Dept.,
- Joe Duran, Executive Director and CFO, Stanislaus Equity Partners,
- Jessica Hill, Interim Director of Community and Economic Development, City of Modesto
- Carol Ornelas, CEO, Visionary Home Builders of California, Inc.)

Monday, October 16, 1 pm, Forum 110, MJC East Campus - Local Housing & Environmental Justice - Lecture

- Bianca Lopez, Project Director, Valley Improvement Projects

Monday, October 23, 1 pm, Forum 110, MJC East Campus - Housing Segregation: A Local History - Presentation by Local History Project Interns, Modesto Junior College

- Kiarra Dixon, Calvin Douglas, Alex Hamiel, Samantha Ho, Brianna Leigh, Robin Siefkin, Jaime Venegas

Monday, October 30, 1 pm, Forum 110, MJC East Campus - *The Color of Law*: Real-World Stories of Real Estate Discrimination - Panel Discussion

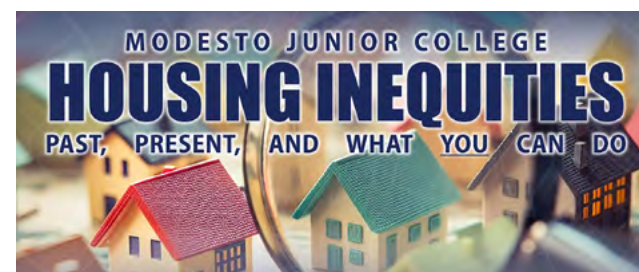
- Lionel Akpovi, Broker, Redwood Real Estate Group
- Chandra Howard, Professor of English & UMOJA Elder, Modesto Junior College
- Marvin Jackson, Professor of History & UMOJA Elder, Modesto Junior College
- Dejeuné M. Shelton, Director of Career Services & UMOJA Elder, Modesto Junior College

Saturday, November 8, and Wednesdays, November 4 & 15 - *Just Action*: Book Discussions

- 11/4 @ 11:00 am | Salida Public Library | 4835 Sisk Rd., Salida
- 11/8 @ 6:00 pm | Turlock Public Library | 550 N. Minaret Ave., Turlock
- 11/15 @ Noon | Learning & Library Center | MJC East Campus

Thursday, November 16, 7 pm, Sierra Hall 132, MJC West Campus - *Just Action: How to Challenge Segregation Enacted Under the Color of Law* An Evening with Leah Rothstein

*UMOJA (A Kiswahili word meaning unity) is a community and critical resource dedicated to enhancing the cultural and educational experiences of African Americans and other students.



Art of Vince Walsh

Featured at Kruse Lucas

The **Kruse Lucas Art Gallery** welcomes plein air artist Vince Walsh, for the months of September, October, and November. The gallery is located at 525 Tully Rd., Modesto and is open Monday-Friday 9 a.m.- 5 p.m., except holidays. Phone: 209-529-9111.



Community Conversations about Neurodiversity: Learn About People with ADHD or Autism

By SEAN RODGERS

There is a new paradigm for people with neurodevelopmental conditions called Neurodiversity. As part of our ongoing series of Community Conversations at The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County, 2172 Kiernan Avenue Modesto, we will give a presentation and question and answer session on Sunday, September 24 from 1 to 3 p.m. I will be presenting my experience as a neurodiverse person, and **Cari Wise** will be presenting her experience as a parent of someone diagnosed with Autism.

My Story

"I always knew I was different; I just didn't know why." Over my past 13 years speaking publicly about mental health, I've said those words dozens of times, perhaps hundreds. I did well in school academically but suffered socially. I was bullied, not only by students but by teachers who seemed to blame me for being the victim of bullying. I once asked my mother if the teachers thought I had it coming. She was silent for a few moments, a tense look on her face, as if she was afraid of what she was about to say. Then she said yes.

"I always knew I was different; I just didn't know why."

I spoke about these deficits for years not truly understanding what they represented. Only in the last few years have I added the word neurodiversity to the speeches I give on behalf of the local affiliate of The National Alliance on Mental Illness. I have had a spectacularly large amount of terminology thrown at me in the last 22 years, since a hospitalization that introduced me to the world of psych meds and diagnoses. I was familiar with many of the terms already. My extended family has seen many hospitalizations, many diagnoses, many psych meds. There have been two suicides. But one of the terms I was given was different - Autism.

Oxford Languages defines autism as: "a neurodevelopmental condition of variable severity with lifelong effects that can be recognized from early childhood, chiefly characterized by difficulties with social interaction and communication and by restricted or repetitive patterns of thought and behavior."

I was diagnosed with autism in 2019 at the age of 37. Part of the process of diagnosis is interviewing the parent. My mom spoke at great length of telling one doctor after another that something was wrong, and not receiving help. At the time, there was very little understanding of autism. She knew I needed assistance but didn't know what help looked like. But things are changing.

Neurodiversity is defined, also by Oxford Languages, as: "the range of differences in individual brain function and behavioral traits, regarded as part of normal variation in the human population (used especially in the context of autistic

spectrum disorders)."

When a person is diagnosed as having a mental health condition, as I have been many times, it is inferred that there is something wrong with you. There is an air of deviance to it. You are unwell, and you need medical intervention to be made better. You must enter "recovery" a term borrowed from substance abuse support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous. I thought of myself like this for decades, as a person broken by mental illness that needed to be fixed.

The neurodiverse paradigm differs from this in one key way. In the light of neurodiversity, we are all seen as whole and complete people who are simply different from others. We are not broken, we are not unnatural, we do not need to be fixed. The full range of the human experience includes our experience, and our ostracization is the result of a broken society, not broken individuals.

This is a new and different way of looking at people whose brains are different. It has changed the way I see myself and others like me. I would like very much for more people to understand this new way in which I relate to the person I have become, and to the person I always was.

