



Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

A MODESTO
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CENTER
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Modesto Peace/Life Center honored with the Emiliano Amor Mataka Award

"The greatest philanthropists of all time are not the Rockefellers, the Carnegies, the Gates or the Buffets: they are the nameless, everyday people who display the best of humanity daily with the fewest of resources and with extreme grace. The poorest people give the most. Don't think you need monetary wealth to make an impact. Your time in life are the most valuable assets on Earth, besides Earth."
— Emiliano Amor Mataka



Left to Right: James Costello, Miguel Donoso, Edgar Garibay, Luis Magaña, Dan Onorato, Helen Melo-Flowers, Lilia Lomeli-Gil. Photo: James Costello

The Modesto Peace/Life Center, along with other five recipients, were awarded the first annual Emiliano Amor Mataka Award by the Valley Improvement Projects on Friday, March 23, 2018 at the Grayson United Community Center for "self-less dedication to community empowerment and advocacy for social and environmental justice in the northern San Joaquin Valley." James Costello and Dan Onorato accepted the award for the Center.

The other recipients were:

Lilia Lomeli-Gil who was instrumental in establishing nonprofit status for the United Community Center in Grayson, California. She currently works for PAL, an after-school program, volunteered for ESL, GED and citizenship classes, and coordinates soccer tournaments, and National Night Out, and End of the Year Celebrations.

Helena Melo-Flowers is a five-year volunteer and an intricate part of the success of the United Community Center. She is involved in Young at Heart, Literacy Programs for toddlers and parents, Bailoterapia classes, and assists with student school registration. She also distributes food for the Salvation Army and Green Bag for seniors.

Miguel Donoso is a longtime community organizer fighting to improve the lives of Latinos and the poor through issues of affordable housing, mental health, youth activities and drug services for Spanish speakers. He was instrumental in the closing of Modesto

Tallow and now fights against police violence in Patterson, California.

Luis Magaña is a founder of *El Centro de la Cultura Campesina* in Stockton where he documents the experiences of migrant workers, helps locate resources, stays at the forefront of issues that affect such communities and has recently started a neighborhood Ice Watch.

Edgar Garibay is currently the Director of the Tuolumne River Trust, is active in the Stanislaus Sustainable Communities Coalition and sits as the environmental justice advocate in the STANCOG advocacy group. He stays knowledgeable on facts that affect social and environmental rights of vulnerable communities.

About VIP: In 2012, a group of Modesto community organizers came together under the name Valley Improvement Projects, with the mission of improving the quality of life of underrepresented in and marginalized residents of California's Central Valley by promoting social and environmental issues through youth outreach, education, technology and art. We meet at the Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St. every second Friday of the month at 6 p.m.

Today we honored community members in the memory of our lost friend, comrade and founder of VIP, Emiliano Mataka.

Visit VIP at <https://valleyimprovement-projects.org/about/>

CALL TO ACTION

Because we are tired of moments of silence that only follow other moments of silence
Because we are tired of waking to hear more awful news: same story, different place
Because we thought this wouldn't keep happening, but we were blind and naïve
Because we can't keep explaining these outrages to children
Because we love for our fellow humans and everyone deserves to feel safe
Because flags at half-mast lose their meaning when they are so often at half-mast
Because our hearts are worn down with sadness
Because Peter and Carmen, because Alex and Helena
Because we've kept waiting for others to make things better, but we have to make things better
Because we need a world where no one is in danger, not at school, not in their backyard
Because it is too much
Because Meadow and Alaina, because Joaquin
Because thoughts and prayers are not laws and actions, they do not make change
Because the moments of silence are moments of inaction
Because I am a teacher and I will not carry a gun
Because we can't afford more government inaction
Because Chris and Aaron and Scott, because Gina
Because not one more life needs to be torn out of existence
Because there is nothing unreasonable about regulating weapons meant for war
Because there is nothing unreasonable about the need to be safe
Because our hearts can't keep carrying these burdens of grief
Because Alyssa and Luke, Martin and Cara, Nicholas and Jaime
Because Stephon Clark too – because they all deserved to live
Because all those we can't name and there are too many to name
Because we have to do better, and there is no time left
Because there is no time left, change is happening now.

— Gillian Wegener

Revised 3/24/18

America is facing a problem; one that is threatening our lives

By SOPHIA POTOCHNIK

A speech delivered at the Modesto March for Our Lives, March 24, 2018.

Hello all, I'm Sophia Potochnik, and I'm a student at Beyer High School. I'm 16 years old— I'm outspoken, studious, and often tired. Throughout my time organizing this march, I've been frequently recognized as the

granddaughter of Rudy and June Potochnik, who are nearly legendary around Modesto for their nonviolent efforts for peace both worldwide and here in this community. I'm honored to be following in their footsteps.

We are here today because America is

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Don't miss Day of Respect on KVIE Channel 6

By SHARON FROBA

Channel 6, KVIE filmed Day of Respect's recent 20th anniversary event on Wednesday, February 14, 2018 at Modesto High School. According to the PBS program guide, a segment devoted to Day of Respect will be shown on the series *Inside California Education*, Wednesday, April 25 at 7:30 p.m. The show will repeat on Sunday, April 29 at 6 p.m.

The show's KVIE producer is Christina Salerno, a Beyer High graduate who witnessed Day of Respect when she was a student there.

2nd Annual Stanislaus County Interfaith Council Prayer Supper

By MIMSIE FARRAR

As the need for religious tolerance continues to grow, the Stanislaus County Interfaith Council is holding its 2nd Annual Interfaith Prayer Supper on Tuesday, May 1, 2018 from 6-8 p.m. at the Gurdwara Sahib-Sikh Temple Modesto/Ceres, 5743 E. Hatch Rd., Hughson. It's an opportunity to share beliefs and show compassionate support of local religious traditions.



Stanislaus County
INTERFAITH
COUNCIL

We wish to expand this compassionate outreach by having participants sit and break bread with others of different faith traditions. It will be a rare opportunity to discuss the meaning of prayer with members of other faith communities. (Families may sit together)

All are welcome and encouraged to attend. The temple is generously providing food.

Cost is \$12.50 whether purchased by check (SCIC, PO Box 3365, Modesto, CA 95353) or by credit card, by going online to go to BrownPaperTickets.com enter the search words "Prayer Supper Stanislaus".

Questions, call or text Rev. Michael Schiefelbein at 209-596-9538.

Peace/Life Center looking for volunteers

The Modesto Peace/Life Center needs volunteers to assist with projects, events, our radio project (radio knowledge, skills needed), fundraising, and administrative activities. No experience necessary. Experience in social media, Word, Excel, or other special skills are desired for some volunteer positions. We need volunteers for a few hours per week, or an ongoing commitment.

For more information, contact our volunteer/outreach coordinators: Susan Bower or Jocelyn Cooper at the Peace Life Center (209) 529-5750.

Register early for Peace Camp discount!

By KEN SCHROEDER

The Modesto Peace/Life Center's 36th annual Peace Camp in the Sierra will take place on June 22-24 at Camp Peaceful Pines on Clark Fork Rd. off Hwy 108. We'll enjoy a weekend of workshops, good food, hikes, campfires, singing, crafts, talent show, recreation, and stimulating people of all ages in a beautiful mountain setting. Families and individuals are welcome. Register early for a discount.

This year **Leng Nou** will present the workshop, "Cultivating Personal Resilience and Embracing Joy." The workshop's aim is to inform participants on ways to integrate our internal state to align with external aspirations in a way that maximizes energy levels and alleviates burn out. We will build on the work of social psychology in the areas of gratitude and joy. We will learn practices that will build resilience as well as develop happiness heart habits.

Leng Nou is a mindfulness and tai chi practitioner with heartfelt interest in the art of slowing down. Leng is a member of the Modesto Peace/Life Center and works to bring peace to all forms of encounter. Leng is also a Senior Fellow of the American Leadership Forum which seeks to unite and strengthen diverse leaders to serve the common good.

Our second workshop will be a **conversation among young and long-time activists** and sharing values, experiences and questions with each other.

Camp Peaceful Pines, on Clark Fork Road off Hwy. 108 in the Stanislaus National Forest, 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.

