



# Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

A MODESTO PEACE/LIFE CENTER PUBLICATION

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VOLUME XXII, NO. 2

## Census data shows 6 million Californians live in poverty

From the California Budget Project (<http://www.cbp.org>)

Census Bureau data released today show that the share of Californians with incomes below the federal poverty line in 2012 remained significantly higher than in 2006, the year before the Great Recession began. More than 6 million Californians – or about one in six – were living in poverty in 2012. In addition, 2.1 million of the state’s children, or nearly one out of four, lived in families with incomes below the poverty line in 2012.

The new data also show that the median California household income last

year was nearly 10 percent below what it was in 2006, the most recent peak.

Specifically, the new Census data show that:

- In 2012, 6.02 million Californians had incomes below the poverty line. The poverty line varies by family size. The 2012 poverty line was \$23,283 for a family of four with two children.
- California’s poverty rate for 2012 – 15.9 percent – is about one-third higher than the 12.2 percent poverty rate in 2006, the year before the recession began (Figure 1). The change in the poverty rate between 2011 and 2012 was not statistically significant.

### Children account for a disproportionately large share of Californians living in poverty.

- The US poverty rate was 15.0 percent in 2012. This is unchanged from 2011 and remains 2.7 percentage points above a recent low of 12.3 percent in 2006.

The new Census data indicate that a large number of California children continue to live in poverty. The data show that:

- Approximately 2.1 million California children – nearly one out of four – lived

in families with incomes below the poverty line in 2012. The share of California’s children living in

poverty was 22.5 percent in 2012 (Figure 2). This rate remains almost one-fourth higher than California’s 18.1 percent child poverty rate in 2006. The year-to-year change from 2011 to 2012 was not statistically significant.

• Children account for a disproportionately large share of Californians living in poverty. While children were one-quarter of the state’s population (24.3 percent) in 2012, they accounted for more than one-third of Californians with incomes below the poverty line (34.3 percent).

Read the full report at [http://cbp.org/pdfs/2013/130917\\_Census\\_Poverty.pdf](http://cbp.org/pdfs/2013/130917_Census_Poverty.pdf)

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## Pilgrimage for a Pathway to Citizenship

By ADRIANA GARCIA-HERNANDEZ

In 1988 my family immigrated to the United States from Mexico and like many immigrant families today, my parents left behind family members, friends and the comforts of their own home to provide my siblings and I with better opportunities.

For over 20 years, my family lived in constant fear of deportation. In 1991, two days before Christmas, our fears became a reality when my father was deported. Christmas came and while every child anxiously awaited Santa’s arrival and the opportunity to open presents, I found myself in front of the Christmas tree attempting to make sense of the void I felt in my heart. As a five year old I could not understand why my father—a



PILGRIMAGE . . . . . cont. p 8

The Modesto Peace Life Center invites you to

## A Harvest Gathering

A benefit for the Peace Essay Contest

Friday, November 1, 2013, 6:00 p.m.

at the home of

John Frailing & Maria Arevalo

1125 Edgebrook Drive, Modesto

Enjoy Delicious Hors d'oeuvres, Desserts,  
Good Wines, Special Coffees and Teas

## Silent Auction!

Suggested Donation: \$20 per person

Casual attire

Help us continue our outreach to our community's youth  
by supporting the Peace Essay Contest

## Medivan to your medical appointments in the Bay Area

By SHELLY SCRIBNER

The Medivan is a public service van that takes passengers from Modesto to Bay Area Medical Services Monday thru Friday. This service includes Oakland, San Francisco, Stanford and many other places in the Bay Area. The cost is \$20.00 round trip. If someone has to go with you the cost is \$6.00 round trip. for that person. The van leaves from the bus terminal in downtown Modesto at 6:30 a.m. and returns between 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. depending on where the stops

are that day.

The van drops you off at your doctor or hospital. Reservations are required. Call 1-800-262-1516. More details at <http://www.srt.org/medivaninfo2.html>

I have used their service and It is a very good service. The drivers are very good and helpful. If you have to stay in the hospital overnight you can also arrange for the van to pick you up another day.

**Stanislaus Regional Transit - Medivan Information**

**StaRT**

## The US Soldier who stood up for Muslims in America

By the CGNEWS TEAM

What would you do if you witnessed intolerance in public? A US soldier recently demonstrated the power of standing up to prejudice. Watch the video at Upworthy [<http://www.upworthy.com/a-boy-makes-anti-muslim-comments-in-front-of-an-american-soldier-the-soldiers-reply-priceless>]

In Myanmar, Buddhist monks are working to stop discrimination and violence against the Muslim minority there. Read more about the monkhood's efforts at Reuters; <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/11/us-myanmar-buddhism-idUSBRE98A0EP20130911>

The International Museum of Women is holding their final call for submissions for Muslima: Muslim Women's Art & Voices. Visit the website to learn more about topics being explored; <http://muslima.imow.org>

Indonesia and the Netherlands recently showed what can be done to heal the wounds of colonialism and begin to rebuild relations. The Jakarta Globe shares the story of the Netherlands' apology for colonial killings under their rule, while a letter to the editor of The Jakarta Post shows how the sharing of ideas between former colonies and colonisers can be mutually beneficial. Visit <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/jakarta/netherlands-apologizes-for-indonesian-colonial-killings/> and <http://www.thejakartapost.com/>

[news/2013/09/12/your-letters-our-dutch-connection.html](http://www.commongroundnews.org/news/2013/09/12/your-letters-our-dutch-connection.html)

What do you get when you combine a Middle Eastern desert island, steampunk style and a mystery in desperate need of solving? Cedaria: Blackout is a new adventure game by Search for Common Ground - Lebanon. Check it out and spread the word! <http://www.cedariagame.com>

For ten years, The International Paediatric Emergency Medicine Elective brought med students from Jordan, Israel, the Palestinian Territory and Canada together in Toronto to learn and build friendships. Visit The Toronto Star to learn more about this program and what students feel they have gained. Visit [http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/09/16/a\\_bridge\\_to\\_peace\\_built\\_in\\_toronto\\_fiorito.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/09/16/a_bridge_to_peace_built_in_toronto_fiorito.html)

For every instance of stereotyping, sensationalism and misunderstanding in Muslim-Western relations, there are many more stories, events and initiatives that foster dialogue and promote collaborative solutions. This new community space is a place to share such stories and opportunities. To suggest something please email [cgnews@sfcg.org](mailto:cgnews@sfcg.org)

Source: Common Ground News Service (CGNews), 17 September 2013, [www.commongroundnews.org](http://www.commongroundnews.org)

## Converge at the gates of the School of the Americas from November 22-24, 2013.

Over the past two decades, SOA Watch has grown from a handful of people into one of the most dynamic multi-generational, cross-continental movements against militarization.

This year, join thousands of students, nuns, migrants, unionists, people of faith, torture survivors, families, veterans, artists from across the Americas from November 22-24 as we converge at the gates of the School of the Americas (SOA; also known as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, WHINSEC), where we continue to reaffirm life and our creativity in the face of Empire. The November Vigil is not just a protest, but also a place where we come together as a community to mourn, resist, strategize, debate, learn, celebrate, and heal. The vigil weekend includes concerts, theater performances, nonviolent direct action, film screenings, workshops and caucuses.

Our work has not gotten easier. We need everyone's energy, creativity and participation. We must come together to reaffirm our belief in justice and peace, and our commitment to ending militarization and injustice. As we struggle, we see hope as movements throughout the hemisphere are standing

up for dignity and self-determination. The November Vigil is about resisting militarization and affirming life, dignity, justice, and peace in our interconnected world. We are organizing together with our partners in the Americas for justice and accountability. Be part of history.

**ACTION:** More information about the November Vigil at <http://soaw.org/november/en/>



**SUPPORT.  
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LOVE.**

For more information on meetings, our programs, and ways you can give back to the LGBT community, visit [www.pflagmodesto.org](http://www.pflagmodesto.org)

Confidential Helpline  
(209) 566-2468



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Parents, Families, and  
Friends of Lesbians  
and Gays



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## There are so many Walls to Tear Down...

