



Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

A MODESTO
PEACE/LIFE
CENTER
PUBLICATION

MAY, 2018
VOLUME XXVI, NO. 9

BREAKING NEWS: Community Radio is on the move and needs your help!

By JAMES COSTELLO

Great news! We have found a site to build our radio tower just west of Patterson and 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 lo-



cal issues and spotlights local talent and events in music and the arts! What a rare opportunity to connect with one another, enriching understanding and appreciation of our

community and widening our circles of awareness and concern for the benefit of all. That's what Community Radio KCBP FM aims to do. 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, including an Art Auction and 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

Partner \$5,000

Founding Member \$500

Patron \$10,000

Friend \$1,000

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 KCBPradio, <https://www.facebook.com/KCBPcommunityradio/>

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

Again! Another AR-15!

From MomsRising.org

In the early hours of Sunday morning, April 22, a man wearing nothing but a green jacket walked into a Waffle House in Antioch, Tennessee and shot four people to death, injuring another four. Our hearts ache for the victims' families and for the Antioch community.

But we are also furious that once again a murderous person reached for an AR-15, a weapon of war, and used it as it was designed to be used: to kill many people at once!

The AR-15 is the weapon of choice for mass murderers, including:

And make no mistake, the AR-15 and other semi-automatic assault rifles are weapons of war. Not only do they look like battlefield firearms, they also match the firepower soldiers currently bring to combat. Because semi-automatic weapons (one bullet per trigger pull) are more accurate and thus more lethal, the American military has been issuing M16s and M4s to most conventional troops without the fully automatic function since the 1980s and have been training troops to fire M4s and M16s in the semiautomatic mode.

Combat weapons should not be used against children and teens in schools, people eating breakfast out with friends, in church, or otherwise going about our regular lives.

This is unacceptable!

Right now, there is legislation ready to be passed in Congress that would get these weapons of war off our streets. Congress must take up that legislation and move it forward now. No matter what we learn about the

Waffle House shooter's affiliations, hatreds, mental health, or background, his access to a weapon that was designed to kill large numbers of people quickly was why 8 people were slaughtered or maimed over the weekend.

It's nothing short of outrageous that civilians have access to the lethality of AR-15s and other military-style semi-automatic assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition,

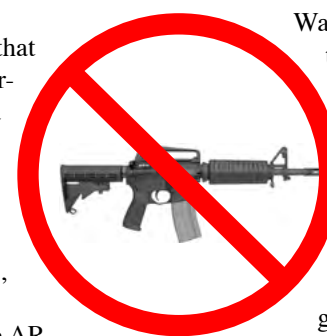
which are meant for battlefields, not our schools, churches, streets and communities.

https://action.momsrising.org/sign/waffle-house_AR15/?t=7&akid=10706%2E118816%2

[Ea-1MDT](#)

Just three days after the student and teacher-lead Protect Our Schools National Day of Action for gun safety, this latest mass shooting is yet another reminder that we must keep fighting for the safety of our families and communities.

Gloria, Kristin, Nate, Dorie and the entire MomsRising.org team



Aurora, Colorado (12 killed, 58 injured): AR-15
Newtown, Connecticut (26 killed, 2 injured): AR-15
Santa Monica, California (5 killed, 3 injured): AR-15
Colorado Springs, Colorado (3 killed, 58 injured): AR-15
San Bernardino, California (14 killed, 21 injured): AR-15
Orlando, Florida (49 killed, 50 injured): AR-15
Las Vegas, Nevada (58 killed, 851 injured): AR-15
Sutherland Springs, Texas (26 killed, 20 injured): AR-15
Parkland, Florida (17 killed, 17 injured): AR-15
Antioch, Tennessee (4 killed, 4 injured): AR-15

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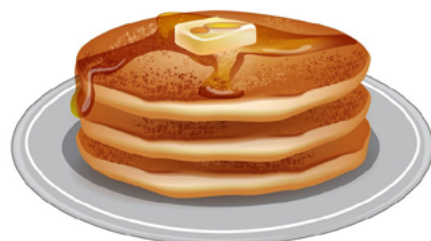
43rd Annual Pancake Breakfast

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.

Register now for Peace Camp, June 22-24

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 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.*

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

Timothy Land is a senior at Modesto High School, where he 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 is a senior at Gregori High School in Modesto. She 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, is the venue for Peace Camp and 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

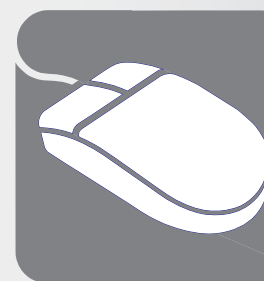
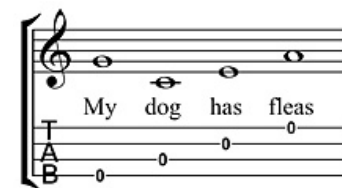
PEACE CAMP: Calling All Musicians!

By **SCOTT GIFFORD**


Hi! I'm Scott Gifford and it will be my pleasure to again play my uke and lead the singing around the Peace Camp campfires on Friday & Saturday nights. Just as more voices help the singing, more INSTRUMENTS can help the music. If you can strum along to chords like A, A7, C, C7, D7, E7, F, G7 and the occasional Am, Em or Dm, bring your guitar, uke, banjo, mandolin, etc. and we'll go for it!

Also, if there's any fiddle or harmonica players coming to camp who can provide solo breaks in between verses...that would be AMAZING.

Finally, as in years past, I'll be teaching a beginning-to-intermediate uke class on Saturday, depending on the skills levels of those who show up. Bring your own uke if you've got one; I'll have a few loaners available as well. "A splendid time is guaranteed for all!"



Look for
CONNECTIONS
online at:
<http://stanislausconnections.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

Armed to the teeth with dentures

By MARCUS PAGE-COLLONGE

This year the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists moved their doomsday clock closer to midnight. Why should we be concerned enough to turn back the clock on doomsday? Can we even do that when the more clear and present danger seems to be that our children are under the gun by attending school or going to movies and concerts where gun violence might occur?

These scientists heightened their assessment of impending nuclear war because of reckless rhetoric from fear-based folks with fingers on nuclear triggers, and the support such decision-makers have from insecure individuals in society cloaked in supremacist ideology. In other words: the belief that certain people are better than others (more deserving) and should have weapons to ensure their power over others is a belief that strongly supports both an infiltration of guns everywhere and nuclear weapons for "our people".

The ancient allure of ultimate control, of absolute power-over others came of age in the high-tech era of the 20th Century. That is why nuclear weapons abolition goes hand-in-hand with gun control. In the schools, streets, and nationalist boundaries, it's the same choice between fearfully clinging to weapons as if they will save "us," or courageously embracing "the other."