The camp fee covers program, food and lodging for the weekend. Adults are \$75 before May 1, \$80 before June 5 and \$85 after June 5. Young people 18 and under are \$55 before May 1, \$60 before June 4 and \$65 after June 4. Ages 3 and under free. Minors under 18 need to be accompanied by an

36th Annual Peace Camp June 22, 23, and 24, 2018

Camp Peaceful Pines
near Pinecrest, California

Registration Form



Adults \$75 before May 1; \$80 before June 4; \$85 after June 4

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____

Total \$ _____

Youth (ages 4 -18) \$55 before May 1; \$60 before June 4; \$65 after June 4

1. _____ Age _____ 2. _____ Age _____
3. _____ Age _____ 4. _____ Age _____

Total \$ _____

Child (ages 3 & under FREE)

1. _____ Age _____ 2. _____ Age _____

Voluntary Donation to provide a camper scholarship = \$ _____

GRAND TOTAL = \$ _____

Make checks payable to: Modesto Peace/Life Center, P.O. Box 134, Modesto, CA 95353-0134

There is an additional \$15 fee for each person coming to camp without a pre-registration.

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
Email _____ Phone _____

☐ I need vegetarian meals. ☐ Other dietary needs: _____

☐ I have a special need for a cabin assignment: _____

☐ I can offer a ride Friday/Saturday. ☐ I need a ride Friday/Saturday

Parent authorization for minor children

I give permission for decisions to be made in my absence about the need for medical care. I give permission for my child to be treated by a physician or hospital in case of an emergency. I understand and agree that the Modesto Peace/Life Center is not responsible for my child/children. I will not hold the Modesto Peace/Life Center, its officers or leaders liable for medical aid rendered.

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian (PRINT) _____

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian _____ Date _____

I authorize the Modesto Peace/Life Center to photograph and/or videotape my child, and reproduce my child's photographs and videotapes for publicity and/or educational/promotional purposes related to Peace Camp.

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian (PRINT) _____

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian _____ Date _____

Note: If adults bring children not their own, the parent/legal guardian of those children must complete and sign a separate parent authorization. Minors must be accompanied by an adult.

For camp information and scholarship availability: Call Ken Schroeder, (209) 480-4576; kschroeder70@yahoo.com

adult. Partial scholarships and day rates are also available. Donations for scholarships are appreciated. The camp opens with supper at 6:00 p.m. on Friday and closes after the morning workshop on Sunday. Directions and other information will be provided to participants before camp. Online registration forms will be on Eventbrite. Downloadable forms will be on www.stanislausconnections.org and www.peacelifecenter.org to mail. Online registration

Information: Ken Schroeder, 209-480-4576, kschroeder70@yahoo.com

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

The time is now!

By ISABEL GARCIA

A speech delivered at the Modesto March for Our Lives, March 24, 2018.

The first memory I have of a school shooting was in the 6th grade when I heard about Sandy Hook. I was riding in the backseat of my grandparent's car, coming home from school. They told me not to look at the news. Of course my curiosity peaked and when I got home, I went on my phone. I read news article after news article. Watched video after video. What I saw is something that will stay with me for the rest of my life. 27 people had died. 20 children.

Innocent children, kindergarteners and first graders. Kids the same age as my little sister had been unjustly murdered. 20. And I cried. I couldn't understand why. I couldn't fathom how someone could do such a thing. Little did I know that this would not be the last. These school shootings have been going on since the beginning of my life, but Sandy Hook was the first time I fully understood what had happened.

Thank you for coming today and taking part in this historical event. I would like to thank those who have helped us plan this march, whether that be through donations, assistance, or words of encouragement. Without you we would not have been able to make this possible. Today is a day that will go down in history. Today, across the nation, millions of mothers, fathers, grandparents, teachers, and students are marching alongside one another in their local communities. 844 marches are happening nationwide. And the reason? Our lives. My life began in 2001, two years after the Columbine shoot-



ing. Since then, 187,000 students have been exposed to gun violence.

Gun violence in the United States is like no other. So much that it has become almost normal to look on the news and see another shooting. So normal, that unless more than a handful of people die, it gets any real news. So normal, that when it happens, people say again? Express their thoughts and prayers and move on.

Well not anymore. The leadership of the Parkland students have inspired millions of young people across the country to say ENOUGH. We are the generation that has grown up doing active shooter drills, and we are tired of it. ENOUGH. We are the generation that goes to school each day hoping that a shooting doesn't happen at our school. ENOUGH. We are the generation that watches live video and social media posts of shootings as they happen. ENOUGH. We are the generation that watches as our politicians introduce bills to regulate practically everything that poses a threat to public safety, EXCEPT GUNS. ENOUGH. In 2017, our very own Jeff Denham sponsored a bill, HR 1818 - called the Big Cat Public Safety Act. This bill was proposed to prohibit any person from breeding or possessing prohibited wildlife species such as lions, tigers, leopards, cheetahs, jaguars, or cougars. Really? Who feels unsafe because their neighbor has a chee-



tah? I'll tell you who. NO ONE. Our representative can stand behind regulating our ability to have a cheetah, but he does NOTHING to support the regulation of guns that kill more people in this country than the neighbor's cheetah. ENOUGH.

So when people say that now is not the time to talk about gun control, I say the time is NOW. Now is the time to pre-register. NOW is the time to raise your voice. And whether or not the capital will want to listen, they will hear it. They will hear our chants. They will see our signs. Because now they SEE us and will continue to see us until we see change. Until I can go into a movie theater and not worry about my life ending. Until I can walk down the street at night and not worry about someone driving by and shooting me. Until I can go to SCHOOL and pursue my right to get an education and NOT flinch every time I hear a loud noise. To not worry that saying goodbye to my parents in the morning before school could be my last. To not worry that my LIFE and the life of my peers, will be cut short by the sound of a bullet.

The time is NOW. The time for gun control is now. The time for everyone to care about mental health is now. The time to VOTE is now. Elections are this November, and if you haven't registered or pre-registered to vote, we have tables outside where you can. Now is the time for action. Students, we are the future of this country, and we MUST safeguard of future.

See Isabel's speech at <https://youtu.be/L-gVAVRj2B4>

C o m p l e t e
Modesto March for
Our Lives cover-
age: <https://youtu.be/qDOsXfezF48>



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Dick's Sporting Goods statement on Gun sales

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

We at DICK'S Sporting Goods are deeply disturbed and saddened by the tragic events in Parkland. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of the victims and their loved ones.

But thoughts and prayers are not enough.

We have tremendous respect and admiration for the students organizing and making their voices heard regarding gun violence in schools and elsewhere in our country.

We have heard you. The nation has heard you.

We support and respect the Second Amendment, and we recognize and appreciate that the vast majority of gun owners in this country are responsible, law-abiding citizens. But we have to help solve the problem that's in front of us. Gun violence is an epidemic that's taking the lives of too many people, including the brightest hope for the future of America – our kids.

Following all of the rules and laws, we sold a shotgun to the Parkland shooter in November of 2017. It was not the gun, nor type of gun, he used in the shooting. But it could have been.

Clearly this indicates on so many levels that the systems in place are not effective to protect our kids and our citizens.

We believe it's time to do something about it.

Beginning today, DICK'S Sporting Goods is committed to the following:

- We will no longer sell assault-style rifles, also referred to as modern sporting rifles. We had already removed them from all DICK'S stores after the Sandy Hook massacre, but we will now remove them from sale at all 35 Field & Stream stores.
- We will no longer sell firearms or ammunition to anyone under 21 years of age.
- We will no longer sell high capacity magazines.
- We never have and never will sell bump stocks that allow semi-automatic weapons to fire more rapidly.

At the same time, we implore our elected officials to enact common sense gun reform and pass the following regulations:

- Ban assault-style firearms
- Raise the minimum age to purchase firearms or ammunition to 21
- Ban high capacity magazines and bump stocks
- Require universal background checks that include relevant mental health information and previous interactions with the law



VIGIL: Thank You, Dick's

Approximately 35 people attended a vigil on Wednesday, March 28 at Dick's Sporting Goods on Dale Rd., Modesto to thank it for its new policy stopping the sale of AR-15s (see accompanying statement). The Modesto Brady group helped make it a success. Photo: Maria Potochnik

- Ensure a complete universal database of those banned from buying firearms
- Close the private sale and gun show loophole that waives the necessity of background checks

We hope others join in this effort to let our kids know that their pleas are being taken seriously.

Some will say these steps can't guarantee tragedies like Parkland will never happen again. They may be correct – but if common sense reform is enacted and even one life is saved, it will have been worth it.

We deeply believe that this country's most precious gift is our children. They are our future. We must keep them safe.