If you are reading this, and you have questions about it, I would love to answer them at our Community Conversation. There is a lot of misinformation out there. We live in the age of the post-truth society. There are too many misunderstandings out there for me to address in this short piece of writing. Perhaps a few popped into your head as you read this. Perhaps you have a nephew or a grandchild who identifies as neurodiverse. Perhaps you have been questioning whether this term might apply to you.

Please join me and our team for a safe place to discuss these ideas. We would love to welcome you and help share what we have learned.

ACTION: Register at Eventbrite at this link: <https://NeurodiversityUU.eventbrite.com>

MoSt to Celebrate 10th Anniversary with Gala Featuring California Poet Laureate Lee Herrick and Stanislaus County Youth Poet Laureate Faith Delgado

Please join us at 2 p.m. on Saturday, September 23, 2023, for what promises to be an outstanding afternoon of wine, hors d'oeuvres, and poetry readings by California Poet Laureate Lee Herrick with Stanislaus County Youth Poet Laureate Faith Delgado. The celebration will occur at the Camp Four Wine Café in Modesto, 1508 10th Street.

Your ticket supports poetry in Stanislaus County, including monthly reading series in Modesto and Turlock; sets of poetry books for area schools; Poetry Out Loud; poetry readings at senior communities; free poetry workshops and poetry book discussions at the Modesto Library; the Youth Poet Laureate program; poetry on the spot at events across the county; annual workshops by noted poets from across California; the Modesto Poetry Festival every February, and much more!

TICKETS WENT ON SALE AUGUST 1; EVENT LIMITED TO 65 TICKETS. Visit <https://poetrygala2023.brownpapertickets.com/> to purchase a ticket. Ticket \$50. Sliding scale price available; please email info@mostpoetry.org for code.



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Stronger Regulation Could Have Protected Children at Modesto School from Pesticide Drift

By **LAURA PLASCENCIA & BIANCA LOPEZ**, Valley Improvement Projects

On January 19, 2023, a pesticide drift incident occurred at Modesto Christian School, exposing children to an unknown pesticide applied by a neighboring orchard during a school fire drill. Following the incident, students complained about headaches and sore throats.

Valley Improvement Projects (VIP), a grassroots non-profit organization working on social and environmental justice in the Northern San Joaquin Valley, became aware of these incidents via an anonymous report to our Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF), a community tool to report potential sources of pollution and regulation violations.

While other details about the incident, or any pesticide complaint under investigation, are not available to the public, we know that pesticide drift is illegal and anyone exposed to these pesticides has, at the very least, a right to know the name of the pesticide they were potentially exposed to.

A state regulation implemented in 2018 prohibits most pesticide applications to agricultural crops within a ¼ mile of a school or daycare during school days from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. It is worth noting that this distance was arbitrarily selected by the CA Department of Pesticide Regulation as sufficient distance, while many studies including those done by UC schools, and the CA Health Department show a significant association between air concentrations of the pesticides beyond 1 mile of air monitoring sites.

In addition, farms within a ¼ mile of a school or daycare are required to submit a list of pesticides they expect to use that year. However, they are not obligated to give the school administration any real notification of actual application dates or times, just a list.

This incident demonstrates that current measures fall short of adequately protecting our children.



On January 27th, about a week after the incident at Modesto Christian School, VIP and the Environmental Working Group (EWG) released a report, revealing that over 6 million pounds of agricultural pesticides were applied in Stanislaus County. Shockingly, nearly half of these pesticides are classified under Proposition 65 for their potential to cause cancer, birth defects, or reproductive harm.

Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of pesticides due to their developing bodies and greater exposure to outdoor environments. Our report highlights high pesticide use near a substantial number of Stanislaus schools and daycare centers, placing our youth at higher risk of inhalation and dermal exposure. Moreover, children with underlying health vulnerabilities to their cardiovascular or respiratory systems, like asthma, face even greater threats to their well-being.

This is not the only incident that put local students at risk, in March a parent of a child at Grayson Elementary reported a possible pesticide violation when they noticed a crop duster making an aerial application of pesticides for what seemed to be too close to their child's school. Hours later after the report to the ag commissioner, this crop duster crashed in Vernalis.

We urge our county's Agricultural Commissioner to exercise her right to implement stronger regulations to prevent future pesticide drift incidents from happening.

We call on all students, staff, and parents impacted by this and any other drift incident to share their stories and collaborate on meaningful solutions. VIP's Pesticide Safety Network (PSN) meets virtually on the 3rd Wednesday of the month and offers a platform for parents, organizations, and concerned citizens to unite in advocating for stricter regulations and protective measures.

To make a report to our Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) go to tinyurl.com/ej-report, or call us at 209-589-9277, or email us at valleyimprovementprojects@gmail.com. To demand that the Agricultural Commissioner increase buffer zones and other restrictions near schools, or report pesticide incidents directly, contact Linda Pinfold at 209-525-4730 or email her directly at lindap@stancounty.com

Together, we can make Stanislaus County a safer place to live, learn, and grow. Why wait for another incident that puts our children's health at risk?

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StArt
Stanislaus Art Magazine

StArt is currently taking a break. Individual back issues are available at lindaknollart.com

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wearorange.org

CDC, Fatal Injury Reports, 2018-2021.

Charles James Ogletree, Jr., native Mercedian, UC Merced champion, Harvard legal scholar, dies at 70

By PROFESSOR NIGEL HATTON I

August 4, 2023, Central Valley Voice

The late Charles Ogletree, Jr., (December 31, 1952 – August 4, 2023) a civil rights icon and proud native of Merced, was also a great friend and champion of The University of California, Merced, and the first recipient of the university's Alice and Clifford Spendlove Prize in Social Justice, Diplomacy and Tolerance.

Professor Ogletree delivered the academic keynote address for the UC Merced campus convocation and opening ceremony on Sept. 5, 2005. His speech is one of the founding documents of the university.