Whatever the choice of weaponry at whatever the level of social control, I and several dozen others each year reject the fearful ideology by stepping into the Mojave Desert for a nonviolent peacewalk directly to the nuclear weapons test site, to experiment with personal disarmament of the heart. The natural pace of walking is a rejection of the false hope of "security" through more powerful weapons. This year the walk was the last week of March.

And we have questions along the way. A big one is about the nonstop pro-nuclear weapons work for seven decades. Because it has continued without resulting in global nuclear war, why should we concern ourselves with nuclear proliferation? Rabbi Mel Hecht, of Las Vegas two decades ago had the answer that still rings true: "... is it NOT a miracle that we have not destroyed ourselves? It is because of people such as you who keep praying..." for peace and justice; that's the reason humanity thus far has been spared the fate that the nuclear weapons industry strives for. The rabbi was speaking to a crowd of 500 at a Nevada Desert Experience gathering.

The goodness of cultivating more goodness in our hearts staves off global destruction, perhaps the same way praying at sunrise in an ancient Shoshone prayer ensures the sun will

rise? The Shoshone (traditionally called "Newe" people) are neighbors of the Paiute people

in that region, and the ability of people from disparate religious traditions to pray together is one reason I keep coming back each Spring for those kinds of prayers to cultivate my own conscience while pushing back the potential mass destruction from hand-held guns, weaponized drone joysticks and nuclear trigger buttons.

The prayers are not simply private, indoor, far-distant quiet prayers. They are obvious, loud, interfaith prayers of action at the nuclear weapons testing site and drone war base in Nevada (also called Newe Sogobia). I am lucky to participate in such prayer-actions in that

bioregion for the sake of peace and environmental justice. The most regular event for 23 years now is the Sacred Peace Walk that NevadaDesertExperience.org (NDE) conducts, with three dozen volunteers each year, usually during Holy Week, often including Passover, a Pagan full-moon ceremony, a Shoshone sunrise ceremony, and a Christian Stations of the Nuclear Cross ceremony. To put it simply, the Sacred Peace Walk is astonishingly powerful, the kind of power-with-each-other that exemplifies the opposite energy of destructive nuclear weapons power. Since the advent of drone warfare (on the same literal path from Vegas to the nuclear site) this peace walk includes the opportunity for civil disobedience at the drone base and at the nuclear site.

It's certainly exciting to be in a long tradition of civilians and clergy working and praying for peace by being a temporary nomadic community, which then disperses back to our homes around the world after this pilgrimage. NDE has been holding the space for spiritual

and temporal activism since 1982 out there on the other

Watch PBS video on Modesto High's Day of Respect

Modesto High School's yearly Day of Respect, founded by Sharon Froba, was featured recently on Inside California Education's show on PBS, KVIE Channel 6.

If you missed it, you can watch the video at this link: <https://insidecaled.org/videogallery/video/modesto-day-of-respect-modesto-ca-0558/>

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.

IT IS 2 MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT



side of the Sierra Nevada mountains from where I live. I am usually arrested with the other NDE folks (at least 30 times in 20 years) in the coordinated ritual of civil disobedience for the sake of conscience and hoped-for effectiveness against nuclear and drone violence.

One of the Nevada elders in the movement for nuclear weapons abolition was Peter Ediger, who poetically drew the connection between the technology of the gun and the technology of the nuclear weapon. The attraction of wielding a device which can swiftly take life away from others, is a desperate, fear-based power that enables one to control others. The symbol of owning guns is identical to the symbol of keeping usable nuclear weapons—the "other" will obey your wishes, will not control you, when you can simply snuff out their lives. It's a sickness of the spirit that cycles this kind of logic through the soul, that is at the heart of violence.

The counter point to such sickness is why some of us undertake the Sacred Peace Walk (from Las Vegas to the nuclear weapons proving ground called the NNSS). We don't wish to succumb to the mainstream cultural value of controlling others, of threatening violence in order to feel powerful. Instead, we let the wilderness of a naked landscape speak to us, sometimes buffeting us with heat and wind, other times with cold and snow, all the time we are with each other, pilgrims walking 10 miles a day or more to experience our plain old power as pedestrians, as earthlings, as children of a nonviolent deity who wants us all to at least get along, and at best to celebrate joyfully as family.

IN MEMORIAM

Patricia Beth Roberts

January 28, 1940 – April 1, 2018

Peace Activist, Community Servant

Outstanding Cook for our Pancake Breakfast & Peace Camp

Beloved by many!



Watch the Enochs School Walkout 4/20/18

Modesto Peace/Life Center records the April 20 Enochs High School walkout in support of school safety. 8 min.

<https://youtu.be/jwhqMPy0RWI>

Video by Richard Anderson.

stanislaus
CONNECTIONS

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Prize Honors Seven Environmental Heroes

Award recognizes activists from Colombia, France, Vietnam, the Philippines, South Africa, and the United States

SAN FRANCISCO, April 23, 2018 — The Goldman Environmental Foundation today announced seven recipients of the 2018 Goldman Environmental Prize, the world's largest award for grassroots environmental activists.

Awarded annually to environmental heroes from each of the world's six inhabited continental regions, the Goldman Environmental Prize recognizes grassroots activists for significant achievements to protect the environment.

The winners were awarded the Prize at an invitation-only ceremony today at the San Francisco Opera House (watch online at www.goldmanprize.org/ceremony).

This year's winners are:

FRANCIA MÁRQUEZ, Colombia:

A formidable leader of the Afro-Colombian community, Francia Márquez pressured the Colombian government and organized the women of La Toma, in the Cauca region, to stop illegal gold mining on their ancestral land.

CLAIRE NOUVIAN, France: A tireless defender of the oceans and marine life, Claire Nouvian led a focused, data-driven advocacy campaign against the destructive fishing practice of deep-sea bottom trawling. Her work yielded French support for a ban on the practice, securing an EU-wide ban.

MAKOMA LEKALAKALA & LIZ MCDAID, South Africa: As grassroots activists, Makoma Lekalakala and Liz McDaid built a broad coalition to stop South Africa's



LeeAnne Walters, American recipient. Photo: Goldman Foundation

massive nuclear deal with Russia. Their work resulted in a landmark legal victory against the secret \$76 billion deal, protecting South Africa from lifetimes of nuclear waste.

MANNY CALONZO, the Philippines: Manny Calonzo spearheaded an advocacy campaign that persuaded the Philippine government to enact a national ban on the production, use, and sale of lead paint. His efforts have protected millions of Filipino kids from lead poisoning.

LEEANNE WALTERS, United States: LeeAnne Walters led a citizens' movement that tested the tap water in Flint, Michigan, and exposed the **Flint water crisis**, compelling the local, state, and federal governments to take action to ensure access to clean drinking water.