Sincerely,
Edward W. Stack
Chairman & CEO
DICK'S Sporting Goods

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PATRICIA MELUGIN COUSINS
Attorney At Law

P.O. Box 520 Phone: (209) 538-9795
Ceres, CA 95307 FAX: (209) 538-0227

Email: pmcousins@aim.com

B&F

MICHAEL R. BAUDLER, CPA
DONNA E. FLANDERS, CPA

Office (209) 575-2653
Fax (209) 575-0629

e-mail b_f@modestocpas.com
1120 14th Street, Suite 2
Modesto, CA 95350

California Zephyr on Track and Smokin' for CBS Concert

By **TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL**

California Zephyr brings its wildly eclectic blend of American roots music to the Sunday Afternoons at CBS Concert Series, 3 p.m. April 15th at 1705 Sherwood Ave.

This is a rare Modesto appearance by the band that features native sons Alan Arnopole and Steve Ewert. The show, entitled "Roots and Branches," highlights music from all phases of the group's storied 43-year career and coincides with the reissue (on CD for the first time) of their inaugural albums, "California Zephyr" and "In the Saddle."

Early in the group's history an appearance on the original "Gong Show" prompted comedian Pat Paulsen to exclaim, "This is the kind of band you want to go down to the river and stomp frogs with!"

No need to follow them to a riverbank or stomp frogs, just come on over to CBS and join them for a rollicking afternoon of great harmony, solid musicianship and masterful song craft, followed by a dinner with the band.

Make your reservations early for the dinner as seating is limited. Tickets for the concert and dinner are available at the CBS office weekdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., by phone, 571-6060, or through <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3081510>.

California Zephyr: Alan Arnopole (Vocals, Guitar, Banjo); Steve Ewert, (Vocals, Guitar); Seth Arnopole (Vocals, Guitar, Washboard); Steve Della Maggiora, (Vocals, Keyboards, Accordion. Guitar); Gary Vessel (Mandolin, Fiddle); Sam Page, (Bass); Kevin Dillon (Drums).

Community Hospice presents "Before I Die" Wall

In an effort to promote positive conversation about death and dying in our community, Community Hospice has created a "Before I Die Wall" to help our friends and neighbors think about what is most important in their lives. The wall challenges people to think about relationships with death and one another, put their lives in perspective and hopefully lead people to be proactive when it comes to end-of-life care decision making.

Before I Die is a global art project originally created by artist Candy Chang on an abandoned house in New Orleans after she lost someone she loved. "Before I Die Walls" can be found all over the globe. Over 2,000 walls have been created in over 70 countries and over 35 languages.

WHEN/WHERE: The "Before I Die Wall" will be at various locations throughout Stanislaus and San Joaquin Counties during the Month of April.

Locations: California State University at Stanislaus, Mary

Stuart Rogers Building, University of the Pacific - DeRosa University Center, Modesto Junior College, Love Modesto (April 21), Earth Day Modesto - Graceada Park, Community Hospice.

Community Hospice, the largest and oldest nonprofit hospice agency in the Central Valley, has cared for thousands of friends and neighbors offering compassionate and quality care, education and support to terminally ill patients and families, regardless of ability to pay. Care extends to over 2000 patients each year in private homes, skilled nursing facilities, retirement communities and at the 16-bed inpatient Alexander Cohen Hospice House. Community Hospice also provides bereavement and grief support to anyone in the community.

Information: visit hospiceheart.org, or call Kristin Mostowski, Director of Public Relations, 209.578.6301, or email kristin.mostowski@hospiceheart.org. Host sites are being accepted.

Meet the Candidates for Congress

Hear what your candidates say about protecting and improving Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and other Senior Issues.

MONDAY, APRIL 16, 2018, 11:00 a.m. - 1 p.m., Community Room, Salida/Modesto Library, 4835 Sisk Rd., Salida.

Special Guest: Sha Na Na's Jon "Bowzer" Bauman

This event is open to the public. You must RSVP to attend, space is limited.

California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) is a non-profit organization and does not support or oppose any candidate for political office. For questions and to RSVP, contact the CARA office at 877-223-6107 or visit www.californiaalliance.org.



Rally for Public Lands: Protest at 2018 Range Rights Symposium

By **RYAN BEAM, Center for Biological Diversity**

When: Saturday, April 21, 3 p.m.

Where: Modesto Junior College Ag Pavilion, West Campus.

Event Link: <https://ignite.biologicaldiversity.org/event/action-attend/398>

Details: On April 21, some of the most prominent and controversial anti-public lands and anti-environment leaders will be speaking at Modesto Junior College as part of the Range Rights Symposium. [Note: this symposium is NOT endorsed or sponsored by Modesto Junior College.]

Speakers include Ammon Bundy whose family became notorious in 2014 by organizing a dangerous armed standoff against federal authorities attempting to remove the family's cows grazing illegally on sensitive desert habitat in southern Nevada. Ammon went on to lead the armed takeover and occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon in 2016, which did significant damage to the refuge and resulted in deep divisions in the local community that

are still being mended today.

The Bundys and their followers are now spreading misinformation in an attempt to wrest control of public lands from the people. The animals, plants and communities that rely on and cherish public lands are under great threat if this radical ideology, built on lies, fear and division, is allowed to spread.

Join us in standing up for public lands by pushing back against these dangerous ideologues and spreading the truth about the beauty and importance of the people's lands.

We'll be protesting and passing out informational materials Saturday, April 21, at the Modesto Junior College Ag Pavilion at 3 p.m.

INFORMATION: contact Ryan Beam, rbeam@biologicaldiversity.org, or 928-853-9929 or Lilly Vallee Wilson, 510-944-7937 or lcw.wilson@gmail.com, or Patrick Donnelly, pdonnelly@biologicaldiversity.org, 702-483-0449.

Visit the Center for Biological Diversity: <http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/>

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I Am Alive

First Place Division II Peace Essay Contest

By CIARA BARGAS

I'm walking slowly down a white road lined with ashes and dust. I look around me and see the crumbling buildings. The walls of rubble cascading down like waterfalls. There is black smoke waving up in the air as if was also trying to escape into the bright blue skies. The smell of gas and death linger throughout the air. The frightening melody of thundering bombs is bursting from a distance and the fireworks of bullets raining from the sky. I try to breathe as I gasp for air. I try to run as fast as I can but I'm not moving. My legs won't move. They are melting into the ground. I start panicking. I start to cry. I open my eyes and awaken. "It was just a dream, just a dream", I tell myself as I take a deep breath of relief. But I then realize, it was not a dream or a horrible nightmare. Those are the visions of my last days in Syria that haunt me to this day. My name is Amira Amon Khalid. I was 10 years old when the Syrian Civil War started. I am now 16 and I am alive.

My home was bombed and destroyed during the Syrian conflict. While trying to flee, my parents were senselessly killed by the Assad Regime. I ended up fleeing to a temporary camp on the outskirts of Aleppo and stayed there for almost 2 years. I had nothing and was full of hunger and thirst for many days and nights, but was relieved that I had escaped the terror that was engulfing the city. I had not escaped the nightmare but had entered into another nightmare. While at the camp, a man approached me and some of the other children who had lost their parents. He told us he would take us to Lebanon, where there were families that would take care of us. I was young and naive and felt blessed that I was chosen to get out of the migrant camp to go to a new home. I was taken in a van with other women and children who had also lost everything from the conflict. After driving for hours, we arrived at a rundown building in Maamaltein, Lebanon. We were all herded like cattle into a tattered building that was adorned with bars on all of the windows. For years, I was beaten and tortured and was enslaved by my captors, forced to do the unthinkable. One day, four of the women escaped, which led to the raid and my freedom from enslavement. I was taken to Dar Al Amal, The House of Hope, which helps women and children that have been trafficked. While there, they found that I had family in the United States. They also contacted the United Nations Refugee Agency to consider me for resettlement. I was one of the fortunate ones to be chosen for resettlement. The International Rescue Committee helped me through the process and guided me through this long tiring journey.

I was sad, scared and torn apart that I would have to leave my homeland of Syria. I did not know what to expect from this land that I would make my new home. Would I be welcomed or looked down upon? Will I practice the culture that I am so proud of? At times I felt that was I being punished for everything that has happened in my life. After years of waiting, I finally arrived in the United States. The IRC brought me to Sacramento, California, where they helped me adjust to my new home.