In remarks titled "A Meditation on Success," he drew from his journey from South Merced to Stanford University, from Stanford to Harvard Law School, from Harvard to the professional world as an attorney representing figures like Anita Hill and Tupac Shakur, and from the courtroom back to Harvard Law as a tenured professor. In a speech that is at once inspirational, informative, and prophetic, Prof. Ogletree also drew from his faith, the Book of Isaiah Chapter 40, his deep love for his family, the words of Nelson Mandela, and the University of California charter, culminating in a powerful reflection on the unique position of UC Merced in the world.

"As I think about the UC Merced campus," he said, "I too envision a unique place, in California, in America, and indeed, in the world. I envision that, when your children and grandchildren have a choice of universities to attend, whether it is Harvard or Howard, Stanford or the University of Texas, Princeton or even UCLA or Berkeley, they will say, 'Thanks, but no thanks. I'm setting higher goals, and the institution I choose to attend is UC Merced!'"

Echoing the spirit and philosophies of education heard in the speeches of thinkers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and W.E.B. Du Bois, Professor Ogletree urged the founders of the new university to move forward with a bold blend of tradition and innovation.

The "charter and the name declare that this is the 'University of California,'" he said, "It is not the University of Berlin nor of New Haven, which we are to copy; it is not the University of Oakland nor of San Francisco, which we are to create; but it is the University of this state. It must be adapted to this people, to their public and private schools, to their peculiar geographical position, to the requirements of their new society and their undeveloped resources. It is not the foundation of an ecclesiastical body nor of private individuals. It is 'of the people and for the people' – not in any low or unworthy sense, but in the highest and noblest relations to their intellectual and moral well-being."

Professor Ogletree also lauded UC Merced's diversity, encouraging the university to "celebrate our diversity, and see diversity and excellence as complementary, not in conflict."

Then-Chancellor Carol Tomlinson-Keasey said Professor Ogletree's speech "was exactly what the students needed to hear, and it had special meaning given his early years in Merced." A columnist in the Merced Sun-Star wrote that "it should be required reading for every high school student in Merced County. Ogletree's rise from South Merced to a position of prominence at America's foremost university is an inspiration for all."



Charles Ogletree was a champion of UC Merced.

At Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., Professor Ogletree was the Jesse Climenko Professor of Law and the founder and executive director of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice. His office was as busy as a courthouse: students, colleagues, legal clients, and admirers lined up for counsel and guidance. A Harvard undergraduate once wrote of visiting Professor Ogletree, "I recall vividly how, as a junior at Harvard College, I landed a coveted position on Professor Ogletree's office hours list. My ostensible purpose for taking an office hours slot away from a deserving law school student was to discuss the college seminar paper I was writing on the District of Columbia statehood movement. Although I did leave that meeting with several fruitful research leads, I was much more satisfied with achieving my true aim-to meet in person this man about whom I had heard so many wonderful things."

Professor Ogletree's papers, spanning his Harvard career as scholar, teacher, and legal theorist from 1985 to 2000, and comprising 500 boxes of letters, legal files, and academic course materials, were donated to Harvard Law School by his family in 2022. In a 2017 tribute to Prof. Ogletree at Harvard, attended by more than 600 people, fellow law professor David Wilkins said, "When the history of Harvard Law School in the 20th century is written, Charles Ogletree will be among the first ones mentioned."

The demand on Professor Ogletree's time in Cambridge, and across the nation and world, rendered his many returns

to Merced and UC Merced as clear indications of his commitment and support for his hometown and the university. He was the ideal person to receive UC Merced's inaugural Spendlove Prize in Social Justice, Diplomacy and Tolerance.

"It was an honor to be the first recipient of this distinguished award, and to share it with your mother and father present,"

Professor Ogletree wrote in a letter to Sherrie Spendlove, who founded the prize in honor of her parents. "It has really set a tone in my mind for striving to achieve great things in this environment, and I wanted to praise you for your efforts. It is always a pleasure to come back to Merced, but the programs held at the University of California – Merced, Merced High School and Golden Valley High

School were exceptional. I know that my mother and father, Willi Mae and Charles Ogletree, were looking down from heaven with great pride."

Professor Ogletree's letter to Sherrie contained his signature emphases on family, home, friendship, home, faith, education, and "striving to achieve great things." These hallmarks were not lost upon former First Lady Michelle Obama when she delivered the Commencement address at UC Merced in 2009, and lauded Professor Ogletree, a mentor and teacher to Michelle Obama and her husband, former U.S. President Barack Obama.

"And then there is my friend and former law school professor, Charles Ogletree, a product of the Merced public

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No Relief for Unhoused Residents from page 1

quest to find affordable housing in our County. One elderly woman writes that she is looking for a room but “cannot afford more than a \$1000 a month.” A single mom writes that she has one child and can pay \$900 for a room. A family of three is looking to find a place for \$1250 a month. Another mom posts that she’s homeless with three kids and is in dire need of a safe place.

These are real people – our neighbors – some of them are young families, just starting out in life and already forced to climb a steep hill just to have a simple rented room or two over their heads. A few seem to be as old as I am (74) and probably more than a little unsettled as they watch rising rents and inflation in general swallow up their fixed incomes.

Indeed, the California Housing Partnership reports that, in 2023, “77% of extremely low-income households in Stanislaus County are paying more than half of their income on housing costs.” With at least fifty-one cents out of every dollar being handed over to a landlord, where does a family come up with the money to put food in the hungry mouths of their kids, keep them clothed as they go through growth spurts, or do anything but live on a meager subsistence level? Surely, this is a recipe for more homelessness, ever more suffering than what we are currently seeing on our streets.

The 2023 American Community Survey reports that 14.1 percent of Stanislaus County’s residents live in poverty (which means that one in seven of us may now be living not just from paycheck to paycheck but from day to day, which would be frightening for any of us. Modesto’s motto or promise of Water, Wealth, Contentment, Health must ring hollow for a growing number of its residents these days.

