



stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

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The shooting statistics are clear: It's not schools that are dangerous

Schools are the sites of fewer than 3 percent of students' gun homicides; the other 97 percent occur somewhere other than school.

By **MIKE MALES**

COMMENTARY: Every day, 42 Americans die in gun homicides, the grim backdrop against which to talk about school shootings. In the three months between the 10 shot dead in Santa Fe, Texas, on Friday, and the 17 in Parkland, Florida, on Feb. 14, around 4,000 Americans lost their lives in firearms homicides.

In the initial horror following a school shooting, we witness the "thoughts and prayers," finger-wagging from politicians not wanting to "politicize" the shooting, and promises to "do something." Then, just as predictably, nothing happens.

Or, worse, bad things are done. The survivors of the February shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas in Parkland, Florida, took center stage to argue passionately for action, and adults initially appeared to be listening. Gov. Rick Scott signed a reform bill into law, but on balance, it does more harm than good. The limited beneficial steps, such as modestly extending background checks and waiting periods on potential gun buyers and banning "bump stocks," accompanied popular but ineffectual measures such as raising the gun-buying age to 21. Also, one very, very bad idea: procedures to arm more teachers and school officers.



But whether those steps will change anything is unlikely. That's because, while shootings at schools are terrible, it's not the schools that are the problem. The real problem is that America as a whole is dangerous. As crazy as it might sound after the mass school shootings in the last two decades at Columbine, Sandy Hook, Parkland, and now Santa Fe High School, it's true: We should be exploring ways to make the rest of society as safe from guns as schools are.

That means doing something Americans find hard and with it comes to evaluating risks and designing policy: incorporating critical perspective.

Over the 12 months leading up to May 18, 2018, a gun was fired in 63 American schools,

including 24 where homicides occurred. We can all agree that should be zero.

However, it is crucial to point out that the United States has 130,000 public and private elementary and secondary schools attended by 52 million students and 5 million teachers and staff.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention projections indicate during the past 12 months Americans suffered approximately 15,500 gun homicides (along with 31,000 gun injuries). Of these, Everytown for Gun Safety reports (and including Friday's shooting in Texas), 38 gun deaths and 71 injuries occurred in or around a school.

Per person-hour spent at school (based on 93 percent attendance and an eight-hour school day, 180 days per year), students and adults in America's schools are only slightly more likely to be gun homicide victims than the general population in Denmark.

For all gun killings (including homicides,

continued page 8

California proposition endorsements from several groups

Collected by **KEN SCHROEDER**

• **Prop. 68: [Bonds] California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018**

League of Women Voters (LWV) YES
California Federation of Labor (CFL) YES
Sierra Club YES

CA Democratic Party (CA Dem) YES
California Republican Party (CA Rep) NO

• **Prop. 69: Motor vehicle fees and taxes: restriction on expenditures: appropriations limit**

LWV YES
CFL YES
CA Dem YES

• **Prop. 70: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Reserve Fund.**
LWV NO



CFL NO
Sierra NO
CA Dem NO
CA Rep NO

• **Prop. 71: Ballot Measures: effective date.**

LWV YES
CFL YES
CA Dem YES
CA Rep YES

• **Prop. 72: Property tax: new construction exclusion: rainwater capture system**

LWV YES
CFL YES
CA Dem YES
CA Rep YES

If an organization does not appear under a proposition, it means they did not take a position on that measure.

IN MEMORIAM

May 18, 2018 - Santa Fe High School, Santa Fe Texas

Students: Aaron Kyle McLeod, Angelique Ramirez, Chris Stone, Jared Conard Black, Kimberly Jessica Vaughan, Shana Fisher, Christian Garcia, Sabika Sheikh.

**Teacher's aide: Cynthia Tisdale;
Teacher: Ann Perkins.**

43rd Annual Pancake Breakfast

Sunday June 3, 2018

8:00 a.m. — Noon

*Benefit for
the Modesto Peace/Life Center*

Modesto Church of the Brethren
2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto



All-Star Favorites

• *Blueberry* • *Buttermilk* •
• *Scotch Oaties* •

Fresh fruit salad
Excellent coffees, teas, juices
Fresh granola, yogurt

• *Every order served hot!*
• *Visit with fellow breakfasters.*

Adults: \$10, Children: \$5

The Church of the Brethren has graciously donated the use of its facility.

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It is not too late to register for Peace Camp!

By **KEN SCHROEDER**

The Modesto Peace/Life Center's 36th Annual Peace Camp will take place on June 22-24 at Camp Peaceful Pines on Clark Fork Rd. off Hwy 108 east of Pinecrest. 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.*

Leng Nou will present the workshop, "Cultivating Personal Resilience and Embracing Joy." Which will 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 and

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. She 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 long-time activists and young activists sharing values, experiences and questions with each other.

Timothy Land is a senior at Modesto High School and is president of Project Hope, a group that has raised \$60,000 for a school and a health center in Ecuador. **Polet**

Hernandez is a student at CSU Stanislaus who encourages other undocumented students to further their education. At Modesto Junior College she helped establish the first group for undocumented students, Students United Reaching for Equality. **Katherine Swartz**, a senior at Gregori High School in Modesto focuses primarily on capturing the stories of other youth through broadcast journalism focused activism. She was honored this year as an Outstanding Young Woman of Stanislaus County. **Jocelyn Cooper** is a board member for the Modesto Peace/Life Center where she is the Volunteer/Community Outreach Coordinator for radio station KCBP, a board member for the West Modesto Community Collaborative and National Vice-President and Secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of All People. **Homero Mejia** was the executive director of the community organizing group Faith in Stanislaus (formerly known as Congregations Building Community) where his work focused on immigration, civic engagement, health care and other community issues. **Sandy Sample** has been an activist with the Modesto Peace/Life Center since 1970, has worked on anti-racism since her youth, and organized in Stanislaus County with the National Farm Worker Ministry.

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

features kitchen and bathroom facilities, rustic cabins, platform tents and a special needs cabin. 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 \$80 before June 5 and \$85 after June 5. Young people 18 and under are \$60 before June 4 and \$65 after June 4. Ages 3 and under free. Minors under 18 need to be accompanied by an adult. Partial scholarships and day rates are also available. Donations for scholarships are appreciated.

The camp is open at 2:00pm with supper at 6:00pm on Friday and closes at noon after the morning workshop on Sunday. Directions and information will be provided to participants before camp. Registration forms are available online at www.stanislausconnections.org and www.peacelifecenter.org to download. Campers may mail registration forms and pay by check or may mail registration forms and pay online on Eventbrite at 2018 Peace Camp, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2018-peace-camp-tickets-45012516649?aff=eac2>

There will be a wait list if Peace Camp fills up.

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



Your help is needed for the 43rd Annual Pancake Breakfast on Sunday June 3

By **DAVID TUCKER**

The 43rd Annual Pancake Breakfast will again be held at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto on Sunday, June 3 from 8 a.m. to noon. We appreciate your help in past years. Please help again this year.

We need volunteers for the following list of jobs:

- Preparing potatoes (Saturday)
- Preparing pancake batter (Saturday)
- Set up Tables (Saturday)
- Wrapping silverware
- Fruit Preparation
- Batter mixing
- Griddle
- General Cleanup
- Handling Beverages
- Taking orders
- Greeter
- Dishwashing
- Servers & Table Cleanup

ACTION: To help, email David Tucker at david.tucker@stanfordalumni.org

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

KCBP RADIO UPDATE: Community Radio needs your help!

