



Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

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Why California's drought affects us all

With so much of the nation's food supply concentrated in the "Shake and Bake" state, its good weather is bad news for us all.

By JILL RICHARDSON

As a Californian, I have not gotten too much sympathy from friends and family about our rotten weather this winter. Yes, I said rotten weather. It's been incredibly pleasant — except for a few times when the temperature crept up to 90 — but we've hardly had any rain.

Cry me a river, you might think. Especially if you live in a part of the country where the term "polar vortex" was added to your vocabulary in the past few months. Boo-hoo. It was too sunny and perfect every day.

California's climate problems have nothing to do with human comfort — but they have everything to do with human food. And not just for California.

Unfortunately for the rest of the country, Californians provide a huge share of the nation's fruits and vegetables. If we can't grow crops because we have no water, everybody misses out.

A recent *Mother Jones* article points out

that nearly all of America's almonds, walnuts, strawberries, broccoli, grapes, and more come from the Golden State [<http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2014/02/wheres-californias-water-going>] And just one walnut requires a whopping 4.9 gallons of water. That's not 4.9 gallons for a pound of walnuts. That's for just one nut. A stick of butter? That takes 109 gallons of water to produce.

It's more than a little crazy that a state without much water provides the nation with nearly half of its fruit, nuts, and vegetables. And yeah, you can't judge California's water supplies based on this year alone since it's one of the driest years on record. But whether the current drought continues (as some experts predict) or the recent downpours herald a break in this dry spell, we are foolish to put all of our agricultural eggs in one geographic basket.

The prominent food writer Michael Pollan once made the point that efficiency in agriculture comes at the expense of resilience, and vice versa. To date, it's been efficient to produce 95 percent of America's broccoli in just a few California counties. But that also means that one natural disaster could take out the majority of our broccoli supply in a

DROUGHT. cont. p 4

Come to Peace Camp in June!

By KEN SCHROEDER

Join us for the Modesto Peace/Life Center's 32nd annual Peace Camp in the Sierra, June 27-29 at Camp Peaceful Pines on Clark Fork Rd. off Hwy 108, about 100 miles east of Modesto. We will enjoy workshops, good food, hikes, campfires, singing, talent show, children's activities, crafts, table tennis, horseshoes, tetherball and other recreation, fresh air in a mountain setting, the wind in the pines and cedars and stimulating people of all ages. The camp is now covered in snow, but in June the mountains come alive with wild flowers, birds and campers.

Guadalupe Martinez, Assistant Executive Director of the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment (CRPE) will facilitate a workshop on environmental justice. CRPE is a national environmental justice organization providing legal and organizing assistance to grassroots groups in low-income communities and communities of color. They have focused on issues such as clean air, fracking, climate justice, civil rights, toxic waste and green economic development.



Lupe lives Delano in the southern San Joaquin Valley, where he worked in the vineyards as a farm worker and became a union organizer with Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers. Lupe also served the Union as a contract administrator, negotiator, Regional Director and National Organizing Director. In 1996 he was elected to the UFW Executive Board and subsequently was elected third vice president. Lupe was the first full-time organizer with the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment. He has worked there for

PEACE CAMP. cont. p 2

Myrtle's Attic RUMMAGE SALE *In Honor of Myrtle Osner*

**Fund Raiser for
The Modesto Peace/Life
Center**

**Saturday April 5, 2014
8 am to 2 pm
College Ave.
Congregational Church
parking lot,
1341 College Ave. Modesto**

WE NEED ITEMS!

**To donate articles, take
them to the College Ave.
Congregational Church,
Friday, April 4 between 3
pm and 6 pm.**

**(We will add items to the sale
that are there by 9 am April 5)
For more info., call John at
209-765-3813**

*The Modesto Peace/Life Center
has worked for over 43 years for
peace, social justice, and
sustainability.*



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Just Peace Coffee Brigade to Colombia

Submitted by **SHELLY SCRIBNER**

Just Peace Coffee Brigade: 50 Years of the US/Colombia War on Farmers is Enough!

Come for one or two weeks from May 23-June 8, 2014. Help harvest coffee with a community targeted for repression!

Rural families in the municipality of Dolores, Tolima are facing the likelihood of displacement because of mass arrests, threats and assaults. This is related to the discovery of oil in the region, and the desire to remove all "obstacles" to its development—many the farming families. Many small farms are without hands needed for the May and June coffee harvest.

The Alliance for Global Justice is working with the Tolima farmers union, Astracatol, and the human rights organization, Lazos de Dignidad, to bring a Just Peace Coffee Brigade to help these families bring in the harvest *and not be forcibly displaced*. Your presence on this coffee brigade will not only

offer concrete and practical help to bring in the harvest, but will also

1. Make a strong statement to the oppressors that the world is watching and taking action in support of rural communities and pro-democracy activists in Colombia;

2. Provide accompaniment for Colombian labor and student leaders traveling with us on this brigade.

COSTS: Still being worked out. Depending how long you stay, the delegation costs (NOT including international airfare) will be between \$950 and \$1,400. Final itinerary and costs still being determined. *We are also actively seeking contributions for scholarships for people who want to come do the work but cannot afford the full price.*

INFORMATION: Email James Jordan, james@afgj.org or call 202-540-8336, ext. 3

<http://afgj.org>

Get on The Bus

Get on The Bus is an organization that works towards helping children to visit their mothers or fathers who are in prison. The Modesto Peace Life/Center will have someone from Get on The Bus come tell us about this program on Wednesday, April 2, 2014 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Center, 720 13th St., Modesto.

We invite all to come and learn about how programs like this want to keep families in touch with each other. Call Shelly Scribner for further information, 521-6304.

Get on The Bus is a program of The Center for Restorative Justice Works, a non-profit organization that unites children, families and communities separated by crime and the criminal justice system.

More information at <http://www.getonthebus.us/index.php>



UC Cooperative Extension's Centennial Celebration

The UC Cooperative Extension's Centennial Celebration will be held on Saturday, May 10, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Stanislaus County Agricultural Center, 3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto, corner of Service & Crows Landing Rds.

Celebrate the Extension's 100 years of Science and Service in our community.

This FREE event provides entertainment for the whole family. Live Music, Car Show, Farmers Market, Arts & Crafts Vendors, Kid Zone with Petting Zoo, Professional Chef Demonstration featuring Michael Midgley from Food Network's Cutthroat Kitchen and Mini Spa Day: First 100 mothers get a free gift.

Vendors participate for free. All we ask for is a donated item valued at \$20.00 for a silent auction. *Final date for booth sign ups is April 11.* Spaces limited. Info: Russ Hill, 209-525-6800.

Peace camp

from page 1

over 10 years, continuing to follow his passion for organizing for justice. He MC'd the March 15 anti-fracking rally at the State Capitol in Sacramento.

Julia Stephens of the Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC) will lead a workshop on the state of the Sierra. Julia's background includes being a trail worker, a botany surveyor, studies in outdoor recreation and leadership, and a B.A. in environmental geography. She's worked at CSERC since 2008 in fieldwork, volunteer coordination, member development, web design, grant research, and more. CSERC acts as the environmental defender of water, wildlife and wild places within the Northern Yosemite region of the Sierra Nevada. They deal with clearcutting, new road construction, development projects, water contamination, pesticides, destruction of wildlife habitat, and threats to wild places. Because the Center is located in a region that is still



dominated by proponents of mining, logging, grazing, development, and aggressive use of resources, CSERC is often the only local voice speaking up for nature.

