



Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

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Bombs Will Not Heal Our Broken Hearts

Written by Rivera Sun

“later that night
I held an atlas in my lap
ran my fingers across the whole world
where does it hurt
it answered
everywhere
everywhere
everywhere

— Warsan Shire

In the past 36 hrs., I have watched and listened to hundreds of reactions of ordinary people to the attacks in Paris. With a clenched gut, I feared the reiteration of the sequence of 9/11: anger, shock, fear, calls for vengeance, war, and more violence.

Instead, I saw the unexpected, and a tendril of hope grew inside my heart. Here is some of what I saw:

- **Compassion for the scared, frightened, injured, killed.**
- **A willingness to remember that all across the world, there are people frightened, hurt, angry, and lost.**
- **An acknowledgment of the cycle of violence begetting violence begetting more and more violence.**

A stark look at our own nation (the US) and our role in terrorism, invasion, drone strikes, illegal wars, destabilizing governments, regions, peoples.

The courage to speak up for an end to this vicious, horrific cycle. To say the unthinkable: that perhaps more war, bombs, weapons, troops, guns is not going to heal the broken hearts of Paris, Baghdad, Beirut, Yemen, Syria, United States, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Israel, and . . .

The knowledge that the list is endless. We speak the names of all the communities

touched by violence, terrorism, war, destruction and the list is endless. We say their names as if reading out a roll call of the Earth.

And she is weeping, too.

Prayers are spoken, tears are falling, people are speaking, honesty and truth telling are breaking open the fear, giving room for compassion, until . . .

We see ourselves in the faces of the world.

Our sorrows, their sorrows. Our fears, their fears. Our broken dreams, and theirs. Our wrong actions, and theirs. Our silence, their silence. Our courage, their courage. Our love, their love.

Our love.

In hundreds of comments, posts, tweets,

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Dear Syrian Refugees,

You are welcome in my home.
Not everyone welcomes you,
not in their country, not in their city,
not on the streets where they walk their dogs,
stopping only to let them urinate on trees.

These are sacred lands, they say,
and your hands are dirty. But my porch light
is always on. My door is always open.

I have a futon in the front room
and a bookcase full of poetry
from Levine to Rumi if you get bored.
And there are picture books too,
leftover from my children
who have graduated
to bigger words
like *scared*,
like *starving*,
like *survival*.

My 7-year-old son has a bunk bed.
He says you can have the bottom
because he likes the top. It makes him
feel like an airplane pilot every night
when he climbs into the cockpit of his bed
where his dreams take flight.

He's even set aside stuffed animals
for your sons and daughters who might
want to cuddle something more than fear
and the heartbreaking chill of despair.

Our house is warm. I know
the oceans you've crossed
have been cold. Rain and winter
have beaten your bodies down,
but still you have the strength
to keep your spirits up and moving.

When you get to my house, there will be
rest.

There will be hot tea and dinner.

There will be laughter.

There will be safety.

You will be home.

At least, I hope it will feel that way
if only for a moment.

Sam Pierstorff

The author is professor of English at
Modesto Junior College and former Poet
Laureate of Modesto

Annual Modesto Peace
/Life Center

Holiday Party
Potluck
& Song Fest

Saturday,
December 5, 2015

5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

At the home of Dan &
Alice Onorato

1532 Vernon Ave., Modesto

Bring your festive spirit
and food to share!

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Children's book (K-1 to K-6)

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McCutcheon concert tickets on sale

By KEN SCHROEDER

Six-time Grammy nominated folk musician John McCutcheon performs in his 15th annual benefit concert for the Modesto Peace/Life Center on Tuesday, January 12 at 7 pm at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave.

Johnny Cash called him “the most impressive instrumental I’ve ever heard.”

John is a master of a dozen different instruments, including guitar, banjo, hammer dulcimer, piano and fiddle. His socially and politically conscious songs inspire us, his songs about family and every-day life move us and his wicked sense of humor entertains us. Beyond entertainment, his concerts bring us together in a sense of community and shared values.

On November 19, as part of the Utah Humanities Council commemoration of the 100th anniversary of labor martyr Joe Hill’s death, John performed his one-man play “Joe Hill’s Last Will” in Salt Lake City, the site of Joe Hill’s execution. Last June he presented the play to a sold-out audience in Modesto.



Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$23 at the door and youth 18 and under are \$7. Tickets can be purchased in person by check or cash at the Brethren Church, 2301 Woodland Ave., 523-1438 or at Beads of Contentment, 1028 J St., Modesto, 523-6335. Online tickets sales are at <http://mc-cutcheonmodesto2016.eventbrite.com>

For information, contact Ken Schroeder 209-480-4576.

Peace & Justice Network San Joaquin’s 29th Annual Peaceful Holiday Faire

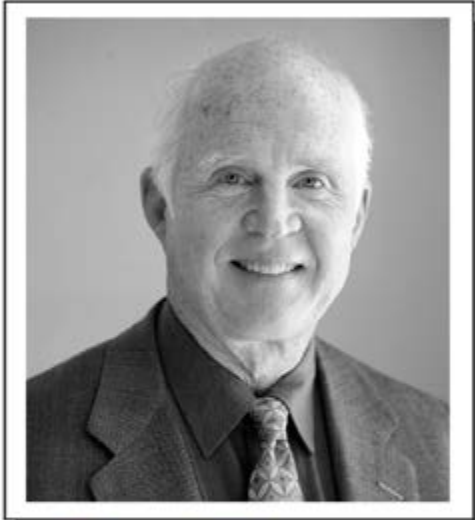
By MARCIA SAVAGE

Unique hand-crafted, fair-trade items by local artists and global sustainable community organizations for sale. Homemade soups and light refreshments available for purchase.

The goal of this Faire is to have items for sale that promote non-violence, reflect the beauty of nature and sustainable living, the creativity of the spirit, the skill of the hands, and which contribute to a more responsible world.

Friday December 4, 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm, and Saturday December 5, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave., Stockton (across from University of the Pacific).

Speaker: Civil Rights Historian: TAYLOR BRANCH



Author of *America in the King Years*

SATURDAY, January 23, 2016

22nd Annual
*Martin Luther King, Jr.
Commemoration*

Performing Arts & Media Center
Modesto Junior College, East Campus
435 College Ave., Modesto

- 6:00 p.m. - Doors Open
- 7:00 p.m. - Free program



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City of Modesto Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Dept.; Modesto Junior College; Modesto Peace/Life Center; California State University, Stanislaus; Associated Students of Modesto Junior College; West Modesto King-Kennedy Neighborhood Collaborative. *Sponsors needed. Email jcostello@igc.org*

Notice

All Recycled Things (ARTS) has moved from the SCOE Media Center to 1324 Celeste Dr. Modesto.

Free materials for use in creative projects with children. To donate new or partly used clean materials call 529-1749 for drop off location.