KHANH NGUY THI, Vietnam: Khanh Nguy Thi used scientific research

and engaged Vietnamese state agencies to advocate for sustainable long-term energy projections and reduction in coal power dependency in Vietnam. Her efforts helped eliminate 115 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions from Vietnam annually.

There is much more about each prize winner at <https://www.goldmanprize.org/>

The Goldman Environmental Prize was established in 1989 by late San Francisco civic leaders and philanthropists Richard and Rhoda Goldman. Prize winners are selected by an international jury from confidential nominations submitted by a worldwide network of environmental organizations and individuals.

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

By **DAVID TUCKER**

The Pancake Breakfast will again be held at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave. on Sunday, June 3 from 8 a.m. to noon.

It is that time of year again. We appreciate your help in past years. Let me know if you are willing to 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

Dishwashing

Handling Beverages

Taking orders

Greeter

Servers & Table Cleanup

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



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Can enlarge text to read more easily!

Print out if desired!

To sign-up, send your email address to Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org

If you do not have Adobe Reader, download it free from <http://www.adobe.com/downloads/>

Be informed!

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



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Green Tips for a Green Planet: Be Aware, Care, Nurture, Protect

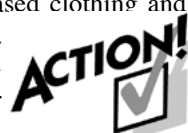
By **TINA ARNOPPLE DRISKILL**

Plastics - the cold hard facts:

- Throwaway plastics are being tossed indiscriminately throughout our communities and into our waterways.
- The lives of seabirds, fish, turtles, whales and all sea life are being compromised, while **the equivalent of a truckload of plastic enters ocean habitats daily.**
- An alarming **90%** of plastics have **not been recycled**, and **plastic production is set to double in the next 20 years.**
- Studies conclude that plastic fibers have contaminated 94% of US tap water.
- Other evidence has shown that we are breathing in and ingesting micro-fibers from plastic based clothing and bedding like polyester, fleece and more.

Corporations do not take responsibility for the manufacture of these and other harmful throw away plastic products.

ACTION: Greenpeace is asking con-



sumers to get and board to help convince corporations to take responsibility and stop producing single-use plastic packaging. Learn more about what you can do to take action today at greenpeace.org/breakfreefromplastic

Reminder: Summer heat is just around the corner. Learn how to save and use less water in your garden and around the house. Check your local city websites for water conservation tips and watering schedules.

Liberty Or Death

Peace Essay Contest Winner: First Place, Division III

By RANA BANANKHAH

"My name is Imamu Shaka. I am twelve years old, in a refugee camp, running from the guerrillas, and in dire need of true refuge. We are about to embark on our journey from Congo to America. If I don't make it, I want people to remember me this way. I am Imamu Shaka."

I slowly closed the brown leather journal my mother had once treasured. Had we lived a different life, my mother would be here, now: peering over my shoulder with her keen, beautiful hazelnut eyes. My sister would enlighten our spirits in the worst situations with her contagious smile and optimism. My friends would come over to play football in the middle of the deserted dirt field with the sun tickling our skins. But things were different. My mother was slowly choked to death, as if *they* took pleasure in her suffering. My sister: murdered by the disease that plagued her tiny, frail body. All of my friends were kidnapped and recruited as soldiers, as if they were merely being turned into pawns in a game of chess. But this was no game. This was my life... And now we must leave this war zone we call home in search of a better life. My father is the only one I trust and love. All the others are dead.

It seemed impossible to leave the Congo for a life in America, but somehow my father managed to make it work. We were finally freed from the shackles that bound us to this land; we finally had our visas. When I walked out of that plane, a wave of liberation emanated through my veins. "*I'm finally free,*" I thought to myself, "*I'm free.*" I strutted the way over to the massive airport. My head was high and my chest was up. I was free.

A week later we were settled into a small apartment in the city of Charlottesville, Virginia. I could wander out and upon the foreign city for days. But I didn't have time for

distractions, for it was my first day of school and we were already running late. I quickly tossed my pencil and notebook into my bag and bolted my way over to the school. The bell rang just as I stepped foot on campus. I looked around. It was as if I was a crow in a sea of doves. My head hung low as I walked towards the class. I took my seat in the far corner of the class. I could tell that people were already talking about me, but I pretended not to notice. The class soon started with everyone telling each other their names. Wyatt, Emma, Jack, Abigail... The list went on and soon it was my turn.

"My name is Imamu Shaka," I said softly. I heard whispers among the class. I just slouched in my seat. I had the strangest name, I had the strangest accent, I had the strangest face. I was the only one whose lip was deformed. Back in the Congo, it wasn't abnormal for one to display such a formation, but things were different here. I prayed not to be called on for the rest of the day, but my prayers weren't answered.

"I just wanted to specifically introduce our school's newest student, Imamu. He is from the Congo and doesn't know much English so be sure to give him a warm welcome to our school," Mrs. Anne said as she turned to write on the board. I felt something bounce off my neck. At first I thought it was all in my head until it hit me again, and again. Everytime I turned around I didn't see anything, but someone was throwing something at me. I sat in that class for what felt like hours waiting for break. When the bell finally rang, I swiftly stood up from my chair and went outside. I stood near the fence by myself. People were giving me looks as if I were an alien. Oh, how I yearned for my mother's affection. I was fortunate enough to meet a young boy named Jack during that break, who would forever change my life. He stood up for me. He helped me. He was a brother to me.

Before I knew it, school ended and it wasn't so bad at all. I walked home and began my homework. I spent hours on the one page that we had. It was all too confusing. I didn't understand any of it. I spent hour after frustrating hour on it until I was finally finished. When I

had completed my homework, I routinely wrote about my day in my journal. I was in the middle of entry number ten when I heard the front door open. I looked up and saw my father with a grin on his face. "Let's go," he said excitedly.

"Go where? When? For what?" I asked.

"I'll answer all your questions later," He said briskly as he



opened the door. I cluelessly followed him to the bus stop. We hopped on the bus and rode to a hospital. We entered the waiting room and sat for a few minutes until we were in a strange room with many unknown devices. "This organization saved us from our past life in the Congo, so don't fear. Be brave my boy," my father whispered in the silence. I slowly scanned the room and everything in it. There were medical tools, gloves, antibiotics. I paused for a moment and tilted my head. "*The walls,*" I thought. The walls were covered with pictures of people like me, with the same lip deformation. I stopped. I could hardly breathe. My heart raced. I swallowed heavily trying to hold back the tears. I finally knew why I was here.

The surgery went well. When I first looked at myself in the mirror I was almost unrecognizable. I was overcome with such joy. And that's when it hit me. Like a slap in the face. I wanted to help others. I wanted to be a doctor.