Walls of Homophobia, Racism, Militarized Border Walls, Wall Street, Walls to Citizenship, Housing, Education, Walls of Inequality and the Walls between us, which weaken our collective movement. Please join us, November 1st- 3rd in Tucson Arizona to **Tear Down the Walls!**

The purpose of the **Tear Down the Walls National Gathering** is to create spaces for cross-movement strategies and networking. We want this to be an action oriented conference that will create substantial progress toward building a stronger, more unified movement for transformational change in the US.

To that end we are incorporating six 2 and a 1/2 hour People's Power Assemblies throughout the weekend which are designed to produce cross-movement strategies and at least one [inter]nationally coordinated day of local action that all the groups involved agree to build together.

Topics for People's Power Assemblies (more may added)

- US Imperialism and Anti-Militarism
- Drug War and Drug War Prisoners
- Immigration and Border Militarization
- Economic Justice
- Ecology and Empire
- Anti-Repression and Prison-Industrial Complex

Learn more at <https://afgj.org/tear-down-the-walls>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/OccupySolidarity>

**Where:** Tucson Convention Center, Tucson, Arizona. Registration now open. Register at: <http://afgj.org/participant-registration>

## Wild West Gala, Jeans & Jewels benefit for Society for Handicapped Children & Adults

The 2013 Wild West Gala, Jeans & Jewels benefitting the Society for Handicapped Children & Adults will be held on Saturday, October 12, 2013 from 6 p.m. to midnight at the Durrer Barn in Modesto, CA. The evening includes pig races, Rib-eye steak dinner, desserts, live music and dancing, midway games, live & silent auctions, raffles, beverage bars, a mechanical bull and more! Tickets are \$100.00 per person, 21 and over only.

All proceeds benefit Society for Handicapped Children & Adults, an organization dedicated to helping improve and enrich the lives of those with disabilities through recreation and education. Society for Handicapped is 100% privately funded and receives no government funding.

Main sponsors are Winton-Ireland Strom and Green, Pacific Southwest Container, IMC Consulting, Never Boring Design, Burnside Auto Repair, Doctor's Hospital, Gallo Wine and Delta Sierra Beverage.

We are need volunteers to help run the event, please call, Lynn QV, if you are interested or have any questions at (209) 524-3536.

**ACTION:** Purchase tickets at [www.societyforhandicapped.org](http://www.societyforhandicapped.org), by phone (209) 524-3536 or by coming into the SHCA office at 1129 8th St., Suite 101, Modesto, CA 95354.

# 2014 Peace Essay Contest

“It isn't enough to talk about  
peace. One must believe in it. And  
it isn't enough to believe in it. One  
must work at it.”

(Eleanor Roosevelt)  
Broadcast. Voice of America  
November 11, 1951

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

History shows us that conflicts between people, families, groups, cultures and nations are inevitable. When disagreements arise, too often people respond with anger and violence. Alternative actions can be undertaken to avert violence and the destruction that accompanies it. All too often, when conflict is experienced, the use of force and violence is often promoted as the best means of solving conflict and settling disagreements. Taking the time to explore alternatives that encourage understanding and cooperation can lead to peaceful resolution of conflicts and prevent war. All of us should participate in promoting actions that lead to peace. Appreciating other perspectives, understanding cultures different than our own and learning to work cooperatively are good beginning steps. Implementing these ideas (and many others) can lessen tensions and prevent war, thus creating a more peaceful world.

### DIVISION I (grades 11 & 12)

In your essay of 500-1000 words, begin by briefly describing a past or current international conflict that did or could escalate into war. Then describe the harmful consequences that did or could result from the conflict or war. Next propose a non-violent strategy that could be implemented that would reduce the tensions and contribute to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Be specific about the steps you think would be necessary to make your idea work. Conclude by explaining how your proposal would lessen tensions and hostilities on all sides and create the possibility for lasting peace.

### DIVISION II (grades 9 & 10)

In your 500-1000 word essay, begin by briefly describing a past or current specific situation somewhere in the United States that did or could escalate into violence. In the body of your essay, propose a non-violent strategy that could be implemented that would reduce the tensions and contribute to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Be specific about the steps you think would be necessary to make your idea work. Conclude by clearly explaining how your proposal would lessen tensions and hostilities on all sides and create the possibility for lasting peace.

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

History shows us that conflicts between people, families, groups, cultures and nations are unavoidable. When disagreements arise, too often people respond with anger and violence. However, in any conflict there are non-violent alternatives that encourage understanding and cooperation that can lead to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Being committed to working at peaceful solutions helps each of us practice “keeping our cool” when we find ourselves in a conflict. A “cool head” then allows us to follow through with our commitment to finding a peaceful solution.

### DIVISION III (grades 7 & 8)

Think of an example of a conflict you know about in your community or elsewhere in California. Begin your essay of 250-500 words by briefly describing the conflict. In the body of your essay, suggest a non-violent strategy that could be implemented that would reduce the tensions and contribute to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Be specific about the steps you think would be necessary to make your idea work. In your conclusion, explain how peacefully resolving local and regional conflicts can contribute to a more just and peaceful world.

### DIVISION IV (grades 5 & 6)

Think of an example of a conflict you know about in your school, neighborhood or community. Begin your essay of 250-500 words by briefly describing the conflict. In the body of your essay, suggest a non-violent plan that would reduce the tensions and make the situation better. Describe the steps you think would be necessary to make your idea work. In your conclusion, explain how resolving our local, everyday conflicts can contribute to bringing about a more just and peaceful world.

### AWARDS

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

**Deadline for entries:  
November 15, 2013**

**Notification of winners: Early February, 2014**

- *Download the flyers and entry form and “Like Us” at: [www.facebook.com/PeaceEssayContest](http://www.facebook.com/PeaceEssayContest)*
- *Email your questions to: [peaceessay@juno.com](mailto:peaceessay@juno.com)*
- *View/print flyers at: [www.stanislausconnections.org](http://www.stanislausconnections.org)*

*See rules and submission information on page 4*



# Peace Essay Contest 2014

## Rules & Submission Directions

- The Peace Essay Contest is open to all fifth through twelfth grade students who are residents of Stanislaus County or attend any public, private, or home school in Stanislaus County.
- Submit one copy of your essay. Essays in Division I & II must be typewritten, double spaced. Essays in Divisions III & IV must be either typewritten or written in dark ink, double spaced, using one side of **white** paper 8 1/2 x 11 inches. Number the pages consecutively. Your essay must be of a quality to photocopy legibly. **YOUR NAME OR IDENTIFYING INFORMATION SHOULD NOT BE ANYWHERE ON OR IN THE ESSAY.**
- Give your essay a title. Place it on the first page where you begin your essay. **DO NOT** use a separate title or cover page.
- Print and complete the Entry Form (may be found at: [www.facebook.com/PeaceEssayContest](http://www.facebook.com/PeaceEssayContest) OR [www.stanislausconnections.org](http://www.stanislausconnections.org) OR request a copy via email at: [peaceessay@juno.com](mailto:peaceessay@juno.com))
- Cite any quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge. If you are uncertain about plagiarism, ask your teacher.
- You must do your own work. However, you may ask a teacher, parent, or friend for constructive criticism.
- The Modesto Peace/Life Center reserves the right to reprint entries. Entries will not be returned.
- Entries may be delivered to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., Modesto, from 2 p.m. - 5 p.m., November 13-15, 2013. You may also mail all entries, postmarked no later than November 15, 2013 to:  
2013 Peace Essay Contest  
Modesto Peace/Life Center  
P.O. Box 134  
Modesto, CA 95353-0134

## Judging

A distinguished group of local writers, educators, and peacemakers will judge the essays.

Judging guidelines (in order of weight) include:

- Content:
  - Does the essay demonstrate concern for establishing a more peaceful world?
  - How well-developed are the ideas?
  - Does it address the given topic?