Scott Gifford returns to lead us in singing. He will do a performance for the children and give a workshop for ukulele suitable for beginners. Tim Smart will guide us through the night sky. Because of the new moon, it should be a very dark night with spectacular stars.

Friday offers a long hike with hikers carpooling from Modesto early in the morning, spending the day hiking and arriving at camp in time for dinner. Hike leaders are **John Lucas** and **Mike Chiavetta**. Short hikes will also be available over the weekend.

At the 6,200-foot elevation in the Stanislaus National Forest near the Clark Fork of the Stanislaus River, Camp Peaceful Pines is a beautiful setting for Peace Camp. Camp Peaceful Pines features kitchen and bathroom facilities, rustic cabins and platform tents and a cabin for those with special needs. Depending on the number of campers, cabins may be shared. Campers share in meal preparation, cleanup, and other work. Families and individuals are welcome.

The \$80 fee covers program, food and lodging for the weekend. Young people 18 and under are \$60. Ages 3 and under free. Minors need to be accompanied by an adult. Early registration by June 1 entitles registrants to a \$10 per person discount. Partial scholarships and day rates are also available. Campers may arrive after 2:00pm on Friday. The camp opens with supper at 6:00pm on Friday and closes after the morning workshop on Sunday. Directions and other information will be provided to participants before camp.

ACTION! SIGN UP FOR CAMP! Information: Ken Schroeder, 209-569-0321.



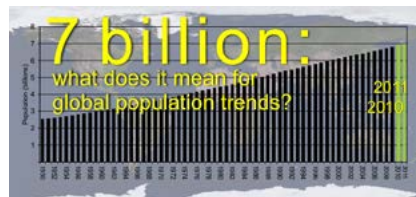
Film night at the Center *Mother: Caring for 7 Billion*

By SANDY SAMPLE

The April Film Night at the Modesto Peace/Life Center will feature *Mother: Caring for 7 Billion*, an award-winning film that ponders the huge challenges we all will face as the world population grows beyond the 7 billion it reached in 2011.

The film is compelling for its honest approach to the complexity of interwoven problems: chronic hunger worldwide, diminishing natural resources, over-consumption, cultural patterns and inequities, and the burden that population growth places on all life systems. Yet it is both inspiring and hopeful about the strength of the human spirit to create a different path for humanity, told through the story of the encounter of an American mother and child's rights activist with an desperately poor but courageous Ethiopian woman.

Grounded in the theories of social scientist Riane Eisler, biologist Paul Ehrlich, economist Mathis Wackernagel, and reproductive health pioneer Malcolm Potts, "Mother:



Caring for 7 Billion" explores the history of "the domination system" that glorifies the domination of man over nature, man over child, and man over women; and insists that to break that pattern, we must change our conquering mindset into a nurturing one.

This film will educate, challenge, and prod you to look at a critical environmental, humanitarian and social crisis through a new lens. It is sure to provoke a lively discussion afterwards. Don't miss it!

Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th Street; Wednesday, April 16th, 6:30 p.m. Learn more about the film at <http://www.motherthefilm.com>



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"Science on Screen" at the State: Physics & Fastballs: The Science of Baseball

As baseball season gets into full swing, the State Theater's "Science on Screen" winds down on Sunday, April 13 with a fascinating look at our national obsession ~ baseball ~ including the physics of the perfect pitch, the aerodynamics behind the batter's swing and the biomechanics of how the players perform.

Through the use of clips from scientific documentaries and Hollywood films, designer, artist, scientist and baseball fanatic David Barker, recently retired from the San Francisco Exploratorium, will take us on a journey through the sport and the amazing science behind it. As he says, "Our basic approach to this is that all ballplayers, from T-ball players to little leaguers to major leaguers, are intuitive scientists. They're always experimenting. and the baseball field is

their laboratory." Barker's program has been a hit at The Exploratorium, AT&T Park, and the Oakland Coliseum where he threw out the first pitch before an A's-Yankees game.

There will also be drawings for great prizes, lots of interactive activities and displays in the lobby from 2 to 3 p.m., followed by the presentation and film, and a Q&A. This family-friendly program is appropriate for junior high and high school students as well as adults.

Doors and interactive activities at 2 p.m.; presentation and film at 3 p.m. Tickets: \$8. FREE for kids and students with ID.

Group discounts are available for classes and organizations of 10.

Information: call Sue Richardson, 209-527-4697. <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/192#>

Green tips for a Green Planet: April is Get Aware and Get Involved Month

Earth Day April 19 and
Love Modesto April 5/6 and 12

Tuolumne River Trust: Riparian
Stewards from the Sierras through
Stanislaus County to the SF Bay

The Clavey is one of three free-flowing rivers in the Sierra. April marks the two year anniversary of the Tuolumne River Trust acquisition and start of the restoration project near Dos Rios Ranch to create a more natural floodplain and support riparian habitat along the Tuolumne River through Stanislaus County, as well as to develop multiple use of the Lower Tuolumne River Parkway, including expanded river access for fishing, boating and hiking.

The Trust's mission since its founding in 1981 has been to make all those who benefit from the Tuolumne aware that their food was grown from its water, their tap water comes from it, their wild salmon were hatched in its gravels, and their backpacking, fishing and rafting trips depend on its health.

Stewardship of the Tuolumne, which runs through 52 miles of Stanislaus County from La Grange to the confluence of the San Joaquin River near Modesto's Old Fisherman's Club on Highway 152, is promoted through education, community outreach and adventures, collaboration with a diverse array of stakeholders, and on-the-ground restoration projects.

In the Central Valley, the Trust is working to create a more **natural floodplain**, a healthier river for people to enjoy and for fish to thrive in, and to restore streamside habitats for the wide variety of species that inhabit such river corridors. The ultimate goal is to provide a riparian habitat that is held in trust as a refuge for our children and grandchildren, which is teeming with fish and wildlife and safe for drinking, fishing and swimming.

Historically the Tuolumne River Trust has made remarkable progress toward its vision. In 1984 it won Wild and Scenic designation for 83 miles of the Tuolumne River. In

the 1990s plans to dam the Clavey River were halted, and the Trust played a major role in winning higher flows for salmon on the Lower Tuolumne. A five-year effort to defeat a plan by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission to divert up to 50% more water from the Tuolumne River than the city takes today was won in 2008. Go to www.tuolumne.org to see the complete Tuolumne River Trust's history and to learn about stewardship opportunities.

ACTION: Tuolumne River Trust is participating in **Love Modesto** on April 5.

Festivities begin at 8 a.m. with FREE food and beverages in front of the Gallo Center at 1000 I St., downtown Modesto! The rally starts at 9 a.m. sharp, when volunteers will receive instructions from project leaders for each specific site prior to beginning volunteer service.

• **West Modesto River Clean up** - 9am to 12:30pm: Help clean the Tuolumne River and its surroundings near River Rd and 9th St. in West Modesto. Volunteers will pick up garbage along the river and give some TLC to the natural areas in this potential riverside park.

• **Legion Park Neighborhood Clean Up** - 9am - 12:30pm: Join Airport Neighborhood families as we clean up Legion Park, the surrounding neighborhood and park space. Volunteers will pick up garbage along the river and give some TLC to the natural areas of the Airport District.