For so many, the anguish and uncertainty are ever-present now, but no one – no one – is suffering more than those of our neighbors who live unhoused and starving on our city’s streets.

I recently glanced at the 2023 Homeless Point in Time (PIT) Count for Stanislaus County, which reveals that almost two-thirds (62%) of the unhoused who took part in the biennial survey this year have been homeless in our county

for three or more years. Consider what that may mean for a moment, i.e., being homeless year after year, season after season – the hunger knifing into you; the hot summer sun or cold winter rains hounding your every movement as you seek refuge from the elements; the threat of sudden violence ever present so you become fearful to sleep during the night; the scorn and verbal abuse tossed out at you by random strangers; the fear of soiling yourself if you can’t find an appropriate place in time just to relieve yourself.

And as Lynelle Loeb Solomon can attest, this summer of triple-digit heat domes has heightened the humanitarian crisis she sees every day among “my people” as they try and escape the scorching sun any way they can.

As a volunteer for SHARE, (a nonprofit dedicated to providing resources such as temporary housing and transportation for the homeless in Modesto and nearby), Ms. Solomon packs up her car every week and heroically provides care to “her people” – the unhoused she has met and come to know over several years now, supplying them with hot food, donated clothes, and toiletries – and a plethora of other needs, including hugs. The other day, Ms. Solomon even tended to the superficial wounds of a man who had been stabbed. But in addition to ministering to their physical needs, she also lets each of her people know that she sees them as individuals, as people possessing dignity and worth – and deserving of love like everyone else.

Ms. Solomon is also a fierce advocate for her people, for all the unhoused and unheard in our community, and so she is in good company as a member of the Modesto Citizens Action Group (MoCag), whose teamwork in advocacy of the homeless in our community is unflinching and deeply focused.

“Our streets are bleeding, our streets are hemorrhaging, and all you can do is let them bleed out,” Ms. Solomon chastised the Modesto City Council recently, in the wake of more inaction and studying of plans by local elected officials as she and the other MoCag members continue to fight doggedly for a safe sleeping site and transitional housing



for “a specific group of people who are homeless: the people who are camping in the parks, streets, and doorways.” The shocking and inexcusable death of Christine Chavez in July gave further tragic impetus to the MoCag mission.

Whether meeting with and educating elected officials about the urgency and scale of the suffering currently being experienced by so many on our streets or offering a helping hand to the unhoused, the Modesto Citizens Action Group has been leading the way for some time now. But it needs your help.

“Momentum is building to get something done, but we need community support to pressure our elected officials to act,” MoCag member James Costello urged. “Other Valley cities are attempting to address this issue, but Modesto is lagging in helping this particular homeless population. Much has been done to help the homeless in our cities and county but much more can and must be done. The community must keep the pressure on.”

Remembering Ogletree from page 6

schools,” Michelle Obama said in remarks reprinted in *The New York Times*. “Now, he is an example of how you can bring your skills back. His ambitions took him far away from home, but he has never forgotten where he came from. Each year, with his help, Merced’s high schools are able to hand out scholarships, not just for the best and the brightest students, but also for many students who are just stuck in poverty and simply need a hand up to compete.”

By the time Professor Ogletree visited UC Merced again in 2016, the number of Spendlove Prize laureates had grown to a list of nine distinguished award recipients. The tenth winner and 2016 Spendlove Prize recipient would be **Prof. Anita Hill**, whose testimony during the 1991 U.S. Senate confirmation hearings for then-Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas raised national and global awareness of sexual harassment. Professor Ogletree served as legal counsel for Hill during the hearings.

Twenty-five years later, he shared the stage with Hill as she received the Spendlove Prize during a ceremony at the Merced Theater. During his return to Merced, Prof. Ogletree

also signed copies of his book, *All Deliberate Speed: Reflections on the First Half-Century of Brown v. Board of Education* at the local Barnes & Noble.

UC Merced Chancellor Juan Sánchez Muñoz was on hand when the Merced Courthouse on N Street was renamed the Charles James Ogletree Courthouse during a February 17, 2023, ceremony. Friends, family, state representatives, and members of the community who cherished Professor Ogletree’s accomplishments, legacy, and connections to Merced turned out for a standing-room-only tribute followed by a dinner at the Merced Women’s Club.

“He hasn’t forgotten where he came from,” said Professor Ogletree’s brother Richard during the ceremony. “He remembers his roots.”

Richard Ogletree said that while his brother was often in the company of global leaders and dignitaries like Nelson Mandela and former U.S. president Bill Clinton, he always took time to give back to youth and the community in Merced, with a special emphasis on those areas of Merced that are marginalized or underrepresented in the public sphere.

U.S. Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., who delivered remarks remotely at the courthouse renaming, said, “Professor Ogletree has been an incredible force of nature, a dynamic public servant who has advanced the law for social justice, civil rights, civil liberties and tolerance in our society like none other. Charles Ogletree has really brought to life, through his teaching, his advocacy, through his understanding, through his analysis and insight with respect to our society, that America is in a continuing march toward a more perfect union, and he has continued to advance the law in that direction, lifting up and bringing to life values such as liberty and justice for all, equal protection under the law, free and fair elections, and the notion of our country as a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. He’s also inspired countless law students, including President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama and numerous members of the House Democratic Caucus that I serve with today including Congresswoman Terri Sewell.”

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Meet Faith Delgado: Stanislaus County's Inaugural Youth Poet Laureate

My name is Faith Delgado. I'm Stanislaus County's Youth Poet Laureate and a senior at Pitman High School.

In eighth grade, I wanted to perform in a talent show through Pitman Choir, but I didn't have a Broadway voice like everyone else. Still, I knew I wanted to be a part of it. Little did I know how far that would go and in going down the list of categories to audition, I saw spoken word. That was a word I hadn't heard before, and before this poetry wasn't an open door for me. Poetry was something I thought was confined and defined by rules - a role like that wasn't a role for me. But finding spoken word has been the start of my story.