I have had such warm welcomes from the people I have met in Sacramento. The IRC has helped me in so many ways. Once I arrived, I was given clothes, food, medical care, and I started school again. I have also started counseling to help me with the mental pain and nightmares that I can't control. They have given me the resources to start a new life. It took a few months before I was fully resettled with my Aunt and Uncle. I feel blessed that I have been given this new life. It has been very hard at times not understanding the English language that most people speak. Sometimes I feel down when people stare at me as if I don't belong here. I still have nightmares daily of the torture and persecution that I have endured. I get startled when I hear loud noises and I find it hard to trust in another fully. But I am strong. I am a survivor. I am alive.

Wars are not made so we have something to write in the blank pages of our history books. Human trafficking is not a fictional story you watch on Netflix. There are millions of people just like me that are being trafficked every day. The International Labour Organization estimates that there are 20.9 million victims of human trafficking globally. 68% are trapped in forced labor, 26% are children and 55% are women and girls (Polaris. Pars 2). Unless we speak out and stop those that are making it a reality, more lives will be destroyed. I feel more than blessed that I am alive. I am determined to graduate from high school and then enroll in a college to get my degree as a social worker. I want to work with organizations that will fight and help the victims of human trafficking. We must embrace, offer a helping hand and spread the word of peace.

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Martin Luther King, Jr.: excerpts from a newly discovered speech

(On April 4, 1968, at age 39, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, where he had joined the garbage workers' march for better wages and working conditions. While Dr. King is primarily remembered as a civil rights leader, he also championed the cause of the poor, organizing the Poor People's Campaign to address issues of economic justice. This month marks 50 years since his death. To keep his life and vision vital and to honor his legacy, we publish excerpts from a speech Dr. King gave in London a few days before he received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo in December 1964. The transcript of this speech was recently discovered by Brian DeShazor, director of the Pacifica Radio Archives, and aired on Amy Goodman's Pacifica Radio's daily program, Democracy Now! We focus on King's understanding of nonviolence and a few other ideas.)

To read the entire transcript, visit https://www.democracynow.org/2018/1/15/newly_discovered_1964_mlk_speech_on

... There is still a great gulf between the haves and the have-nots. If America is to continue to grow and progress and develop and move on toward its greatness, this problem must be solved.

... There is nothing more dangerous than to build a society with a segment in that society that feels it has no stake in the society, and nothing more dangerous than to build a society with a number of people who see life as little more than a long and desolate corridor with no exit sign. They end up with despair because they have no jobs, because they can't educate their children, because they can't live in a nice home, because they can't have adequate health facilities.

... Human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and the persistent work of dedicated individuals willing to be co-workers with God. Without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the primitive forces of social stagnation. We must help time and realize that the time is always ripe to do right.

... While it may be true you can't legislate integration, you can legislate desegregation. It may be true that morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. It may be true that the law can't change the heart, but it can restrain the heartless. It may be true that the law can't make a man love me, but it can restrain him from lynching me. That is important.

... Our massive struggle to make desegregation and, finally, integration a reality ... has an undergirding philosophy: the philosophy and method of nonviolent resistance. I'd like to say just a few words about this philosophy. First, I'm still convinced that nonviolence is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom and justice. It has a way of disarming the opponent, exposing his moral defenses. It weakens his morale, and at the same time it works on his conscience, and he just doesn't know how to handle it. If he doesn't beat you, wonderful. If he beats you, you develop the quiet courage of accepting blows without retaliating. If he doesn't put you in jail, wonderful. Nobody with any sense loves to go to jail. But if he puts you in jail, you go in that jail and transform it from a dungeon of shame to a haven of freedom and human dignity. Even if he tries to kill you, you develop the inner conviction that there is something so dear, something so precious, something so eternally true, it



is worth dying for. If a man has not discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live. This is what the nonviolent discipline says.

Nonviolence also gives the individual a way of struggling to secure moral ends through moral means. One of the great debates of history has been over the question of ends and means. [From Plato] through Machiavelli and others, people have argued that the end justifies the means. But the nonviolent philosophy comes along and says the end is pre-existent in the means. The means represent the ideal in the making and the end in process. In the long run of history, immoral means cannot bring about moral ends. Somehow man must come to see the necessity of having ends and means cohering. This is one of the things that is basic in the nonviolent philosophy at its best. It gives one a way and a method of struggle which

IN MEMORIAM

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

January 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968

American Baptist minister, activist, most visible spokesperson and leader in the civil rights movement from 1954 through 1968. Best known for his role in the advancement of civil rights using the tactics of nonviolence and civil disobedience based on his Christian beliefs and inspired by the nonviolent activism of Mahatma Gandhi.

says you can seek to secure moral ends through moral means.

It also says it is possible to struggle against an evil, unjust system with all your might and with all your heart, and even hate that unjust system, but yet you maintain an attitude of active goodwill and understanding and even love for the perpetrators of that evil system. This is the most misunderstood aspect of nonviolence. This is where those who don't want to follow the nonviolent method say a lot of bad things to those of us who talk about love. But I still go on and believe in it, because I remain convinced that it is love that makes the world go round, and somehow this kind of love can be a powerful force for social change.

I'm not talking about a weak love. I'm not talking about

emotional bosh here. I'm not talking about some sentimental quality. I'm not talking about an affectionate response. It would be nonsense to urge oppressed people to love their violent oppressors in an affectionate sense, and I have never advised that. When Jesus said, "Love your enemies," I'm happy he didn't say, "Like your enemies." It's pretty difficult to like some people. But love is greater than like. Love is understanding, creative, redemptive goodwill for all men. Theologians talk about this kind of love with the Greek word *agape*, which is a sort of overflowing love that seeks nothing in return. And when you develop this, you rise to the position of being able to love the person who does the evil deed, while hating the deed that the person does. I believe this can be done. . . . I believe firmly that it is through this kind of powerful nonviolent action, this kind of love that organizes itself into mass action, that we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation and the world into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. Certainly, this is the great challenge facing us.

... We all want to live well-adjusted lives in order to avoid neurotic and schizophrenic personalities. But I must say to you this evening, my friends, as I come to a close, that there are some things in my own nation, and there are some things in the world, to which I am proud to be maladjusted and to which I call upon all men of goodwill to be maladjusted until the good society is realized. I must say to you that I never intend to become adjusted to segregation, discrimination, or colonialism. I never intend to adjust myself to religious bigotry. I never intend to adjust myself to economic conditions that will take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few. I never intend to become adjusted to the madness of militarism and the self-defeating effects of physical violence, for in a day when Sputniks and explorers are dashing through outer space and guided ballistic missiles are carving highways of death through the stratosphere, no nation can win a war. It is no longer the choice between violence and nonviolence; it is either nonviolence or non-existence. The alternative to disarmament, the alternative to a greater suspension of nuclear tests, the alternative to strengthening the United Nations and thereby disarming the whole world, may well be a civilization plunged into the abyss of annihilation. I assure you that I will never adjust to the madness of militarism. . . . Through such maladjustment, we will be able to emerge from the long and desolate midnight of man's inhumanity to man into the bright and glittering daybreak of freedom and justice.

... I say to you that I still believe that mankind will rise up to the occasion. In spite of the darkness of the hour, in spite of the difficulties of the moment, in spite of these days of emotional tension, when the problems of the world are gigantic in extent and chaotic in detail, I still have faith in the future, and I still believe that we can build this society of brotherhood and this society of peace.

We have a long, long way to go before racial discrimination and economic inequality are solved, but thank God we've made strides. We've come a long, long way. I close by quoting the words of an old Negro slave preacher who didn't quite have his grammar and diction right, but who uttered words of great symbolic profundity: "Lord, we ain't what we want to be. We ain't what we ought to be. We ain't what we gonna be. But, thank God, we ain't what we was."

How to Argue with Gun Fans

By **BERNIE HORN**

Every six months or so there is an especially horrific gun massacre. The cold-blooded slaughter in Las Vegas, the most deadly single-shooter incident in American history with 58 dead and more than 500 injured, was only last October. So, it's just the appalling truth that if you don't have the chance to argue for gun restrictions following this latest high school shooting, there will be no shortage of future opportunities—unless we act now.

The problem is not American public opinion. The highly-respected Poll reported on February 20 that Americans support universal background checks for all gun purchases by 97-to-2 percent, a nationwide ban on the sale of assault weapons by 67-to-29 percent, and a mandatory waiting period for all gun purchases by 83-to-14 percent.

The problem is that too many elected officials are irrevocably allied with the pro-gun lobby. The only way to strengthen federal and state gun laws is to defeat those officials. Perhaps 2018 will provide a unique opportunity to do so.