For Questions about these and other Love Modesto, visit <http://lovemodesto.com> or email contact@lovemodesto.com. For Trust volunteer options, visit <http://www.tuolumne.org/> or call 209 236-0330.



Healthier for Life

By JENIFER WEST

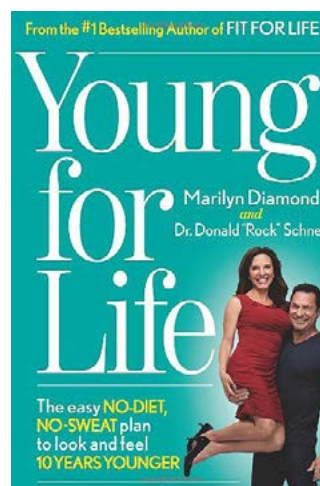
Wow – for the last little while, I’ve awakened feeling GREAT!! So good, in fact, that I’ve felt compelled to write about it. What has changed, that would make this middle-aged body feel so good? Two things: A change in eating philosophy, and an easy, extremely effective exercise approach called isometrics.

Having suffered pretty much all of my life with digestive issues, I recently decided to try a different approach to meal planning. Some may recall “Fit for Life,” a biochemistry-based dietary philosophy popular in the 1980’s. Basically, starches (grains, potatoes, beans, etc.) stimulate the secretion of ptyalin, a digestive enzyme that creates an alkaline condition. Protein, on the other hand, stimulates the secretion of hydrochloric acid and pepsin, an acidic enzyme. Anyone who’s taken a high school chemistry class will understand that the two enzymes neutralize each other, effectively halting

digestion. The partially-digested conglomeration of starch and protein eventually passes from the stomach through the rest of the digestive tract, potentially causing problems along the way. Therefore, one consumes either a starch or a protein at a given meal, along with plenty of vegetables. The original Fit for Life program emphasized a vegetarian/vegan diet. I was exposed to the philosophy at the time, and have to admit I thought the idea a bit extreme – and definitely a tough program to follow.

It turns out Marilyn Diamond, co-creator of the Fit for Life program, eventually suffered a health crisis due to the vegetarian/vegan approach of this particular eating style. She subsequently altered her diet to include animal protein, and drastically cut back grains and other starches. (This could be considered similar to the “Caveman” or “Paleo” diet currently in vogue in some circles.) Her health improved dramatically, and she felt compelled to share her experience in hopes of helping others. Although she has caught a lot of flack from the vegetarian/vegan camp to which she formerly belonged, Ms. Diamond continues to share the message of how to renew one’s health in her book, *Young for Life*, co-authored with her current husband, Donald Schnell, PhD. (Admittedly, I thought the title was somewhat “cheesy,” and wouldn’t have looked twice at the book if I hadn’t read Ms. Diamond’s foreword detailing her experience – she was practically describing me!)

After researching this dietary approach, I tried rearranging my dietary habits, consuming starches and proteins at separate meals. I’d read online that some folks have felt better in just a few days, but I was skeptical – how could a challenge I’ve dealt with for more than 50 years improve noticeably that quickly? *But that’s exactly what happened.* The first day, having consumed only meat and a green drink for lunch, I fully expected to be hungry, probably to the point of shakiness, within a few hours. To my great surprise, not only did I not feel a single hunger pang until dinnertime, I actually felt better than I had for a while! I felt what I can only describe



as a sense of peaceful wellbeing. I’d noticed myself being a bit irritable recently, and even that seemed to be reduced. I was hooked! I’ve tried not to combine starches and proteins since, and aside from a day or two of adjustment, have felt great. As an added bonus, sinus symptoms that have plagued me pretty much my whole life have all but disappeared! For more information, search online for “food combining,” “Paleo diet,” etc.

Of course, the other aspect of any healthy approach to life is exercise – in this case, isometric exercises. Let me say right up front that I HATE to exercise. Don’t like the time it takes away from other things (anything!) I’d prefer to be doing, don’t like the boring repetitiousness of it, *really* don’t like the way it makes me feel when I’m done. Well, at least that’s the way I felt about “working out” before I tried isometrics. This approach is all about using the body’s own muscle strength, simultaneously oxygenating one’s system via deep breathing. And it’s actually healthier than some of the more challenging workouts! The end result is improved posture, increased strength, decreased back and neck pain, and muscle toning and definition. And from the very first session, I have to say I felt wonderful! Actually felt energized! Done correctly, the exercises should not make one sore. The *Young for Life* book gives a head-to-toe “iso” workout, and no doubt this information is available online, as well.

Of course, not everyone will be interested in making such a dramatic change in eating habits, and some who are “allergic to exercise” may not have been persuaded to consider making a change there, either. But I sincerely hope my experience will encourage you, dear reader, to take even one small step toward a healthier lifestyle – whatever that means to you. The rewards will be much greater than the effort it takes!

Drought

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given year.

California is blessed with a mild Mediterranean climate and seemingly unlimited sunshine, but it’s not for nothing that we call ourselves the “Shake ‘n Bake” state. Earthquakes and wildfires are only two of our specialties — we’ve also got mudslides, flash floods, and now this terrible drought.

Even in wet years, it doesn’t rain much.

When farmers concentrate the growth of a single crop in one area, we risk losing that crop to an outbreak of pests or disease. That is even truer when farmers grow the same variety of the same crop. Think grove after grove of Valencia oranges, without any Navels in sight.

Our current farming system arose out of a drive for efficiency. If we grow all of the tomatoes (or lettuce or broccoli) in one spot, then the farmers benefit from an entire distribution and processing system centralized in their area. Perhaps there’s a tomato canning plant or a ketchup factory nearby.

This system currently gives us the cheapest food in the world. Americans spend less than 10 percent of our disposable income on food, *less than any other nation.*

Yet our cheap food system is inherently risky. A few years ago, a drought across most of the country radically reduced our corn production. California’s ongoing drought will reduce the supply of many fruits, nuts, and vegetables.

With the changing climate, we can expect more weather extremes and the crop failures they sow. Let’s build resiliency into our food system by growing fruits, nuts, and vegetables across the country instead of concentrating way too much of our food in one drought-prone state.

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Jill Richardson is the founder of the blog *La Vida Locavore* and a member of the Organic Consumers Association policy advisory board. She is the author of *Recipe for America: Why Our Food System Is Broken and What We Can Do to Fix It.*

Visit Jill’s blog at <http://www.lavidalocavore.org>

Source URL: <http://www.commondreams.org/view/2014/03/14-3>



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Parents, Families, and
Friends of Lesbians
and Gays

Thailand: Treadmill or Tipping Point

By MICHAEL BERKOWITZ

Mike Berkowitz is a retired city planner for the City of San Francisco, a long-time peace/justice/sustainable environment activist and a political writer. I had the opportunity to travel with him and his wife, Lana, on a recent trip to Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. While we were in Thailand, the latest demonstrations took a violent turn, and all demonstration sites were consolidated into one area, as mentioned in the article below, which Mike has generously made available to our readers. — Tina Arnopole Driskill.

Thailand's year of living dangerously may be grinding to a conclusion. But is it moving to another stage — or just another venue?

For months, huge anti-corruption, pro-democracy marches have brought hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions as protestors claim, of peaceful but angry demonstrators into the streets of Bangkok. Large encampments and nonstop rallies have blocked some of the city's major arteries and government buildings.