That day, I wrote my first spoken word and ended up performing at the high school. I got a standing ovation and ever since I've known this is my occupation. I love spoken word because it empowers me to fight for what I believe in and to show people there is always hope even when they feel they are at the end of their rope.

A Gathering of Voices is honored to publish these fine poems by Stanislaus County's Inaugural Poet Laureate, Faith Delgado



Broadway

A funny phrase right?/ A place where dreamers chase their
dreams into the night

/but we don't all make it //right?/

Broadway is a clay that can be molded into many things,
nearly anything / it's a play, whether it'd be playing music
or playing a star/ its a profession that has so many roles by
far

//But not // everyone / gets rolled out?//

It's a crucible of lyrics, it's *irrefutably* moving, it's a
picture painted of any person choosing /

It brings us together like cold weather and a jacket //
inseparable//

To become someone with your name in the stars / it all
starts/ far / from where it ends
Where some meet ends // instead of ending up on the deep
end you swim into shallow

And being callow you stay there thinking who could I
possibly be // just a kid with no degree / just a nobody/ just
an absentee in my own life // but I disagree

See there's no guarantee / that your guaranteed fame / and
I can't guarantee the whole world will know your name //
but // I will

Where some find an ashtray some find sound / in the
miracles of music "you will be found"

And those who find it are blessed beyond measure / their
song becomes someone else's treasure

We tend to see those with a million followers / but not the
people following them wishing to follow in their footsteps
// it's a big staircase

There's a girl strumming a guitar on the streets / a boy
scribbling down lyrics on the back of his math sheets /
there's a kid crying in the bathroom humming a tune to
their sorrows / teens just waiting for what their tomorrow
holds

And they think / maybe I'll be someone when I'm old
You can be someone // right // now //

//But today // we think we can't//

Today // we're obsessed with making stupid people famous
// not those who were destined for greatness

No instead we see those who make a scene / not those who
spend their whole life trying to be *seen*

We are easy to cetic /but/ uneasy to see // the work that
some people put in is so much more than me //

We see the person who lives their life in a fake magazine,
we see the person who the world loves to hear sing // we
see those who do the stupidest things and those who least
deserve it are idolized like kings

Lyrics where the words are based off nothing// people
don't sing honestly honestly it's all conceded / a lot of
artists today spend fortune on fame on things that aren't
needed

You can walk on the stars that hold their names, but let me
take you the other way // here is where unknown stars lie

Being someone isn't only for those out of Hollywood / you
don't have to live in LA / you don't have to be rich / being
someone always comes with a fee / it's not easy to be // Be
yourself

I'll tell you about me, you'll guess who I am // let's start
first with a kind-hearted man

*I quote "I lived by the candlelight for two years because
I couldn't afford power. It was nice and romantic at the
time, but if you can't afford power you're pretty broke. You
endure it."*

Who am I?

Born in Modesto California to a man named lee // in the
80's dad managed the Mchenry bowling all-ey
My mothers' name was Valerie // they divorced when I was
ten // and yet more siblings time and time again
The oldest of 7 / graduated in 89 // what I ended up in
wasn't exactly what I had in mind

My mind was set on other things at MJC // I studied
computer science and criminolo-gy /

I ended up taking a drama class and before I knew it my
eyes were set on something new // I pursued acting and had
my first part when I was a little over 22

In my career /today/ I am known for my crew
// a rich playboy billionaire // a widow and a soldier // a
blondie with a smile a green man who's bipolar//

Do you know who I am?

I // am // hawkeye

My name is Jeremy Renner

Today I'm sure you know me as an Avenger
// Little towns can produce many things, things can happen
local-ly // like a man who's living in a universe of heroes
who was born just down the street / two streets from me
meets destiny /two streets from you meets // possibly

Who am I?

*I quote, "We could see what a wonderful world it would be
if only we would give it a chance"*

I was born in 1904 the core of my family / until my parents
split and I was left with my mom, sister, and granny

I lived in what they called "the battlefield"// a field of
darkness/drunks ran the streets / at night I'd toss and turn
in the sheets // to the sound of shooting

New years eve I got arrested for firing a gun in the air /
dead air became an answered prayer

I was sent to a reform school where I took up the cornet

Today I'm known as one of the most famous jazz
musicians and singers

Do you know who I am?h

I am Louis Armstrong.

And I am regarded as one of the most influential musicians
in the history of jazz music

I don't know about you but music *is* my home // a
metronome for a heartbeat / pages of lyrics in the
backseat / sheets of unfinished lines lined up on repeat / a
spreadsheet of sound / words that pound / music playing in
the background of my mind but // I don't mind /// do you
mind?

Here is where we draw the fine line // you might be like
me // lost is the composure of music and here's where you

do it /// You're not the only one with big dreams, dreams
aren't always as unrealistic as they seem/ seemingly
impossible becomes a little possible when you try / and
when you try you *can* get there
Waitress taught me, "Dreams come and they go, but hold
them and keep them and know that you need them"
The paperboys, Newsies said, "*Now* is the time to seize the
day, Stare down the odds and seize the day!"
Heathers tells us life *can* be beautiful!
Lift up your eyes and hear, "Even the darkest night will
end and the sun will rise." - Lay Mis
Chorus line, "Kiss today good-bye and point me towards
tomorrow."
Bonnie and Clyde, "Everybody's got dreams. *I* got plans."
Dear Evan Hansen reminds us, "It just takes a little
patience, takes a little time, a little perseverance, and a
little uphill climb"
Legally blonde, the iconic bond says, "Being true to
yourself never goes out of style."
We may not be any peter pan but in Finding Neverland
they remind us, All that matters now is where I go from
here
//Where will you go from here?//
// I don't know about you but, just like Lin-Manuel
Miranda taught me//
I'm not throwing away my shot // I am *not* throwing
away my shot // yeah I'm just like my country//I'm young
Scrappy and hungry//and we are / not /
throwing away *our* shot