No drop off accepted at the new center.
Ann Dutton

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Feast, sing, and bring a book, Sat., December 5

By DAN ONORATO

Despite the bombs, racism, and fear that seem to engulf our world, we refuse to lose heart. In the face of hatred and bigotry, we hold a light to the darkness, as we did recently with our evening vigil for solidarity and peace in Graceada Park. And we'll keep on building community and caring, as we'll do at the Peace/Life Center's annual Holiday Potluck Songfest on Saturday, December 5, from 5:30 to 9:00 pm at Alice and Dan Onorato's home at 1532 Vernon Avenue in Modesto.

It's a potluck so bring your favorite dish and a beverage to share. After a hearty feast we'll sing with gusto—not just holiday songs but folk and pop favorites, with maestro John Poat, lead singer of the local band Wooden Nickle, coaxing our voices and spirits to soar with gleeful abandon.



And don't forget to bring a new book or two for a K-6th grade child at Wilson Elementary School. Many of the families and households of students there are low-income and don't have many books. So each year at this event, we try to gather as many new books as gifts that teacher Jana Chiavetta and her colleagues can give the children. Don't wrap the book(s) you bring. That way the teachers can give the right reading level to each student.

The evening promises culinary delight and frolicking music in the company of some of the best people this side of the Sierra Nevada. And with the books, we'll do a little good. Come one and all.

December's Film: Academy Award winning documentary CITIZENFOUR

By DAN ONORATO

2014's Academy Award winning documentary CITIZENFOUR is a real-life international thriller that unfolds by the minute.



Documentarian Laura Poitras had already been working on a film about surveillance for two years when Snowden contacted her, using the name "CITIZENFOUR," in January 2013. He reached out to her because he knew she had long been a target of government surveillance, stopped at airports numerous times, and had refused to be intimidated. When Snowden revealed he was a high-level analyst driven to expose the massive surveillance of Americans by the NSA, Poitras persuaded him to let her film.

With unprecedented access, this gripping behind-the-scenes chronicle follows award-winning director Poitras and journalist Glenn Greenwald's remarkable encounters with whistle-blower Edward Snowden in a hotel room in Hong Kong, as he hands over classified documents that provide evidence of mass indiscriminate and illegal invasions of

The documentary not only shows the dangers of governmental surveillance, but makes audiences feel them.

privacy by the National Security Agency (NSA).

CITIZENFOUR places you in the room with Poitras, Greenwald, and Snowden as they attempt to manage the media storm raging outside, forced to make quick decisions that will impact their lives and all of those around them.

The documentary not only shows the dangers of governmental surveillance, but makes audiences feel them. After seeing the film, viewers will never think the same way about their phone, e-mail, credit cards, web browser or digital footprint again.

The film will be shown at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, December 16 at the Center, 720 13th St., Modesto. Discussion will follow.

Be informed!

Read the Valley Citizen at
<http://thevalleycitizen.com>

Participate in international community online in real time!

By LEN & LIBBY TRAUBMAN

For a one-hour live international experience, we invite a few of you individual relationship-builders and supporters of Dialogue to participate in a face-to-face video gathering with each other and us.

The 23-year-old Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue here on the San Francisco Peninsula is preparing for its 281st meeting — a **2015 Season of Light Video Bridge**.

It will be similar to last year's experience but less formal — <http://traubman.igc.org/light2014.htm>

More about the host group is at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish-Palestinian_Living_Room_Dialogue_Group

Using the Skype-like Zoom platform — <https://zoom.us>—this year up to 20 of you will be able to meet, see, and hear one another online. At our end, the local Dialogue group will be in the living room to meet you, before its holiday dinner and meeting.

Here is the information:

WHAT: December 2015 Season of Light Global Video Bridge

WHY: To meet others around Earth who are interested in communication excellence to create relationships and an authentic global community.

WHO: Global Dialogue Participants & Citizen Bridge Builders

hosted by the Jewish-Palestinian Living Group Dialogue in California, USA (Muslim, Jewish, and Christian women, men, and youth)

WHERE: Online at <https://zoom.us/j/5126812154>

WHEN:

Hawaii - Monday, 07 December 2015 — 4:30pm - 5:30 pm
California - Monday, 07 December 2015 — 6:30-7:30pm

Chicago and Mexico City - Monday, 07 December 2015 — 8:30-9:30pm

New York - Monday 07 December 2015 - 9:30-10:30pm

Chile - Monday, 07 December 2015 - 11:30pm-12:30am

GMT - Tuesday, 08 December 2015 - 2:30-3:30am

Nigeria — Tuesday, 08 December 2015 — 3:30-4:30am

Jerusalem — Tuesday, 08 December 2015 — 4:30-5:30am

Moscow — Tuesday, 08 December 2015 — 5:30 - 6:30am

Myanmar — Tuesday, 08 December 2015 — 9:30-10:30am

Manila — Tuesday, 08 December 2015 — 10:30-11:30am

Seoul, Tokyo, Hong Kong — Tuesday, 08 December 2015

— 11:30-am12:30pm

Sydney, Australia — Tuesday, 08 December 2015 — 1:30-2:30pm

Auckland, New Zealand — Tuesday, 08 December 2015

— 3:30-4:30pm

Space on Zoom will be limited to 20 interested people from diverse continents.

If you are interested in participating for this hour, please respond by e-mail to:

1. Confirm your participation. LTRAUBMAN@igc.org

2. Practice online with Zoom, with our assistance if needed, before the December hour.

20 Years of Palestinian-Jewish Living Room Dialogue (1992-2012): WHAT A HANDFUL OF CITIZENS CAN DO.

A 48-minute film online <http://traubman.igc.org/dg-prog.htm>

Libby and Len Traubman 1448 Cedarwood Dr., San Mateo, CA 94403; 650-574-8303 Cell: 650-200-8913; Skype: libbyandlentraubman E-mail: LTRAUBMAN@igc.org ;Web:

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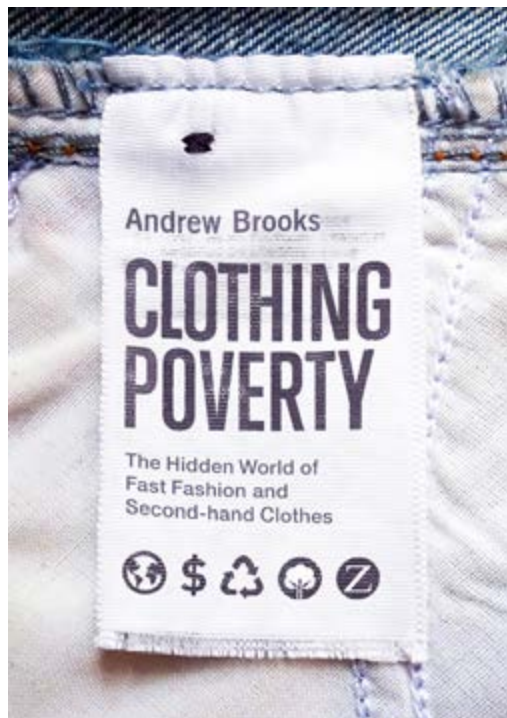
“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” - Margaret Mead

The Best Things in Life...

By JENIFER WEST

The holiday season, with all its excesses, seems a good time to pause, and consider just how much many of us in this country are fortunate to possess. The biggest blessing of course, is love, and the humanity we share with our fellow travelers on the planet. "We're all in this together," someone I admire once said to me. And indeed we are. Hopefully, none of us needs a reminder at this time of year to take the time to appreciate the various people around us.