By JAMES COSTELLO

We have submitted our application for a use permit to the Stanislaus County Planning Commission in order to start actual tower construction!

Creating a full power radio station is the most complex, expensive project the Center has ever undertaken.

Imagine: a non-profit, community-based, locally-focused, independent station that explores important local issues and spotlights local talent and events in music and the arts!



But to turn that vision into reality, we need your generous support.

We must reach our goal of raising \$150,000 soon. Big dreams require grit, bold determination, and lots of help. We'll now have major expenses: the transmission tower, transmitter and antenna; engineering assessments, permits, construction fees, and studio rent. Can you help us? Anyone who contributes \$500 or more will be considered a Founding Member of this station.

Our volunteer programmers are creating content right now for our online streaming (KCBPradio.org). New volunteers have added their energy as we near KCBP FM 95.5's on-air deadline of August 2018. We are planning several public fundraisers: one is hosting the Golden State Warriors' Wheelchair Basketball team playing against local athletes and VIPs.

Please join us in creating a truly unique volunteer-driven, public, non-profit community radio station!

YES, I WANT TO DONATE!

Contributor Up to	\$100
Supporter	\$250
Founding Member	\$500
Friend	\$1,000
Partner	\$5,000
Patron	\$10,000
Visionary	\$25,000

Write in the memo of your check: "Radio KCBP." Send to David Tucker, Modesto Peace/Life Center, P.O. Box 134, Modesto, CA 95353. Or, at www.KCBPRadio.org; click on Donate to go to PayPal. Or go to GoFundMe at <https://www.gofundme.com/kcbp-community-radio-startup>

Follow us on Facebook KCBP Radio, <https://www.facebook.com/KCBPcommunityradio/>

To volunteer in programming or fundraising, contact Jocelyn Cooper at jocelyncooper2012@gmail.com

Homeless and Mentally Ill: The Families

By ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen

Sadie Koch was stunned when she learned a few weeks ago that her sister, Mary Baca, is homeless. Though she hadn't seen her in well over three years, Sadie, who lives in Escalon, thought Mary was still living in Modesto with her friend and partner Linda.*

The sisters had never been particularly close, but reunited when Mary returned to the Valley from Los Angeles, where she worked for a supermarket chain. At first, she continued working for the chain at one of its outlets in Turlock, but lost her job after a year or so.

That was about six years ago, around the time Sadie began noticing Mary's erratic and disturbing behavior. First she thought her sister might be on drugs, maybe even heroin, but whatever the cause, Mary became more and more difficult to live with even during short stays with Sadie and her husband.

Things reached a climax when Sadie told Mary she should, "Get some help." Mary responded with a hard punch to the face, and that was when Sadie realized she could no longer be around her sister.

Though they didn't see each other face-to-face after the punching incident, Sadie and Mary still communicated via texts and email. Late one night a little over three years ago, Sadie received a text from Mary saying, "If anything happens to me, it was John Quincy."*

Alarmed, and knowing John Quincy was a friend of Linda's, Sadie called Mary, but Mary acted as though there was no reason to be concerned.

"I told Mary that when I receive a late-night text that my sister's in danger, I should be upset, but Mary acted like she didn't know what I was talking about."

Not long after that episode, unbeknownst to Sadie, Mary began living in her car, an almost-new Nissan Versa she parked near Ensen Park in Modesto. It turned out Mary had had a falling out with Linda and had nowhere to go. The deeper story was that Mary's erratic behavior had progressed into serious mental illness, in Mary's case, acute schizophrenia.

One day, while she was wandering the streets, Mary's car got towed. This was in the late summer of 2015. After that incident, Mary began staying in and around Graceada and Ensen Parks. For a while, she was an oddity among the homeless people who frequent the area, mostly because her clothing was new and well-tailored.

Luckily, Mary was noticed and taken under the wings of a homeless group that calls itself "The Family." A loose association of long-time homeless friends, The Family watches out for vulnerable homeless people, especially the elderly, weak, or disabled.

Once they heard Mary's ramblings about the eight men who lived underground and had put cameras in her eyes and microphones in her ears, members of The Family tried to watch her as much as they could. Now in her mid-fifties, Mary usually spends nights with a homeless man in his early sixties, known for his reliability when watching over other people's belongings.

Only recently learning of Mary's whereabouts, Sadie has experienced that terrible mixture of fear, helplessness, and overwhelming sadness close relatives of the homeless and mentally ill routinely suffer.

"Even though we never got along that well, Mary's my sister and it hurts me she can't get help. She's sick and she

needs help but my husband and I can't take care of her; she's just too much to handle."

Sadie's anguish over Mary is shared by thousands upon thousands of people nationwide. In California alone, the homeless population numbers well over 100,000 people.

According to the Treatment Advocacy Center, at least a third of homeless people are seriously mentally ill, suffering from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, schizoaffective disorder, and other maladies.

Mary Baca is thus only one of tens of thousands of seriously mentally ill homeless people in California alone, not to mention nationwide. She's been outside almost three years now, and in that time she's been treated by professionals one time for a total of fifteen days. Once diagnosed and given prescribed medication, Mary was released back to the streets.

The homeless people who know her say Mary was completely changed when taking her medication. She no longer talked about the people controlling her actions, no longer imagined nearby home invasions and kidnappings, and even stopped talking about the eight evil men who lived underground.

But as is the case with virtually every homeless person who's treated with what Modesto's Lonny Davis calls the "catch and release" program, Mary soon stopped taking her medicine and reverted to her schizophrenic delusions.

When Sadie saw a video of Mary playing the guitar followed by an interview for the Modesto Homeless Documentary Project, she couldn't hold back tears. Mary taught herself the guitar as a teenager and has a beautiful voice, but Sadie was stunned by Mary's condition.

"She is so lost in her delusions it's unreal," she wrote later. "It breaks my heart to see her like that and know there is nothing I can do to help her."

In Stanislaus County alone, with a homeless population somewhere around 2,000 people, thousands upon thousands of family members experience Sadie's despair at the lack of resources for the estimated three or four hundred mentally ill homeless people on the streets. Seriously mentally ill people need professional help, and there are simply few to no resources available. Family members who try to care for them when they refuse to take their medication must deal with random violence, broken furniture and dishes, dangerous neglect of burning stoves, cigarette lighters and matches, theft, and drug abuse.

For many family members of the mentally ill, the worst problem of all is how many people view mentally ill people in terms of "bad choices." More acutely than anyone could ever imagine, family members of the mentally ill know their siblings, sons, daughters, mothers and fathers are sick and need professional help. None ever chose to be mentally ill and on the streets.

And while there may be wide differences among people about the causes of mental illness, most everyone with a mentally ill family member will agree with Sadie Koch when she says, "It's just not right. It's just not right she should be out there when she needs help."

*These names have been changed to protect privacy <http://thevalleycitizen.com/homeless-and-mentally-ill-the-families/>



Green Tips for a Green Planet: Global Citizen calls for governments and business leaders to Say No to Single-Use Plastics

Submitted By **TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL**

"Around 8 million metric tons of plastic enter the world's oceans each year," according to Global Citizen. "It's like dumping a rubbish truck full of plastic in the water every single minute."

"The average supermarket plastic bag can take up to 1,000 years to break down, and in the US, which accounts for just 4% of the global population, 500 million plastic straws are used every day."