Revolutionary

//High school was revolutionary//
What comes to mind when I say high school?
I know *exactly* what your thinking // you open the gym
doors and see a group of teens dancing in their jeans
singing we're all in this together
//right? // Wrong
Disney and all the movies lied to you and said that high
school, life, and love was full of random dance numbers
and songs you'll never get out of your head // *never* //
however this fantasy isn't total insanity

Although you might not walk outside and suddenly be
overrun by dance numbers, doesn't someone's number in
your phone cause your heart to dance when you call them?
Doesn't some little kid randomly dancing his life away
in the target aisle doing his own freestyle just make you
smile?
I'm not that good of a dancer but in Just Dance, literally
Just Dance // we used to play Just Dance on the Wii, we
being me and my siblings // my sister always beat me she'd
never miss a beat
I'd like to say she was cheating but you can't really cheat //
in // dancing //
in fact dancing takes a bit of freelancing
You make moves of your own, some might come up with

it themselves / it's not all directions from a bookshelf //
A dancer must push themselves through and learn to be
determined // even the soles of their shoes have souls as
they cruise down the street

//Revolutionary//
//The 90's were revolutionary//
Was your new year's resolution working out?? // then let
me introduce you to dance dance revolution, a substitution
and higher solution, a evolution of the 90's //Dance dance
revolution is *truly* revolutionary//

//The process is all follows; Players stand on the dance
platform//
Don't we all kind of have our own platform, its some form
of a stage that we build for ourselves
Some sort of way you show off yourself // you don't have
to be a dancer to have a platform
In the same way you don't have to be in the clouds to hear
and thunderstorm
You just do // it's loud like you // you can be loud in your
words or you can be loud with your hands but we all have
something that hands us a platform
We are all gifted in our own strengths so why are you
spending those strengths dancing with the wrong partner?
You look so tired and I know you're tired of dancing
through the same toxic, draining and paining conversations
// why are you letting them steal your platform that was
never defined by them in the first place//but defined by you

//The process is all follows; Players stand on the dance
platform and hit the colored arrows laid out in a cross with
their feet to the musical and visual cues//
Which arrow are you stepping on, pink or blue? Which
step is the one you go to?//
Does your foot step on the arrow in front or the arrow in
back//not every step ahead has to make you backtrack
You might not have a yellow brick road or bright arrow to
tell you where to go because we all know that sounds crazy
// isn't it crazy that we follow lately // online we meet
people vaguely/online we act so greatly but offline is that
so innately?//
You don't have to have an arrow pointing which way to
go//sometimes you just know//and other times every step
teaches you to grow even if it's slow//
Sometimes you might outgrow a dance and you *have* to
learn to let go//you *have* to learn to it's okay to out grow
some dances/vincent van go and picasso started out like
you and me//did you know that mozart died as a nobody
He was buried in a regular grave with just fame to his
name, in the end he died in poverty, isn't that crazy?//A
million dollar name full of fame and yet in the end it didn't
give him much gain
It takes steps to form a dance//every step, good or not is a
step to getting there

//The process is all follows; Players are judged by how
well they time their dance to the patterns presented to
them//

How many times have you been so afraid of other people's
judgment you let it make an adjustment to you // your life
and behavior is defined by other peoples patterns
You live your life in the snow so worried of where to go
that you follow footsteps from long ago
So worried other people will judge you that you follow
someone else's steps
//we don't all have the same shoe size//
and no matter how hard you try you will never be them/
you will *never* be them//you *won't*/your you and that is
something you have to come to
And I know it's hard for you to love you and I've been
there too and I'm there for you so now it's your turn to be
there for you
Your dance is your dance/don't let other people's boo's
turn into a life full of booze and bottles and mourning
every second of morning, you reap the seeds you sow so
why are you sowing other peoples patterns in your life

//The process is all follows; Players are judged by how
well they time their dance to the patterns presented to them
and are allowed to choose more music to play to if they
receive a passing score//
If you keep score of how many falters you have in your
dance//in your life//your done for
When your so focused on the wrongs you can't make them
right and you continue to write the same lines over and
over and over and in your own kitchen/your life is a plate
full of leftovers
When your eyes are so set on something it can make you
do some dumb thing
Goals are good, at the same time make sure those goals
don't turn your loved ones into firewood
We've all been burned by people because people would
put their goals and wants over you//and unfortunately it's
something we all do//at some point
What are you willing to do to receive a passing score?
Don't you know no paper or score can define and confine
you?
Life is a dance and a dance is what you make if it//don't
just choose the music that everyone else does because you
will not benefit
//Choose your own music//

Life is about dancing in the kitchen at midnight with
friends//it's about slow dancing even when the music has
stopped//dancing doesn't stop and your feet keep moving
and problems can be a feat but they can't beat you so keep
dancing though/everything
//Walking through life is something we can all do, but if
you want to live your life it's something you have to dance
through//
//And that//is revolutionary//

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

Streaming on www.kcbpradio.org

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

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

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

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

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

PROGRAMS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Democracy Now! - 7:00 am, Monday thru Friday.

Reporting by veteran journalists Amy Goodman & Juan Gonzalez.

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

Alternative Radio – 4:00 pm, Mondays. Interviews with prominent political and social people.

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

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

LOCALLY PRODUCED PROGRAMS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Please consider a recurring monthly donation.



Peace Is Just as Possible as War

On International Peace Day this September 21, imagine an unstoppable wave of peace actions sweeping across our country.

By H. Patricia Hynes, *Common Dreams*

I am heartened each time I come across a study affirming that waging war is not an innate part of human nature, that we humans are just as likely to be peaceful as we are to be violent. To quote the revered anthropologist Margaret Mead, “warfare is only an invention—not a biological necessity.”