In any case, right now progressives need to stand up for their values, stand beside the students of Stoneman Douglas High School, and face down the pro-gun extremists. To help you do so, let me offer a little message framing advice.

First, understand that pro-gun advocates almost never argue the merits of specific legislation.

Their constant tactic is to sidetrack the discussion, talking about the Second Amendment, the technical definition of certain guns, their misperception of what a law does, their bizarre ideas about how other countries' laws work, or proposing an entirely different policy that they claim will solve the problem. So, when you argue with pro-gun people, you must concentrate on steering the conversation back to the specific proposal at hand.

There is, of course, a role for detailed rebuttals of pro-gun assertions, but I will leave that to others. When you are actively engaged in a live or online debate, you need to focus and re-focus the terms of the debate, or persuadable listeners/readers will walk away confused.

While this advice is true for any discussion of gun policy, let me illustrate it with pro-gun arguments being expressed right now.

Pro-gun argument: The solution is to arm schoolteachers

Answer: That's absurd. Do you know any schoolteachers at all? The only reason you are embarrassing yourself with this argument is that you desperately want to avoid addressing the actual legislation in Congress. Federal law banned assault weapons for ten years and it's long-past time to reenact that ban. Do you really think we should be selling weapons of war to teenagers?

Why: Generally speaking, you need to turn away from the fallacious pro-gun arguments and get back to the extremely popular legislation as quickly as you can. Remember, you're not going to persuade a gun nut—and you should not try. You are speaking, or writing online, to reach swing voters. So, swat away the crazy.

Pro-gun argument: The AR-15 is not an "assault rifle" because it is not fully automatic

Answer: There is absolutely no question that the AR-15 is an assault weapon. It was banned by federal law as an as-

sault weapon for ten years and is currently banned as such in several states. It is wrong to play rhetorical word games while teenagers are gunned down in high school. The question is whether to respond to the slaughter by reenacting the federal ban on assault weapons. Doing so is simple common sense.

Why: "Assault rifle" is an 80-year-old term for certain machine guns. "Assault weapon" is the term that gun manufacturers made up in the 1980s to sell semiautomatic versions of machine guns. This is pure evasion of the issue.

Pro-gun argument: An assault weapons ban violates the Second Amendment

Answer: That's obviously false since neither the federal ban on assault weapons nor the bans in seven different states have been declared unconstitutional. Here's the real issue: 14 teenagers and 3 teachers were murdered in Florida with an AR-15 assault weapon. A few months ago, 58 people were murdered in Las Vegas with an AR-15. 49 were killed with a type of AR-15 in an Orlando nightclub. 20 tiny elementary school children and six teachers were killed in Newtown with an AR-15. Do you think this is okay? That we should continue to do nothing?

Why: The 2008 Supreme Court opinion in *District of Columbia v. Heller* guarantees Americans the right to have a handgun in the home for self-protection. The Court also said: "[N]othing in our opinion should be taken to cast doubt on longstanding prohibitions on the possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill, or laws forbidding the carrying of firearms in sensitive places such as schools and government buildings, or laws imposing conditions and qualifications on the commercial sale of arms." And that ruling explicitly reaffirmed the Supreme Court's 1939 *U.S. v. Miller* opinion that upheld a law banning sawed-off shotguns (the same law bans machine guns, silencers and grenades) and stated that policymakers have the power to prohibit "dangerous and unusual weapons." Based on this opinion, federal courts across the nation have upheld assault weapon bans. That's the long answer—cut it short so you don't sidetrack the debate.

Pro-gun argument: An assault weapon ban won't eliminate/substantially reduce the number of violent crimes

Answer: To be successful, an assault weapon ban doesn't have to stop thousands of murders, if it just prevents some—especially another high school shooting like the one in Florida, or elementary school shooting like the one in Connecticut, or concert shooting like the one in Nevada. How many children have to die to justify this simple law? Let's reenact the ban that was in effect for ten years.

Why: The law against murder doesn't stop all murders. The law that lowered the blood alcohol level for driving didn't stop all drunk driving. This policy will not stop every gun crime, but it will save some lives. That is all that matters.

Pro-gun argument: This law will give the federal government the data to create a gun registration list, and that'll lead to gun confiscation.

Answer: Federal law forbids our national government from establishing a gun registration list. Let's return to the real issue. This legislation would reenact the federal assault weapon ban that was successful for ten years. It's just simple common sense.

Why: Only gun extremists believe or care about the "con-

fiscation" argument. Brush it away.

Pro-gun argument: We should do something about mental health/make parents take responsibility/ban violent video games, or... We'd save more lives stopping texting while driving/addressing opioids/curing heart disease.

Answer: Proposing one policy is not an argument against a different policy. If two laws would work, we could do both—this is simply not an either-or debate. Can we get back to the legislation on the table: Why should we sell these weapons of war that have no real purpose other than to slaughter people?

Why: This is a common distraction tactic. Don't fall for the either-or argument, get the discussion back to your gun restrictions.

Right wing argument: The only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.

Answer: That just doesn't work in real life. There was an armed Deputy Sheriff at the high school in Parkland, Florida. There was an armed Deputy at the Columbine High School massacre. And remember when President Reagan was shot? He was surrounded by armed police and Secret Service agents. It simply doesn't work. Let's get back to the real debate—Why should we sell weapons of war to civilians when a federal ban on assault weapons was in effect and worked for ten years?

Why: This and all the other arguments I've addressed are logical fallacies, a style of rhetoric that has been used since at least the time of Aristotle. You can read more about the five most common logical fallacies, [here](http://ourfuture.org/20180223/how-to-argue-with-gun-nuts).

Bernie Horn is the Senior Director for Policy and Communications at the [Public Leadership Institute](http://PublicLeadershipInstitute.org). Years ago, he was one of the chief lobbyists for federal and state laws banning assault weapons.

<https://ourfuture.org/20180223/how-to-argue-with-gun-nuts>

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At Suicide Table on Valentine's Day

At Suicide Table
we receive their *education*
we collect the sorry diploma
on gurney, in ambulance,
at hospital,
in morgue.

We duck and cover
like that would benefit,
now that there's a new
Valentine's Day Massacre.

No imaginary bombs
fall from the sky here
over America. No.
No f-bombs. No a-bombs.
No s-bombs. No h-bombs,
(used to display emphasis
or might) or because
it's a free country
and *because we can*,
here in the *greatest*
country in the world.

We have no terrorists
(at the moment)
except that right now
the terrorists r us.
Children—
you can run
but you can't hide.

In this *Bucket of Blood*
There is no shelter.
We only find
the fallout
of tears
sliding
slowly
down
our
cheeks.

bg
2/14/18



Stoneman Survivor in a Free Country

On social media
I share— sometimes bravely,
sometimes in trepidation
& lately in exhaustion,
I slide by without comment.

The repetition of violence
does not excite me.
I do not need bad news
to read worthwhile copy.
Viewing unlikely animal friends
can be time well spent,
as far as I can see.

I find Emma Gonzales'
speech daunting and cannot
bear to read or hear one more.

I take a break from the snarky
comments of L.C.— she is
entitled of course, to not
believe in global warming.
It is a free country, but maybe—
is she getting senile?

Bill S. Is not my friend.
Rants just this side of racist—
(abuse to my dear I.P.)— i just
want to slap him.
I'd like to censure him— but
it's not mine to do.

I.P. has been through
the Nazi occupation
of Europe. She makes the
hysterical emoji face
to Bill S. She is *alive*
& can say whatever
she wants *in spite*
of his mean foolishness.

There on the public wall
he is free to post his
paranoid and cruel jabs.
It is a free country *still*,
and even his rude
freedom of speech
I must regard. He is a
canary in the coal mine.

I go on the public wall.
I want my posts and shares
to be seen. I fear the right
as I stand towards the left.
I stand by my thoughts
for whomever to see.

I know that what I don't
want to see is *probably*
just the one thing,
I need to know & fear.
Unfortunately.

bg
february 2018



Southside Boys, Part II

Young man,
your own sweat drowns you.
Radiation
erupts in waves
from your bones and your scream
burns
into your mother's mouth.

Under your skin,
violence.

But your eyes betray you.
Not the eyes of a warrior;
a deer's eyes.
You are more water than fire.
If only someone would grip
your shoulders, hold you,
allow you to flood.