But now the protestors may be shifting gears. By bringing this city of more than 8 million to a standstill, they have tried to topple the government of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra who governs by proxy for her exiled brother, businessman and exiled former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, less affectionately referred to as "Mr. T." Thaksin was a highly suspect businessman whom many claimed bought his way to head of the government in 2001. He then used his position to further his business interests and his family's vast financial empire.

Thaksin Shinawatra was ousted in 2006, convicted by Thailand Supreme Court's Criminal Division for abuse of power, guilty among other things of egregiously using his power to secure public lands at auction for his wife. Thaksin fled to Dubai rather than face prison. Over \$1 billion of his Thai financial empire remains frozen. But from Dubai, he engineered a coup to install his inexperienced younger sister Yingluck Shinawatra as his puppet ruler, the new Prime Minister of Thailand. Through her, Mr. T is seeking a pardon and the right to return to access his vast fortune.

Through the brother and sister combination, the Shinawatra Regime has continued their economic consolidation and abuse of power, engineering questionable election returns and antagonizing large segments of the population with their

"We are right and we will win."



favoritist policies. Their recent proposal to divide Thailand into two, to strengthen their northern base, did not endear them to the rest of the country. An attempt to bribe farmers by promising high rice payments has not been honored as the economy and the government's ability to pay has faltered.

The army has remained largely neutral, observing restraint in the face of the large protests. The same cannot be said of

"We are choosing democracy over corruption!"

the police. Police have beaten demonstrators though they dare not dismantle the many barricades that have forced traffic rerouting of major streets and around government buildings. Video widely circulating on the Internet indicates police involvement in a bombing that resulted in four deaths last week.

But the Shinawatra Regime has largely and somewhat successfully tried to wait out the demonstrators. This nonaction may be having an effect, as in the last few days demonstrators have pulled back, regrouping their positions in the Lumpini Park District. People's Democratic Reform Committee

(PDRC) protest leader Suthep Thaugsuban maintains that support for government change remains strong. Demonstrators along the barricades agree. "We are right and we will win," volunteered a woman group leader, from under her bandana.

Others carrying flags and whistles enthusiastically concurred. Marneenate Rugkiate, a professional guide, warned that Mr. T was dangerous, but was optimistic that his family's hold on the country was slipping. "We are choosing democracy over corruption!"

Despite the persistence and enthusiasm of the street, judgement on the Shinawatra Dynasty now seems headed to the courts. As the stalemate in the streets winds on, the corruption charges have wound through the courts, seemingly advancing toward resolution. The Supreme Court has already condemned Mr. T while Yingluck is still trying to fight off charges by the National Anti-Corruption Commission and avoid removal by the judiciary. Meanwhile the upper house of the Thai representative government which would initiate impeachment proceedings is subject to elections at the end of March. Demonstrators including the PDRC reformers have roundly attacked these elections as rigged by the Shinawatra Regime.

So far the regime has been constrained from conducting fraudulent elections and implementing their proposals to pardon the prime minister's brother, remove the criminal charges, unfreeze his assets and allow him to return to Thailand. But should the court proceed with its indictment of the regime, they threaten unleashing the violence of their red-shirted vigilantes which have already resulted in sporadic violence and death. Then presumably the army will have to abandon its posture of neutrality to intervene. But on which side might that be?

Michael Berkowitz has most recently worked on the Occupy Movement. He was Land Use Planning Consultant to the government of China, a past Senior Manager of the San Francisco Planning Department, the Planning Commissioner for the City of Berkeley, and Special Assistant to the Vice Mayor of Berkeley. He also taught at Pikeville College in Pikeville, Kentucky, worked with Eastern Kentucky Welfare Rights with miners and was a Business Agent and Officer of SEIU. He has Masters degrees from Yale and Stanford in history.

The Man I Knew

First Place ~ Division II Peace Essay Contest

BY CERINA CERVANTES

Central Valley High School ~ Kirsten Bartlett

On January 8, 2005 Ceres police officers responded to a 911 call about a man with a SKS assault rifle in front of a local liquor store. The man was identified as nineteen year old Andres Raya, a US marine, and local citizen of Ceres. Andres had just returned home to Ceres from his deployment in Iraq. When police officers arrived on scene Andres opened fire on them, killing one and seriously wounding another. Andres then fled into the neighborhood where officers surrounded him in an alleyway. In the alleyway, Andres was fired at by police and fell dead due to gunshot-wounds. If the military had focused more on the mental health of their troops this event could have been avoided.

The reason why I chose to write about this topic was because Andres Raya was my cousin. After hearing about these events I was stunned because that was not the Andres or "Andy", as our family members called him, I knew. He was a kind and loving man that always dreamed about serving his country. Andy attended Ceres High and after school would go walking to a recruiting office in Ceres and spend his afternoons there. Finally, Andy got his wish to serve his country after his high school graduation. He was deployed into Iraq as a US marine, and his job was as a motor brigade transportation operator. In Iraq, Andy witnessed and experienced first-hand combat against our military's enemy with his brigade.

I was stunned because that was not the Andres or "Andy",
as our family members called him, I knew.

On Andy's deployment back from combat in Fallujah, his immediate family and friends noticed a change in him. "He came back different," his mother Julia Cortez Raya told the *Modesto Bee* ("Suicide by cop": Marine provokes police shootout to avoid return to Iraq). The usual happy, outgoing, and comedic Andy had changed. He mostly kept to himself and was always in deep thought. Andy also expressed often how he did not want to return back to Iraq. After his return home, followed the events of January eighth. This was when Andy was made out to be a monster in the eyes of Ceres citizens. There are many stories about what might have made Andy take such actions. Plain and simple his mental instability along with drugs and alcohol which he used to numb and mask his feelings, of fear and confusion of the war, caused his mental breakdown.

This event could have been avoided by the military focusing more on the mental stability of their troops returning from war. Most soldiers after war suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and other mental health disorders. All the US military does is have soldiers who have experienced combat fill out a four page form called a 00-2796 upon their return. Which is basically a four page check box answer form. This kind of evaluation is not fitting for our troops who have served in war. Studies even showed that "20.3% of soldiers who screened positive for depression or PTSO reported that they were uncomfortable reporting their answers honestly on the routine post deployment screening," (Importance of anonymity to encourage honest reporting in mental health screening after combat deployment). Which

means our troops could easily lie about their experience in war through these forms because, they don't want to be deemed as "mentally unstable," or remember the horrors of war they had to go through.

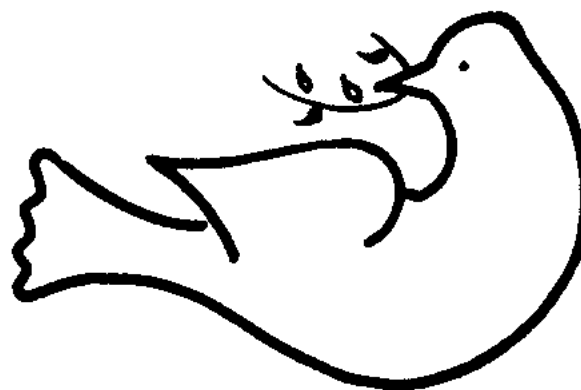
What I think would be suitable for our troops who faced combat is an evaluation of mental health before, during, and after their service in war. Also, these evaluations would not be a four page form but would actually be performed by a psychiatric counselor. By doing this the military and its soldiers could be improved. The military could see the changes a person goes through during the war and help them from lashing out if they have mental instability. A soldier who has faced combat in war dealing with mental trauma could benefit from this by, having someone to talk to about their experiences in war without feeling like they are being judged and take the necessary steps to cope with their mental trauma caused by the war.