"Journal entry number ten... Living in America has given me a whole new perspective on life. There aren't wars when you step out of your house. The school roofs don't look like they're about to crumble down on you. Everyone is given a fair chance at life. I have come to realize how incredibly lucky I am to be living in such a country, a place I now call home. And even though there might be obstacles in the way, crows can fly over them. I hope the next time I read this journal I will be helping others, like those doctors helped me. And if I ever forget how grateful I should be living in such a country, I can look back at the memories housed inside of these rough leather covers. I am Imamu Shaka, and this is my story."

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What you should know about the federal standards that protect farmworkers and families from pesticides

And how each of us could be affected if the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guts these safeguards

From Earth Justice, Feb. 28, 2018 | Updated Apr. 17

Every day starting at dawn, teenage and adult farmworkers labor by hand in fields sopping with toxic pesticides. We can see them all over the country. They cut ferns in Florida, pull weeds in Ohio, pick strawberries in California, or harvest squash in Michigan, while others mix and spray pesticides that are intended to harm pests but also put workers in harm's way.

Stories of workers suffering from vomiting, headaches, itches and other symptoms of acute pesticide exposure are all too common, as doctors diagnose up to 20,000 poisonings a year among agricultural workers. This is like saying that every year, each child and adult in the town of Shelbyville, Indiana, ends up in the hospital for a pesticide-related injury. And that's only what's reported.

To address ongoing poisonings, critical improvements were made in the past several years to two federal safeguards—known as the [Agricultural Worker Protection Standard](#) and its sister set of safety standards, the [Certification of Pesticide Applicators Rule](#). But on Dec. 14, the Scott Pruitt-led U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced its intent to gut these two poisoning-prevention measures, despite the lives at stake.

UPDATE: Apr. 17: Earthjustice and Farmworker Justice have filed a lawsuit to force the EPA to turn over communications between EPA and representatives of the agricultural and chemical industries related to the anticipated gutting of these two safety standards.

Farmworker Justice and Earthjustice submitted a Freedom of Information Act request to EPA for the records in late December, days after EPA announced its intention to revisit these protections. The request went unanswered. Now, these groups are asking the court to order EPA to provide the documents within 20 business days.

The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, comes less than a month after the same district court ruled that the EPA illegally delayed implementation of the Certification of Pesticide Applicators Rule last summer. The court declared the original Mar. 6, 2017, date as the effective date, making its ruling effective immediately.

The judge also sent a strong message to the EPA by rejecting all the agency's delays for failing to properly notify the public and allow for comments. It's still unclear when the EPA will open its proposed changes to the Agricultural Worker Protection Standard and Certification of Pesticide Applicators Rule for public comments.

Earthjustice is proud to have worked alongside worker advocate and justice organizations for years to strengthen

both of these critical protections. And we will defend these vital safeguards in court if the Trump administration continues its attack on our communities and the millions of people who grow our food.

Here's how you could be affected, and how you can defend these protections.

Who do these safeguards protect?

The [Agricultural Worker Protection Standard](#) and [Certification of Pesticide Applicators Rule](#) protect everyone, including farmworkers.

When pesticides are used to maintain home lawns or the community greenspace, or to manage an insect infestation in or around your home or office, the [Certification of Pesticide Applicators Rule](#) prevents tragedies by ensuring that the certified pesticide applicator hired—and the people who they employ—are adequately trained to use these hazardous

chemicals.

These protections make sure that basic, life-saving questions are answered: Is the pesticide applicator trained to protect themselves and others during and after applying the most toxic chemicals available on the market (formally known as "restricted use pesticides")? Are pesticide applicators aware of which chemicals they are handling could severely injure or kill people and pets if misused?

When the EPA adopted these standards, it pointed to multiple tragic incidents where children died, or were seriously and permanently injured with nerve damage, when pesticides applicators misused highly toxic pesticides that had been banned for residential use.

Why are these two standards needed?

The [Agricultural Worker Protection Standard](#) and [Certification of Pesticide Applicators Rule](#) save lives by preventing illness, injury and death from pesticide exposure or misuse.

"They would spray pesticides near us, over and over, and there was nothing that could be done."

Olga Santos Santa Maria, CA. Santos began working in the fields as a six-year-old. [Read more](#)

Every year, approximately 20,000 agricultural workers, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—as many as 300,000, according to the [U.S. Government Accountability Office](#)—suffer pesticide poisoning. The enormity of these health harms and farmworkers from across the country compelled the federal government to protect the farm-working labor who feeds the country.

Pesticide exposure can pose serious short- and long-term health risks to children and adults. Children are particularly vulnerable to the dangerous effects of pesticide exposure—children's bodies are still developing; they consume more water and food; and they breathe more air, pound for pound, than adults.

The immediate aftermath of [acute pesticide poisoning](#) can result in rashes, vomiting, and even death. In the long-term, pesticide exposure has been associated with [increased risk of cancers, infertility, neurological disorders, and respiratory conditions](#). These chemicals also contaminate the air and water, a burden disproportionately borne by rural communities.

Pesticide Poisoning in the United States

Children in farmworker families in Washington's Yakima Valley are exposed to higher amounts of harmful pesticides from dust in the home than other children.

In Michigan, data collected in 1993 showed a total of 82 different active ingredients were applied as agricultural chemicals to the state's apples, blueberries, grapes, peaches, sweet cherries and tart cherries.

In Minnesota, six of the top eight agricultural pesticides sold by volume in 2011 have been linked to cancer.

In California, mortality from Parkinson's disease as the underlying cause of death was higher in agricultural pesticide-use counties than in non-use counties.

Among non-occupational pesticide-related illness and injury between 2007–2011, the state of Florida experienced the highest number, with 1,759 cases.

Between 2000–2010, Oklahoma experienced more pesticide-related illnesses and deaths than any other state.

On Kauai, "restricted use pesticides" are used on cornfields 17 times more per acre than in the U.S. mainland.

What is the Agricultural Worker Protection Standard, and how is it at risk?

The [Agricultural Worker Protection Standard](#) is the only federal rule protecting people from occupational pesticide ex-

continued next page

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posure and poisonings. It protects approximately 2.5 million farmworkers across the 50 states, the District of Columbia and all U.S. territories.

This set of safeguards was [strengthened in 2015](#)—the result of more than 15 years of advocacy and stakeholder meetings—to give farmworkers health protections that employees in other industries have enjoyed for decades. The updated standards balance the needs of growers, while taking into account the unique working environment of agricultural labor.

The updated standard serves critical purposes:

- Protect the approximately [half-a-million child farmworkers](#) throughout the country. Teens under the age of 18 are not permitted to mix, load or apply pesticides, unless they are working on an establishment that is owned or operated by their family members.
- Improve the quality of pesticide safety training, so workers can protect themselves on the job, and shield their families from take-home pesticide residue that can latch onto bodies or clothes.
- Give farmworkers the right to request pesticide-application information through a designated representative.

The Trump administration has now signaled it [may eliminate all of these provisions](#)—meaning, it would once again be lawful to let all teenage farmworkers handle dangerous pesticides while on the job.