—Dmitra Inteuse-Gideon

Statement to be Read at Your Swearing-In Ceremony

Despair I call you
to lose the nothings I have left
to give I call you already a failure
when failing to act.

I call you, Cognitive Dissonance—
to detonate in the future
what you know of the dark corners
you know inside the light.

Authority— I call you, too: crumble inside this beauty
turn the fragmentary
into kaleidoscope mosaic let your yea be
yea mirror the voices unpack the domestic into the world
verbatim inside DNA are embers
waiting to burn this exists to set fire to
the best of our ability.

Poets, lovers, hearts
declare the prize moot solemnly and informally
swear-in the world's kitchens & home offices
where we were already called already struggling
with terms to serve the powerless
and to condition ourselves.

Mathematician
mother wife
councilmember
teenage philosopher
teacher
grandmother
waitress

remember the oath
remember to articulate
to speak what is known in the land of language
and to learn the bodies to live inside & outside the margins.

I hear voices in the fabric
the body politic
is not stitched of paid crisis actors
so now when they call you, Delusion
so help me, stitch it square
when they call us the moon
please
do answer
in fire.

— Stella Beratlis
Modesto March for Our Lives poem
March 24, 2018
See Stella read her poem at
<https://youtu.be/qDOsXfezF48>

RIDE FOR MOM Family Cycling Event returns on May 12, 2018

Created for all ages and riding abilities, hundreds of cyclists will gather on Saturday morning, May 12, 2018, in Modesto, for the **Ride for Mom® (RFM)** family and charity cycling celebration. The event promotes healthy lifestyle choices while raising funds for several local non-profit agencies. This year is especially significant as it will be the seventh annual event.

Ride for Mom will take place at Johansen High School and will feature 3 rides, a 10, 35 and 77-mile route. There will be SAG support, maps and route markings, and a catered lunch provided by Greens on 10th. In addition, the RFM Organizing Team will be hosting an early check-in and a pre-ride social gathering on Friday, May 11, 2018 from 5 p.m. to

8 p.m. at Greens on Tenth in Modesto.

Robert Fores, event coordinator and founder of Ride for Mom, shares, “We are thrilled that Doctors Medical Center (DMC) will once again be the presenting sponsor for this year’s event.” He adds, “DMC supports educational and hu-



man service projects and is focused on improving the health of our community through the pursuit of wellness. Their support is crucial in our continued effort to elevate the viability of the event and is deeply appreciated because with their help, we have raised a significant amount of money.”

Over the past six years, RFM has distributed over \$60,000 in grants, bicycles and helmets to groups that support RFM’s purpose to “**BE ACTIVE, EAT HEALTHY AND LIVE BETTER.**” This year, beneficiaries of RFM grants will include Teens Run Modesto, Bi-National Health Fair (El Concilio), The Society for Disabilities, Boys and Girls Clubs of Stanislaus County and the Tuolumne River Trust.

Ride for Mom, Inc. is an all-volunteer effort organized as a California 501(c)(3) non-profit.

Information visit www.rideformom.com, www.facebook.com/rideformom, or email info@rideformom.com. For press inquiries call Veronica, (310) 508-1896.

Register to ride at: <https://www.active.com/modesto-ca/cycling/ride-for-mom-2018?int=>

Share your story: One in 10 fathers will experience postpartum depression

“When you tell your story, you free yourself and give other people permission to acknowledge their own story.”
— Iyanla Vanzant

Researchers at California State University, Stanislaus are gathering stories from fathers who have experienced perinatal depression. We are looking for fathers who believe that they may have experienced depression around the time of their child’s birth who are willing to talk with us and share their experiences or respond to an online questionnaire.

All responses are confidential.

Please contact us if you have any questions about the study, paternal perinatal depression, or if you are interested in participating. We would love to talk with you!

Email atoone@csustan.edu, or call 209-565-4763. Visit https://csustan.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4YDErYEIv2URTP7?Q_CHL=qr

America is facing a problem; one that is threatening our lives

from page 1

facing a problem—one that is threatening our lives. Today, we marched for our lives. And now, we are calling on Congress to take action to save our lives.

It’s been said before, but I’ll say it again: we should not have to learn in fear, and we should not have to live in fear. America’s epidemic of mass shootings is growing more and more ominous: three of the deadliest mass shootings in American history have happened within the last six months. America has more child gun deaths than any other high-income nation. America makes up less than 5% of the world’s population but has 31% of global mass shooters. And mass shootings are not at all the only problem: they only make up a small portion of America’s gun deaths. But America can also boast far more gun deaths in general than other developed nations.

And yet nothing has been done here in the U.S.—in fact, as a society, we’ve started to become desensitized to horrific gun violence. “Yeah, there was another school shooting today.” “Did you hear about that shooting yesterday?” These abhorrent words roll off our tongues easily, calmly. That is not right. That is not a world I want to live in. Thoughts and prayers are not enough. There are over 800 marches happening today across the U.S.—our collective voice can be heard loud and clear: we don’t want your thoughts and prayers, we want change.

Many people have asked what makes this time different. Why this school shooting? Why is Parkland, specifically, our chance to change gun policy? I think Americans are truly tired of these unnecessary deaths, and luckily, an amazing group of people—a group of TEENAGERS—happened to step up to lead our tired nation in the right direction. The kids and staff



of Marjory Stoneman Douglas absolutely should not have had to die for change to be enacted. But now, the very least we can do now is to honor their memory and ensure that they did not die in vain!

Many people say they need guns to defend themselves. Unfortunately, some are even saying that teachers need guns to protect their classrooms. I shudder at the thought of having a firearm in any of my classrooms. If it is easily accessible to the teacher who’s supposed to use it, then it is easily accessible to students. I respect and understand wanting to be safe

and wanting your families to be safe, but the answer to gun violence is not more guns. If you think our world is such a dangerous place that you need to carry a firearm with you at all times, wouldn’t you rather do something to change the unsafe environment you live in, instead of having to defend yourself all the time?

Our schools should be safe places. Children do not deserve to be doing active-shooter drills, and teachers do not deserve to be acting as defensive security guards. Since 2013, there have been more than 300 school shootings in the U.S.—that’s an average of about one per week. I think, and I hope you agree, that the students of America are more valuable than the guns of America. We are the future of this nation—what will happen is we’re killed off? What’s terrifying to think about is that any of our schools could be next—we have no way of predicting where the next tragedy will occur. The night of the Parkland shooting, I watched a video filmed inside the school. Students were sobbing and running past limp bodies in the hallways. I realized that it could’ve easily been my school and my friends lying there. That night, I sat and cried with my mom for a long time. I didn’t want to go to school

the next day. Someone dropped a binder in my history class and I just about flew out of my chair.

I decided I needed to do something to effect change myself. I learned about the March for Our Lives and the National School Walkouts on social media, and soon I was connected with Isabel, my co-organizer for this march, and the other 11 teens who are leading walkouts all across this area. Isabel—I’m so, so proud to have worked with you to accomplish all this, and I’m so lucky to have you as a new friend.

I’d also like to thank Modesto Police Department and the City of Modesto for being so helpful and kind throughout the permit process, the *Modesto Bee* for interviewing Isabel and me, and the Modesto Peace/Life Center for letting us operate under its insurance and 501(c)(3) certificate. I’d also like to let everyone know that this Wednesday, March 28th, the Modesto Peace/Life Center will be hosting a vigil outside of Dick’s Sporting Goods, thanking the company for stopping its sales of AR-15s, high capacity magazines, and other accessories used with similar weapons, as well as raising the minimum age for all gun sales to 21. Again, that’s this Wednesday, March 28th. I’d like to thank all our speakers, and all who donated money, and most importantly, all of you here in attendance today. Together, we CAN and we WILL make a difference.

This is not a partisan or political issue—there can’t be two sides to wanting to protect our nation’s children. We want legislation, and we want it now. Any step toward our safety is a step in the right direction.

How many more? Ladies and gentlemen, I say no more. WE say never again. Enough is enough. My name is Sophia Potochnik—thank you.

To hear Sophia’s speech, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYhZE51IP5I&feature=youtu.be>

Complete Modesto March for Our Lives coverage: <https://youtu.be/qDOsXfezF48>

Study Nonviolence Systematically

By **STEPHANIE VAN HOOK**, Executive Director, the **Metta Center for Nonviolence**

Every year we offer a 6-month course on the history, theory, practice, and application of nonviolence. And every year, we find ourselves inspired by the incredible people who participate in the course—people from all over the world who are dedicated to bringing greater nonviolence into their lives and communities.