And most of us are blessed with material things, clueless to the fact that our stuff that weighs us down, without contributing in any real way to the quality of our lives. *Clothing Poverty* by author Andrew Brooks takes on capitalism, and the ramifications of the fact that it depends on relentless consumerism. Manufacturers exist to manufacture and sell, their clever advertising campaigns artificially creating 'need' in the minds of consumers. (Who, after all, really needs another 'thneed'?)



Mr. Brooks refers to 'fast fashion' – the clothing version of 'fast food' – available at mass market outlets like Walmart and Target, not far from the milk and sugar-frosted cereal. We really don't have a justifiable 'need' to wear this year's fashions – last year's coat, tops and pants are undoubtedly still serviceable, if, viewed through this year's lens, a bit lackluster. And yet, if we find ourselves wearing them just a few years out of style, we are uncomfortable – and may even come in for a bit of ridicule, or at least an odd look or two. Before the fairly recent advent of 'fast fashion', clothing was not so easy to come by, and was therefore kept as long as it remained serviceable – passed from hand to hand (strengthening social bonds in the process), until it wound up either in the donation box or the rag bin.

After spending the better part of a day weeding out jeans, shorts, and even (gasp!) the Duluth brand pants I've worn to work for quite some time, I just couldn't face the idea of donating them. There was just too much money involved, and too much high-quality fabric, to boot. T-shirts, too. Any that were too snug, or frayed in places, wound up in a pile to be recycled or upcycled. Too-short sweats, some with tiny holes, met the same fate. And a pair of hand-me-down, cut-off flannel pajama bottoms. (Love those flannel shorts teenage girls have been wearing – maybe I could get away with wearing them around the house...)

After all that, my fabric 'stash' had grown from a few yards

of several interesting items from the fabric store to a large pile each of denims; what the Duluth Trading Company calls 'firehose' material – sturdy, canvas-like material nicely made into pants suitable for both casual office wear and milking a small herd of sheep or goats (seriously!); and stretchy t-shirt and sweats material. All of this handy fabric is wonderful, because it provides an instant source of material with which to make projects as they come to mind.


Besides clearing clutter, the motivation for all of this weeding out is simple: I've set a goal, over the next year, to refashion 50 existing textile items into 50 new pieces to wear or use around the house – on a budget of \$100. That goal was in place before I read a couple of things that served to increase my determination: The *Clothing Poverty* book, and an article written by a woman who swore off purchasing anything new for 200 days after clearing out her late father's apartment.

All of these factors combined have inspired me to set a goal (deep breath): To purchase little or nothing new in 2016. (The obvious exceptions are groceries and medicine, as well as anything required to maintain our vehicles or home. And any bits and bobs needed for the 50-item project.) I will admit to 'laying in' certain things, including socks and underwear to replace those worn out by various members of the household, and reasonable quantities of sewing supplies such as elastic, interfacing and, if my Ebay bid is successful, an excellent assortment of high-quality thread. (I figure these are justifiable because of the serious savings resulting from buying in bulk.) A new, heavy-duty sewing machine is also on the horizon before the end of the year – I've already put far too many miles on the one lighter-duty one belonging to a certain young lady in the household.

It's true that most of us, myself certainly included, simply have too many things. But it's my sincere hope that spending a year focusing on clearing out some of the excess by re-creating useful items from what's already at hand or on its 'second life' will enrich my own, as well as the lives of those around me.

As Art Buchwald said, "The best things in life aren't things."

Check out *Clothing Poverty* at <http://www.clothingpoverty.com/>



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“Peace/Life Candlelight Vigil For Paris and Beirut: November 24, 2015

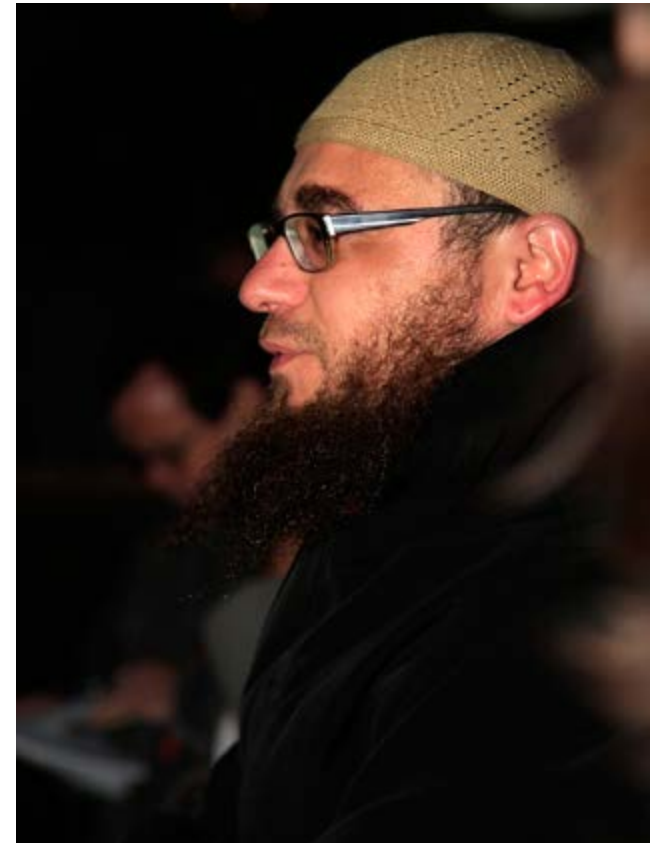
By JOSEPH HOMER

On a brisk, Sunday evening in Graceada park, over fifty people gathered to honor the victims of the still-stinging Paris and Beirut attacks. Held just a few days following the events, the group urged nonviolent restraint and understanding in their wake.

Planned by the Peace/Life Center, community members attended to share visions for an inclusive and nonviolent way forward. Imam Ahmad Kayello reminded us of the peacefulness of Islam, while Harpreet Singh of the Sikh community and Frank Johnson of the NAACP decried violence and emphasized the promise of peace. Other attendees highlighted the need to engage youth in these pressing conversations and to reflect on how we might respectfully and constructively discuss them. The event concluded with a harmonized performance of John Lennon’s “Imagine” and statements of thanks and hope shared all around.

As the evening cooled and the night grew dark, encouraging attendee participation nevertheless suggested that the warm light of humanity - not to mention our little pocket here - would overcome.”

(Photos: Jim Costello)



Living Revolution: 8 ways to defend against terror nonviolently

By GEORGE LAKEY

One of my most popular courses at Swarthmore College focused on the challenge of how to defend against terrorism, nonviolently. Events now unfolding in France make our course more relevant than ever. (The syllabus was published in “Peace, Justice, and Security Studies: A Curriculum Guide” in 2009.) In fact, the international post-9/11 “war against terror” has been accompanied by increased actual threats of terror almost everywhere.

In the first place, who knew that non-military techniques have, in actual historical cases, reduced the threat of terror?