- Style:
  - Is the essay original and interesting?
  - Is it written with conviction?
  - Does the personality of the writer come through?
- Clarity of expression:
  - Are the ideas clearly stated?
  - Is the essay well-organized?
  - Does it have an effective beginning and ending?
- Mechanics:
  - Is grammar, spelling, and punctuation reasonably correct?
  - Does the author cite all quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge?
  - Does the essay stay within the word limit?

## Prizes

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

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

## Notification of Winners

In mid-February 2014, winners will be notified through the student's teacher. Prizes will be presented at an Awards Reception in the spring. All participants, teachers, judges, and sponsors will be invited as guests of honor.

2014 Peace Essay Committee: Peggy Castaneda, Indira Clark, Pam Franklin, Elaine Gorman, Linda Lagace, Deborah Roberts, Sandy Sample, Shelly Scribner and David Tucker

This 27th Annual Peace Essay Contest is a project of the Modesto Peace/Life Center (209) 529-5750 and is co-sponsored by: Department of Literature and Language Arts, Modesto Junior College

## Green Tips for a Green Planet: mulch & compost leaves!

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

The falling leaves drift by my window...the falling leaves of red and gold...

It's October... Eventually the trees will pull in their chlorophyll, exchanging the green Ginkgo leaves for bright yellow against blue autumn skies, soon to blanket yellow-covered sidewalks and lawns. The Chinese Pistache and Liquid Amber will star in reds, oranges and golds. Japanese Maples will punctuate surroundings in deep magenta and rusty orange and Tree City Modesto Ash will add a yellow canopy over Modesto and other county cities.

Whether the trees change color and lose their leaves gradually or overnight, don't rush to stuff them in trash bags, burn them in smog producing burn barrels or land them on roadside piles to clog drains, ditches and culverts. You will be sending away red, orange, rust, and yellow gold.

If you live in the city you may think you don't have enough space, time, or energy to mulch or consider the process dirty and smelly. On the contrary... pile a simple leaf and green compost mound consisting of 3 parts leaves to 1 part garden pruning, clippings and spent healthy plants, leave unattended for up to 12 months, give it a quick watering when you water your garden, and let nature take its course! The result... compost with no bad smells. If you want a faster mulch, turn or mix the pile occasionally.

Avoid the urge to blow and mow and allow for the inner child urge to jump fall into piles of autumn leaves, then haul them to those piles of sedentary gold. Richard Anderson, retired Modesto Junior College biology professor, goes one better; he collects the leaves from his neighbors' street leaf piles and mulches them for future use. The fall leaves may be a great excuse for a neighborhood mulch collection party!

Let those leaves that fall in dormant gardens mirror the process of humus creation in a woodland ecosystem to create a rich natural mulch. Rural folks can mix their leaves with straw to create a powerful nutrient mix. Spreading mulch in your garden will contribute to ongoing soil fertility, keep weeds at bay, and protect the soil for future planting.

"Money may not fall from trees," says Angela Blackerby in her D Acres Permaculture Farm & Educational Homestead blog in Mother Earth News, "but good soil can be found beneath them."

## Environmental Subtlety

So let them fall and let them land—  
the leaves of maple and ash and sycamore  
and more.

Let them aerial dance, drift and soar  
like small airships, gliders,  
lazy angels or sent ones.

Reverence the silence.  
Don't rush in with mechanized blowers,  
let the wind have its way.

Don't crank up the mower, let them lay,  
to finish their calling....  
reclaim the earth.

Perhaps later, pick up a rake,  
listen to the sound of rustling....  
exercise your heart.

— Linda Marie Prather, Meter Maids

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CONNECTIONS

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# Riding the Thermal Wave

By JENIFER WEST

Scene 1: Post-game soccer field. “Mom,” a girl yells, “I’m hungry!” “No problem, honey,” says Mom, smiling serenely. Surrounded by hungry kids, she opens a (insert brand name here: Saratoga Jack’s, Thermos Shuttle Chef...) thermal cooker and dishes up steaming hot mac & cheese. Voiceover: “No need to hit the drive-through, thanks to the (brand name) thermal cooker!”

Scene 2: Family in mini-van. Dad smiles smugly at Mom. Voiceover: “On the way to the beach, with Dad’s famous chili cooking in the back. With a (brand name) thermal cooker, no matter where you’re headed, you can cook on the go. Compact and portable – no need to plug it in, so you really can take it with you, and enjoy a hot, homemade meal whenever you want. Just put your ingredients into the inner cooking pot, simmer a few minutes on the stove, pop it into the thermal cooker, and hit the road. Save money, save time, and eat healthier with a (brand name) thermal cooker.”

Ok, maybe I’m getting a little carried away. But I’m learning to use another “weapon” in the “lean & green” arsenal: Thermal cookers. And I’m totally jazzed, because, unlike my old standby, solar cooking, thermal cooking works in any kind of weather!! It’s pretty straightforward: Combine the ingredients, simmer briefly on the stove, and place inside a well-insulated container to finish cooking. A few hours later your food’s done, steaming hot and ready to serve.

Thermal cooking isn’t new – it was known as “fireless cooking” in the early 1900’s; and “hay box cooking” during World War II, when cooking oil (among many other things) was rationed. And although there are some excellent cookers on the market, the set-up can be as simple as an ice chest, some beach towels or other insulating material, and a large-capacity Thermos or two. Pretty much anyone can do it, anywhere.

When our first cooker arrived (a Thermos “Shuttle Chef”, quickly followed by a Saratoga Jack’s, from my favorite online retailer), I was a little disappointed because I thought it could only be used for soups and stews. But there’s another

option: A food-filled pot (or canning jar) can be placed inside the cooking pot that comes with the cooker. The cooking pot can then be filled with water and simmered, so that the heat of the water cooks the jars’ contents, but the water itself never comes into direct contact with the food. Wahoo! “Baked” chicken, brown rice, vegetarian stroganoff, barefoot quiche, chicken a la king, meatloaf, and even carrot cake (all cooked in pint or quart canning jars) came out of our cookers in quick succession. (Still working on the carrot cake, but even after cutting the oil way down, it’s incredibly moist.) As an added bonus, cooking in jars allows more than one type of dish to be cooked at a time – great for households like ours, where everyone sometimes wants something different for dinner.



Pretty much anything you’d cook in a crock pot can be thermal-cooked: Soups and stews, of course, but also casseroles, frittata, things like chicken paprikash, “roasted” potatoes, tamale pie... The list goes on and on. You can even cook puddings, some cakes and other desserts! Anything that would benefit from slow, gentle cooking is an excellent candidate for the thermal cooker.

To get you started, below are instructions for cooking a veggie version of stroganoff in a thermos. (Sliced beef or chicken breast can sub for some or all of the mushrooms, if desired.) You can serve it with rice or pasta, both of which can also be cooked in a thermos (although rice is easier – cook and chill it ahead of time to help prevent it from falling apart).

You may not find yourself writing imaginary TV commercials, but you just might be inspired to ride the thermal wave, too!

## Thermos-cooked Stroganoff

Makes 1 quart

1-3/4 cups sour cream

3 – 4 tbsp. ketchup

1 – 2 tbsp. corn starch (more will yield a thicker sauce)

½ - 1 tsp. thyme (or more, to taste)

Salt, to taste

Sliced mushrooms (approximately 3 - 4 cups)

1 medium onion, sliced into thin wedges



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Modesto, CA 95350

Fill the thermos with hot water to preheat. (Do not skip this step.)

Combine all ingredients in a large pan and bring to a simmer; cook 10 minutes. (For better flavor, you can sauté the onions and mushrooms briefly in a tablespoon or so of butter first.)

Pour the water out of the thermos and immediately pour the stroganoff into it (use a canning funnel, if you have one).

Place the lid tightly on the thermos.

Leave it on its side for several hours.

Just before serving, rock the thermos gently end-to-end to re-combine the sauce (which will probably have separated). Serve over rice or pasta. Bon Appetit!

Gardener’s Note: Hurry – you can still plant cabbage, beets, spinach, radishes, turnips, kohlrabi, and lettuce.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE!