Registration for this year's course is now open. Anyone who wishes to develop a comprehensive understanding of the science and theory of nonviolence is welcome to enroll. The course will run May 2–October 2 (wow: we'll wrap the course on Gandhi's birthday!).

The program will follow the Metta Center's Roadmap, to help us see that in following our own passions and callings, each of us has an important contribution to make towards a just, nonviolent future. The opportunities for engagement are endless—and it all starts in our own hearts, in discovering our person power.

"This course helped me develop into a better professional equipped with the tools to address issues nonviolently, as well as into an individual with a richer perspective on human interactions, spirituality, and social issues." ~ Marissa U., Uganda

We're really excited about the 2018 program: We're adding a lot of new material to inspire you, from yoga practices to weekly group mentorship with Metta Center staff (including the noted peace scholar Michael Nagler). At certain junctures you'll be able to take advantage of special trainings and discussions with renowned experts.

While we charge a tuition fee to support our nonprofit work, we'd never want the cost to prevent someone from taking the course. No one will be turned away for lack of funds, as we've noted in the FAQs and pricing box on the Certificate sign-up page.

Are you eager to deepen your knowledge of nonviolence? Do you seek ways to contribute your wisdom and talents to the greater movement for nonviolent culture? If so, this program was made for you! Learn more and sign up.

We'll gladly answer any questions you might have about the course or the registration process: courses@mettacenter.org

IN MEMORIAM

Richard Higginbotham

Professor of Political Science, Modesto Junior College

September, 1941 – March 25, 2018

Robert Jackson

Teacher, Political Science, Modesto City Schools

June 7, 1929 – December 18, 2017

Stanislaus artists to open their studios April 7-8

For the eighth year, Stanislaus artists will open their homes and studios to the public for the weekend of April 7-8. The self-guided tour features 62 artists who work in a variety of mediums, from painting and drawing to ceramics and jewelry. There are 38 locations, some hosting more than one artist. The tour is open from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday.

The tour, originated through the Stanislaus County Travel and Tourism Roundtable, is a showcase for artists to exhibit and sell their work. It allows the public a chance to see where artists work, learn about some of their processes, and see their entire portfolio rather than a few pieces hanging in galleries.

Many artists feature lower cost items such as prints and greeting cards.

Several sponsoring galleries will also be open during the tour: Mistlin Gallery, The Chartreuse Muse, Tri-Chromatic Gallery, and Trewin Framery in Modesto, as well as Carnegie Art Center and CSUS Art Gallery in Turlock.

The official tour booklet can be purchased for \$10 per person (kids under 18 are free) and serves as a guide and map of the open studio venues. Few people can make it around to all the venues, so you can choose your route according to



APRIL 7 & 8 • 11 A.M. TO 5 P.M. • OVER 60 PARTICIPATING ARTISTS



your tastes and availability. Each artist listing has a sample work along with their contact information so the booklet can serve as a reference to local artists long after the tour.

With the purchase of a tour booklet, you can enter a drawing to win one of five original works of art by tour artists (pictured above). You may purchase a booklet at Mistlin Gallery, Chartreuse Muse and Carnegie Art Center before the tour, or from participating artists on the weekend of the tour.

Email openstudio.stanislaus@gmail.com for more information, or visit <https://stanislausaos.wordpress.com>.

The Costs of War

From the **National Priorities Project**

Fifteen years to the day after the United States invaded Iraq, there is still no end in sight. **And we are still spending \$32 million every hour on war.**

According to Brown University's Costs of War project, the United States has spent \$4.6 trillion dollars on the counterterrorism wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Pakistan and elsewhere, and we're on the hook for more than \$1 trillion in additional care for our veterans of these wars - bringing the total costs of war to \$5.6 trillion so far.

The National Priorities Project at IPS has launched a new, improved version of our live costs of war counter in partnership with Brown University's Costs of War project, to show Americans how much we're really spending on these never-ending wars.

We're spending:

- **\$11.76 million per hour** for military costs of wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and elsewhere
- **\$10.05 million per hour** for interest on war debts since 9/11
- **\$2.28 million per hour** on care for veterans of the 9/11 wars
- **\$7.99 million per hour** for counterterrorism-related Homeland Security

Total Cost of Wars Since 2001

Every hour, taxpayers in the United States are paying
\$32.08 million for Total Cost of Wars Since 2001.

\$4,481,569,180,021

We can't keep doing this. We must work toward ending these wars, with as much determination as we will bring to stop our leaders from starting new ones.

Must Reads on 15 Years in Iraq:

Fifteen Years Ago, America Destroyed My Country.

An Iraqi writer finds that America's invasion of Iraq was no mistake: it was a crime. By Sinan Antoon. It's Time to Transform the War Economy. An Afghanistan veteran explains how the Poor People's Campaign offers an antidote to the war economy. By Brock McIntosh. Photos: Looking Back at War in Iraq, 15 Years After the U.S. Invaded. (Warning: graphic content.) By Alan Taylor. Why We Need to Remember the Iraq War—As Well as the Global Resistance to It. The Middle East is still suffering from the consequences of the US invasion 15 years ago. By Phyllis Bennis. Taking Flight. An Iraqi family sought asylum in the U.S. Then their American nightmare began. By Ryan Devereaux.

These wars will end someday. It's up to us to make sure it's sooner than later.

Visit <https://www.nationalpriorities.org/>



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

Stockton

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

APRIL

MAPS (Modesto Area Partners in Science) presents free, informative, engaging, inspiring community science programs. Fridays, 7:30 pm, MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132 (*except where noted). ***April 6:** MJC East Campus Auditorium, A Family Science (all ages) Presentation, TED speaker, Dr. Puragra (Raja) GuhaThakurta, UCSC and Lick Observatory, “Our Place in the Cosmos.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOWTzVNB2g4>

MJC Spring Science Colloquium. 3:15pm – 4:15 p.m. Contact: Teri Curtis (209) 575-6775, curtist@mjc.edu. **April 4:** “Math in Poetry” by Heidi Fernandez Meyer, MJC mathematics professor. **April 11:** Documentary: *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*, sponsored by the MJC Civic Engagement Project. Note: This 90-minute film will be shown in SCC 114 (same 3:15 p.m. start time).

4 WED: Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGIL: Gun Control. McHenry & J St., 4:30-5:30 pm. (Note new time).

7-8 SAT/SUN: Stanislaus Artist Open Studio Tour. 11 am - 5 pm. Info stanislausaos.wordpress.com

14 SAT: Food for Thought. Switch up what is on the end of your fork and get your body running like a racing car on high-octane fuel and, at the same time, improve planet earth’s environment and hone your compassion skills. Will Tuttle, Ph.D. and Ruben Guzman. FREE. State Theatre, 7:00 pm. Info: kathyhaynesSESG@gmail.com or (209) 250-9961.

15: SUN Afternoons at CBS: California Zephyr brings its wildly eclectic blend of American roots music to the Sunday Afternoons at CBS Concert Series, 3 p.m. at 1705 Sherwood Ave. Make your reservations early for the dinner, seating is limited. Tickets for the concert and dinner at the CBS office, weekdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., by phone, 209-571-6060, or through <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3081510>

15 SUN: The Modesto Film Society and The State Theatre presents *Raising Arizona*. 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://ww2.thestate.org/calendar/event/904>. Become a member of the State Theatre and get perks! Visit <http://www.thestate.org/membership>

16 MON: Meet the Candidates for Congress. Community Room, Salida/Modesto Library, 4835 Sisk Rd., Salida. Special Guest: Sha Na Na’s Jon “Bowzer” Bauman. Sponsored by California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA). Please RSVP, space is limited. Call 877-223-6107 or visit www.californiaalliance.org.

20 FRI: The State Theatre presents Fox trot. 1307 J. St., 4:00 pm. Visit <http://ww2.thestate.org/calendar/event/1070>. Become a member of the State Theatre and get perks! Visit <http://www.thestate.org/membership>

21 SAT: Earth Day in the Park Festival, Graceada Park, Needham & Sycamore, 10 am to 4 pm. Visit us at our booth!

21 SAT: Rally for Public Lands: Protest at 2018 Range Rights Symposium at the MJC Ag Pavilion, 3:00 pm. Protest is sponsored by the Center for Biological Diversity. Info: Ryan Beam, rbeam@biologicaldiversity.org, or 928-853-9929 or Lilly Vallee Wilson, 510-944-7937 or lcw.wilson@gmail.com, or Patrick Donnelly,

pdonnelly@biologicaldiversity.org, 702-483-0449. See article, this issue. Note: the symposium is NOT endorsed or sponsored by MJC.