I gathered for the students eight non-military techniques that have worked for some country or other. The eight comprised the “toolbox” that the students had to work with. We didn’t spend time criticizing military counter-terrorism because we were more interested in alternatives.

Each student chose a country somewhere in the world that is presently threatened by terrorism and, taking the role of a consultant to that country, devised from our nonviolent toolbox a strategy for defense.

It was tough work, and highly stimulating. Most of the students had a ball, and some did brilliant strategizing.

Students especially liked brainstorming synergistic effects — what happens when technique 3 interacts with techniques 2 and 5, for example? At the time I wished we had an additional semester to handle the complexity of making the tools not just additive, but discovering how the whole became more powerful than the sum of the parts.

Some students who assumed that military defense is crucial opened to a bigger perspective. They realized that, given the success some countries have had using just two or three of the tools, there is significant untapped potential: What if countries used all of the tools together, with the resulting synergies? For me the question arose: Why couldn’t populations rely completely on the nonviolent toolbox for their defense against terror?

What are the eight techniques?

1. Ally-building and the infrastructure of economic development

Poverty and terrorism are indirectly linked. Economic development can reduce recruits and gain allies, especially if development is done in a democratic way. The terrorism by Northern Ireland’s Irish Republican Army, for example, was strongly reduced by grassroots, job-creating, economic development.

2. Reducing cultural marginalization

As France, Britain and other countries have learned, marginalizing a group within your population is not safe or sensible; terrorists grow under those conditions. This is also true on a global level. Much marginalizing is unintentional, but it can be reduced. “Freedom of the press,” for example,

transforms into “provocation” when it further marginalizes a population that is already one-down, as are Muslims in France. When Anglophone Canada reduced its marginalization, it reduced the threat of terrorism from Quebec.

3. Nonviolent protest/campaigns among the defenders, plus unarmed civilian peacekeeping

Terrorism happens in a larger context and is therefore influenced by that context. Some terror campaigns have lapsed because they lost popular support. That’s because terror’s strategic use is often to gain attention, provoke a violent response and win more support in the broader population.

The rise and fall of support for terrorism is in turn influenced by social movements using people power, or nonviolent struggle. The U.S. civil rights movement brilliantly handled the Ku Klux Klan’s threat to activists, most dangerous when there was no effective law enforcement to help. The nonviolent tactics reduced the KKK’s appeal among white segregationists. Since the 1980s, pacifists and others have established an additional, promising

tool: intentional and planned unarmed civilian peacekeeping. (Check out Peace Brigades International, for one example.)

4. Pro-conflict education and training

Ironically, terror often happens when a population tries to suppress conflicts instead of supporting their expression. A technique for reducing terror, therefore, is to spread a pro-conflict attitude and the nonviolent skills that support people waging conflict to give full voice to their grievances.

5. Post-terror recovery programs

Not all terror can be prevented, any more than all crime can be prevented. Keep in mind that terrorists often have the goal of increasing polarization. Recovery programs can help prevent that polarization, the cycle of hawks on one side “arming” the hawks on the other side. One place we’ve seen this cycle of violence is in the Palestine/Israel struggle.

Recovery programs build resilience, so people don’t go rigid with fear and create self-fulfilling prophecies. The leap forward in trauma counseling is relevant for this technique along with innovative rituals such as those the Norwegians used after the 2011 terrorist massacre there.

6. Police as peace officers: the infrastructure of norms and laws

Police work can become far more effective through more community policing and reduction of the social distance between police and the neighborhoods they serve. In some countries this requires re-conceptualization of the police

from defenders of the property of the dominant group to genuine peace officers; witness the unarmed Icelandic police. Countries like the United States need to join the growing global infrastructure of human rights law reflected in the Land Mines Treaty and International Criminal Court, and accept accountability for their own officials who are probable war criminals.

7. Policy changes and the concept of reckless behavior

Governments sometimes make choices that invite — almost beg for — a terrorist response. Political scientist and sometime U.S. Air Force consultant Robert A. Pape showed in 2005 that the United States has repeatedly done this, often by putting troops on someone else’s land. In his recent book “Cutting the Fuse,” he and James K. Feldman give concrete examples of governments reducing the terror threat by ending such reckless behavior. To protect themselves from terror, citizens in all countries need to gain control of their own governments and force them to behave.

8. Negotiation

Governments often say “we don’t negotiate with terrorists,” but when they say that they are often lying. Governments have often reduced or eliminated terrorism through negotiation, and negotiation skills continue to grow in sophistication.

Realistic application of non-military defense against terror

At the request of a group of U.S. experts on counter-terrorism, I described our Swarthmore work and especially the eight techniques. The experts recognized that each of these tools have indeed been used in real-life situations in one place or another, with some degree of success. They also saw no problem, in principle, in devising a comprehensive strategy that would create synergies among the tools.

The problem they saw was persuading a government to take such a bold, innovative leap.

As an American, I can see the direct contradiction between, on the one hand, my government’s huge effort to convince taxpayers that we desperately need our swollen military and, on the other, a new policy that mobilizes a different kind of power for genuine, human security. I understand that for my country and for some others as well, a living revolution might need to come first.

What I like about having an alternative, non-military defense in our back pocket, though, is that it speaks to the real need of my fellow citizens for security in a dangerous world. Psychologist Abraham Maslow long ago pointed out the fundamental human need for security. Analyzing and criticizing militarism, however brilliantly, doesn’t actually enhance anyone’s security. Imagining an alternative, as my students did, may give

Police work can become far more effective through more community policing and reduction of the social distance between police and the neighborhoods they serve.

The good news is that a number of these eight techniques can be applied by civil society, without waiting for governmental leadership that may never come.

The New Abnormal—Reflections on Paris

By PROFESSOR MICHAEL NAGLER

It is clear now that instead of lurching from crisis to crisis, we need to get off this disastrous path.

After expressing our condolences we should be saying, “Let us now pledge ourselves to get to the root of this problem” – and have the courage to follow that inquiry wherever it leads.

When Mahatma Gandhi wrote Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule in 1909, as it were firing his first shot across the bow of the empire that he would finally sink, he addressed the now classic essay not to the British (the original was published in Gujarati; only when the British banned it did he bring out the English translation, ironically, and reach a vastly greater audience) but to his own countrymen. And he told them, “The British did not take India; we gave it to them.” His purpose was not to offend but to awaken them, namely to the fact that they were not helpless, as they supposed.

They had agency waiting to be taken. And so do we.

ISIS is a monster, but it is not a monster that simply sprang up from the earth for no reason. ISIS and modern terrorism is a monster that is partly of our creation. We created it in “shock and awe,” where we laid waste a nation of some 37 million people for a “reason” that was a lie, in the atrocities of Abu Ghraib, in the innumerable small acts of intolerance that are likely now to increase, in the checkpoints of Palestine where pregnant women lose their babies because they are not let through – and all the acts of humiliation and oppression being meted out to the people of Palestine as we speak. And it is in these places that we can uncreate it. We cannot defend ourselves against terrorism by creating more of it. Then how can we?