In response to support from local businesses, environmental groups and the general public the city of Vancouver Canada has initiated Zero Waste 2040, claiming it is the first city in the world to approve a comprehensive zero waste strategic plan.

In that city alone approximately 2 million plastic bags and 2.6 million plastic-lined paper cups are thrown out every week, according to Daily Hive. The city also initiated a

flexible bylaw to help minimize the use of plastic and paper bags, as well as disposable cups, and has set targeted goals for elimination or reduction of these items if not reached voluntarily by 2021.

Vancouver has become one of 16 cities and countries worldwide to approve such a plastics ban, while only 2 US cities, Seattle and New York, have gotten on board.

Global Citizen encourages everyone to Take Action Now: Click on the following link: <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/action/call-on-gov-and-corporates-to-say-no-to-plastic/>,

Call on Governments and Business Leaders to Say No to Single-Use Plastics Dear Corporate and Government Leaders

A million plastic bottles are bought every single minute around the globe, and less than half of these are collected for recycling. Meanwhile, the US uses approximately 500 million straws every single day. There are over 5 trillion pieces



of plastic already in the ocean, and the world uses over 300 million tonnes of plastic every single year. There are more microplastics in the ocean than there are stars in the Milky Way — and, sadly, if we carry on our current trajectory, there will be more plastic than fish in the sea by 2050. Our planet is being overrun by harmful plastics and something must change. As a Global Citizen, I've pledged to do my part to stop using single-use plastic, but we need your leadership to make a true collective impact. I'm calling on you to commit your power and resources to ending the distribution of single-use plastics and developing renewable plastics that won't pose a threat to our planet and the people who inhabit it.

RIDE FOR MOM: Family Cycling Event Brings Out Record Number of Riders

Funds Raised Benefit Local Non-Profits including Boys & Girls Clubs of Stanislaus County.

By **VERONICA JACUINDE**

Hundreds of cyclists gathered on Saturday, May 12th for the **Ride for Mom® (RFM)** family and charity cycling celebration. The seventh annual event brought together cycling enthusiasts for a fun day promoting healthy lifestyles while raising funds for several local non-profit agencies.

Ride for Mom founder, Robert Fores shares, "We are thrilled that this year we surpassed our number of participants from previous years with almost 500 cyclists participating." He adds, "We thank our various sponsors that helped make the event a success, particularly our presenting sponsor Doctors Medical Center, and Greens on Tenth, Commodity Transporters, Oak Valley Community Bank, and MHD Group." With their help and that of many volunteers, over the last seven years **RFM** has raised over \$70,000 for local non-profits that also focus on improving the health of the community.



Lincoln Ellis, President of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Stanislaus County states, "We greatly appreciate **RFM** for their financial support of our health and nutrition programs." He adds, "We are happy to count on **RFM** as a generous partner."

Ride for Mom

was created as a tribute to Robert Fores' mother who passed away from cancer. "Every year we host this event the day before Mother's Day to honor my mother and all those others that have been afflicted with this terrible disease." With the purpose to encourage "*BE ACTIVE, EAT HEALTHY AND LIVE BETTER*," **RFM** has grown into a community event that unites and inspires others to embrace this philosophy.

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

ACTION: to participate or volunteer in next year's event or to sponsor or donate, visit www.rideformom.com, www.facebook.com/rideformom, or e-mail info@rideformom.com.

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.

IF NOT YOU
Then Who?



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Rivers of Birds, Forests of Tules: Central Valley Nature and Culture in Season

By LILLIAN VALLEE

81. Back to the Future: Reviving California Balanoculture

The authors of the rich and illuminating book, *Oaks of California*, begin one chapter with the sentence “The human history of California began in the shade of her native oaks.” Not only was the nutritious acorn the dietary staple for diverse Indian cultures, but oak communities were revered because they harbored “bear, deer, and other wildlife that thrived on the acorns and lingered within the deep shade.” Elaborate acorn ceremonies expressed the reverence native peoples felt for their sacred groves, a reverence that persists into the present day. Today, despite the impacts of disease, development and poor regeneration, oak trees and woodlands continue to provide food and shelter for more than 330 species of amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals and 5,000 species of insects. Planting oaks for food and habitat honors the oldest of California cultures, balanoculture, a term coined by David Bainbridge from the Greek word for acorn, *balanos*.

As the authors of *Oaks of California* remind us, oaks continued to feed and shelter even as California Indian balanocultures, or acorn-eating cultures, were diminished: “The Franciscan padres established a chain of missions that closely followed the general distribution of the coast live oak.” The newcomers “held mass, delineated ranchos, and built new settlements beneath the massive boughs of ancient and wild oaks.” When I look out my window, I see a Valley Oak that is 250 years old, the result of an acorn planted here before the American Revolution.

Geographer William Preston has said that if the Central Valley were anywhere else on earth, it would be considered a cradle of civilization. In his book, *Oak: The Frame of Civilization*, William Bryant Logan explains why California’s Central Valley and other river valleys we think of as historical cradles of civilization arose: they were valleys ringed and/or crosshatched with oaks. “No tree has been more useful to human beings than the oak,” Logan writes. “Since the glaciers last retreated and since humans began to build and settle down, there have been but two versions of the world: the world made with wood and the world made with coal and oil. One lasted twelve to fifteen millennia; the other has lasted about 250 years so far.”

Logan notes that oaks are neither the tallest, largest or longest-lived trees on the planet. They hold no records. “The



oak’s distinction is its insistence and its flexibility. The tree helps and is helped in turn. It specializes in not specializing.” No one who loves oaks should go without reading Logan’s book, and especially the chapter “Balanoculture.”

Logan recounts fascinating stories about oak versatility: “Kurds, Iranians, and Iraqis swallow the sweet exudate from the oak tree, which they call ‘manna’ [...]. Each June and July, the Kurds wait for the sweet drops to begin to congeal on the leaves of *Quercus infectoria*. [...] They use it to make a breakfast drink, or they mix it with eggs, almonds, and spices to make a delicious, sweet cake.” Logan also marshals the latest research indicating that the earliest cradles of civilization were not created by the cultivation of wild grains but were centered on upland belts of oak trees: “Among the largest early settlements in the Fertile Crescent was a town of thirty-two acres called Catal Huyuk, adjacent to the upland oak belt in the Konya Plain of present-day Turkey.” It is here that archaeologists determined from the grinding, not harvesting, tools that the people of Catal Huyuk “were perhaps the last of a [flourishing] culture that had fed on acorns as its staple food,” some eight thousand years ago.

“Evidently,” Logan adds, “balanocultures were among the most stable and affluent cultures the human world has ever known.” David Bainbridge studied California’s surviving balanocultures and concluded “that local oak uplands could routinely support villages of one thousand people, and these people could harvest enough acorns in three weeks to last two or three years.” Kent Flannery, another researcher cited in Logan’s book, concluded “it took ten times less labor to harvest acorns than it did to harvest wheat and barley.”

While only certain peoples (most notably in Korea, Japan and the Middle East, as well as California Indians and enterprising California residents like Suellen Ocean) continue to consume acorns in meal, flour and jelly forms, there are signs acorns are making a reappearance as a nutritious food in the U.S. The Nutty Buddy Collective invites residents outside of Asheville, North Carolina to bring in their acorns and black walnuts, as well as other nuts, to process into flour and oil at the Collective; in return they receive a share of the

harvest without having to process acorns, a satisfying but laborious endeavor. Acorn flour, leached of bitter tannins, can be blended with other flours for soups, breads, casseroles and cakes.