26 THURS: Film “Fun” Raiser for DKG Epsilon Nu Chapter, Singin’ In The Rain. State Theatre (1307 J St. Modesto). 5:30 pm with Wine, Appetizers, Raffle Items. 7:00 Film. Donation: \$25.00. Benefits: Education Foundation of Stanislaus County, MJC Scholarships, Library Books, & Great Valley Museum. Tickets at dkgmodesto@gmail.com or contact Gloria (209) 545-0883.

LOOKING AHEAD

May 5: Friends of Modesto Library Used Book Sale, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Modesto Library Portico 1500 I St., Modesto. For free pick-up: (209) 985-7156 or pat.glatke@gmail.com

May 12: Boys & Girls Clubs of Stanislaus County hosts Stanislaus’ First Responders Rib, Chicken and Chili Cook Off Competition at the beautiful estate of Dr. Stephen and Ann Endsley. Tickets: \$50 for the 21+ over event. Table of 8 for \$500. Fine wine from Berryhill Family Vineyards and hors d’oeuvres from Papapavlo’s Mediterranean Bistro. Sponsorships available. Tickets: (209) 222-5826 or order at www.bgstan.clubevent.info. Info: Laura Ward, (209) 549-2765, email Laura@WardPromotional.com.

June 3: Annual Modesto Peace/Life Center Pancake Breakfast, Modesto Church of the Brethren.

REGULAR MEETINGS

June 22-24: Peace Camp in the Sierra, Camp Peaceful Pines, Clark Fork Rd. See registration form and article, this issue. Discount for early registration!

SUNDAYS

Modesto Vineyard Christian Fellowship, 10:00 am at the MODSPOT, 1220 J St. Call or text 209-232-1932, email modestovineyard@gmail.com; All Welcome.

IMCV weekly Insight Meditation and dharma talk, 8:45 am - 10:15 am, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC east parking lot). Offered freely, donations welcome. Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: info@imcv.org

Food Addicts Anonymous in Recovery. Sundays 6:30 pm, 2467 Veneman Ave. Modesto. Info: Emily M., 209 480-8247.

MONDAYS

Monday Morning Funstrummers Beginner Ukulele Lessons. Modesto Senior Center. 10:45am to Noon. Free Scenic and Bodem.

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

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

Silver & Gold Support Group 50+ years of age. Ongoing support group for mental health and wellness to meet the needs of the mature Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community. Every Monday 3:00 - 4:00 pm, Community-Hope-Recovery, 305 Downey Ave. Modesto. Info: Monica O, Tiamonica64@gmail.com or Susan J, Susantheipoet@gmail.com

TUESDAYS

NAACP Meeting. Christ Unity Baptist Church, 601 ‘L’ St., Modesto, 3rd Tuesday @ 7 pm. 209-645-1909; email: naacp.

MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

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

MEDIA: Listen to Peace/Life Center radio, KCBP 95.5 FM streaming at <http://www.KCBPradio.org> (not on the air yet)

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.

branch1048@gmail.com

Exploring Whiteness & Showing Up for Racial Justice Meetings, Fourth Tuesday, monthly 7:00 p.m., Central Grace Hmong Alliance Church, 918 Sierra Dr., Modesto. Info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/247655549018387/>

Pagan Family Social, third Tuesdays, Golden Corral, 3737 McHenry Ave, Modesto, 6:00 pm. Info: 569-0816. All newcomers, pagan-curious and pagan-friendly welcome.

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

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

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

WEDNESDAYS

Ongoing meditation class based on Qi Gong Principals. Practice a 3 Step Guided Meditation Process I have been doing for over a decade. Fun and Easy. JOIN ME! Donations accepted but optional. Call 209.495.6608 or email Orlando Arreygue, CMT RYT, orlando@arreygue.com

Merced LGBT Community Center offers a variety of monthly meetings and written materials. Volunteers, on site Wed-Fri, offer support. Ph: 209-626-5551. Email: mercedboard@gay-centralvalley.org – 1744 G St. Suite H, Merced, CA. www.mercedlgbtcenter.org

Merced Full Spectrum meets the second Wednesday of every month, 6 p.m. 1744 G St., Suite H, Merced <http://www.lgbtmerced.org/> Merced Full Spectrum is a division of Gay Central Valley, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. <http://www.gaycentralvalley.org/>

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

LGBT Questioning Teen Support Group (14-19 years old). 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, College Ave. Congregational Church, 1341 College Ave., Modesto. 7 – 9 pm. Safe, friendly, confidential. This is a secular, non-religious group. Info: call 524-0983.

Transgender Support Group, 2nd & 4th Wed., 7:30 to 9 pm. Info: (209) 338-0855. Email info@stanpride.org , or tgssupport@stanpride.org

Mindful Meditation: Modesto Almond Blossom Sangha, 7 - 9 pm. Info: Anne, 521-6977.

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

THURSDAYS

IMCV Grupo de Meditación en Español, cada semana 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (edificio trasero al final del estacionamiento este de UUFSC). Ofrecido libremente, las donaciones son bienvenidas. Info: Contacto Vanessa, 209-408-6172

LGBTQA Collaborative Meetings 4th Thursdays. Agendas are the same for each meeting. Lunch meeting: Peer Recovery Art Center, 1222 J St, Modesto, Noon to 1:30 pm. Dinner meetings: Stanislaus BHRS – Redwood Room, 800 Scenic Dr., Modesto, CA 95354, 5:30 pm to 7 pm. Dedicated to promoting well-being in the LGBTQA community. John Aguirre, jpamodesto@gmail.com, 559-280-3864.

Green Team educational meetings the 3rd Thursday of each month, 10 to 11 am, Kirk Lindsey Center, 1020 10th St. Plaza, Suite 102, Modesto, www.StanislausGreenTeam.com

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

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

The Book Group. First & third Thursdays. College Ave UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 – 5:00 pm. Info: mzjurkovic@gmail.com

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

Valley Heartland Zen Group: every Thurs 6:30 to 8:30 pm, Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2310 Woodland Ave. Meditation. Newcomers welcome. Info: 535-6750 or <http://emptynestzen.org>

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

FRIDAYS

Game Night and Potluck, third Friday of each month. For 21+ only. Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St., Suite 2, Modesto. 7 pm to 10 pm. Info: John Aguirre, (559) 280-3864; jpamodesto@gmail.com

Friday Morning Funstrummers Band Rehearsal. Donation 9:15am to Noon. College Avenue United Church of Christ, 1341 College Ave., Modesto. 209-505-3216, www.Funstrummers.com.

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

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

Sierra Club: Yokuts group. Regular meetings, third Friday, College Ave. Congregational Church, 7 pm. Info: 300-4253. Visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts> for info on hikes and events.

Mujeres Latinas, last Friday, lunch meetings, Info: Cristina Villego, 549-1831.

Hispanic Leadership Council, 3rd Fridays at noon, 1314 H St., Modesto 95354. Questions? Yamilet Valladolid, yamiletv@hotmail.com

SATURDAY

Indivisible Stanislaus 2.0 will hold a demonstration every fourth Saturday until the November election at McHenry and Briggsmore Aves., Modesto from Noon to 1:00 pm. All resistance groups invited. Please bring signs regarding the upcoming District 10 election. Info: June Mills, 209-765-5029, millsjunem@sbcglobal.net

Refuge Recovery: A Buddhist Approach to Recovery from Addiction. @Friends Coming of Age., 1203 Tully Rd., Ste. B., Modesto. Saturdays 8-9 am. FREE (donations accepted). Info: RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com

Divine Feminine Gathering. Join us for a time of ritual, song and conversation as women come together to celebrate one another and the Divine among us and within us. 3rd Saturday of the month, 3:30-5:00 p.m. Stockton, CA. Contact Rev. Erin King, 209-815-0763, orkingenne@gmail.com

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

So Easy ~ So Good: Vegetarian/Vegan/Wannabe Group. Potlucks, guest speakers, field trips, activist activities. movie nights, etc. Third Saturday of every month. Info: Kathy Haynes (209) 250-9961 or email kathyhaynesSESG@gmail.com

SERRV: Gifts from developing countries. Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland, Rm. #4, Modesto. Call Marye, 209-523-0449, or email ezjamm@aol.com

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