Gandhi had another gem to share, later, when his non-violence matured. Reporting from his own experience he famously said,

“I have learnt through bitter experience the one supreme lesson, to conserve my anger. And as heat conserved

is transmuted into energy, even so our anger conserved can be transmuted into a power that can move the world.”

The crisis in which we find ourselves demands first of all that we learn this “supreme lesson.” Of course we are angry. How could we not be? But what will we do with that anger? Hunt down the perpetrators and visit punishments on them along with innocent bystanders (because let us not fool ourselves, ‘clean, surgical’

strikes in the age of drones are a myth)? Lash out against other Muslims or Arabs (or what have you) in random attacks – in other words, respond in kind? Or will we, as Martin Luther King said, “express anger

under discipline for maximum effect”?

So the first step in this mighty conversion – the change of course that will bring back to the security that’s slipping away from us – will be to face the fact that we are not merely victims; we are caught up in a spiral of violence that’s at least partly of our own making.

There are terrorists out there, but in order to deal successfully with them we have also to address two internal enemies righteous indignation (aka anger), and complacency. In addition to the sorrow we’re feeling and the anger building up behind it some editorials are saying that New York, Madrid, Mumbai and now Paris are the “new normal.” There is no such thing as a “normal” that leads a civilization over the brink of what MLK called “spiritual death.” We have to come to grips with the violence that we have actively or passively made ourselves a party to.

Fear, anger and grief are raw material to awaken us – if we use them as such. If we do not use them constructively – and a few suggestions follow – they will work against us.

- Don’t let yourself be drawn into hate speech, against anyone. Support one another in your grief, but not in any desire for revenge.
- Never be drawn in to the belief that this has something

to do with “Islam.” Any more than American troops with Bible verses on their weapons have anything to do with the religion of Jesus.

- Never accept this deteriorating state as ‘normal.’ We have agency.
- Familiarize yourself with the real history of a key conflict, Israel-Palestine, which means seeing past the one-sided presentations our mainstream media. Ex: www.ifamericansknew.org. Then,
- Learn about constructive alternatives to this conflict and others, (for example, Michael Lerner’s *Healing Israel-Palestine*) – and stand up for them. I strongly agree with George Lakey in his recent article in *Waging Nonviolence* that “To protect themselves from terror, citizens in all countries need to gain control of their own governments and force them to behave.”
- Constructive measures do not rule out saying ‘no’ where it has to be said. Demand that our governments explore non-military relationships with Mideast states (and deny,

for example, Israel’s request for yet more military aid). There is such a thing as tough love.

These suggestions can be strengthened immeasurably if we build a framework behind them that

can eventually shift our culture away from its dependency on violence. We have found five effective things anyone can do to build this infrastructure from the personal ground up:

- Limit our exposure to the violence and vulgarity of the mass media.
- Learn everything we can about nonviolence. www.mettacenter.org might help.
- Consider getting a spiritual practice, if we don’t already have one.
- Relate in a personal way with everyone, wherever we can.
- Get active! And don’t be shy about explaining why we’re doing all this: because all life is precious and deeply interconnected, as the wisest humans always knew.

This is not a time for revenge; this is a teaching moment. We cannot afford not to learn its lesson.

As the Founder and President of Metta Center, Michael Nagler is also Professor Emeritus of Classics and Comparative Literature at UC, Berkeley, where he co-founded the Peace and Conflict Studies Program. Michael is the author of *The Search for a Nonviolent Future* and *The Nonviolence Handbook: A Guide for Practical Action*.

<http://mettacenter.org/blog/the-new-abnormal/>

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for NONVIOLENCE

ISIS is a monster, but it is not a monster that simply sprang up from the earth for no reason.



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The Digital Dog Ate Our Civil-Liberties Homework: "It's Just the Way It Is"

By NORMAN SOLOMON

Of all the excuses ladled out for the Obama administration's shredding of the Fourth Amendment while assaulting press freedom and prosecuting "national security" whistleblowers, none is more pernicious than the claim that technology is responsible.

At first glance, the explanation might seem to make sense. After all, the capacities of digital tech have become truly awesome. It's easy to finger "technology" as the driver of government policies, as if the president at the wheel has little choice but to follow the technological routes that have opened up for Big Brother.

Now comes New York Times reporter Charlie Savage,

telling listeners and viewers of a Democracy Now interview that the surveillance state is largely a matter of technology: "It's just the way it is in the 21st century."

That's a great way to depoliticize a crucial subject—downplaying the major dynamics of the political economy, anti-democratic power and top-down choices—letting leaders off the hook, as if sophistication calls for understanding that government is to be regulated by high-tech forces rather than the other way around.

In effect, the message is that—if you don't like mass surveillance and draconian measures to intimidate whistleblowers as well as journalists—your beef is really with technology, and good luck with pushing back against that. Get it? The fault, dear citizen, is not in our political stars but in digital tech.

When Amy Goodman asked Savage about the Obama administration's record-high prosecutions of whistleblowers under the Espionage Act, he summed up this way:

"Because of technology, it's impossible to hide who's in contact with whom anymore, and cases are viable to investigate now that weren't before. That's not something Obama did or Bush did. It's just the way it is in the 21st century, and investigative journalism is still grappling with the implications of that."

Letter to Obama: Drone assassinations of the innocent

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, D.C.
Secretary Ashton B. Carter
Department of Defense
Director John O. Brennan
Central Intelligence Agency

Dear President Obama, Secretary Carter and Director Brennan:

We are former Air Force service members. We joined the Air Force to protect American lives and to protect our Constitution. We came to the realization that the innocent civilians we were killing only fueled the feelings of hatred that ignited terrorism and groups like ISIS, while also serving as a fundamental recruitment tool similar to Guantanamo Bay. This administration and its predecessors have built a drone program that is one of the most devastating driving forces for terrorism and destabilization around the world.

When the guilt of our roles in facilitating this systematic loss of innocent life became too much, all of us succumbed to PTSD. We were cut loose by the same government we gave so much to—sent out in the world without adequate medical care, reliable public health services, or necessary benefits. Some of us are now homeless. Others of us barely make it.

We witnessed gross waste, mismanagement, abuses of power, and our country's leaders lying publicly about the effectiveness of the drone program. We cannot sit silently by and witness tragedies like the attacks in Paris, knowing the devastating effects the drone program has overseas and at home. Such silence would violate the very oaths we took to support and defend the Constitution.

We request that you consider our perspective, though

A more astute and candid assessment of such matters can be found in "Through the Looking-Glass," where Lewis Carroll wrote this dialogue:

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."

"The question is," Alice replied, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," Humpty Dumpty responded, "which is to be master—that's all."

The surveillance state is not the default setting of digital technology. The surveillance state is a failure and suppressor of democracy.

A surveillance state or a democratic system—which is to be master?

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Norman Solomon is co-founder of RootsAction.org and founding director of the Institute for Public Accuracy. His books include "War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death" and "Made Love, Got War: Close Encounters with America's Warfare State".

<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/11/09/digital-dog-ate-our-civil-liberties-homework-its-just-way-it>

Living Revolution

from page 6

people the psychological space they need to put energy into something more life-giving.