Works Cited

Importance of anonymity to encourage honest reporting in mental health screening after combat deployment. Pubmed.gov. Web. 26 October 2013

"Suicide by cop": Marine provokes police shootout to avoid return to Iraq. WSWS.org. Web. 26 October 2013

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Illegal Trash Dumping

First Place ~ Division III Peace Essay Contest

By **ABIGAIL SLOAN**

Independent Home School ~ Susan Janis

Illegal trash dumping is considered a victimless crime - or at least it was, until November 8, 2012. On that day, my friend's uncle, Stan Hyer, died while trying to protect his property from illegal dumpers. He was hit and killed by their pickup truck. Although Stan Hyer is the only man who died due to trash dumping, this disgraceful practice poses a health risk to many. When paint cans, tires, old furniture, construction refuse, and garbage are dumped in orchards, empty lots, or private properties, people (especially children) are exposed to harmful chemicals, as well as nails and other sharp objects. Although this is a problem all over California, it seems to be epidemic in Stanislaus County. From July 2012 to December 2012, our county picked up over 111,000 pounds of dumped garbage. (Benziger) This battle between people trying to get rid of their garbage and farm and ranch owners trying to protect their property must end. Here are a few ways to help stop illegal trash dumping and end unnecessary threats to our people and our community.

First off, we should create a volunteer trash pickup. I believe that one of the reasons people dump trash is because they do not want to, or cannot afford to pay what the landfills charge to take their garbage. If we create a free service that could relieve them of their trash at their house, people would not be tempted to unload it beside the road somewhere. *But how would we fund it?* you ask. It is pretty simple. "Funding from the California Integrated Waste Management Board is used to clean up illegal solid waste sites on farm or ranch property." (Boyd) I believe that a better use of this funding is to stop these illegal dumpers, not clean up after them.

Also, I believe that Stanislaus County should enforce stricter laws concerning illegal dumping. The current law states that if the trash dumped is less than one cubic yard it is considered an infraction, and a law enforcement officer must have witnessed it being dumped. If it is larger than one cubic yard, or if it contains tires, it does not have to be witnessed, and is considered a misdemeanor. It is a felony if it contains toxic materials. I think that we should enforce a rule that all dumping not containing toxic materials is a misdemeanor. A cubic yard is pretty big for a pile of potentially dangerous garbage on someone's private property.

Lastly, I think that every town in Stanislaus County should have a small landfill. Because gas prices are going up, it is more expensive to drive all the way to a dump in another town. I think that even small towns should have their own landfill. If landfills were closer and cheaper, it would be easier for people to dispose of their trash properly.

I believe that a volunteer trash pickup, stricter laws, and small landfills for every town are reasonable solutions to help stop illegal trash dumping - a pressing problem in Stanislaus County. If we can end illegal dumping, we will be ending one more distraction keeping us from living peacefully together in our community. Once we are at peace locally, then we can begin to work together to create peace worldwide.

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2012

Boyd, Vicky. "Don't get trashed." [The Grower](http://TheGrower.com). 1 June, 2005

Illegal trash dumping is considered a victimless crime - or at least it was, until November 8, 2012. On that day, my friend's uncle, Stan Hyer, died while trying to protect his property from illegal dumpers.

Every day, approximately 85 Americans are victims of gun violence.

Ending Gun Violence and Bringing Peace

First Place ~ Division IV Peace Essay Contest

By **ARNAV KRISHNAMOORTHY**

Lakewood Elementary School ~ Christine Malekos-Quick

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, gun violence claims over 30,000 lives every year in the U.S. Every day, approximately 85 Americans are victims of gun violence. There are more than three deaths by firearm every hour. Now at first look, this may be just numbers and statistics, but really, it's about people and lives lost, all because someone abused a firearm. The issue of gun violence is common in every community, including ours.

When our founding fathers wrote the second amendment of our constitution, they gave the people the right to bear arms. I'm sure that they did not expect so much violence and abuse to come out of this freedom the people are given.

When people abuse the right to have a gun, violence begins and lives end. They cause tragedies that affect people's lives in the worst way. This problem of gun violence shows true in an event that happened in our own community this year when Marty Kent, a 17 year old Modesto teenager, died trying to protect his mother from a gunman.

To solve this horrific problem that occurs in our community and nation every day, we should take three major steps. First, parents can easily help their children be aware of gun violence. Some video games can have violent images and scenes that are a bad influence on young children and teaches them that violence is cool. This can cause some children to grow up and still believe in this idea. Parents can stop this idea by monitoring which video games their children are allowed to play. Schools can take the second step. If we can educate children about the dangers of gun violence at an early age, it will prepare them for the future. There should be a gun safety week, teaching kids to be aware of gun violence and not take

part in it. Finally, the government should do everything in their power to lower gun crime rates. They need to increase the enforcement of the existing laws that security and background checks are needed to buy a gun. Another solution to this problem that the government can do is to have computer chips with information about who owns a gun inside guns. When the gun fires, it can be created so that it logs when and where the gun was fired. Also, if there is a crime scene, and if police find a gun, the chip will tell them who the owner is. These steps may be small, but they can affect a whole world.

We may have to take many steps in order to reach these goals, but if we come together and stand up against gun violence, it can happen.

"Peace is a journey of a thousand miles and it must be taken one step at a time."

— Lyndon B. Johnson

1908-1973

Live with Joy, Purpose and Confidence

By TIFFANY MELLO

What is the secret to happiness? Can we live in a violence free, stress free world? The Art of Living Foundation, founded in 1981 by the world-renown philanthropist and spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, teaches a program that provides potent answers.

Can one understand the mechanics of the mind or gain control over emotions? Is there a healthy way to deal with stress? Are there tools that can transform the quality of life for all the people in the world?

Within you lie vast, untapped possibilities waiting to be discovered. The Art of Living's Happiness Program is a course that sets this potential free and helps you gain a greater vision of who you are. You can come to realize that you have the power to create a joyous life that is on-purpose, the confidence to stretch and grow beyond limiting beliefs, and the ability to lead a deeply fulfilling life.

In today's demanding, distracting world the mind is stuck in the past and the future. But happiness is here and now. It cannot be experienced when one is stuck regretting yesterday or worried about tomorrow. During the Happiness Program you will discover your unlimited power and freedom - not as a concept, but as a direct experience.

The centerpiece of the Happiness Program is the Sudarshan

Kriya, a powerful breathing technique that uses specific, natural rhythms to get you unstuck. Sudarshan Kriya, time tested based on ancient Vedic knowledge, yields continued growth. In addition, in the Happiness program teaches several practical and powerful tools that will benefit you for the rest of your life.

"The secret lies in our own breath. Through breathing exercises, certain breathing techniques and some practice of meditation, we can rekindle positive vibrations within and around us."

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

It has been said of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar that not since Mahatma Gandhi has one person united so many people of different races, religions, traditions, economic and social status, and nationalities, creating a One World spiritual family across the globe. Sri Sri's message is simple: "Love and

wisdom can prevail over hatred and violence."

All of AOL's programs are guided by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's philosophy: "Unless we have a stress-free mind and a violence-free society, we cannot achieve world peace." Operating in over 150 countries, The Art of Living Foundation (AOL) is a non-profit, educational and humanitarian organization. For further information about the Art of Living's international organization go to artofliving.org.