*CONNECTIONS* is no longer being sent by bulk mail. However it is still published and available three different ways:

On our website: <http://www.stanislausconnections.org>

By email as a PDF file. To receive *Stanislaus Connections* by email, contact Jim Costello at [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org)

At sites around Modesto and other places.

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O’Brien’s MKT, Dale Rd  
Posey’s Hearing Aid Ctr  
Big Lots, 3900 Sisk Rd  
CVS, 901 N Carpenter Rd  
Food Maxx, Briggsmore  
Safeway  
Savemart Stores  
Stanislaus County Library

# Six good things Occupy Wall Street made possible (That You Probably Already Take for Granted)

BY JAMES TRIMARCO

Two years after the original occupation of Zuccotti Park on September 17, many things remain unchanged. Wall Street hedge funds and banks continue to siphon money out of our economy, the 1% has seized still more of our society's wealth, and our public places have not become permanent festivals of direct democracy.

But transforming the foundations of our society doesn't happen overnight, so you might have to look a little harder to see the practical, everyday ways that Occupy changed things for the better. Here are six social transformations that Occupy helped make possible:

## 1. You can refer to the "1%" and have everybody know what you are talking about.

Just a few years ago, merely talking about income inequality in the United States was almost forbidden, like a form of "class warfare." It didn't really matter if you were a plumber, a politician, or a pundit: if you said there was too much money concentrated at the top

90 percent of those stopped were black or Latino, and 86 percent were totally innocent.

and that policy was to blame, you were not to be listened to.

But at least these days people on all sides of the political spectrum are aware that income inequality is a thing, and that the real concentration of wealth is in the hands of a tiny few. You can see the results through looking at Google's records on searches for the term "income inequality," which peaked strongly in late 2011 and never quite went back down.

View full report in Google Trends; <http://www.google.com/trends/explore?hl=en-US#q=income+inequality&geo=US&date=1/2008+61m&cmpt=q>

## 2. You can fight back in court if you are stopped and frisked in New York City.

Stop and Frisk is a policy in New York City and some other places where the police stop people at random, ask them questions, and pat them down. When Occupy began in September of 2011, New York City police officers stopped and frisked New Yorkers more than 685,000 times, according to the New York Civil Liberties Union. Nearly 90 percent of those stopped were black or Latino, and 86 percent were totally innocent. The police department had been slowly expanding the policy over a decade, and justified it by saying that the small number of arrests the program produced made it worth it.

The issue was already notorious among dedicated activists and engaged members of affected communities, while few others had ever heard about it. But Occupy made "Stop and Frisk" into a huge issue, repeatedly holding massive marches specifically about the policy. A lot of the momentum driving that came from neighborhood-based Occupies such as Take Back the Bronx and Occupy Harlem. The resulting coverage in the mainstream media significantly raised the profile of Stop and Frisk. See <http://occupywallst.org/article/stop-frisk-has-got-go-solidarity-occupyharlem/>

As word got out, Occupy stepped away and the New York



But Occupy made "Stop and Frisk" into a huge issue, repeatedly holding massive marches specifically about the policy

Civil Liberties Union—which had already been organizing around this issue—began focused campaigns against it. This summer, it came to the New York District Court in the case of Floyd v. the City of New York, where judge Shira Sheindlin ruled the policy unconstitutional and called it "a form of racial profiling." The police union has appealed the decision.

Meanwhile, New York's City Council passed the Community Safety Act, which bans racial profiling in the NYPD and allows citizens to seek redress if it happens. Mayor Bloomberg attempted to veto the act, saying "There is no need for additional oversight of the NYPD," but the City Council overrode the veto.

## 3. You can share things online without being immediately sued.

Just a few months after the heyday of Occupy Wall Street, Internet activists in the United States successfully fought off

legislation that would have severely curtailed our ability to post and share online content. The legislation was called the "Stop Online Piracy Act," or SOPA, and it was defeated (so far) through a remarkable collaboration between Internet companies like Google and Yahoo, nonprofits like Wikipedia and Human Rights Watch, and legislators like Nancy Pelosi and Ron Paul.

Occupy taught a whole generation to use social media tools politically

But Occupy played a role as well, according to Peter Higgins at the Electronic Frontier Foundation, setting the cultural and technological stage for an uprising against the bill. Higgins says that Occupy taught a whole generation to use social media tools politically. Occupiers got used to using Twitter and Facebook to communicate about politics, he told me, and that ended up being a tool they used again when the SOPA came up (as well as a related bill known as CISPA).

The longstanding alliance between Occupy and Anonymous also helped bring issues related to online freedom to the masses that had previously been talked about mostly among hackers and geeks.

## 4. Various new media projects.

Tidal is the media organization that came most directly out of Occupy Wall Street. The print and web magazine was originally the project of a working group called "Occupy Theory," and the magazine's URL remains [www.occupytheory.org](http://www.occupytheory.org). Tidal continues to publish a gorgeous print magazine that keeps the key issues of Occupy front and center: economic fairness, liberation and joy in everyday life, and the way that solidarity among us—or the lack of it—determines our political fate.

Writer and editor Travis Mushett noted the other day in Thought Catalog that his literary and comics magazine, Blunderbuss, also owes its existence to Occupy. <http://www.blunderbussmag.com>

"The DIY spirit of OWS helped my co-founders and I to realize that maybe we don't need to throw ourselves at the feet of editors to get our work out there," he wrote, "maybe we can do it without asking permission."

## 5. Senator Elizabeth Warren.

If you haven't seen the video\* posted below, in which Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts asks the officials responsible for regulating Wall Street when was the last time they actually prosecuted a bank, you are missing out. (They tell her they've never done it!)

While Warren's advocacy for economic fairness makes her a somewhat lonely voice in the Senate, it's good to know that she's there. And Occupy helped make that possible: Warren was a relative unknown running an anti-Wall Street platform in a crowded Massachusetts democratic primary. She became a darling of the movement for her fearless willingness to call out bankers' crimes, which raised her profile significantly.

Occupy . . . . . continued on pg.8

# The Banality of Systemic Evil

By PETER LUDLOW

In recent months there has been a visible struggle in the media to come to grips with the leaking, whistle-blowing and hacktivism that has vexed the United States military and the private and government intelligence communities. This response has run the gamut. It has involved attempts to condemn, support, demonize, psychoanalyze and in some cases canonize figures like Aaron Swartz, Jeremy Hammond, Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden.

In broad terms, commentators in the mainstream and corporate media have tended to assume that all of these actors needed to be brought to justice, while independent players on the Internet and elsewhere have been much more supportive. Tellingly, a recent Time magazine cover story has pointed out a marked generational difference in how people view these matters: 70 percent of those age 18 to 34 sampled in a poll said they believed that **Snowden “did a good thing”** in leaking the news of the National Security Agency’s surveillance program.

So has the younger generation lost its moral compass?

## So has the younger generation lost its moral compass?

No. In my view, just the opposite.

Clearly, there is a moral principle at work in the actions of the leakers, whistle-blowers and hacktivists and those who support them. I would also argue that that moral principle has been clearly articulated, and it may just save us from a dystopian future.

In “Eichmann in Jerusalem,” one of the most poignant and important works of 20th-century philosophy, Hannah Arendt made an observation about what she called “the banality of evil.” One interpretation of this holds that it was not an observation about what a regular guy Adolph Eichmann seemed to be, but rather a statement about what happens when people play their “proper” roles within a system, following prescribed conduct with respect to that system, while remaining blind to the moral consequences of what the system was doing — or at least compartmentalizing and ignoring those consequences.