Our role at the grassroots

The good news is that a number of these eight techniques can be applied by civil society, without waiting for governmental leadership that may never come. Two are no-brainers: Spread the skills and strategy of nonviolent protest, and teach a pro-conflict attitude.

The Black Lives Matter movement found many white people joining in on black-initiated turf — that's a concrete example of reducing marginalization, a concept that generates dozens of creative moves by whoever happens to be mainstream (Christian, middle class, etc.). We can also initiate recovery programs after terror has erupted in our midst, as it did during the Boston Marathon.

Activists are used to launching campaigns to force the government to give up some of its reckless policies, but may forget to frame activism that way. A scared public needs to know that activists hear the fear, and are on the side of everyone's safety.

By my count, these five of the eight tools can be used by people taking bottoms-up initiatives to reduce the threat of terror. They might be incorporated by the Transition Town movement and others who want to bring a holistic and positive approach to the fear that otherwise depresses and paralyzes. As usual, what helps others lightens the load for each one of us who takes that step.

George Lakey co-founded Earth Quaker Action Group which just won its five-year campaign to force a major U.S. bank to give up financing mountaintop removal coal mining. Along with college teaching he has led 1,500 workshops on five continents and led activist projects on local, national, and international levels. Among many other books and articles, he is author of "Strategizing for a Living Revolution" in David Solnit's book *Globalize Liberation* (City Lights, 2004). His first arrest was for a civil rights sit-in and most recent was with Earth Quaker Action Team while protesting mountain top removal coal mining.

<http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/8-ways-defend-terror-nonviolently/?pf=true>

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perhaps that request is in vain given the unprecedented prosecution of truth-tellers who came before us like Chelsea Manning, Julian Assange, and Edward Snowden. For the sake of this country, we hope it is otherwise.

Sincerely,
Brandon Bryant
Staff Sergeant
MQ-1B Predator Sensor Operator
SERE Instructor Trainee
USAF Joint Special Operations Command 3rd Special Operations Squadron Disabled Iraq and Afghanistan Veteran
Founder of Project RED HAND
Cian Westmoreland
Senior Airman
RF Transmissions Systems
USAF CENTCOM
73rd Expeditionary Air Control Squadron
Disabled Afghanistan Veteran
Project RED HAND's Sustainable Technology Director
Stephen Lewis
Senior Airman
MQ-1B Predator Sensor Operator
USAF Joint Special Operations Command 3rd Special Operations Squadron
Iraq and Afghanistan Veteran
Michael Haas
Senior Airman
MQ-1B Predator Sensor Operator Instructor USAF Air Combat Command
15th Reconnaissance Squadron
Iraq and Afghanistan Veteran

MeterMaids friends: December gifts of poetry centering on peace

I want to thank some of my MeterMaids friends for these December gifts of poetry centering on peace, justice, and sustainable gifting. They offer some special moments of reflection during this hectic season.

— Tina Arнопole Driskill



True Gifts

How does one wrap up a sonnet~
The words of a bard's true heart?
Tie a ribbon 'round life's puzzles
As its pieces are falling apart?
Is there enough white tissue
To blanket the homeless souls;
Enough bubble paper and stuffing
To fill society's deepest holes?
Are there large corrugated shelters
To house all our thwarted dreams~
The ones interrupted at midnight
By sirens and silence and screams?
I see all the package toppers:
The bows and the angels and more,
The ribbons and berries and garlands
That wrap all around every store.
But when will we close up our wallets?
When will the Black Fridays cease?
And when will we open the true gifts in life~
Those of love and compassion and peace?

— Rabbi Andra Greenwald

The Gift

We are wrapped
strung, labeled
but the gift comes from the inside out
in unadorned form,
without handles or instructions,
tissue or scent
without birthday or Christmas
obligation or sentiment.
No gift is alike,
each one is treasured.
The gift does not name itself that,
it is intent on giving,
naturally, easily
We know when it has been presented
and when it is received.

— Karen Hansis Baker

A Burnt Offering (“olah”)

A burnt offering
unusual gift of love
to bestow
upon humanity;
an innocent lamb
laid willingly upon that altar
of total consumption
to bring peace
to a world steeped
in justice for all
all who clamor to be first
to be noticed
to be placed upon that pedestal
carved from human frailty
that dots the landscape
with self.
Yes, “olah” is a burnt offering
a sweet aroma
rising to the heavens.
A gift of love
cleansing the landscape.

— C. Barstad

Make-Over

I'm not used to it yet –
seeing rocks and tiny shrubs
instead of a triangle of grass
an overgrown juniper bush
and the fortnightlies that sprouted
lovely white blooms every spring.

The nursery worker designed a plan:
drought-resistant plants, three
kinds of rocks, and two stone pathways.
We chose to keep our decades-old
locust tree and the yellow rosebush.

Oh, no! It looks like an apartment complex!
was my first thought after the
Xeriscaping was completed.
Were we gardeners, the plan
might have included fewer rocks.
I suppose we can add more plants, a gift
to ourselves for the holidays.

Our gift to the Earth was to sacrifice
what we're used to, instead choosing to honor
this Valley's dry Mediterranean climate
by giving to our soil what it needs,
not demanding from it what we want.

— Louise Kantro

Hope for Recovery

I sit at my office window
looking out at constant traffic,
dog walkers dressed in their pet's colors,
toddlers learning to walk,
a diligent grandparent close behind.

As I check out the 'hood I see that
my favorite tree is starting to die.
Seeing its lovely wide spread of branches,
now nearly covering my yard, my camphor
has begun each day for me for years.

Being evergreen, it is eternally bright-hued.
Although some leaves fall, it's not
an autumn thing but instead occurs
a little at a time throughout the year
so I scarcely notice the dropping leaves.

In the drought we are enduring
all over this state, I check daily
with feelings of dread, expecting the
dryness of the earth and air to
slowly kill off my much-loved tree.

I have seen its trunk whiten gradually,
wondered if the birds will stop nesting there,
watched the grass around it wither.
Watering twice a week does not help.
For months no rain replenished it.

Yesterday it rained steadily and gently
all day and again during the night.
Puddles in the backyard raised my spirits.
The bark of the tree seemed brighter.
It is foolish to mourn while yet there's life.

— Virginia Dahl

Of Constancy and Change

The Mother is spiraling
through red rusted golden leaves.
Winds have brought much needed rain.

We are awash with the beauty of endings,
the promise of beginnings. aglow in a
landscape of barren soil and detritus,
purposefully placed in plain sight.

Change is ever present,
as The Mother reminds us
once again the best is on view
through all Her seasons.

She is quiet, and she cries
out loudly. She is cloaked in a
pantomime. Her wisdom is
meted in the interpretation of her
very real dance. We are
gifted by her constant performance.

— Tina Arнопole Driskill

Green Tips for a Green Planet: Give the gift of YOU!

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

December is the gifting month. One of the best gifts you can give is yourself. The Mother sustains us with the gifts of water, air, beauty, and sustenance commensurate with how we take time and energy to sustain Her. Consider the following opportunities to get involved in the gift of nurturing sustainability:

Operation 9-2-99 Tuolumne River Clean UP Project:

An ongoing monthly clean-up effort along the Tuolumne River in Modesto between the 9th Street bridge and the 99 Freeway to help reduce blight in our community by volunteering and/or partnering with the Tuolumne River Trust, Dry Creek Trails Coalition, and Love Modesto.