AOL offers numerous highly effective educational and self-development programs and tools that facilitate the elimination of stress and foster deep and profound inner peace, happiness and well-being for all individuals. These programs, which include breathing techniques, meditation, yoga, and practical wisdom for daily living, have helped millions around the world to completely transform their lives.

For a free intro talk about the Art of Living Happiness Program, free guided meditation and instruction on simple breathing techniques contact Tiffany Mello or Tim Lechuga at modestoartofliving@yahoo.com.

The Happiness Program is coming to Modesto!

Wednesday, April 30 through Sunday, May 4

Weekdays: 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm

Weekend: 9:30 am – 4:30 pm

Register at: http://secure.artofliving.org/course_details.aspx?course_id=16457

Nineteenth Annual Aileen Jaffa Young Poets Contest

By CLEO GRIFFITH

The Nineteenth Annual Aileen Jaffa Young Poets Contest is now open to all students K-12 living in or attending school in Stanislaus County. Each student may submit up to three entries at \$1 per entry. Poems may be any style, no longer than 24 lines. Poems must be the original creative work of the student.

Postmark deadline for submissions is midnight Saturday, April 12, 2014. Winners will be notified by May 10. Students will receive their awards and the winning poems will be read at an Awards ceremony at 1 p.m. Saturday May 17, 2014 in the auditorium of the Stanislaus County Library, 1500 I St., Modesto.

Offered by the Poets of the San Joaquin as a means of encouraging young writers throughout Stanislaus County, the contest includes the following awards: First: \$25, Second: \$15, Third: \$10 in each of the four categories: Category 1 grades K-3, Category 2 grades 4-6, Category 3 grades 7-9, Category 4 grades 10-12.

In addition, the Modesto Branch of the National League of American Pen Women will award a \$60 *Aileen Jaffa Outstanding Poem* award in each of two combined categories, Category 1 and 2, and Category 3 and 4. These awards are to honor the memory of Aileen Jaffa, the founding President of the Poets of the San Joaquin and member of the Modesto Branch of the National League of American Pen Women.

Carol David, the current President of the Modesto Branch of NLAPW will present the awards.

Entry forms are available at the County Schools, McHenry Museum, Mistlin Gallery, the libraries on "I" St. and in Salida or by calling Cleo Griffith, 543-1776 or at <http://www.chaparralpoets.org/YoungPoetsContest.pdf>

SAVE the DATE: MoSt's first gala benefit

MoSt, The Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center, will host it's first gala benefit on Sunday, May 4, 2014 from 2-5 pm at the Barkin' Dog Grill.

Join us for music, food, art, great company, and poetry. Tickets will be \$15 and will help support the endeavors of the Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center as we continue to promote poetry throughout Stanislaus County and Stanislaus County through poetry.

Visit <http://www.mostpoetry.org>



More Taylor Graham poetry

Prompt: Considering that the U.S. has been at war for nearly 10 years now, write a poem. The poem should not be longer than 15 lines,

REST IN PEACE

Tonight the news is full of horror.
Another school shooting, almost thirty dead,
mostly children. The coverage never ends.
At last I leave the TV to its repeating
massacres past and present
and go to my room; pick up an old novel:
a duel to the death by mistake
of identity. Enough of that, something less
Victorian. Another story, girl fleeing
her bloody homeland, marauding gangs
of murderers, her family dead. My dog
snuggles up beside me on the bed, offers her
chest and belly for a rub. I stroke her
again and again. Almost ten years
now, again, our country's been at war.

Taylor Graham: 40 years of naturalist poetry and dog search and rescue

Taylor Graham has lead three merry natural lives... 40 years a published poet, two summers as a wilderness ranger, and an adult life-time as a dog search and rescuer.

The native Californian studied for a PhD in Comparative Literature, specializing in German and French lyric poetry and 19th Century novels (literary glimpses of the Industrial Revolution). She married her husband, Hatch, a wildlife biologist/forester, and transferred her attention to search-and rescue with their dogs in Alaska, Virginia, and back to California. She volunteered for two summers as a wilderness ranger in the Mokelumne Wilderness with her dog, helping with trail maintenance. When Hatch became coordinator for the Bluebird Recovery Program in El Dorado and Amador Counties, she joined him on his weekly "nestbox trails" checks.

She has been writing and publishing nature-oriented poems for over forty years, and is a member of Red Fox Poetry Underground, a small poetry critique group that has participated in Season for Non-Violence activities in Placerville since 2007. Her online and print journals include: *The Iowa Review*, *Poetry International*, *Southern Humanities Review*, and the anthologies *California Poetry: From the Gold Rush to the Present* (Santa Clara Univ) and *Villanelles* (Everyman's Library, London). Her book titles are: *What the Wind Says* (Lummox Press, 2013), poems about her forty years of living, training, and searching with her dogs; and *Walking with Elihu: poems on Elihu Burritt, the Learned Blacksmith* (2010). Burritt was a well-known peace activist on both sides of the Atlantic and helped organize a series of international peace congresses in Europe.

She and Hatch live on five acres outside Placerville with their two retired SAR trained dogs; an untrained cat, and five sheep. A year and a half ago they had solar panels installed.



Behind the New Development

An old dog knows every inch of path that cuts down from oak-hill to the verge of creek. He holds a lifetime of scent-trails in his head, woven like spider silk, a web so complex it maps his world.

He trots as if lost in reminiscence of old trails along a vacant fringe of woods. Past a new FOR SALE sign. In a dog's short life, will this last bit of wild be manicured lawn with split-level house?

He stops abruptly, stands as if listening to what the liveoaks say without a breeze. He gazes, sniffs, as if recalling every memory that is Nature's, bedrock

of the land's tenacious growth. He tests the wind. Scent, a dog's elixir – but those familiar fragrances are changing. The creekside's up for sale. The dog resumes his path.

Beyond Land's End Cornwall, 1864

A sculpted headland of winding dells, cultivated fields and grazing Shorthorns, grass high enough already for the scythe –

but it's the ocean that pulls, its everlasting pulse against shore; its art of grinding cliff-granite to sand, and heaping sand to earth-

work. Eternal smash and creation.

But on Cape Cornwall, see what man does, in his mortal way of revising Nature: a mine, tunneled under ocean-bed

in quest of tin – who would guess such unseen industry under the paths of sailing ships and whales?

Here are miners tunneling through dark:

these men who delve under the Atlantic floor – aren't they afraid what Mother-Earth vein might open,

what nerve they might strike with their sharpened tools that dig, and take, and can't give back?

Very Early on Earth Day

My dog calls me out of sleep. Overnight the wind has rearranged everything. The sun's first rays just now exploding gold shrapnel over the east ridge.

And everything is moving. Sun-shatter through leaves, and wind plucking overnight spider-webs till they hum gold filament against the dark trunks of oaks,

everything flowing, glowing gold-green, a morning I couldn't describe. And so my dog stands simply wagging.

Wasn't he good to bring me here?

"Graces of an English landscape"

Will the utilitarian and unsparing science of the latter days...

shear away these beautiful tresses?