One of the most difficult myths to dispel in the Central Valley is the myth of the benefits of industrial agriculture which has a stranglehold on the Central Valley imagination. It is endlessly parroted as the only history worth recalling, even in academic settings, massive evidence to the contrary: drained aquifers, air and water pollution, subsidence and desertification of alluvial soils, environmental degradation, and disproportionate numbers of impoverished, homeless, incarcerated, and undereducated residents. The billions of agribusiness dollars made in exporting crops at the expense of locally subsidized water and pauperization of local resources do not trickle back from Beverly Hills or Bakersfield mansions to enrich Valley residents.

The Central Valley sustained an intelligent and attuned civilization long before there was a fence or plow in it. Plant a Valley Oak or Interior Live Oak for food and habitat. Harvest, process, and consume the nutritious acorn. Teach others how. Honor those who have kept that tradition alive. Observe the insects, birds, and cooling shade offered by your tree and learn from a deeper, older balanocultural history that did not begin with the will to dominate and desecrate but with the understanding that the best ideas may already exist and may not be our own.

ACTION: Participate in the California Native Plant Society’s Re-Oak Project. Go to www.cnps.org/acorns for information; bake some delicious acorn cookies from Suellen Ocean’s generous website or Elizabeth Barnet’s fantastic Acorn Biscuits in Judith Larner Lowry’s *The Real California Cuisine*.

Sources: Pavlik, Muick, Johnson, & Popper, “California Oaks and the Human Past” in *Oaks of California*; William Bryant Logan, *Oak the Frame of Civilization*; Suellen Ocean, *Acorns and Eat’em* (entire book online at www.natureoutside.com).



A Mother's Courage: An Interview

By TOM PORTWOOD

This is the first of two articles about the many crucial programs and services offered by the Haven Women's Center of Stanislaus, and the people it serves. Many thanks to Elizabeth R. for her courage in sharing her story.

This is a story not only of courage, but of a mother's love for her children and her indomitable will to protect them. As Elizabeth R.'s account of her family's journey away from domestic violence and fear unfolds, one can't help but be in awe of how much she has overcome and how ultimately triumphant her story is. But the journey was not an easy one for Elizabeth (not her real name), who reached out to Haven several years ago at a moment of stark crisis for herself and her six children.

Before that, Elizabeth had struggled valiantly to save her twenty-year marriage to her abusive husband, above all to keep her children safe, though both became increasingly difficult as the years passed. Elizabeth's husband was in the military and "the relationship had had elements of abuse even prior to him joining the service." After returning from one combat tour, her husband hurt Elizabeth to the point where she needed to seek medical care. "I chose not to do anything about it," Elizabeth explains. "We had conversations with a counselor. I was so hopeful."

But then, following another tour, her husband returned home and "not only became more abusive toward me, but he started taking things out on the children." At that point, "the situation had become completely unacceptable. There was definite fear involved." Elizabeth knew that the very survival of her family was at stake. She knew she had to act.

Tragically, Elizabeth's story is all too typical. The Centers for Disease Control reported in November 2011 that "about one in four women have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner (e.g., hit with a fist or something hard, beaten, slammed against something) at some point in their lifetime."

May Rico, Haven's Executive Director, suggests the fear of violence is all too real for most women. "The reality is, whether you're living in a domestic violence situation or not, as a woman in this society you are constantly living with the threat of violence. Whether you are feeling safe or not feeling safe changes from moment to moment."

In Elizabeth's case, "My counselor recommended that I go through the military for help and they put me in touch with Haven." Elizabeth had actually delayed seeking outside

help for her situation, dire as it was, because she feared her oldest son might be too old to stay in a family shelter. She was determined to keep the family together. But Haven opened its doors and its arms to the entire family. "Haven provided us with a safe place," Elizabeth remembers. "One of my daughters turned to me and said, 'Mama I finally got a good night's sleep.' We had lived in a big house, but the kids felt safer all huddled together in a shelter than in their own bedrooms. Everyone at Haven provided that sense of safety for us. I still have the little paper flowers the children made there."

Haven provided far more than a shelter for Elizabeth and her six children. "Haven represented a critical piece," she notes. "They helped me get a restraining order, provided counseling services, the shelter – all of that gave me a chance to take a deep breath and find the confidence that I could finish raising these kids. I had struggled with making decisions. But I sat in the reception room at Haven and just talked and talked to the staff members there, and they just listened and helped me gain some clarity about what I wanted to do. I had always seen it

as a tradeoff – I will allow you to hurt me so long as the kids are safe. Haven helped me to see that I needed to be safe as well. I don't know if I could have made any of the transitions I've made had I not had Haven to go to."

As it turns out, one of the transitions Elizabeth decided to undertake was to return to her beloved home state, where her family has lived for generations. "I've come back to the Mother Land," she beams. "We are doing so well! It was a little challenging, because the children didn't know my family that well – partly because of the military, and partly because domestic abuse can be so isolating."

In the two years since Elizabeth and her children struck out on this new path, all of the children "are flourishing both academically and socially." Her oldest son generously "took a year off to help his mom adjust to single motherhood." He and the two other college-aged children received scholarships and are doing exceptionally well in school. The younger children have happily adjusted to their new home as well. Elizabeth herself is a graduate student at a major university and preparing for a career in Social Work. And she has become an activist, making presentations about domestic abuse to various groups by using her own story of survival and triumph as a starting point. In her presentations Elizabeth is raising awareness about the difficulties faced

by domestic abuse survivors in obtaining justice from the military. "It took a full year for the military to complete its investigation and it was determined by the Family Advocacy Program to be domestic abuse," she relates. But prosecution wasn't necessarily a viable option for a variety of reasons. "Only about half of the domestic abuse reports to the military are ever substantiated," Elizabeth notes. "The definition of abuse is pretty narrow."

While Elizabeth works toward establishing her new career, she can justifiably bask in how beautifully her family is doing. She knows she owes much to Haven. "This organization was a life changer for me and my children," says Elizabeth. "As I see them moving toward adulthood, I see how the impact of Haven will last into the families they create."

Haven's Modesto Office: 618 13th Street, Modesto, CA, 95354, Operation Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Office Closed - Saturday & Sunday, Main Phone: 209.524.4331; Haven's Turlock Office: 301 Starr Avenue, Turlock, CA, 95380, Operation Hours: Monday – Thursday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Closed 12 pm to 1 pm, Office Closed – Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Main Phone: 209.664.9131.

Website: www.havenwcs.org

24-Hour Crisis Line: 209.577.5980; National Dating Abuse Helpline 1-866-331-9474; National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-833-656-HOPE (4673); National Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273 – TALK (8255)

"...as a woman in this society you are constantly living with the threat of violence. Whether you are feeling safe or not feeling safe changes from moment to moment."



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HAVEN: Far More Than A Shelter

Haven is a catalyst for individual empowerment and societal change: advocating for those impacted by domestic and sexual abuse or exploitation and working to end gender-based violence.

By **TOM PORTWOOD**

While Haven has long been recognized in Stanislaus County for its outstanding shelter that provides survivors of domestic violence and their families a place of safety where they can begin healing and forging new lives, many people may not realize that, as crucial as the shelter is, residential services comprise only one aspect of this venerable agency's mission to the community.