Furthermore, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is withholding the new pesticide safety materials that employers need to educate their workforce. This comes even as farmworkers and [doctors](#) have called for these protections, because pesticide exposure increases [the risk of cancer](#) and may impact [child development](#).

What is the Certification for Pesticide

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Applicators Rule, and how is it at risk?

The *Certification for Pesticide Applicators Rule* sets training and certification requirements for commercial and private pesticide applicators who handle chemicals classified as the most toxic in the market. These so-called “[restricted use pesticides](#)” cannot be sold to the general public because of how dangerous they can be to people and the environment. Only certified applicators can handle these life-threatening chemicals and apply them in our homes, our businesses and our farms.

“I hope that working conditions are better when my children are grown. I’m thinking positively.” — Olivia Flores Apopka, FL. Flores mixed chemicals in a Florida nursery with few protections or handling instructions. [Read more](#)

To protect children’s brains and their developing bodies, in 2017, an important [improvement](#) to the *Certification for Pesticide Applicators Rule* prohibited youth under the age of 18 from applying “[restricted use pesticides](#).”

This standard provides many critical protections, in addition to protecting children from applying the most toxic pesticides:

- Requires that certified applicators be able to read and write and increases the frequency of applicator safety training to every year.
- Mandates that pesticide information is provided in different languages, since pesticide workers are often migrants who may speak limited English.
- *Immediate Family Exemption*: To accommodate family-owned pesticides applicator businesses, the standard allows 16-year-olds to handle “[restricted use pesticides](#)” if they are supervised by a certified applicator who is a member of their immediate family. Critics of the standard have claimed immediate family has been too narrowly defined, but in fact, the term includes: spouse, parents, stepparents, foster parents, children, stepchildren, foster children, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, grandparents, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and first cousins.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency now wants to eliminate the *Certification for Pesticide Applicators Rule*’s minimum age restriction—a safeguard that protects not just the lives of minors working as for-hire laborers, but also the public who may be exposed to injury or even death, when pesticides are mishandled.

What occupations are covered by these two standards?

The *Agricultural Worker Protection Standard* covers:

- Pesticide handlers, who mix, load, or apply agricultural pesticides; clean or repair pesticide application equipment; or assist with pesticide application.
- Agricultural workers, who perform tasks related to growing and harvesting plants on farms, greenhouses, nurseries, and forests.

The *Certification of Pesticide Applicators Rule* covers:

- Workers who apply “[restricted use pesticides](#)”—the most toxic chemicals available on the market—in businesses, homes, schools, farms and ranches. That includes approximately one million certified pesticide applicators and the non-certified pesticide applicators they supervise.

While the *Certification of Pesticide Applicators Rule* protects the lives of pest control workers, those protections extend to all of us who are exposed to hazardous pesticides in our place of business, in schools, and in our homes—even our pets are protected under this standard.

What has the federal government said about how these safeguards can improve our lives?

According to [the government’s own findings](#), the monetized health benefits of both standards will offset or outweigh costs, with the [benefits](#) of the improved *Agricultural Worker Protection Standard* itself likely to exceed \$64 million each year in avoided health costs.

These life-saving protections are sensible. Still, the Pruitt-led EPA is eager to discount these benefits in order to cater to petrochemical companies’ bottom line.

In fact, by delaying and re-working standards that have taken decades of expert work to develop and finalize, the Pruitt-led EPA is wasting taxpayer money.

Is there anything I can do?

- Absolutely. [Urge your elected officials](#) to defend the *Agricultural Worker Protection Standard* and the *Certification of Pesticide Applicators Rule* from attacks by the Trump administration.
- Tell the EPA that you support these two standards and oppose any attempts to undermine these protections. It is important to build a public record of opposition to these attacks on public health and the environment.
- Voice your concern with your local newspaper through an opinion piece or Letter to the Editor. (See our tips for writing an effective Letter to the Editor.)
- Share what you’ve learned and this resource with your friends and social media networks, with the hashtag #ProtectFarmworkers. Encourage others to be informed and get involved.

To see a Map of Poisonings from the CDC and read the entire article with photos, visit

<https://earthjustice.org/features/worker-protection-standard-certification-pesticide-applicator-rule>

Speak and Live: Bullets into Bells: Poets and Citizens Respond to Gun Violence

By Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Two statements from very different poets, set the agenda for *Bullets into Bells: Poets and Citizens Respond to Gun Violence*, a unique anthology of poetry and reflections on guns. “If you speak, you die. If you keep quiet, you die. So, speak and die,” wrote Algerian poet and journalist Tahar Djaout, who in 1993 was shot and killed by a fundamentalist group. Wallace Stevens describes poetry as “a violence from within that protects us from a violence without. It is the imagination pressing back against the pressure of reality.”

The staggering, unimaginable reality in the United States is cited in the book: our nation suffers more than 30,000 shooting deaths annually, including suicides, accidents, and assaults. In this anthology, 54 poets respond to this reality by—in essence—asserting, “speak and live.”

The times necessitate moving beyond debate about guns into a new territory of nuance, perhaps accessible only through poetry and other creative arts. Poets and artists are the doorkeepers who usher us into the interior of this national horror.

The book is constructed as a litany. Each poem is echoed by a short reflection written by the “citizens” referred to in the book’s subtitle. They aren’t just any citizens, however. They are survivors of shootings, family of people who died in shootings, gun control activists and other peacemakers—even people who are related to shooters.

It makes for a truly disturbing, unsettling reading experience. Raw language and graphic imagery bring to life the stark reality of gun violence, and what it does to people. Readers should prepare for a deeply emotional and personal reaction, feeling with and for victims, survivors, even shooters . . . because that’s the point. Unless Americans tap into the physical and emotional and spiritual realities of the shootings, gun violence will be allowed to continue and untold more lives will be lost.

One of the editors, Brian Clements, lives in Newtown, Conn., and is married to a teacher who survived the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School. His poem is a litany of its own. The number 22 helps him remember people he has encountered at various times in his life, people who carried .22 pistols, or threatened him with one, or shot themselves or others. One stanza is about his best friend from sixth and seventh grade, who committed suicide at age 22. The last stanza recounts his wife’s experience at Sandy Hook.

. . . a Bushmaster .223, hundreds of rounds of ammunition, and a shotgun in the car. Rather than turn right, toward my wife’s classroom where she pulled two kids into her room from the hallway, he turned to the left. . . .

A poem by Reginald Dwayne Betts, “When I Think of Tamir Rice While Driving,” is paired with a response by the mother of 12-year-old Tamir, who was shot by police while playing with a toy gun in a public park. “When I lost Tamir, I lost a piece of myself,” Samaria Rice writes. “American police terrorism was created to control the black and brown people of slavery. This remains vivid today. We need change across this country and accountability for our loved ones whose lives have been stolen by American terrorism.”