— Elihu Burritt, "A Walk from London to John O'Groats" (1864)

Of hedgerow tree and hawthorn hedge who can adequately sing? Who but the birds who nest there at the edge

of cultivation? Like many a lovely thing we take for granted, endangered now. Who can adequately sing

of plough-horse and the brindle cow in an age of iron, smoke, and steam one takes for granted? Endangered now,

the unprofitable margin and unbridled stream. The picturesque has little place in an age of iron, smoke, and steam.

Still, a traveler's lightened by the grace of unproductive leaf, and shade. If picturesque has little place,

who mourns the work of axe and blade? Who but the birds who nest here at the edge of unproductive leaf and shade, of hedgerow tree and hawthorn hedge?



Sir Tim Berners-Lee calls for 'Magna Carta' bill of rights for world wide web

By LEE MUNSON

Sir Tim Berners-Lee has called for a 'Magna Carta' for the world wide web to protect its users across the globe.

The creator of the web also believes controls need to be put into place to ensure it remains independent and equally accessible to all.

Sir Tim's comments come on what is the 25th anniversary of his first draft of the first proposal for what would become the world wide web.

If you're pretty sure you remember reading about a 20th anniversary* within the last year, well, you'd be right.

Berners-Lee's initial abstract proposal for what would become the web was created on 12 March 1989. It wasn't until April 1993 that CERN, where Berners-Lee was contracting, served the first web page.

His 'Magna Carta' proposal is to form part of an initiative called **Web We Want** which is calling on people to "stand up for their right to a free, open and truly global internet".

Speaking to the *Guardian*, Berners-Lee said:

"Unless we have an open, neutral internet we can rely on without worrying about what's happening at the back door,

we can't have open government, good democracy, good healthcare, connected communities and diversity of culture. It's not naive to think we can have that, but it is naive to think we can just sit back and get it."

Berners-Lee has been an outspoken critic of government surveillance following leaks by ex-US intelligence contractor Edward Snowden, saying that that such activity could undermine the democratic nature of the web.

He told the BBC that the use of an open and free internet in the future is akin to the importance of human rights and made a call for people to protest against surveillance, saying that the internet should be a neutral medium that can be enjoyed without the feeling that "somebody's looking over our shoulder."

From <http://nakedsecurity.sophos.com/2014/03/12>

More on Web We Want at <https://webwewant.org>

Also see <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-26540635> and

* <http://nakedsecurity.sophos.com/2013/04/30/cern-geneva-celebrates-20-years-of-the-world-wide-web/>



Friends of the Modesto Library Used Book Sale on May 3

The Friends of the Modesto Library will hold its annual Used Book Sale on Saturday, May 3, 2014 from 8 a.m.-3 p.m., on the East portico of the Modesto Stanislaus County Library, 1500 I St.

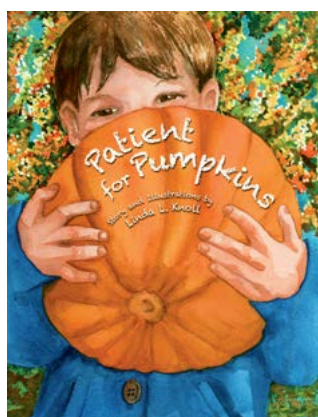
Thousands of books in every genre. Prices are \$1 hardbound, 50 cents paperback. The Beard Family Companies will match our total up to \$4,000.



ACTION: For information or to donate books, contact Clare Noonan, 522-5054. clarenoo@gmail.com

Local author, artist releases new picture book, *Patient for Pumpkins*

Local author, artist, teacher, and Stanislaus Connections Layout Editor, Linda Knoll, will release a new picture book in April. *Patient for Pumpkins* celebrates the farmer's market, fruits and vegetables and seasonal eating. The California Foundation for Ag in the Classroom says "We enthusiastically include the beautifully written and illustrated *Patient for Pumpkins* in our online bibliography of children's books about agriculture."



In the story, T.J. is anxious to buy a pumpkin at the farmer's market, but he's disappointed when he and his father arrive at the spring market and there are none. Dad urges him to "be patient" because each fruit or vegetable ripens in its own time. They continue visiting the market throughout the summer and enjoy the variety of tasty, locally grown produce. In October, T.J.'s patience is rewarded. A sidebar throughout the book describes the progress of the pumpkin's growth on the farm through the season.

A limited number of pre-release copies of *Patient for Pumpkins* will be available at Linda's Modesto studio during the annual **Artist Open Studio tour on April 12 and 13,**

between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. The original art will be on display and art and books will be for sale. Officially, the book goes on sale April 22 in local stores and online.

In addition to writing and illustrating picture books, Linda Knoll is an artist, graphic designer and art teacher. Having lived in Modesto, California all her life, she strives to share the San Joaquin Valley's richness with children of all ages. Her first book, *Over in the Valley* will also be available at the open studio event.

For information about Linda's books or the open studio tour, contact her at 209-247-2626 or email llknoll@gmail.com Her website is www.lindaknollart.blogspot.com



Will you have a spot of tea?

By DANIEL NESTLERODE

Over a cup of tea the other day a good, and truly English, friend asked me, "What do people in other countries drink?"

"Anything."

"No what I mean is, what do they *drink*?"

"Really, anything. Water, soft drinks, coffee, tea..."

"But it's not the same, is it?"

"No, you're right Britain has a thing about tea."

Our exchange led me to think about tea in a way that I hadn't before. I realized that tea, like "football," is both an activity and an object. (And there the similarity rather abruptly ends.)

Tea is the indispensable item in the pantry. The electric kettle is the indispensable kitchen appliance. And whether you drink from one of the mugs in your extensive collection or from bone china, you drink tea.

You can chart the course of your day by tea. Most people start their day with a cup. You can get the coffee out at break time, around 10. Tea is what you drink with lunch, though you might also have something cooler with your food on a hot day. Tea time happens again at around 4 p.m. And then, of course, you have a cup of tea after dinner.

Dinner itself is sometimes called Tea. That's when you have something lighter than normal and maybe cold instead of hot. (The food not the tea.) You could have sandwiches and salad for tea. On a special occasion Sunday afternoon in the summer you can have High Tea. Scones with butter, clotted cream, and strawberry jam along with your tea.

Tea is a social lubricant. You serve it when people stop by for a visit. I tend to put the kettle on before I answer the

doorbell. If someone stops by for a visit and can stay for more than 20 minutes, they'll say yes to tea and think it odd if you don't offer. If they say no, it means they probably aren't staying long.

Likewise, if you ask someone in for a cup of tea, you had better be prepared for a yes answer. I once got a ride home



from a late night gig. I asked my new acquaintances in for a cup at 1 a.m. I figured it was so late that they would understand I was being more polite than hospitable, but I was wrong. Ninety minutes and 2 cups of tea later I was able to close the door behind them and go to bed.

Tea is so ubiquitous here in the UK that people who don't like tea drink tea. Almost everyone here puts milk in it. Indeed taking it "white" is so prevalent that people just assume you take it with milk. Sometimes I get it that way whether I want it or not. (For the record, I prefer tea with no milk and one sugar.) Some put both milk and sugar in it. Tea with milk and two sugars is as much a cup of tea as coffee with steamed milk and chocolate syrup in it is coffee. One friend confided in me that he hated tea until he had without milk. Now he loves it.

Tea is serious business here. Several years ago Twinings created a limited blend of Earl Grey with rose. It seemed to sell well enough so they called it a success and discontinued it as planned. That's when the trouble started. Twinings was basically forced by disgruntled shoppers and tea drinkers to resume production of the blend. Luckily, it continues to sell enough to keep Twinings interested in producing it. Otherwise my wife would have a less satisfying morning cup.