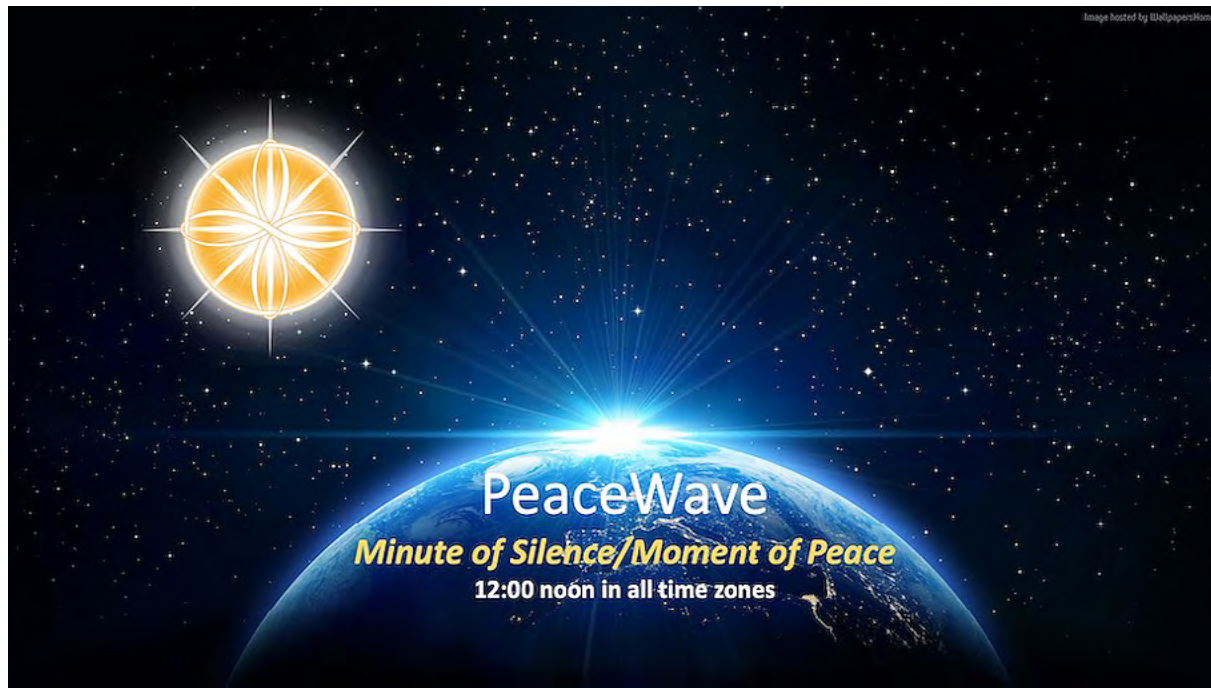
And why do I cherish findings by historians, anthropologists, psychologists, and others that we are not doomed inevitably to human conflict; that, in the words of President John F. Kennedy “our problems are man-made—therefore, they can be solved by man.”

In my lifetime, there has been barely a year that my government has not been at war overtly or covertly. By some calculations the United States has been involved in more than 100 wars since 1776—early on with Native Americans to steal their land, claim their natural resources, and imprison them on reservations. Between 1945 and 1989 the U.S. attempted to change other (many democratic) countries’ governments overtly and covertly 72 times. More than 4.5 million people have died in the more than two decades of post-9/11 U.S. wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, and Libya.

Recent landmark research by Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan of movements from 1900 through 2006 to overthrow dictatorships, expel foreign occupations, or achieve self-determination reveal that nonviolent resistance campaigns were more than twice as successful as violent insurrections with the same goals.

But war is relatively new in the more than 200,000-year history of us homo sapiens: Evidence of war dates back to 10-12,000 years ago, especially with the emergence of more settled communities. Further, societies that were once extremely warlike are now peaceful: the countries of Scandinavia, for example, and the tribes of the Iroquois from around 1600. Ireland, Austria, and Switzerland are neutral Western European countries, not members of NATO; and Costa Rica has eliminated its military in a hemispheric region where conflict has been rife. All undercut the notion of war being a deeply ingrained, inevitable biological behavior.

Moreover, experts who have studied the history of violent and non-violent responses to conflict have found that violence is not the most effective nor successful way to resolve country-level disputes. Recent landmark research by Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan of movements from 1900 through 2006 to overthrow dictatorships, expel foreign occupations, or achieve self-determination reveal that nonviolent resistance campaigns were more than twice as successful as violent insurrections with the same goals. Elsewhere Chenoweth found that when women have leadership roles, they are



“more likely to maintain nonviolent discipline... in resistance campaigns against repressive regimes.”

Especially uplifting, too, are the multitudinous creative individuals and movements in recent decades at work for peace in their countries. In 2005, 1,000 outstanding women peacemakers from 150 countries were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Why 1,000 women? Because “creating peace requires a culture of peace practiced by millions in our daily life,” explained their Nobel prize sponsors. Their slogan, “I am not a wall that divides—I am a crack in that wall” conjures up the lyrics of singer/songwriter Leonard Cohen: “There are cracks in everything/that’s how the light gets in.”

A final piece of wisdom about the necessity of sustaining peace following violent conflict comes from Liberian Nobel Peace Prize winner Leymah Gbowee, who brought Christian and Muslim women together in her West African country to

a deeply unjust, deeply racist society in order to inaugurate social healing that would last. Knowing that forgiveness would not assure perfect justice for all, Desmond Tutu realistically stated that simply punishing their oppressors with prison sentences may have resulted in a civil war ending with “a South Africa lying in ashes.”

There were shortcomings, though. Some of the worst unrepentant war criminals escaped prosecution; some citizens grievously harmed by apartheid citizens felt that amnesty was too easily given; and the country is still ridden with vast inequities. Elsewhere, others believe that peace without accountability for violence is a peace without justice, including Gbowee and other advocating for a war crimes

court to ensure accountability for Liberian war criminals.