“Who will govern the government when they continue to murder American citizens?” is her question. It deserves a serious answer from our nation’s leaders—and, really, from all of us.

Here is her answer: “I am not afraid of the leadership that I have come into upon the death of my son. I am not afraid to create change and to be a part of change.”

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford is director of News Services for the Church of the Brethren, and associate editor for Messenger. She also is an ordained minister and a graduate of Bethany Seminary and the University of La Verne, Calif.

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Speaking with an Acquaintance about Gun Violence

By DMITRA INTEUSE-GIDEON

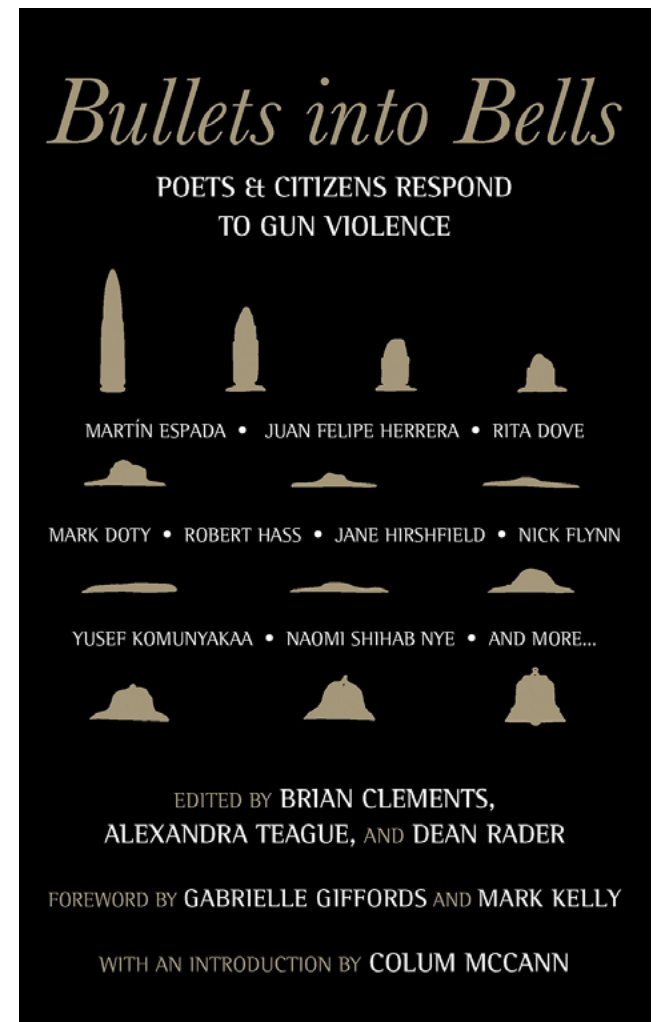
“You don’t understand,” you tell me, “You don’t live where I live.” You tell me about the time your door was kicked in and a woman was raped. You tell me about robberies, invasions, and families murdered. You ask what I would do in your shoes. You assume that I oppose guns because I have lived a life free from violence.

As you explain to me your need for violence, you reveal your story, your pain, and your fears. You show me the deepest and most cherished parts of yourself—the parts you want to protect. I want to protect them, too. Your insistence on the distance between us increases my compassion, extends a string between us and pulls me closer to you. If you raised your fist, I would cover it with my hands and press it to my lips.

I want to tell you that your guns will not save you. I, too, have seen violence and brutality. I am fully aware of the menace surrounding us. The menace is not the issue, nor

is the violence. What you seek to defend against is not an external enemy; it is your fear.

The ever-present threat of violence repeats itself as a story in your mind until you are filled with the fear of your enemies. Your instinct is to fight your fear, and this instinct drives your actions. It is not the enemy you fight, then, but the fear the enemy has planted within you. Without ever touching your body, your attacker places himself inside of you. You adopt his fear, his distrust, his aggression. You envelop yourself in his violence. You buy a gun to place on your bedside table, which allows you to sleep through the night. In doing this you have not vanquished the threat or eliminated your fear; you have placed your fear in the totem of the gun just as your attacker has placed his fear inside of you. If someone does break into your home and you shoot him, it will not be a bullet but your fear that



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On Mothering, Nurturing and Compassion (synonymous with mothering), and Social Media

Homeless in Capitol Mall

We were lost before you came
staring in the window
as we sat in the darkened restaurant.
We had finally found
our pre-paid parking garage,
cursing our way round city blocks,
wanting to go the wrong way
on one-way streets, coming up
on dead-ends.
The machine scanned our bar-code,
we parked and went inside.
Seething, I was ready
for a drink or four.
My husband stepped outside.
Where does he think
he's going now? I wondered.
He returned, we ordered drinks
and he went into the men's.
You returned to the window
wearing your day-glow orange
blanket and watch cap. I glared
into my purse which held my camera
it's battery dead. I would not look
at your sad face, peering
through the glass. I looked into
my wallet, found a fiver
and Steve returned.
"I want to give
that homeless man
some money."
(He had advised against doing so
if anyone had approached
in the parking garage,) and
I could see the logic in that—
but felt ashamed to be eating
with a poor crazy man outside
(wearing an orange blanket)
staring through the glass.
"I just did." Steve said,
"But do what you want."
My heart filled with love for him.
I stepped outside and found the man.
He apologized, (again,) as Steve
had said he'd done with him.

— bg (Bonita Gill)



#Parenting - (A Mother reflects upon parenting via social media)

Some Sunday evenings end in absent silence.
The ones where the girls are under a different roof
and the ones that see my siblings depart after
a festive weekend celebrating Cambodian New Years.

I know a small degree of the ache
my dad feels as he stands
and waves until his children
are out of sight.

It's probably the same one
I feel when I know Dahlia is watching through
the car window until they turn the corner
and we can no longer see each other.

I can endure these
temporary good byes,
because I know we
will reunite and resume.

My dad demonstrates what it is to trust the world
to care for your most precious gifts
and to provide love in a way that
transcends the distance between.

#parenting
— Leng Nou

POET: Leng Nou

Leng is Manager of MHSA/Innovation Projects at Stanislaus County and has been a Senior Director at the American Leadership Forum. She is chair of the Modesto Peace/Life Center.

She writes: "I believe in the common good. I work in every capacity of my life to ensure that the community I am a part of is happy, safe and have options for the future. I have built programs in the non-profit sector for over ten years and have exercised oversight of the service structures. I use data driven analysis to not only define what is helpful but how to maximize our resources in providing assistance to the most affected populations. I support the idea of interconnectedness in solving problems and work to refine existing systems to reach their optimum potential. I enjoy helping others learn skills that will enable them to work in their own capacity to accomplish the same objectives."