"People think of us only as a shelter, but only about 10% of our services are residential services," explains May Rico, Haven's Executive Director. Ms. Rico points out that Haven has grown substantially in recent years. "Our mission statement is a good place to start, because it gives equal weight between intervention and prevention. We will never end violence if all we're doing is working with victims. To end violence you have to do things which change the societal structures in our culture that lead to violence."

This emphasis on offering comprehensive, integrated prevention and intervention services carries over to the work the Haven program staff is assigned to do with both clients and the community as a whole. In addition to its shelter program, which dates to 1977, Haven provides a broad spectrum of other services including:

- A crisis line
- Counseling Services
- Legal Services
- Support Groups for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors

"People think of us only as a shelter, but only about 10% of our services are residential services."

- Youth Services, including Kids Count, Teens Count, T.R.U.S.T.
- HARRT Peer education for high school-aged teens (currently Enochs and Downey High Schools but with plans to expand)
- Outreach and Education for schools, businesses, and non-profit organizations
- Supportive Services, including 24 Hour Trauma Response, Case Management, and Behavioral Health Services
- Haven serves all survivors of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and sex trafficking regardless of gender identity, immigration status, or sexual orientation.

"The HARRT program (HARRT stands for Healthy and Responsible Relationships Troop) is probably the purest form of that integrated approach, because it focuses on teaching people to become advocates for change in their own environment," Ms. Rico suggests. "It provides tools on how to talk with your peers about the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships."

"HARRT started about three years ago," recalls Jennifer Cinelli, a senior at Enochs High School, who founded the first HARRT troop along with several of her peers. "At first, I don't think we knew exactly where we wanted to go with it. But through a couple of meetings and a lot of discussion we decided that the program should be focused on healthy and responsible relationships so that teens could be more aware of what was going on around them."

HARRT is directly confronting one of the most disturbing epidemics currently facing teens in dating situations. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency Focus reports that "one in three teens in the United States is a victim of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner." Not surprisingly, the Journal of the American Medical Association published research that shows that "violent relationships in adolescence can have serious ramifications by putting victims at higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior, and further domestic violence."

"That's why it's so important that somebody has to keep doing this work, to educate about what's ok, and what's ok in relationships and dating situations," explains Ms. Cinelli. "Teens have rights. They have the right to be in a healthy relationship. I want to help people to help themselves, to explain to people the differences between a healthy and an unhealthy relationship."

"Adolescents are so peer-oriented" suggests Holly Grace Currie, who is one of Haven's Advisors to the HARRT program. "And so I love this peer education. Having the teens make these educational presentations to their peers really magnifies their work. They reach between 250 to 300 freshmen every year. And they want to hear from their peers."

"I really hope that this program can expand to a lot more schools and expand beyond Stanislaus County and California," Ms. Cinelli concludes. "Having it take hold across the country would be a great thing. I hope that that with every person we impact, that they can go and impact someone else."

HARRT is directly confronting one of the most disturbing epidemics currently facing teens in dating situations.

While Jennifer Cinelli and her fellow HARRT Troop members go about their work among their peers to help shape a better, healthier world going forward, Ms. Rico is challenging us all to become agents for change in our daily lives. "Most of us have the personal opportunity to help change societal attitudes. Violence does not happen out of nowhere," Ms. Rico states. "Sexual abuse is woven deep into the fabric of our culture. As a society, we are acting in ways that make it easier for perpetrators to keep doing what they're doing. If you really want the environment to change - for yourself, for your children, for half of the population - you have to be willing to go to some uncomfortable places when you hear or see something that is supporting violence, you have to be willing to say something."

For more information on HARRT and other Haven programs, call 209-524-4331; Crisis Line, 1-888-454-2836; National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline, 1-888-331-9474; The California Youth Crisis line, 1-800-843-5200; Regional Suicide Prevention Crisis Services, 1-800-273-8255

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Point the Trigger Finger at Everyone Else

No matter what the gun rights advocates say, all these deaths are about a country with far too many guns, plain and simple, full stop.

By **MICHAEL WINSHIP**

Friday afternoon, I was walking across my West Village neighborhood running some errands. Here and there my path crossed with college students in graduation gowns from NYU, Columbia and The New School.

It's that time of year, and as I watched the graduates and their proud, happy friends and families, I thought of the eight young men and women and two teachers at Santa Fe High School in Texas who just hours before had lost their lives to a 17-year-old armed with a shotgun and a .38 caliber handgun. Those kids would never see a college commencement or even their own high school graduation, which was scheduled for June 1. What a despicable tragedy.

No matter what the gun rights advocates say, all these deaths are about a country with far too many guns, plain and simple, full stop. Las Vegas, Parkland, Newtown, Orlando, Aurora, Santa Fe and Sutherland Springs, Texas and so many more: It's not about guns for duck hunting or target practice or protecting the home or shooting varmints in the cornfield. It's not about the Second Amendment giving us the right to bear arms when the British are coming.

Nor is it, as incoming NRA president Oliver North would tell you, about young boys "on Ritalin," who are "steeped in a culture of violence." Or, as Texas lieutenant governor Dan Patrick claimed, first, that Texas schools have "too many entrances and too many exits" and then, to George Stephanopoulos at ABC on Sunday that the Santa Fe deaths weren't because of guns but because, "We have devalued life, whether it's through abortion, whether it's the breakup of families, through violent movies, and particularly violent video games, which now outsell movies and music."

To which Fred Guttenberg, who lost a daughter in Parkland, Florida, three months ago, had the most appropriate response: "I think those are the most idiotic comments I've ever heard regarding gun safety," he said. "Let me be clear. He should be removed from office for his failure to want to protect the citizens of Texas."

Dan Patrick said, "It's not about the guns; it's about us." We can talk about that, Dan, but it is about guns – 88 of them for every hundred Americans, more than 300 million guns, with a mass-shooting rate eleven times higher than any other developed country.

No contortion of argument – twisting and turning to make the problem about anything other than guns – is going to change that. You sound like that clown Mo Brooks, Republican congressman from Alabama, who said last week that rising oceans aren't about climate change. No, he suggested, "Every time you have that soil or rock or whatever it is that is deposited into the seas, that forces the sea levels to rise, because now you have less space in those oceans, because the bottom is moving up."

You can't make this stuff up. Stop throwing rocks in the ocean, people; you're drowning our coastal cities.

Seriously, it's about keeping guns out of the hands of those

who are dangerous when they have weapons in their possession. It's about banning assault rifles and other instruments of destruction that should never be allowed off a military base or a battlefield or placed anywhere near where civilians can get their hot little hands on them. (Philip Bump in Post noted "a stunning statistic: More people have been killed at schools this year than have been killed while [deployed] in the military.")

Yet Dan Patrick, Ollie North – an arms dealer of long experience – and all the other extreme gun advocates insist that the proliferation of weapons in this country isn't the problem. And here's where I can agree that it's not just about guns – it's also about our current political climate. From the top down in this administration and among too many of its supporters, it's always about pointing the finger at someone or something else other than the real problem, whether guns or graft or collusion. As said here before, it's the world according to Bart Simpson: Whatever it is, I didn't do it, unless it's something good, in which case I did do it, even if I didn't.

Except that Bart has some semblance of a moral compass. And he's a cartoon character. Whatever happened to responsibility, that basic premise of legitimate conservative thought? Whatever happened to accountability? Instead, the president and his cronies blame everyone but themselves for their problems and wrongdoings.

Donald Trump and his administration are the Wal-Mart of corruption – one-stop shopping for graft and influence peddling (and while we're at it, fiercely anti-union). When it comes to fessing up, forget about it. They shout and obfuscate and lie.