On International Peace Day this September 21, imagine an unstoppable wave of peace actions sweeping across our country, like that of the first Earth Day, April 22, 1970. That day Congress closed so its members could attend environmental teach-ins; 20 million citizens and politicians (one-fifth of the population) came out for marches, rallies, and concerts; and 10 million children participated in peace teach-ins in their schools. A surge of environmental legislation and the creation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency by President Richard Nixon followed in the next years.

May we be part of finding our country’s lost path to peace: by peace education and active bystander programs in every school; by interracial and interfaith collaborations; by reparations for the historical injustices of slavery and theft of land from Native Americans; by ensuring women’s full equality, including restoring women’s reproductive rights; by beating warheads into windmills through shifting our government’s

priorities from militarism to renewable technologies; and by demanding that our lawmakers have a real democratic debate on war, peace, and the military budget.

As Eleanor Roosevelt asked, “When will our conscience grow so tender that we will act to prevent human misery rather than avenge it?”

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H. Patricia Hynes is a retired Professor of Environmental Health from Boston University School of Public Health and current Chair of the Board of the Traprock Center for Peace and Justice. She is also on the board of NuclearBan.us. She has written and edited seven books, among them “The Recurring Silent Spring.” She writes and speaks on issues of war and militarism with an emphasis on women, the environment, and public health.

“When will our conscience grow so tender that we will act to prevent human misery rather than avenge it?” ~ Eleanor Roosevelt

end Liberia’s brutal 14-year-long civil war in 2003. According to Gbowee, “Stopping a war does not bring lasting peace.” Peace persists through peacebuilding, using community organizing and expressing dissent; teaching peace and nonviolence; and prioritizing the basic issues of women’s, racial and social equality, and environmental protection.

Few of us have imagined forgiveness as a crucial element of peace that can enable peace to endure. In 1995, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela, who had spent 27 years as a political prisoner before emerging as South Africa’s first Black president, called for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission that offered amnesty to “those responsible for atrocities during the long nightmare of white-minority rule,” provided they publicly confess all the brutalities they had committed and request amnesty. The Commission intended to refrain from revenge and to reconcile the peoples of

calendar



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

september 2023

MJC Science Colloquium Fall 2024 Schedule. Wednesdays 3:15-4:15 pm, Science Community Center, Room 115, Modesto Junior College West Campus, Parking Free. (Recorded for later viewing on Science Colloquium YouTube.) **Sept. 20: John Holland**, Reporter, Modesto Bee: A Modesto Bee's Reporter's View of Climate Change Close to Home. John Holland's work at the Modesto Bee has involved several efforts to avert climate change. They include storing carbon in orchards and forests, recharging groundwater through floodplain restoration, and making passenger rail more useful for residents. Full schedule, this issue.

MAPS (Modesto Area Partners in Science): Free MJC science programs. on Fridays in MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132 at 7:30 pm. **Friday, September 29: Dr. Stephanie Dole** (the Beetelady) educates the public about insects. She will talk about the biodiversity, ecological roles, and the importance of our local arthropods and how they are connected to the greater world. The Great Valley Museum will feature a pop-up bug exhibit in the Science Center Lobby on Saturday, 9/30/23 with many activities for families. <https://www.beetelady.com/about/>. Full schedule, page 2.

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

6 WED: VIGIL: HOMELESSNESS: SAFE SLEEPING. at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five points), 4:30-5:30 pm. Call the Center for info: 209-529-5750 or email jcostello@igc.org

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

17 SUN: The State Theatre and Modesto Film Society present *Lady Bird*, 2 pm. Join the State Theatre. Have fun, get perks, and support Modesto's historic non-profit theatre. Visit <https://thestate.org/films/lady-bird-092023/>

21 THURS: International Peace Day. Imagine an unstoppable wave of peace actions sweeping across our country.

23 SAT: MoSt Celebrates 10th Anniversary with Gala Featuring California Poet Laureate Lee Herrick and Stanislaus County Youth Poet Laureate Faith Delgado, 2 pm. See article page 4.

23 SAT: The Stanislaus County Library Foundation's annual **Author's Garden Gala**. Celebrates People, Pets, and Books, "Pawstively Tail-Wagging" event to benefit Stanislaus County Libraries. Social hour, 6 pm, dinner, 7 pm, followed by a Fund-A-Need Auction and author interview. This year's speaker: local author, literacy advocate, and animal lover Hillari DeSchane who writes "fatally fun" family-friendly novels that combine her favorite things: mystery, humor, and animals. Tickets: \$150 per person. Call 209-523-9093 or contact the Library Foundation at stanlibfoundation@gmail.com

24 SUN: Neurodiversity & Autism. Part of ongoing series of Community Conversations. The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County, 2172 Kiernan Avenue Modesto, 1 to 3 pm. Shawn Rogers and Cari Wise will present. Register at Eventbrite: <https://NeurodiversityUU.eventbrite.com>. See the article page 4.

LOOKING AHEAD

Harvest Gathering this Fall. TBA.

Tuesday, January 9, 2024: Annual Modesto Peace/Life Center Benefit: John McCutcheon Concert, Modesto Church of the Brethren. More soon.

REGULAR MEETINGS

SUNDAYS

D&D Champions Group, Noon. Central California LGBTQ+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, 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.

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

MONDAYS

Queer Cuts, last Monday of the month, 10 a.m., Central California LGBTQ+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, 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 Women 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+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, Modesto (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.

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), 4:30-5:30 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.

Tuesday Evening Funstrummers Ukulele Jam. Songbooks provided. 6pm to 8pm, 1600 Carver Rd., Donation. 209-505-3216, www.Funstrummers.com.

IMCV weekly Insight Meditation and dharma talk, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC east parking lot). Offered freely, donations welcome. Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: info@imcv.org

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

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+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, 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+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, 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=LLB8Y19zZg660qHCXGoC6ojQ&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? Yamilet Valladolid, yamiletv@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+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, 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 UUFC 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.



SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 16TH
10.00AM TO 2.00PM

JOIN US FOR OUR 2023

FAMILY HEALTH & RESOURCE FAIR



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