ACTION: DECEMBER 12th CLEANUP – Beard Brook Park entrance near Gateway Park on S. Morton Blvd. and 11th St. on the north bank of the river.

Union of Concerned Scientists:

Founded in 1969 by scientists and students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the UCS is a network of more than 17,000 technical experts advancing science-based solutions for a healthy planet and a safer world. UCS

calls for scientific research to be directed away from military technologies and toward solving pressing environmental and social problems. Learn about their many accomplishments around the issues of clean energy, clean vehicles, food and agriculture, global warming, nuclear power and nuclear weapons. Sign up to receive critical updates and urgent action opportunities from the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Current Site Actions: “Demand deforestation-free groceries”. “Call on presidential candidates to debate science. <http://www.ucsusa.org/>

Paper Reduction and Recycling:

- Why does the government require reams of paper to give instructions and warnings at pharmacies? Why do those instructions/warnings often come on one-sided sheets, and why do they come with every refill?
- Why do pamphlets and mailings come with cover letters that have only an address or a few words on a mostly empty page?
- Why do invoices often come with a page that is left empty intentionally?
- Why does there seem to be little concern for the unfathomable amount of paper and paper packaging used in the United States?



ACTION:

- Go paperless when possible.
- Be the squeaky wheels and encourage folks to use less paper in their businesses, institutions and other large paper use facilities.
- Reuse one-sided mailers and other unprinted sheets as scratch paper and to make unofficial copies in your printers.
- Bring reusable bags and containers to stores and farmer’s markets when shopping.



Bombs Will Not Heal

from page 1

words, emails, speeches, I am seeing a glimpse of the impossible: that you, my friends, love this Earth and all her inhabitants.

That you see this violence is killing us . . . each and every one of us. We cannot bomb our way to peace. We cannot shoot our way to safety. We cannot drone strike our sense of security back. That ‘terrorist’ is a label that could fall on the faces of us all. That our nation, like their nation, has picked up bombs and blown apart the fabric of human lives.

The words of our mothers come back to us, “two wrongs do not make a right”.

And no amount of bombs will fix our broken hearts.

Instead, we must do the impossible, the only thing that can get us out of darkness. We must break the cycle of violence. We must return hatred with understanding. We must search our souls for the truth about why and how these things occur. And then, we must work for change.

No one said it would be easy.

In the weeks to come, the usual voices on their large podiums and loudspeakers, their television networks, and radio chains, and conglomerate newspapers will start shouting about retribution and driving out terrorism, invasions, increased troops, more fighter jets, drones strikes, bombs. They will convince our friends and neighbors that *we* are the dreamers. They will tell us we are unpatriotic, that we want the terrorists to succeed.

Somehow, we will find the courage to tell them, as I once wrote in my novel, *The Dandelion Insurrection*, that “the terrorists have succeeded in making greater terrorists out of us.”

Unless we take a different course. A difficult course. The path we might have taken thirteen years ago, of seeing our face in those that we fear. In seeing the mirror of our common humanity. In seeking understanding instead of annihilation. In changing the course of history toward a world beyond the threat of violence. I am courageous enough to think this might be possible . . . and audacious enough to speak out, act up, and work with my fellow human beings to make this vision so.

Note: Thank you Christian Peacemaker Teams, for sharing the poem at the top in a social media post. Warsan Shire’s entire poem can be read here: <http://riotpieces.tumblr.com/post/8998897146/what-they-did-yesterday-afternoon-by-warsan-shire>

Rivera Sun is the author of *The Dandelion Insurrection*, *Billionaire Buddha* and *Steam Drills, Treadmills, and Shooting Stars*, the cohost of Occupy Radio, and the co-founder of the Love-In-Action Network. She is also the social media coordinator for Campaign Nonviolence and Pace e Bene. Sun attended the James Lawson Institute on Strategic Nonviolent Resistance in 2014 and her essays on social justice movements appear in Truthout and Popular Resistance. www.riverasun.com

DREAM OF DREAMS — CLIMATE CHANGE

By I was born pure and clean
Every passing birthday remembers my perfect genes
Don’t know since when the climate gets me ill
My lungs darken with soot-filled Co2
and brain lives in a death mansion

Drowning in school works
is the killing of intelligence
I wish I were reborn in outer space
I’d create the Martian laws, forget the earth’s

The place I live seeks magical wealth
I dream of the trees
Yesterday the Douglas firs standing tall in the far woods
Are they still there today?

If the world would manufacture more roses
I’d use them to cover the carbon footprints behind humans
My heart’s deepest fear is to see future without leaves
Until then, I won’t wear green glasses

— Lin Guo

7 Reasons I'm Thankful for My Union

By RACHEL WARINO

Family and friends gathering in one place, cooking together, and sharing all of the things they're most grateful for is why Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. My family takes the being grateful thing seriously and this year I'm going to take time to say why I'm grateful for my union (but really: all unions). We spend most of our time working so anything that improves that part of our lives is worth our gratitude. So in the spirit of Thanksgiving, here are 7 reasons why I'm thankful for my union:

1. Fair & equal pay is a guarantee with my union!

Equal pay for equal work is not always a guarantee for women in the US. Recent data shows that the gender pay gap still exists for many women today. In fact, women are said to earn 77 cents on average for every dollar their male counterparts bring home. And the gap only increases for women of color. For every dollar a man earns, a Latina earns an average of 54 cents! While there are efforts to tackle this pay gap affecting millions of women, there is one sure-fire way to ensure I earn the same salary as my male counterparts: My union contract. It's clear as day how much I earn and how much my coworkers earn. Not to mention studies showing women in unions earn 11 percent more than non-union workers <http://www.epi.org/womens-agenda/>. It's no wonder the Economic Policy Institute recommends protecting and expanding collective bargaining rights in their new Women's Economic Agenda!

2. I have a voice at work

When my coworkers and I stand together, it's simple: our managers listen. We frequently have ideas on how to improve work flow and increase efficiency and through our union we have a process and a forum to bring those ideas to our organization. No matter what you do or where you work, you have first-hand knowledge of how to make your job and your workplace better. That's something we all share. But I know from experience, when you're alone it can be tough to get your voice heard. Having a union standing behind you? Now that's an entirely different story.

3. My union is democratic

Everything we do, we vote on. It could be what officer we want to elect, if we want to approve changes to our contract, and so much more. We have committees that go into detail on topics and then report back to a larger group who then votes on any new proposals. There's a lot of things in this world that seem unfair and unclear but - even if I disagree with the outcome of a vote - I know our system is fair and it's always transparent.

4. My benefits

As a millennial with lots of millennial friends, I know the benefits I have at work are rare to find without a union con-

tract. If I'm sick I can take a day off. If someone in my family gets sick, I can take care of them. I have retirement security! As I see my grandparents and parents aging, I understand how important yet difficult or impossible (unless of course you're a millionaire CEO) it can be to save up enough to stay out of poverty when you retire. So many people today are just trying to find work that puts food on the table. But with a union, you can negotiate for so much more than just a decent wage. You can bargain for benefits that improve your life beyond your paycheck and give you some security when you and your family need it the most.