Barack Obama's a perpetual target of the pointed finger going all the way back to Trump's birtherism. High crime, not enough jobs – blame undocumented immigrants. And as the scheduled summit with North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un seems to be crumbling, count on Trump to accuse everyone and everything but his own thoughtless impetuosity, prematurely polishing the Nobel Prize for peace while ignoring any semblance of knowledgeable diplomacy.

Many of the leaks that characterize this administration are nothing more than attempts at the finger point, aides working mightily to shift blame, to single out a fall guy. And of course, witness the current fiasco as Republicans and the White House work like thieves to wreck the legitimacy of Robert Mueller's investigation.

When Trump doesn't get the result he wants, when the truth comes out, he will, as ever, yell foul and WITCH HUNT! and cover-up and fake news and deep state and cast aspersions on everyone but the truly guilty party – himself.

As a result, democracy may be mortally wounded, as lifeless and deprived of its promise as those kids gunned down in their schools. What a despicable – and reckless – tragedy.

Michael Winship is the Emmy Award-winning senior writer of *Moyers & Company* and BillMoyers.com, a past senior writing fellow at the policy and advocacy group Demos and former president of the Writers Guild of America East. Follow him on Twitter: @MichaelWinship

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Statistics are clear

from page 1

suicides, and accidents), American schools are safer than most of western Europe.

School time occupies around one-sixth of school-age children's total hours, but schools are the sites of fewer than 3 percent of students' gun homicides; the other 97 percent occur somewhere other than school. In fact, the most likely place for a child to be shot and killed is at home, with the shooter most likely to be an adult in the household.

Features that make American schools and modern teenagers uniquely safe from shootings could inform social and gun policies in a country whose overall gun homicide rate is 15 times higher than in other Western countries.

First, there are very few guns in schools at present. Unfortunately, responses to school shootings include proposals like President Donald Trump's to arm 20 percent of teachers. If implemented, that would mean 800,000 more armed adults in schools, which would only add to the numbers of school shootings by teachers, principals, school officers, and law enforcement.

Second, schools are occupied by millions of preteen and teenage students, a demographic that, contrary to popular stereotype, has uniquely low rates of gun homicides. CDC data show that since the early 1990s, the number of teenage homicides by gun has dropped 50 percent nationally, far more than for other age groups. Nationally, FBI estimates indicate arrests of youths for gun homicides have fallen by nearly 80 percent over the last generation to levels well below those of adults.

In 1990, middle school and high school teens (ages 13 to 18) had gun homicide rates 50 percent above the average for all ages. Today, students 13 to 18 have below-average gun homicide rates.

Third, enhancing the first two trends, youths who stay in school, graduate, and attend college suffer gun homicide death rates just one/25th that of dropouts (by definition, a population unlikely to be at school). Since 1990, the school dropout rate among teenagers and young adults has fallen by 60 percent while college enrollments and graduations have risen, making today's students singularly gun-averse.

The emerging student movement against gun violence should be raising two key points: younger generations themselves have made stunning progress toward reducing shootings and making schools and students safe, and that progress deserves attention and study rather than continued fearmongering. Reducing poverty and education costs, along with background checks and bans on high-capacity weapons offer promise for decreasing gun suicide rates and domestic killings, and, eventually, mass shootings.

The worthy goal of making campuses safer still is being warped by the myth that they're uniquely dangerous. Basing perception and policy on rare mass shootings and obsolete prejudices against teenagers invites panicked, harmful responses. Far from keeping their kids home out of fear of gun violence, Americans should feel safer when kids are in school.

Mike Males wrote this article for YES! Magazine. Mike is senior researcher for the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, San Francisco.

From *Yes Magazine*, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/the-statistics-are-clear-its-not-schools-that-are-dangerous-but-america-itself-20180518>

Failure is the Greatest Teacher

Why do we only showcase the good china
and light the tapered stems of candles
stretching for the chandelier to celebrate
the intelligent memories, the victories?

Why not adorn the mantle with awards
of omissions, failures, and apologies
commemorating the regrettable mistakes?

Why not toast to the day
we launched brakeless bicycles
off a plywood ramp over Miller's creek bed?

Why not write an anthem to
to the dull blade of a chef's knife
slipping off the shiny crust of a bagel
chunking a crevice out of your index finger?

Where are the parties crouching in the dark
waiting to scream "Surprise!" for the ones
that accepted dare over truth,
forks joggling in electrical sockets
unleashing an arsenal
through the entire factory
of the nervous system?

Where are the distinguished alumni
handing out diplomas for enrolling in bad marriages
and dropping out of broken homes?

Because who ever really gleaned
a valuable lesson from a pat on the back,
or a gold medallion hung like a wreath
around the tender branch of your neck?
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a valuable lesson from a pat on the back,
or a gold medallion hung like a wreath
around the tender branch of your neck?

– Chad Sokol

Standing

Good Morning Awesome
I hear the stillness of your breath
singing in Nature's Garden
laden with rabbits chasing tulips

You dance like no one is watching
I'm watching
your bubbles floating on the water
capture crystal clear footage
of Standing Rock

Sitting so still so tall
opens my soul
to peace within
as you give up yourself
with no regret
for the love
that's going to hurt
as you humanize
the responsibility for yourself...

– C. Barstad

Blank Stare

Traveling lightly
the burning man with dementia
was a curious stranger
who lost his manuscript
in the fog.

Turning the pages
he lit upon images
of his first and third cousins,
a man and a woman
joined in arranged matrimony
because the village
would soon be barren
without their union of melded lives
bleeding through bloodlines
in jeopardy of extinction.

With a blank stare
at ever so blank pages,
burning man rose up to meet
his mother-
another figment
in his ever blank mind;
void of memory
yet laden with knowing
and rich in love....

C. Barstad

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Fleeing for Safety

Division IV First Place, Peace Essay Contest

By HEIDI BOWMAN

Pain surged through my body and blood gushed down my side, turning the ground where I collapsed into a bloody puddle. I screamed for help. It seemed like hours, but it was really only minutes, before a villager heard my cries and rushed to my aid. He carried me to the home of the local doctor where they managed to stop the bleeding. Healing slowly came. The biggest heartache, however, was not my missing arm. It was the dreadful reality that, for our safety, my family must leave our country.

My sister, Dim-Dim, my mother, Dante, and I, Shreya, live together in our bamboo hut near the southeast border of Myanmar (also known as Burma). We are from the Karen tribe, and our people have long been persecuted by our fellow Burmese. Landmines are scattered around our war-torn jungle, and one day, I had the great misfortune of triggering one. I am very thankful, though, that only my arm was blown off. My father died from a land bomb about a year ago and some people at church are missing multiple limbs.

A loud rap woke me from my sleep. Mother beckoned in the stranger at the door, and they sat down, talking in low tones. After several minutes, Mother stood up and asked, "How would you like to go to America?" Dim-Dim squealed with delight, but my heart sank. I didn't want to go to America, however, I knew it was best for my family's safety.

Mother woke us early in the morning to walk the many miles to the refugee camp which was just across the border in Thailand. We arrived exhausted! The refugee village was repulsive. Trash was littered everywhere and the stench was sickening. Our "house" consisted of several tarps draped over some poles.