A good illustration of this phenomenon appears in “Moral Mazes,” a book by the sociologist Robert Jackall that explored the ethics of decision making within several corporate bureaucracies. In it, Jackall made several observations that dovetailed with those of Arendt. The mid-level managers that he spoke with were not “evil” people in their everyday lives, but in the context of their jobs, they had a separate moral code altogether, what Jackall calls the “fundamental rules of corporate life”:

(1) *You never go around your boss. (2) You tell your boss what he wants to hear, even when your boss claims that he wants dissenting views. (3) If your boss wants something*

*dropped, you drop it. (4) You are sensitive to your boss’s wishes so that you anticipate what he wants; you don’t force him, in other words, to act as a boss. (5) Your job is not to report something that your boss does not want reported, but rather to cover it up. You do your job and you keep your mouth shut.*

Jackall went through case after case in which managers violated this code and were drummed out of a business (for example, for reporting wrongdoing in the cleanup at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant).

the rules that required obedience to the system in order to avoid systemic evil. In Swartz’s case the system was not a corporation but a system for the dissemination of bottled up knowledge that should have been available to all. Swartz engaged in an act of civil disobedience to liberate that knowledge, arguing that **“there is no justice in following unjust laws.** It’s time to come into the light and, in the grand tradition of civil disobedience, declare our opposition to this private theft of public culture.”

Chelsea Manning, the United States Army private incarcerated for leaking classified documents from the Departments of Defense and State, felt a similar pull to resist the internal rules of the bureaucracy. In a statement at her trial she described a case where she felt this was necessary. In February 2010, she received a report of an event in which the Iraqi Federal Police had detained 15 people for printing “anti-Iraqi” literature. Upon investigating the matter, Manning discovered that none of the 15 had previous ties to anti-Iraqi actions or suspected terrorist organizations. Manning had the allegedly anti-Iraqi literature translated and found that, contrary to what the federal police had said, the published literature in question “detailed corruption within the cabinet of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki’s government and the financial impact of his corruption on the Iraqi people.”

When Manning reported this discrepancy to the officer in charge (OIC), she was told to “drop it,” she recounted.


## When Manning reported this discrepancy to the officer in charge (OIC), she was told to “drop it”

Manning could not play along. As she put it, she knew if she “continued to assist the Baghdad Federal Police in identifying the political opponents of Prime Minister al-Maliki, those people would be arrested and in the custody of the Special Unit of the Baghdad Federal Police and very likely tortured and not seen again for a very long time — if ever.” When her superiors would not address the problem, she was compelled to pass this information on to WikiLeaks.

Snowden too felt that, confronting what was clearly wrong, he could not play his proper role within the bureaucracy of the intelligence community. As he put it,

*[W]hen you talk to people about [abuses] in a place like this where this is the normal state of business people tend not to take them very seriously and move on from them. But over time that awareness of wrongdoing sort of builds up and you*

Evil. . . . . continued on pg.10



## Whistleblowing

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**A “whistleblower” discloses information he or she reasonably believes evidences:**

- A violation of any law, rule or regulation
- An abuse of authority
- Gross mismanagement
- A substantial and specific danger to public health
- A gross waste of funds
- A substantial and specific danger to public safety

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The Office of Special Counsel (OSC) provides a secure channel through which current and former federal employees and applicants for federal employment may make confidential disclosures. OSC evaluates the disclosures to determine whether there is a substantial likelihood that one of the categories listed above has been disclosed. If such a determination is made, OSC has the authority to require the head of the agency to investigate the matter.

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Aaron Swartz counted “Moral Mazes” among his “very favorite books.” Swartz was the Internet wunderkind who was hounded by a government prosecution threatening him with 35 years in jail for illicitly downloading academic journals that were behind a pay wall. Swartz, who committed suicide in January at age 26 (many believe because of his prosecution), said that “Moral Mazes” did an excellent job of **“explaining how so many well-intentioned people can end up committing so much evil.”**

Swartz argued that it was sometimes necessary to break

## Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center - Launches the "Stanislaus Poem"

The Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center (MoSt), an organization dedicated to "promoting poetry throughout Stanislaus County and to promoting Stanislaus County through poetry," announces the launch of its first large-scale project, the "Stanislaus Poem."

"Stanislaus County has received a lot of negative media attention in the past few years," points out Gillian Wegener, Modesto's Poet Laureate and MoSt president, and MoSt is celebrating our county by inviting county residents of all ages to write four-line poems (quatrains) about something positive, beautiful or otherwise appreciated in this place that "has continued to grow and thrive." The intention of the

poem is to bring residents and others out of the shadows of narrow media focus into the awareness of a home place that is beautiful in many different ways through many different perspectives.

Members of MoSt have written several quatrains as models which are available at the MoSt Poetry Center website as are further submission guidelines. Also available on the website is a no-cost lesson plan adaptable for grades K-12 and/or any community groups or persons who might be interested in running "Stanislaus Poem" workshops.

The quatrains will be organized into one large collaborative community poem, which is scheduled to be published

by April 2014 for distribution throughout Stanislaus County and beyond.

**ACTION:** The deadline for submissions is November 15, 2013, and can be submitted to the Poetry Center through email ([info@mostpoetry.org](mailto:info@mostpoetry.org)) or by regular mail to: The Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center, PO Box 578940, Modesto, CA 95357.



The Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center is accepting membership and sponsorship donations under Fund #257 with the Stanislaus Community Foundation, a 501(c)(3). See [www.mostpoetry.org](http://www.mostpoetry.org) for details.

## Pilgrimage

from page 1

hard working, law-abiding man—was taken from us. I only understood the pain his absence left and the fear to never see him again. Conversing with God, I remember asking Him to forget about the presents that year; all I wanted for Christmas was my dad. My mother always said that God was grand and that same night I learned why. At two in the morning my father appeared in our doorstep as if God had dropped off a present for me. Clueless of the journey my father had endured to return home, I hugged his leg and promised myself to always fight for what is right and just.

Holding myself accountable to that promise, I did everything in my power to overcome every obstacle I faced while furthering my education as a DREAMER. In 2008, I earned my Bachelors Degree from the University of California Santa Cruz with a double major in Latin American Studies and American Studies. Keeping in mind what my parents sacrificed in order to provide us with better opportunities, I furthered my education by earning my Masters Degree in Public Affairs from the University of San Francisco.

Despite obtaining my citizenship in 2011, I continue to fight for the 11 millions aspiring Americans that live in the shadows of our great nation, who work hard and contribute millions of dollars to our economy all while living with second-class citizenship.

The moment I learned PICO California, an interfaith-based network of federations that works to unlock the power of people through congregations, was organizing a 21 days, 285 mile pilgrimage from Sacramento to Bakersfield in support for a pathway to citizenship, I made the commitment to become the face of the 11 million aspiring Americans.

The Pilgrimage for a Pathway to Citizenship set to bring a more humane dimension to the immigration debate and to uncover the moral crisis our immigration policies have caused our undocumented brothers and sisters. In every town we arrived throughout our journey, my fellow pilgrims and community members shared personal stories powerful enough to move key republican leaders such as Congressman Jeff Denham. Although, Majority Whip of the House Kevin McCarthy continues to push for the expansion and militarization of the border, we are confident that we will obtain a humane immigration bill.

The minute I joined the pilgrimage I understood that I was going on a journey to find a spiritual significance that would

not only allow me to grow as a woman, but also provide me the tools that would enable me to further develop a united nation. On a personal level, my experience with the pilgrimage continues to be an emotional roller coaster. Two weeks after our journey ended, I continue to reflect on my experience and have found that my life has become an oxymoron. My heart is fulfilled because I have been reunited with family and friends, but heartbroken because I am now separated from the pilgrims, my new family. I'm happy our journey concluded safely in Bakersfield, yet I'm angered because congressional representatives continue belittling the voice of their constituents.

I'm slowly adjusting back into my daily routine, but returning to normality is impossible because the 285-mile journey transformed my life. Every diverse community I met taught me humility, love and unity. The volunteers, organizers, community members who attended the actions and vigils, even those who prepared the food that fed us daily, overwhelm my heart with love. I am forever humbled and inspired.

The pilgrims have sacrificed their minds, bodies and souls and placed their lives on hold for 22 days to demand a pathway to citizenship. Now, as the pilgrims move forward with their own journeys, we pass the torch to the community and ask them to keep the spirit of unity alive.