Twice I Made My Mother Cry

The first time I was a fish
swallowed by the very first woman,
whose thighs were made of water
and wide as mountains. I sat
in her gut, and in the gut of each woman
after, flapping, throbbing impatience
against their wombs, pressing down
on their watery thighs. Each one
put her hand on her belly and cooed gently,
Not Yet.
Until my mother sweated and screamed,
pushed me out, pulled red threads of memory
to wrap around my throat so I would not forget
the women I had been. My gills pulsed.
I gasped for breath.
She said I made her a redwood.
The second time we sat
on the couch and I told her the truth
of my father, showed her where
he had sunk in the knife, ripped me open
gills to thighs. I showed her how the flesh
never quite goes back the same way. My scalp
still peels away from my eyebrows.
My gut still spills out
onto the floorboards.
I showed her how I could unravel
my skin, step out, unwind
the thread from my throat, the red
now coated by a man's sweat,
the mark of womanhood long gone
from its memory. I told her,
I have never stopped gasping for breath.
Uprooted, my mother cried.

— Dmitra Inteuse-Gideon



Boys & Girls Clubs of Stanislaus County hosts Stanislaus' First Responders Rib, Chicken and Chili Cook Off competition

The Saturday, May 12th fundraising event will feature delicious ribs, savory chicken, and homemade chili to benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Stanislaus County.

March 20, 2018 – Modesto, CA.

Back by popular demand, an epic battle between Stanislaus First Responders is set for Saturday, May 12th to benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Stanislaus County (BGCStan). The event brings together in a friendly competition, Modesto Fire Fighters against Modesto Police Officers for best ribs and Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department against Stanislaus Consolidated Fire Department competing for best chicken. Each one of these teams will also be judged for their original chili.

More than 300 guests will serve as judges to decide who will take home the top prize of a year long worth of official bragging rights. Last year, Modesto Police Officers won the title for best ribs while Modesto Fire Fighters won for best chili.

Kevin Fox, iHeartMedia host of Power Talk 1360AM, will once again serve as the event's charismatic emcee. There will also be a special ceremony presented by the Civil Air Patrol.

Lincoln Ellis, BGCStan Chief Professional Officer, adds, "This event lets us celebrate our mission which is to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens."

Mike Hicks, of the Modesto Police, adds, "It is our pleasure to participate in this fun competition knowing that the money raised will help the Boys & Girls Clubs of Stanislaus County to continue to empower the local youth of our community."

Tickets are \$50 for the 21+ over event which takes place at the beautiful estate of Dr. Stephen and Ann Endsley. Purchase a table of 8 for \$500 and enjoy a bottle of fine wine from Berryhill Family Vineyards and hors d'oeuvres from Papapavlo's Mediterranean Bistro. Sponsorships are also available. For tickets call (209) 222-5826 or order online at www.bgcstan.clubevent.info. For additional information, contact Laura Ward at (209) 549-2765 or email Laura@WardPromotional.com



OPINION: What's up with immigration?

By ED BEARDEN

What's up with immigration? By 'up' I mean ICE and all of its valley activities: mothers ripped away from minor children, the active hunting down of a Modesto cancer-survivor, or any of the other 150 valley citizens detained by ICE. We are not talking about felons. It's not a crime to be undocumented, regardless of Washington rhetoric. It is a self-serving lie, in the same class as the current administration's war against the FBI. These so called "illegal" immigrants are described as major and violent criminals. They reportedly take advantage of our schools, our health care systems and freeloader off our hard-working taxpayers.

It's the same argument made by Pete Wilson, then the Republican Governor of California, in his 1994 support of Proposition 187. A law that was challenged in a legal suit, found unconstitutional, and never went into effect. Proposition 187 would have prohibited undocumented immigrants from using health care, public education and other social services in the State of California.

That's the talk. Now, let's walk it back. The facts are more nuanced. If everything in America is money driven, (ask any politician) let's challenge the economic assumptions, as economist Richard Wolff has done (rdwolff.com). The population of the United States is about 325 million people. About half of them hold jobs. That's what is meant by full employment. Within this mix, are about 12 million undocumented immigrants. This group is made up largely of people who work, pay taxes, and don't break our laws.

They value a safe community as much as we do. Perhaps more-so, as many of them have come to the United States precisely because of dangerous and violent situations in their homeland. Violence that in a number of documented instances, was encouraged by actions of the United States itself. Actions which include the teaching of torture at the U.S. Army School of the Americas, Fort Benning Georgia. A 'school' where techniques of torture were taught to government personnel from US-allied, Latin American nations.

So, what's up with Attorney General Jeff Sessions? Is he really so scared, so frightened he is about to wet his pants? Really? He's afraid of people who are at the absolute bottom of the economic ladder? Does he expect to fix a broken and corrupt economy on the backs of these already impoverished people? Sessions in turn, has frightened local political leaders. At an April 20, 2017, informational meeting on the subject of sanctuary cities, three members of the Modesto City Council stated their opposition to Modesto becoming a sanctuary city. They were afraid Modesto could lose funding if it declared itself a sanctuary-city, as if money were an adequate replacement for humane treatment. So once again we are reminded, as FDR did so long ago, that it is fear itself that is to be feared. How else could they have concluded the city itself was more important than the people who live here.

So, here's what's up with immigration. It's a distraction. Its

fake and its phony. The issue is not immigrants. The issue is jobs. Jobs, and an unequal distribution of wages and profits. Jobs, good jobs that pay a living wage, are being lost to automation, not immigrants. A recent Bee article highlighted the shortage of truck drivers. Not to worry. Futurists predict truck driving could become self-driving within as few as 10 years. Did I say not to worry? It is automation, like self-driving trucks, artificial intelligence, or "Flippy," the fast food robot, and not our undocumented neighbors, that is taking our jobs.



Speaking with an Acquaintance about Gun Violence

from page 8

lodge itself between his ribs.

I am not fearless. If I am threatened, my gut trembles. If I am beaten, robbed, or raped, I feel terror and agony. I fear strangers, alleyways, darkness, and rage. The difference between us is not our histories or neighborhoods; it is our reaction to fear. I do not run from the terror, nor do I attempt to vanquish it. I do not coordinate my actions around my fear. I do not place my fear in a weapon in order to convince myself it is gone. I accept fear as part of my experience. I allow it to bubble inside me and rest in my ribs. I breathe into the fear. I do not let it breathe into me.

Peace is not the disappearance of all external threats; it is an internal process by which we decide that nothing will bring us to violence. It is the assurance that no outside force can shake the calm within. It is the certainty that, though we may be overpowered, we will retain our power, though we may be degraded, we will keep our dignity, though we may be enslaved, our minds will remain unbound and, though war may be waged against us, we will maintain our peace.