I was worried that it would take several months to get all the paperwork, but in four weeks our documents were complete. I had signed all my papers, before we realized Mother and Dim-Dim's documents were missing. Mother told me to continue to America without them, assuring me that she and Dim-Dim would come when their paperwork arrived. I reluctantly agreed, but two weeks later, I regretted my decision. As we said a tearful goodbye, I wept bitterly and rested my head on my mother's shoulder, comforted by her warm hug and kisses. I bid Dim-Dim goodbye and realized how much my family meant to me.

I was weary and overwhelmed when my plane landed in Los Angeles. My caseworker, Kennedy, was at the airport to meet me, along with an interpreter. She told me that World Relief was working to locate an apartment but, for now, I would be staying in a hotel. In my opinion, most anything would be better than the refugee camp. As soon as we scrambled into the car Kennedy said, "A church group has provided some necessary items to get your started, and a couple people from their group will help you learn basic English." I was so grateful for such kindness!

Now, two months later, I am desperately searching for a much-needed job. Every job interview has the same answer: "No." I feel so disheartened and discouraged. The government



has provided a limited amount of money to get me started, and those funds are quickly disappearing. Money is a continual worry. In addition, transportation is a big challenge. I have to rely on public transportation since I don't have a license or a vehicle. Language is another ongoing struggle. While I have mastered some beginner words, I still have much to learn. I have discovered Americans have many unusual expressions that have such interesting meanings. Recently, on a rainy trip to the store, I overheard a lady tell her son it was raining cats and dogs. All I saw were raindrops pouring down. On a positive note, I recently discovered a nearby market that sells Burmese food. It is very comforting to have food such as Mohinga, my favorite rice noodle and fish soup.

Although my challenges are discouraging at the moment, I am still hopeful for this chance to start a new life in America. I want to make new friends, go to school, and get a job. I also want to help other refugees from Burma. I miss my family dreadfully, and my deepest desire is for Dante and Dim-Dim to arrive in America. I am very grateful to have a fresh start in America. It has not been easy, but, for the first time in my life, I feel safe!

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Throwback House Party to help Support Project Uplift

By WENDY BYRD

GKB productions presents The Wild Wild West Juneteenth R&B Throwback House Party, featuring Top Shelf Classics, the Bay Area's premier Party and Show Band, to be held on Saturday, June 16, 2018 from 8 PM to midnight at the Modesto Centre Plaza, 1000 L St., Modesto.

Dance to your favorite Old School R&B, Motown or Funk, enjoy a Soul Food Sampler, a Best Western Outfit Contest, and more! **Tickets:** \$35 in advance, \$40 at the door. Tickets can be purchased at Doc's BBQ, 421 Maze Blvd., Modesto, or at Mama Weber's Southern Kitchen & BBQ, 823 S. Mellon St., Manteca. OR from Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/juneteenth-throwback-dance-party-modesto-tickets-44711960678>

A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Project Uplift Mentoring Program. Info: 209-551-1902.



California Audio Roots Project

By BRENDA FRANCIS

The California Audio Roots Project invites members of the community to share stories about their lives and living in California. Individuals or small groups of up to eight people work with show Producers at the recording studio, or we can come to you.

With the guidance and professionalism of Producers and Audio Engineers such as Lucky Lew, Janet Seay, Mark Oesau and Blake Boetto, they record their experiences of living in California and their life stories, through music, poetry and storytelling. The shows are aired on radio stations and podcast sites.

SAVE THE DATE: On Saturday, June 23rd 2018 from 2-4p.m. a free public showcase with everyone involved will be held at the Stanislaus County Library, Modesto! <http://www.modestosound.com/radio>



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Book Review: *In Defense of Housing* by Peter Marcuse, David Madden

By JOSEPH HOMER

In their recent book *In Defense of Housing*, Peter Marcuse and David Madden chart the history of housing in urban New York as a way to help us understand the social significance of housing as well as provide a critique of the currently-popular formulation of the problem of ‘affordable housing crisis.’

Marcuse and Madden begin with an appreciation of the importance of housing in the everyday lives of people and its role as an anchor and as a sanctuary. In this view, “Housing is the precondition both for work and for leisure” (12). While the world outside might be contested and unequal, one’s domicile might very well provide the kind of refuge that each of us needs. Moreover, the analysis considers the psychological consequences of having one’s housing be under threat. The fear of housing insecurity may force people to stay together when they might like to part, people to stay in jobs they dislike and exacerbate anxieties experienced in other aspects of their lives (67). In this way, the fear of losing one’s housing or the stress involved in having to keep it create dual traumas for many.

“For the oppressed, housing is always in crisis. The reappearance of the term ‘housing crisis’ in headlines represents the experiences of middle-class homeowners and investors” (10). Marcuse and Madden also assert that the “housing crisis is not a result of the system breaking down but of the system working as it is intended,” to drive up prices, create scarcity and discourage development if there isn’t any economic incentive.

This book is primarily concerned with the treatment of housing as commodity, as ‘real-estate’ instead of as necessary place of refuge. In this critique, there is a “conflict between housing as lived, social space and housing as an instrument for profit-making – a conflict between housing as home and as real estate” (4). We see this problem play out today in the affordability problem: developers seek to build high-end properties, but the market fails to create incentives for the development of solutions around low-income and affordable housing. For Marcuse and Madden (and for the rest of us), “what needs defending is the use of housing as home, not as real estate” (11).

And yet, even state-sponsored building and building incentive creation has long been bound up with problematic housing practices and attempts to preserve the capitalist system. While creating the framework for widespread housing ownership, federal housing programs such as the Federal Housing Administration and laws like the Glass Steagall Act and other New Deal initiatives “used redlining, discrimination, and restrictive covenants to entrench racist patterns of land use and to exclude African-Americans from home finance, creating unjust housing patterns that continued to have destructive consequences far into the future” (24). Restrictions like this hardly disappeared in following years, and the lost wealth involved with not being able to own a home still plagues communities today. Aside from outright racism, most housing policies are driven by the demands of private developers, and this has been the case since the postwar boom years and led to a “state-supported system dominated by private ownership” (25). Importantly, the state is often depicted as a benign actor which acts on the behalf of the poorest and stands as a counterpoint to private develop-

ment; that is the myth of the benevolent state (140). But an analysis like this is itself hollow: in so many cases, “the actual motivations for state action in the housing sector have more to do with maintaining the political and economic order than with solving the housing crisis” (120). That is, if the state did not act, it would have to deal with an even worse problem of social instability, and so the incentives for addressing the housing crisis may just as well be reformist as anything else.

While the tenant movement is nearly non-existent in Modesto, there is a long history of radical tenant organizing in older, urban places like New York. These tenant movements date back decades to overcrowded tenements in the late 19th Century, the efforts of which created co-operative housing developments in New York as well as strong community organizing groups dispersed throughout the New York urban area (115). Moreover, housing movements such as these are made up of people of all walks of life, and in some cases, they have had great impact on city and state actions (147).