**ACTION:** We ask our brothers and sisters to lead our community towards a more perfect union. Join us for National Day of Dignity and Respect Immigration Reform with Pathway to Citizenship, Saturday, October 5th 2013 at 9 a.m. at Franklin Elementary School, 120 S. Emerald Ave. Modesto, CA. Congregations Building Communities will hold a press conference as well as a briefing on immigration and where we are in the process; our next strategic approach to pressure Congress to pass an inclusive immigration bill. We invite the public to participate in our art contest by bringing drawings, photography, sculptures etc. that demonstrate dignity and respect for the immigrant community. The contest is open to all ages. Visit <https://www.facebook.com/CBCSTAN>

As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Everybody can be great... because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

## Occupy

from page 6

Republicans then sought to use her association with Occupy against her, but she never denied her solidarity with the movement, and ultimately she won. \*Video at <http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/six-good-things-occupy-wall-street-made-possible>

### 6. A more deeply networked activist world.

If you spent enough time embroiled in Occupy activities, you almost certainly came away with new friends and acquaintances. And they weren't just any friends; they were people who you had camped next to on rainy nights, people you'd locked arms with when the police suddenly ordered a march to disperse for no reason, people you'd debated tactics with until you each gave a little and finally reached consensus.

Of all the not-insignificant practical gains listed here, this is probably the most important and the toughest to quantify. There are the brick-and-mortar institutions that came out of friendships forged at Occupy, like Seattle's Black Coffee, a cooperatively owned cafe. But beyond that, there are just a whole lot of people who are more likely to know their fellow progressives—both across the street and across the country—than the way it was before.

That creates a better environment for the social change projects we need so badly at this moment, and adds an element of warmth and fun to the often-exhausting project of changing the world for the better.

*James Trimarco wrote this article for YES! Magazine, a national, nonprofit media project that fuses powerful ideas with practical actions. James worked in Occupy's working group on Shipping Inventory and Storage during the occupation of Zuccotti Park and is web editor at YES! <http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/six-good-things-occupy-wall-street-made-possible>*

DON'T AGONIZE.  
Organize.



**Kathryn Harlan-Gran: Poet & Writer**

My name is Kathryn Harlan-Gran and I am a writer. Of that I am sure. I am a senior at Enochs High School in Modesto, sixteen years old. As long as I can remember, writing poetry and fiction have been my passion. Although other dreams have evolved and changed, publication has been my constant aspiration. I also love music, and play the flute, piccolo, harp, and sing, and

I am greatly involved with my school's speech and debate team. Within the last couple of years I have become very enthusiastic about photography, particularly with the detail and nuance of close-up subjects, as well as natural landscapes. Lastly, I love cats—I recently adopted a kitten and named her Emily Dickinson.

*Ed note: Kathryn is Vice President of the Enochs chapter of FFA this year and is currently the top scorer for the National Forensics League at her school.*

**Torrential**

The sky is a tangle of aerated gray cotton,  
stretched wispy and tense as it is wrung for all it's worth,  
sending moisture downward  
in the form of a dreary,  
inconsistent haze of precipitation.  
From above,  
the motley of umbrellas forms a bright patchwork,  
a dance of brilliant color  
between gray sky  
and slick cement.  
Puddles collect in cracks and dips  
in an ancient, crumbling sidewalk,  
dull, slightly shimmering phosphorescence  
shattered frequently under rubber-clad feet,  
like a child without a stocking  
who no longer believes in Santa  
or a mother without a child,  
who no longer believes in God.  
Footsteps quicken in relation to the intensity  
of the downfall,  
the constant bustle of the city  
morphing into a light-footed race for cover,  
under awnings  
or through tight-shut doors of store fronts.  
On the dry side of a water-streaked window  
a pregnant mother files for divorce—  
in the shadows of an empty locker room,  
a teenager sits down to weep—  
in a lightless, dripping basement  
a dealer counts his cash  
before the man he took it from has ceased to bleed—  
and above,  
pedestrians jay-walk quickly  
and complain about the wet.

**Going Somewhere, Going Nowhere**

Going Somewhere,  
Going Nowhere,  
setting sun casting  
long shadows behind us,  
darkness pooling in our shapeless footprints  
as we walk dead center  
down a hot black strip of road  
that doesn't lead anywhere,  
stirring squirrels from their sleeping shade  
with our singing voices,  
pausing to disrupt the solemn progression  
of ants  
scuttling neatly in hurried succession  
down the upper crest  
of an abandoned run of PVC piping,  
also going nowhere—  
picking blackberries almost-ripe  
because two days more  
is too long to wait.  
Going Somewhere,  
Going Nowhere,  
realizing that all of time is an illusion,  
merely an impression on the conscious mind  
lost to us in the firm hold of sleep.  
Remembering tomorrows already past  
we seek nowhere,  
because time changes everything  
but nothing really changes.  
So we pace on,  
going Somewhere,  
going Nowhere,  
leaving the setting sun behind us  
and knowing  
living  
now.

**Experiencing Yesterday**

The horizon devoured the sun  
as he opened his eyes  
to sleep;  
breathing unevenly,  
swaying rhythmically to  
the motion of  
a sea  
of inconsistency,  
remembering an unrealized dream.  
His daughter's joyous shouts  
blended  
with an ancient whisper,  
circled,  
entwined,  
darted in and out and was  
abandoned.  
Time,  
he realized then,  
does not heal  
all wounds,  
nor can platitudes mend hearts.

The sun embraced the horizon  
melded with it,  
greeted it as a lover  
and enjoyed oneness  
as he breathed slowly,  
kissing his wife  
with the memory of  
another  
even yet on his lips,  
an unfulfilled promise  
from another lifetime  
remembered in the sunset  
and the unceasing crash  
of the tide.

**The Tangibility of Distance**

They stood on two sides of a void.  
He looked down  
at the chasm between them  
as she looked across,  
at him—  
at his face,  
furrowed,  
well-adored,  
lined by pain and memory  
like the creases in a love letter.  
Their hearts beat in even time,  
eyes shining,  
throats tight.  
They stood on two sides of a void  
and she stepped  
forward, and  
he turned up his face and  
for the first time she could remember  
she couldn't see his thoughts  
written on his face.  
Was that anger  
in his eyes?  
Guilt?  
Blame?  
"Say something,"  
she whispered.  
Her voice caught,  
echoed,  
rebounded,  
multiplied and petered out.  
He told her  
that what she'd done was unforgivable,  
and shattered her image  
of what forgiveness  
was.  
They stood on two sides of a void  
and ceased to be one,  
ceased to be cohesive,  
ceased to be in love.  
Thus the void became a precipice,  
not a division, but a boundary—  
not a quarrel,  
but an end.

## Modesto Poets' Corner Contest Now Accepting Submissions

By LYNN M. HANSEN,  
Chair of the Poets Corner Committee

The City of Modesto celebrates the art of poetry not only by appointing a Poet Laureate (currently Gillian Wegener) but also by sponsoring the annual Poets' Corner Contest for all adults and children that live or go to school in Stanislaus County.

According to founding members, poet James Shuman and writer Colleen Stanley Bare, the idea of a Poets' Corner began in 1980-81 as a State-wide promotion by Claire J. Baker, a Bay-area member of National League of American Pen Women. The objective was to establish a tangible **poets' place** in each city, honoring local poets, with a committee that would be in charge of promoting poetry in their community. Additionally, the requirements were that the Poets' Corner be sponsored by the city and supported by the city government.

Modesto was the third of fifteen cities in California that have formed a Poets' Corner. For Modesto, the poets' place is a bower and two Victorian benches located in the north-west wall of the McHenry Mansion side gardens, now marked by two bronze plaques.

As was intended, thirty-three years after its inception, the Poets' Corner Contest continues as an annual event, supervised by the Poets' Corner Committee with municipal sponsorship by the City of Modesto, Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods, a Subcommittee of the Modesto Culture Commission. The submission period for this year's contest is now open with two categories: **General and Special Theme – poetry exploring the world of Insects and Spiders**. Children from grades 1-12 and adults of the community are invited to submit poems postmarked no later than by Wednesday March 12, 2014. Winners of the contest will be

invited to read their works at the Poets' Corner Celebration upstairs in the McHenry Museum on Sunday May 18, 2014. Each author of a winning poem will receive an anthology of this year's Poets' Corner poems. Submission Guidelines and entry form are available on the following website [www.modestogov.com/prnd/poet\\_corner.asp](http://www.modestogov.com/prnd/poet_corner.asp).