5. I have job security

My boss is great but anyone who has worked in a bad job before knows this isn't always the case. There are managers who come into your life and it seems like their mission is to just ruin your day. In other jobs when I didn't have a union, I would see coworkers get disciplined (and even fired!) for the most asinine reasons. But without a union, it felt like there was nothing I could do to help them. With a union, I have due process if I mess up or if a manager thinks I messed up. I have a chance to defend myself with someone by my side every step of the way.

6. Unions make my world better

It's easy to focus on the things that directly impact me in a tangible way like salary and benefits thanks to my union. But truth be told I'm also grateful to live in a world where unions exist. There's so much good that has come from unions. The kind of stuff that seems so normal today: weekends, overtime pay, workplace health and safety laws, voting rights, an end to child labor...I can go on and on. Nearly everything that helps working class and low-income people in our country comes out of a union struggle. There's no shortage of examples of people standing together throughout our history to change the status quo.

7. My union builds community where I work

I'm closer with my coworkers because of our union. Our union brings us together. Union meetings and bargaining sessions (and maybe a few happy hours!) give me a chance to get to know them outside of work, especially the coworkers who I may not work with directly every day. There's nothing better than going to work everyday and liking the people you work with and feeling a sense of community.

Thank you to my union (CWA Pacific Media Workers Guild Local 39521!) and to ALL unions! Happy Thanksgiving all!

http://www.calaborfed.org/index.php/site/page/7_reasons_im_thankful_for_my_union

Death Penalty Focus President explores 2016 ballot measure to abolish death penalty in California

By MIKE FARRELL

I want you to know that I have taken a leave of absence as President of DPF in order to investigate the possibility of an initiative campaign to end the use of state killing in California next year. To that end, last month I filed a proposed ballot initiative entitled **The Justice That Works Act of 2016**. This is a very exciting prospect, but it will take a lot of work before it's clear we can launch a full-dress campaign. Happily, I received heartfelt endorsement and support from across the country in response to the filing, including some generous financial commitments.

Though I am the official Proponent of this measure, a great many dedicated people who have been working toward abolition for decades are with me. Led by Death Penalty Focus, we are organizing a great team: Professionals and volunteers, consultants and pollsters, attorneys, death penalty scholars, religious leaders, people from across the political spectrum, and scores of dedicated abolitionists.

I believe the time is right to bring the matter back to the voters. As abolitionists we have to continue the fight to end the death penalty. The number of lives at stake on California's death row compels it. Pope Francis' recent condemnation of the death penalty is sure to rededicate Catholics and all people of faith to end state killing throughout the country and it's up to us to build on the growing momentum to do so.

We've done a sober and realistic assessment of the likelihood of success in 2016, including polling voters and analyzing the challenge of raising the necessary financial support. We've developed a strategy that involves key political leaders, law enforcement, faith-based and victims' groups, and exonerees. If we build a strong base of support and continue to poll well, elected officials may even be persuaded to support repeal.

If we continue to raise the funding needed to mount a strong campaign, we can abolish state killing in California. We feel the enormous presence of the 749 men and women on California's death row and must do all we can to spare them and anyone who may yet be sentenced to death. If abolition is ever to come about it will be through a collective and multi-faceted attack on capital punishment—from the courtroom to the classroom, from legislation to public education, from the soap box to the ballot box—and there is a role for all to play.

I am deeply grateful to be part of this movement and I thank each of you for all you have done and will continue to do to end state killing. You have our support and, going forward, we very much appreciate yours.

More information on Death Penalty Focus at <http://www.deathpenalty.org/index.php>



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

DECEMBER

ONGOING: Modesto Area Partners in Science, Fridays, 7:30 pm, Sierra Hall 132, MJC West Campus; <http://maps.events.mjc.edu/>. 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.

2 MJC SCIENCE COLLOQUIUM, 3 to 4 p.m. Wednesdays, Science 115, West Campus, 2201 Blue Gum Ave. FREE. Campus parking: \$2.00. **Dec. 2:** Engineer Des Orsinelli, "A Light Look at Reversing a Warming Planet." Read more here: <https://www.mjc.edu/instruction/sme/colloquium.php>

To January 10, 2016: Alphonse Mucha: The Golden Age of Art Nouveau. 70+ original works by the creator of the Art Nouveau style. 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>

3 THURS: MJC's Civic Engagement Project presents - 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. 7 pm, Forum 110. MJC East Campus.

4-5 FRI & SAT: Peace & Justice Network San Joaquin's 29th Annual Peaceful Holiday Faire. Unique hand-crafted, fair-trade items by local artists and global sustainable community organizations. Homemade soups, light refreshments available for purchase. Faire's goal: to have items for sale that promote non-violence, reflect the beauty of nature and sustainable living, the creativity of the spirit, the skill of the hands, and contributes to a more responsible world. **HOURS:** Friday 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm; Saturday 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave., Stockton (across from University of the Pacific).

5 SAT: Annual Holiday Potluck Song Fest. A celebration of our Peace community at the Onorato's, 1532 Vernon Ave., Modesto. Bring your favorite dish and beverage to share, your merry Holiday spirit, and your eagerness to sing. 5:30 to 9 pm. See article, this issue.

16 WED: Film Night at the Center presents *CITIZENFOUR*. 6:30 pm, Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., Modesto. See article, this issue.

27 SUN: The Modesto Film Society presents *The Bishop's Wife*. State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/514>

LOOKING AHEAD

January 12, 2016: Annual John McCutcheon Concert. Tickets: \$20 in advance, \$23 at the door; youth 18 and under, \$7. Purchased in person by check or cash at the Brethren Church, 2301 Woodland Ave., 523-1438 or at Beads of Contentment, 1028 J St., Modesto, 523-6335. Online tickets sales are at <http://mccutcheon-modesto2016.eventbrite.com>

January 23, 2016: 22nd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration. Speaker: historian Taylor Branch. Modesto Junior College, 7 pm.

Sunday Afternoons at CBS, 3 pm 1705 Sherwood Ave., Modesto. Tickets: \$25/Adults; \$20/Seniors & Students; \$7 children. Call (209) 571-6060. Visit <http://sundaysatcbs.com/> for information on concerts starting in January.

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; 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.liferingnetwork.org

Weekly mindfulness meditation and dharma talk, 9:00 am-10:30 am, 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 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 pro-

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), 4:00-5:00 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

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

vided. Trinity Presbyterian Church, 1600 Carver, Modesto. Donation accepted. Info: 505-3216. 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.

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 - 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/>

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, or tgsupport@stanpride.org

Mindful Meditation: Modesto Almond Blossom Sangha, 7 - 9 pm. Info: Stan, 549-7770, 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

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

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

The Compassionate Friends, Modesto/Riverbank Area Chapter. 2nd Thursday of the month. Contact: Joanna Rose-Murray, 209-484-8276, 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

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

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.

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. For up to date information, visit www.stanislausconnections.org/calendar.htm