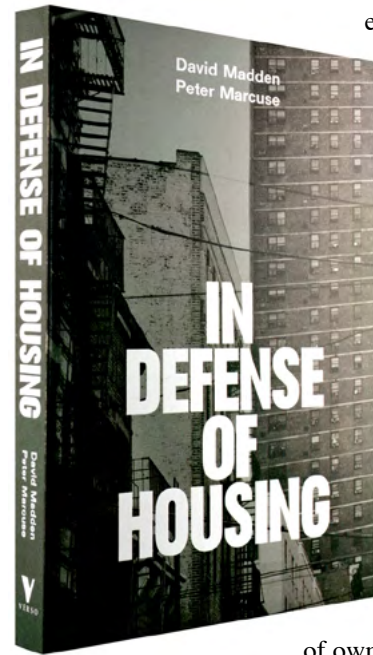
It is crucial that we come to some new consensus on how we think the significance, ownership and development of housing. This is as crucial as “housing preeminently creates and reinforces connections between people, communities, and institutions, and thus it ultimately creates relationships of power” (89). And so, neglecting the relations of power bound up with the production, ownership and development of housing is akin to neglecting the realities of power. Marcuse and Madden suggest several palliatives for us, although some of these are a bit clouded

and need testing. First, they encourage us to “decommodify and de-financialize the housing system” (201). They suggest we do so in many ways, some having to do with rent control and others with public housing. Importantly, they also recommend that we consider cultivating “community land trusts,” or ownership situations in which a “nonprofit corporation holds land in trust and offers permanently affordable limited-equity, long-term leases to residents (209). Other

prescriptions involve democratizing housing management and housing policy and seeing the housing struggle as part of a larger political and economic struggle created by the depredations of Capitalism (211, 212, 213). Moreover, they criticize the all-too-easy action of creation housing rights which are not enforced or fail to have the impact they intended.

So, what does this mean for us? Modesto can certainly learn from some of these lessons, and as it grows as a town, it must take care not to invite the kinds of development that would inhibit the fair sharing of public space and the ability even of the poorest to have a place to find their refuge and rest. Remember, there are people living downtown already, and building them out might very well reproduce the kinds of inequality of ownership and power described here. And now is the time to make sure it does not happen.

Joseph Homer is a local organizer, fundraiser and homeless advocate who was worked with several community-based organizations to call attention to and highlight inequalities. Please reach out to him if you are interested in our Friday political chats or getting involved in activism or organizing work Email - jhomer42@gmail.com.



Excepted from: “The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions: Address Before the Young Men’s Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois”

January 27, 1838

By ABRAHAM LINCOLN

... At what point shall we expect the approach of danger? By what means shall we fortify against it?-- Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant, to step the Ocean, and crush us at a blow? Never!--All the armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest; with a Buonaparte for a commander, could not by force, take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years.

At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide.

... Many great and good men sufficiently qualified for any task they should undertake, may ever be found, whose ambition would inspire to nothing beyond a seat in Congress, a gubernatorial or a presidential chair; *but such belong not to the family of the lion, or the tribe of the eagle.* What! think

you these places would satisfy an Alexander, a Caesar, or a Napoleon?--Never! Towering genius distains a beaten path. It seeks regions hitherto unexplored.--It sees *no distinction* in adding story to story, upon the monuments of fame, erected to the memory of others. It *denies* that it is glory enough to serve under any chief. It *scorns* to tread in the footsteps of *any* predecessor, however illustrious. It thirsts and burns for distinction; and, if possible, it will have it, whether at the expense of emancipating slaves, or enslaving freemen. Is it unreasonable then to expect, that some man possessed of the loftiest genius, coupled with ambition sufficient to push it to its utmost stretch, will at some time, spring up among us? And when such a one does, it will require the people to be united with each other, attached to the government and laws, and generally intelligent, to successfully frustrate his designs.

Distinction will be his paramount object, and although he would as willingly, perhaps more so, acquire it by doing good as harm; yet, that opportunity being past, and nothing left to be done in the way of building up, he would set boldly to the task of pulling down.



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

JUNE 2018

1 FRI: The State Theatre presents *Pope Francis: A Man of His Word*. 1307 J. St., 12:00 pm. <http://www.ww2.thestate.org/calendar/event/index.php?id=1120>. Become a member of the State Theatre and get perks! Visit <http://www.thestate.org/membership>

2 SAT: The State Theatre presents *American Graffiti*. 1307 J. St., 3:00 pm. Visit <http://www.ww2.thestate.org/calendar/event/index.php?id=458>. Become a member of the State Theatre and get perks! Visit <http://www.thestate.org/membership>.

3 SUN: Annual Modesto Peace/Life Center Pancake Breakfast. Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto. 8 am to Noon.

6 WED: Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGIL: Gun Control. McHenry & J St., 4:30-5:30 pm.

16 SAT: The Wild Wild West Juneteenth R&B Throwback House Party, featuring Top Shelf Classics Party and Show Band, 8 pm to midnight, Modesto Centre Plaza, 1000 L St., Modesto. Dance to Old School R&B, Motown, Funk. Soul Food Sampler, Best Western Outfit Contest. Tickets: \$35 in advance, \$40 at the door. Tickets: Doc's BBQ, 421 Maze Blvd., Modesto, or at Mama Weber's Southern Kitchen & BBQ, 823 S. Mellon St., Manteca. OR from Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/juneteenth-throwback-dance-party-modesto-tickets-44711960678> A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Project Uplift Mentoring Program. Info: 209-551-1902.

17 SUN: The Modesto Film Society and The State Theatre presents *Them*. 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://www.ww2.thestate.org/calendar/event/index.php?id=906>. Become a member of the State Theatre and get perks! Visit <http://www.thestate.org/membership>

22-24 FRI-SUN: Peace Camp in the Sierra, Camp Peaceful Pines, Clark Fork Rd. See registration form and article, this issue. Discount for early registration! See p. 2.

23 SAT: California Audio Roots Project Stories, Stanislaus County Library, 2 pm to 4 pm. <http://www.modestosound.com/radio>

ONGOING

THE JOB CIRCLE Modesto Sound offers Audio Technician training classes for those 13 and older. Work with musicians; hands-on learning Live Sound, Recording Bands, Producing, Mastering, Electronics, and Pro Tools. Call or email for more information and class times. Modesto Sound, 110 Santa Barbara Ave., Modesto. \$200 (limited scholarships available). 209-573-0533, studio@modestosound.org; ModestoSound.org

Prepare for virtually any natural disaster with the **Natural Disaster Preparedness Guide:** www.expertise.com/home-and-garden/home-preparation-for-natural-disasters Complete guide to support groups at <http://www.friendsaregoodmedicine.com/pdf/FriendsDirectory.pdf>

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; 3rd Thursday Art Walk. 1015 J St., in Tenth St. Place. Open 11:30 to 5, Tues. through Sat. 529-3369.

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

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

CHILDRENS STORY HOURS Stanislaus County Library: Modesto, WiggleWorms! Program for children age 2 and younger and their caregivers; combines age appropriate stories and movement activities that promote essential pre-reading skills. Preschool StoryTime, Cuentos en espanol. Times vary. Info: http://www.stanislauslibrary.org/tk_kids_storytime.shtm

Habitat for Humanity's RE-STORE: used and new quality materials. Funds benefit homes built by Habitat in Stanislaus County. 630 Kearney Ave, Modesto. Mon-Sat., 9:00 AM - 6:00 pm. Closed Sunday. Visit <http://www.stanislaushabitat.org>

OCCUPY MODESTO: Action Info: Nancy, 545-1375.

REGULAR MEETINGS

SUNDAYS

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

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, SusanthePoet@gmail.com

TUESDAYS

NAACP Meeting. Christ Unity Baptist Church, 601 'L' St., Modesto, 3rd Tuesday @ 7 pm. 209-645-1909; email: naacp.branch1048@gmail.com

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

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

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

MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

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

MEDIA: Listen to 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.

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 tgsupport@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, jpmamodelto@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://emptynestzendo.org>

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

FRIDAYS

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; jpmamodelto@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.