Copies of Poets' Corner Celebration Anthologies from each year are kept in the main room of the McHenry Museum in a small 4-sided bookshelf. Here too are books that local poets care to submit. The Poets' Corner is a living testimony that poetry thrives in Modesto, so sharpen your pencils, submit your poems and join the poetry community.

Lynn M. Hansen, a Modesto poet, is currently Chair of the Modesto Poets' Corner Committee and the Vice President of the Modesto Chapter of the National League of American Pen Women. Contact her at [hansenl@mjc.edu](mailto:hansenl@mjc.edu)

## The Banality of Evil

from page 7

*feel compelled to talk about [them]. And the more you talk about [them] the more you're ignored. The more you're told it's not a problem until eventually you realize that these things need to be determined by the public and not by somebody who was simply hired by the government.*

The bureaucracy was telling him to shut up and move on (in accord with the five rules in "Moral Mazes"), but Snowden felt that doing so was morally wrong.

In a June Op-Ed in The Times, David Brooks made a case for why he thought Snowden was wrong to leak information about the Prism surveillance program. His reasoning

clearly framed the alternative to the moral code endorsed by Swartz, Manning and Snowden. "For society to function well," he wrote, "there have to be basic levels of trust and cooperation, a respect for institu-

But wasn't there arrogance or hubris in Snowden's and Manning's decisions to leak the documents?

tions and deference to common procedures. By deciding to unilaterally leak secret N.S.A. documents, Snowden has betrayed all of these things."

The complaint is eerily parallel to one from a case discussed in "Moral Mazes," where an accountant was dismissed because he insisted on reporting "irregular payments, doctored invoices, and shuffling numbers." The complaint against the accountant by the other managers of his company was that "by insisting on his own moral purity ... he eroded the fundamental trust and understanding that makes cooperative managerial work possible."

But wasn't there arrogance or hubris in Snowden's and Manning's decisions to leak the documents? After all, weren't there established procedures determining what was right further up the organizational chart? Weren't these ethical decisions better left to someone with a higher pay grade? The former United States ambassador to the United Nations, John Bolton, argued that Snowden "thinks he's smarter and has a higher morality than the rest of us ... that he can see

clearer than other 299, 999, 999 of us, and therefore he can do what he wants. I say that is the worst form of treason."

For the leaker and whistleblower the answer to Bolton is that there can be no expectation that the system will act morally of its own accord. Systems are optimized for their own survival and preventing the system from doing evil may well require breaking with organizational niceties, protocols or laws. It requires stepping outside of one's assigned organizational role. The chief executive is not in a better position to recognize systemic evil than is a middle level manager or, for that matter, an IT contractor. Recognizing systemic evil does not require rank or intelligence, just honesty of vision.

Persons of conscience who step outside their assigned organizational roles are not new. There are many famous earlier examples, including Daniel Ellsberg (the Pentagon Papers), John Kiriakou (of the Central Intelligence Agency) and several former N.S.A. employees, who blew the whistle on what they saw as an unconstitutional and immoral surveillance program (William Binney, Russ Tice and Thomas Drake, for example). But it seems that we are witnessing a new generation of whistleblowers and leakers, which we might call generation W (for the generation that came of age in the era WikiLeaks, and now the war on whistleblowing).

The media's desire to psychoanalyze members of generation W is natural enough. They want to know why these people are acting in a way that they, members of the corporate media, would not. But sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander; if there are psychological motivations for whistleblowing, leaking and hacktivism, there are likewise psychological motivations for closing ranks with the power structure within a system — in this case a system in which corporate media plays an important role. Similarly it is possible that the system itself is sick, even though the actors within the organization are behaving in accord with organizational etiquette and respecting the internal bonds of trust.

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Peter Ludlow is a professor of philosophy at Northwestern University and writes frequently on digital culture, hacktivism and the surveillance state.

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# Dartford Crossing: the price of security

By DANIEL NESTLERODE

Sitting in stationary traffic on the M25, one of the most heavily used motorways in Great Britain, has an apocalyptic feel. The silence gets your attention. The emptiness of the opposing lanes adds eeriness to the feeling. Sounds of conversations replace traffic noises. Birds return. You can inspect the surface of the road (which is not as smooth as you might think), bang on the guard rails (and get a rather satisfying “bong”), and examine the detritus left by fast moving automobiles (lots of plastic bits).

After a while, people begin to act absolutely normal --for locations other than a major motorway. A family plays soccer in the opposite lanes of the M25. People walk away from their cars, over the barriers, through the hedge, and down to a burger van parked at a nearby roundabout. They return 30 minutes later carrying water, soft drinks, burgers, chips, etc.

Packed for a weekend in France, we make use of our provisions. We eat dinner and feed our daughter, Gisèle, in the car. We change her nappies/diaper on the rear passenger seat, and take a walk up the road a piece. I wander across the opposite lanes and have a look over the railing at the small stream over which we are suspended. I take some photos, and later play my mandolin in the road, rather than stereotypically “by the side of the road.”

Aware of the “security alert” that had shut the Dartford Crossing entirely, my internal conversations were centered on contingencies and making sense of the little information we had received. How long could we wait before abandoning our car to go in search of a meal and a place to sleep? How long would Gisèle tolerate being confined to our car and its general vicinity? How would I respond to an explosion on the southbound bridge or in the northbound tunnels?

The absence of any sort of civil authority seemed odd. I know that the California Highway Patrol in a similar situation



would have closed the freeway at the last exit (which we had passed) and forced the traffic to exit there. They would also have made statements to the media outlining the basic situation and asking for our patience. Police representatives for Kent and Essex said nothing. Traffic backed up behind us for another 6 miles.

And so we waited. Five full hours passed by the time we began moving forward. At that point we had noted that a few cars were passing us in the opposite lanes of the M25. As that traffic increased and we began to move, we entertained hopes of catching our train to France. The slow roll increased to 25mph as we ascended the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge’s incline. And again we stopped. And waited.

News of the event trickled in. A man was arrested at the tollbooths around 4 p.m. The bridge was closed immediately, the tunnels were closed around 5 p.m. An army bomb disposal unit was called in to handle a suspicious item in the tunnels. A bus was stopped and searched near Dover. The road it was on, the A20, was closed for a mile in both directions on either side of it.

Darkness fell. Gisèle finally slept.

We learned that traffic was being routed off the bridge and back through the tunnels for a time, but that had now stopped.

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I wandered around the bridge without straying too far from the car and found a 20 pence piece on the deck of the bridge. From my vantage point on the bridge I watched almost nothing happen at the tunnel exits. I checked the maps app on my phone and noted that the red dots, which indicated slow or stationary traffic, ceased as they approached the cloverleaf just beyond the tollbooths. I wondered if the danger, as the police saw it, was there instead of on the bridge.

After another two hours, at 11 p.m., a police constable waving a flashlight walked up through the cars from behind us testily shouting at people to get back in their cars. Apparently we would be moving again soon. I remember thinking, “He’s annoyed? Really? We’ve been sitting in traffic longer than he’s been on shift, and he’s annoyed.” I squashed the temptation to engage him in conversation and got back in the car.

Soon we were indeed moving again. Signs ahead of us indicated we would be routed back through the tunnels and into Essex where we could either decide to cross the Thames in London or go home. In that case, we decided to go home. But as we crested the incline of the bridge we noticed that bridge traffic was not being routed back through the tunnels. The roads had opened.

Freed from the constraints of Kent police, we continued down the M25 to the M20 and made our way to Folkstone, where we inquired, at 12:30 a.m., about the next train. We were told 2:20 a.m. and decided immediately to turn around and go home. The two hour drive back to Cambridge offered my wife and I time to discuss our ordeal and how we would have handled something worse.

Home again a 2:30 a.m. after leaving for France at 3:30 p.m., the rest of the weekend slipped sleepily by.