I should also note, in case it's not well known, that tea is not native to the island. So it's not as if Britons have been sipping hot water diffused with dried tea leaves for 6000 years. Further, it was not immediately adopted as a cultural icon by the British public when it became available.

In fact the East India Tea Company was in such dire straits in 1773 that the Parliament passed the Tea Act. This act reduced the taxes on tea including both exportation from India and importation to both Britain and her colonies. The Act also made it legally possible to ship tea directly from India to ports in America, like Philadelphia, Charleston, and (yes, you guessed it) Boston. Tea all over the empire was instantly easier to obtain and less expensive.

All of this information amounts to a rather trivial fascination, I grant you. But taken together it begins to throw some light on British customs and character. It is one way in which Britain is held together as an idea. Most residents of England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland drink tea as I have described above. They can count on that idea as a commonality in a place that lacks such commonalities.

Still my friend's original question stands: "What do people in other countries drink?" The answer is, Britain is unique to my knowledge in this case. Americans don't drink anything in particular. There are no unwritten rules about the appropriate times to drink what we don't all drink. We have no avenue to social interaction the way tea is an avenue to it.

Further the question itself demonstrates the strength of tea as a cultural phenomenon. He cannot imagine what else to do at 4 p.m., and the idea of not doing anything in particular is so far removed from experience that the question doesn't begin to address the possibility of not doing anything!

It makes me wonder what things about my culture that I take for granted. How about you. What do you take for granted?

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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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

APRIL

Ongoing: MJC Science Colloquium, Wednesdays, Science Community Center Rm 115, MJC West Campus, 3-4 pm.
April 2: Anjani Thakur, M.D. Valley Vein Health Center, Paradigm Shifts in Surgery.
April 9: April Bird, M.S. Invertebrate Researcher at the University of Oregon.

2 WED: Get on The Bus works towards helping children to visit their mothers or fathers in prison. A speaker will tell us about this program. 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., Modesto Peace Life/Center, 720 13th St., Modesto.

2 WED: "Book Club Secrets Revealed." Everything you wanted to know about bookclubs. Modesto Library Aud., 7-8:30 pm. RSVP: 558-7814.

4 FRI: Suburban Placemaking. Michele E. Reeves provide real-world examples of revitalization that you can take back and apply to your own communities. StanCOG - 1111 I St., Modesto, 9:00 – 10:30 am. FREE. Register at <http://goo.gl/k0DJJo3>. Info: contact Erin Hauge: erin@lgc.org. Visit www.lgc.org

5 SAT: PLC Benefit Rummage Sale, College Ave. Congregational Church parking lot, 1341 College Ave. Modesto, 8 am to 2 pm. To donate articles, take them to the College Ave. Congregational Church, Friday, April 4 between 3 pm and 6 pm. Info: John Lucas, 209-765-3813' email lucasjal@sbcglobal.net

5 SAT: California Native Plant Society, North San Joaquin Valley Chapter's Native Plant Sale. Great Valley Museum, 1100 Stoddard Ave., Modesto. 9 am – 1 pm. Info: 209-575-6196

11 FRI: MJC Modesto Area Partners in Science 2014, MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132. 7:30 pm. "Art Inspired by Science and Mathematics" Dr. Carlo H.

Séquin, UC Berkeley. More at <http://maps.events.mjc.edu>

12-13 SAT-SUN: Stanislaus County Artists Open Studio Tour. 11 am to 5 pm. Tour map booklets \$10 each. Students 18 and under FREE in attendance with a map holder. Info: <http://www.stanislausaos.wordpress.com>. Jim Christiansen, 209-241-7130, email: mercenary_graphics@yahoo.com. Facebook: Stanislaus County Artists Open Studio.

13 SUN: "Science On Screen" at the State Theatre presents *Fastballs: The Science of Baseball*. 2 p.m. <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/192#>. See article, this issue.

16 WED: "Film Night at the Center" features *Mother: Caring for 7 Billion*. Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., 6:30 pm. See article this issue.

19 SAT: 25th Annual Modesto Earth Day in the Park. Graceada Park, Needham & Sycamore. Green Education, free recycling: Electronic Waste and CRV, paper shredding, used mercury thermostats/thermometers. Society for Disabilities Thrift Store collecting for reuse. Entertainment: EarthCapades Environmental vaudeville, Bubblemania and Co., MPD K9 Demo, The Silly String Band. Food, more. Info: www.modestogov.com/earthday or call the Solid Waste Office, 209-577-5495. 10:00am - 4:00pm

23 THURS: "Benefits of Waldorf Education." Educator Speaker Steve Spitalny talks on Waldorf education and Manzanita Charter, Modesto's first Waldorf methods school, opening in 2015. Free. Modesto Library Basement, 16th & I Sts., 7 pm.

24 THURS: DKG Epsilon Nu Chapter "Fun" Raiser Film Night, State Theatre, 1307 J St. Modesto. Wine, appetizers, opportunity baskets. Film: Driving Miss Daisy. Benefits Education Foundation of Stanislaus County, MJC/CSUS Scholarships, Library Books. Donation: \$25.00 Tickets at <http://www.thestate.org/> at the door or by calling 545-0883. 5:30 p.m.-9:00. <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/228>

30 WED: The Happiness Program, through Sunday, May 4. Weekdays: 6:30 pm –

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.

9:30 pm; Weekend: 9:30 am – 4:30 pm. See article, this issue. Register at: http://secure.artofliving.org/course_details.aspx?course_id=16457

LOOKING AHEAD

Saturday, May 3, 2014: Friends of the Modesto Library Used Book Sale: 8am-3pm, East portico of the Modesto Library, 1500 I St., Modesto. Thousands of books in every genre, prices are \$1 hardbound, 50 cents paperback. The Beard Family Companies are matching our total up to \$4,000. For information or to donate books, contact Clare Noonan, 522-5054. clarenoo@gmail.com

Sunday, June 1, 2014. Annual Peace Center Pancake Breakfast, Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto. 8 am-Noon.

June 27-29, 2014: MPLC's Annual Peace Camp in the Sierras. See article, this issue

ONGOING

Calculators for a sustainable environment: valuable website which contains car payment and car use calculators and links to many calculators to help people reduce their energy footprints. <http://www.carpaymentcalculator.net/calcs/environmental.php>

Valley Improvement Project's mission is to improve the quality of life of under-represented and marginalized residents of California's Central Valley. For ongoing events visit V.I.P. at <http://valleyimprovementprojects.org/about>. Email: valleyimprovementprojects@gmail.com Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ValleyImprovementProjects?ref=br_tf

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

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA ART ASSOCIATION AND MISTLIN GALLERY. Exhibits by local artists; art classes for children and adults; art teachers for schools. Open Tues. - Fri. 11:30 - 5 and Sat. 12-4. 529-3369 or www.ccartassn.org

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 StoryTime (children ages 3 - 6 years) Tuesdays: 6:15 pm; Wednesdays: 10:15 am. Cuentos en español-jueves, 6:15. Bilingual StoryTime/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

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>

For up-to-date calendar
information and regularly
scheduled activities, visit
www.stanislausconnections.org/calendar.htm

DEADLINE to submit articles to CONNECTIONS: Tenth of each month. Submit peace, justice, environmental event notices to Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org Free Calendar listings subject to space and editing.