Stanislaus CONNECTIONS, published by the non-profit Modesto Peace/Life Center, has promoted non-violent social change since 1971. Opinions expressed DO NOT necessarily reflect those of the Center or Editorial Committee. We welcome pertinent, signed articles, 800-1000 words or less, and letters with address, phone number. DEADLINE: 10th of the Month PRECEDING the next issue. Send articles and ads to Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org. Submit PHOTOS as high-resolution JPEGs; ADS as PDF files.

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# 12 CALENDAR



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

## ACTIONS FOR PEACE

### Sonora - Stockton

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

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

## OCTOBER

**Ongoing: MJC Modesto Area Partners in Science 2013-2014:** 10/25: Chris Peterson, **Conjunctive Use of Groundwater**. 11/22: Antony Westerling, UCM, **Wildfires in the West**. 12/06: B. Lynn Ingram, **Atmospheric Rivers and Megafloods**. 1/24/14: Mark Aldenderfer, UVM, **Sky Caves of Nepal**. 2/28: Kevin Mitchell, UCM, **Chaos and Fractals**. 3/28: Judy Van de Water, UCD, **Autism and Immunology**. 4/25: Joel Hagen, TBD. *Note: last year, MAPS co-sponsored, with the Gallo Theater, an excellent play about Madame Curie by Susan Marie Frontczak. Susan will portray Eleanor Roosevelt at the Gallo on Oct. 10.*

**Ongoing: MJC Science Colloquium,** Wednesdays, Science Community Center Rm 115, MJC West Campus, 3-4 pm. Oct. 2 Dr. John Gerling, President, Gerling Applied Engineering, Modesto, **Are We Nuking (Microwaving) Ourselves?** FLEX #5040. Oct. 9: Bobby Hutchison, MJC Behavioral Scientist, **The Twenty-first Century AIDS Epidemic**. Oct. 16: Dr. Richard Anderson, MJC Biologist Emeritus, **Birds and Environments of Nicaragua**. Oct. 23: Dr. Debi Bolter, MJC Anthropologist, **Using Forensics on Fossils to Understand Human Evolution**. Dec. 4: Dr. Ken Meidl, MJC Astronomer, **MJC's World Class Planetarium and Observatory**.

**1 TUES: Modesto Film Society** hosts *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. 7 pm, State Theatre. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/105>

**5 SAT: National Day of Dignity and Respect Immigration Reform with**

**Pathway to Citizenship**, Franklin Elementary School, 120 S. Emerald Ave. Modesto, CA. sponsored by Congregations Building Communities. See <https://www.facebook.com/CBCSTAN>

**6 SUN: The State Theatre** presents, *This is Spinal Tap* Doors open at 5:30 pm, film at 6 pm. <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/165>

**12 SAT: Great Valley Museum's Wild Planet Day**, fee event fun for the entire family. Science Community Center, MJC West Campus. \$8/person. Visit <http://schortnerm.blogs.yosemite.edu/wild-planet-day/>

**12 SAT: 2013 Wild West Gala, Jeans & Jewels benefit** for the Society for Handicapped Children & Adults 6 pm to midnight at the Durrer Barn in Modesto, CA. Pig races, Rib-eye steak dinner, deserts, live music, dancing, midway games, live & silent auctions, raffles, beverage bars, more! Tickets: \$100.00 per person, 21 and over only. Tickets at [www.societyforhandicapped.org](http://www.societyforhandicapped.org), by phone (209) 524-3536 or at SHCA office, 1129 8th St., Suite 101, Modesto.

**13 SUN: Science on Screen** presents *Spider Man* with research scientist, Bill Donahue Ph.D., on the **Power of Spiders**. 2 pm, State Theatre. There will be random drawings for great prizes, spiders on display, and lots of interactive activities in the lobby from 2 to 3 p.m., followed by Dr. Donahue's talk, the blockbuster *Spider-Man\**, and a Q&A following the film. This family-friendly program is appropriate for jr high and high school students and adults. Q&A follows film. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/188>

**18 FRI: Great Valley Acoustic Music Series hosts Maurice Tani**. 918 Sierra Dr., Modesto, next to Modesto High School. Admission: \$10 donation. Doors open at 7:30 pm., concert at 8 pm. No one is turned away. See article this issue.

**19 SAT: Great Valley Bookfest**, Manteca. Readers and revelers will once again gather to enjoy great food and beverages as they meet authors, savor cooking demos, attend live performances, and

## MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

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

**CENTER TV:** News and interviews you won't find elsewhere on Comcast Public Access TV Ch 26, Wed. & Sat. 9:00 pm - 10 pm. Also: 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:** Meets twice a month. New workers welcome. Call to confirm time and place. 537-7818, [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org)

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

browse diverse vendor displays. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Orchard Valley Shopping Center. Info at <http://greatvalleybookfest.org>

**20 SUN: Sundays at CBS: Murasaki Ensemble** where East Meets West in a sound weave of Far Eastern subtleties, Near Eastern and Latin American rhythms and improvisational jazz sounds unlike any other. 1705 Sherwood Ave., Modesto. Individual tickets and group rates available. Learn more at [www.cbsmodesto.org/concerts.php](http://www.cbsmodesto.org/concerts.php) or call 571-6060 between 9 am and 1 p.m. weekdays. Visit <http://www.murasakiensemble.com>

## LOOKING AHEAD

**Friday, November 1: Peace/Life Center's Annual Harvest Gathering.** See ad page 1.

**Friday, November 1 El Concilio 45th Gala Anniversary.** The River Mill, 1672 W. Bowman Rd., French Camp, CA. 6:00 PM. Info: 644-2600, or visit <http://www.elconcilio.org> or [cvar@elconcilio.org](mailto:cvar@elconcilio.org)

**January 14, 2014: John McCutcheon in Concert** for the Peace/Life Center.

**January 19, 2014:** The Motherlode Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee presents the 19th Annual **MLK Birthday Celebration**. **Keynote speaker: Dolores Huerta**, co-founder of the United Farmworkers Union with Cesar Chavez. At Sonora High School Auditorium, Shaws Flat Rd. and Washington St., Sonora, 2:00 PM. FREE. Info: Pat Cervelli, 209-928-3494.

**February 1, 2014: MLK Commemoration** with Civil Rights pioneer **Diane Nash**.

## ONGOING

**GREAT VALLEY MUSEUM of Natural History:** Classes for children. Museum

exhibits and store open Tues. to Fri., 9 am to 4:30 pm. and 2nd and 4th Saturday. Info: 575-6196. Call for info about traveling teachers' science programs for schools.

**CENTRAL CALIFORNIA ART ASSOCIATION AND MISTLIN GALLERY.** Exhibits by local artists, classes for children and adults, teaching artists for school programs; 1015 J St., in Tenth St. Place. Open 10 to 5, Mon. through Sat. 529-3369.

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

**CENTRAL VALLEY DEMOCRATIC CLUB.** Monthly meetings: Modesto, Patterson, and Oakdale. For more information, call Neil Hudson at 847-0540.

**CHILDRENS STORY HOURS Stanislaus County Library:** Modesto, **Wiggle Worms!** Program for children age 2 and younger and their caregivers; combines age appropriate stories and movement activities that promote essential pre-reading skills. Mondays: 10:15 am & 11:15 am, Tuesdays, 11:15 am. **Preschool Story Time** (children ages 3 - 6 years) Tuesdays: 6:15 pm; Wednesdays: 10:15 am. Cuentos en espanol-jueves, 6:15. **Bilingual Story Time/Cuentos bilingües** - Saturdays 10:15 am. All Library branches have story hours. All branches closed Fridays. Info: [http://www.stanislauslibrary.org/tk\\_kids\\_storytime.shtml#mod](http://www.stanislauslibrary.org/tk_kids_storytime.shtml#mod)

**Habitat for Humanity's RE-STORE:** used and new quality materials, 630 Kearney Ave (across from Post Office), and at 3124 McHenry Ave., Modesto. Funds benefit homes built by Habitat in Stanislaus County. Visit <http://www.stanislaushabitat.org/home/restore>