I know that, whatever is done to me or taken from me, my stillness endures. I know that I am not my body, nor am I the violence wrought against it. I refuse to become a victim of, or defender against, violence, and become instead an author of peace. I endure fear and suffering so that my core will remain powerfully, militantly nonviolent.

I want to say this to you, but I do not think you will hear me. I cannot convert you to nonviolence. You must find it in yourself. You must let down your walls of defense and listen to your enemies. You must be willing to be wrong, to be vulnerable. You must experience the ache of true compassion, of an empathy that swallows you whole. Only then will you exorcise violence from your body. Only then will you understand that you cannot enforce peace with a gun in your hand, nor can you combat fear with firepower. You enforce peace by waging peace. You combat fear by refusing to let it dictate your actions. You end violence when you cut off your fists and live in the world not as it is, but as you know it can be.

The opinions expressed in Connections do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or the board of the Modesto Peace/Life Center.

Arpaio, Bundy, Coulter: The ABC of Evil in the Valley

By **ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen**

Local Republicans can scarcely suppress their glee as leading figures of Trumpism have made the valley a favored destination. The parade of far-right celebrities began late last April, when Stanislaus County Republicans, led by former Modesto City Councilperson Janice Keating and Stanislaus County Supervisor Jim DeMartini, brought in Ann Coulter for a fund raiser.

The tour continued in September, when Fresno Republicans had their own fundraiser featuring Joe Arpaio, self-designated as, “America’s toughest sheriff.” This Friday and Saturday, sagebrush rebellion superstar Ammon Bundy appeared at Modesto Junior College, brought in by prominent local Republican John Duarte, owner of Hughson’s Duarte Nursery. Together, the three amount to an “ABC” of evil in a region where Donald Trump’s minions have an iron grip on political leadership.

An octogenarian sadist, steeped for decades in the twin toxins of racism and xenophobia—a man who put prisoners in pink underwear and tents where the temperature rose to 145 degrees—Joe Arpaio is Donald Trump’s kinda guy; in fact, Trump spared the nasty sheriff a jail term last August, when he bestowed him with a full pardon for his criminal contempt case.

Like Trump, Arpaio has a long history of litigation and losses. The U.S. Department of Justice has ruled that Arpaio’s

office had the worst cases of racial profiling in United States history; the office subsequently paid over \$146 million in fees, court awards, and settlements.

Also, like Trump, Arpaio was a big draw in a valley that far too often rewards its migrant workers with low pay, constant fears of criminal prosecution, and routine contempt. Last September, Fresno Republicans paid \$70 a head to listen to Arpaio’s hate rants. VIP seats were offered at \$1500 per group of ten.

Ammon Bundy’s Modesto Junior College (MJC) event was a more modest affair. Bundy’s pitch to exploit public lands by overgrazing and stiffing the government on use fees has less traction in a region that has replaced much of its grazing land with almond trees. Moreover, valley cattle ranchers tend to use their own land for grazing, though some move their cattle to public lands on a seasonal basis.

Though it was hard to separate Bundy supporters’ vehicles from those of protestors, a rough count appeared to limit paying customers to around forty cars and trucks for Bundy’s \$75 per person appearance. A few non-paying Bundy supporters showed up flying flags and bearing signs; they wanted to show their support, but not to point of shelling out 75 hard-earned bucks.

Retired Modesto Junior College Professor Lillian Vallee joined protestors from the Center for Biological Diversity and said she was “dismayed” at Bundy’s appearance at her former workplace. She added that she has the “highest respect” for employees of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and others who protect public lands.

“Here in the valley,” she said, “public lands are the only places that protect natural diversity. What’s at risk when people destroy nature is the complexity of life. I’ve become a student of *biomimicry*, which is the study of sustainability through the study of nature. But we can’t learn from nature if we destroy it.”

Vallee showed up to support protestors who met outside the MJC Ag Pavilion, chanted, “Keep public lands in public hands,” and waved signs with slogans like, “Extinction is forever,” and, “Lawbreakers go home.”

If Bundy has been a point person on the sustained assault

on public lands that culminated in Ryan Zinke’s appointment as Secretary of the Interior, Ann Coulter represents the apex of celebrity Trumpism.

Recently appearing angular and almost anorexic, Coulter has begun to resemble something that came to life out of Pablo Picasso’s flirtation with cubism. But if anyone can take credit as the demiurge who dredged Trump up out of the swamp of tabloids and reality shows and into the hearts of the Republican Party, it is Ann Coulter. Long a favorite of white supremacists, devotees of hate speech, and foil-in-the-hat conspiracy theorists, Coulter is today what passes for the guiding intellectual spirit of the Republican Party.

Like Rush Limbaugh and Michael Savage, Coulter has learned there’s money to be made from hate, anger, and their associated “isms.” Under the cover of the First Amendment, Coulter has made a career of racism, sexism, isolationism, jingoism, and all the other toxic elements of Trumpism.

Recognizing a fellow opportunist of the rude, crude, and vulgar, Coulter jumped on the Trump bandwagon early on. Today, however, she’s ripping him for caving on the Republican budget and falling behind on his promise to build a wall.

Like others who thrive only insofar as they are outrageous, Coulter has to constantly up the ante. When the perilous times after 9/11 called for moderation and restraint, Coulter said of Muslims at a Town Hall meeting,

“We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity. We weren’t punctilious about locating and punishing only Hitler and his top officers. We carpet-bombed German cities; we killed civilians. That’s war. And this is war.”

Stanislaus County Republicans paid Coulter \$25,000 for a live sample of her racist rhetoric of hate. Tickets started at \$125, and went upward from there; Republican organizers said they sold 600 tickets.

Arpaio, Bundy, and Coulter represent Trumpism at its zenith. All three flout law, civility, and America’s most sacred values and institutions. Theodore Roosevelt’s genius in establishing public lands for the public is under a sustained assault not just by Ammon Bundy and his posse of deadbeats but also by Trump and Secretary Zinke.

Trump and Coulter routinely vilify America’s immigrant heritage, while Arpaio represents Trumpism’s contempt for rules of law and equal justice. In all, the three celebrity Trumpers are blatant symptoms of a pestilence that has swept through the San Joaquin Valley like one of its historic floods.

For those who remember the Valley before Trumpism, it’s especially difficult to bear the degradation of the civility and humanity that once characterized Valley leadership. Moderate Republicans have gone extinct, replaced by extremists who recall the worst aspects of America’s McCarthy era. Courageous and benevolent Republican presidents like Dwight David Eisenhower have been discarded in favor of an orange-skinned racist wearing a road-kill pompadour.

There is only one antidote to the poison spread by Trump and his ABCs of evil—Valley citizens with true American values need to replace the poison of Republican Red with a Democratic Blue Wave next November and beyond. A great nation and a great republic are in danger.

<http://thevalleycitizen.com/arpaio-bundy-coulter-the-abc-of-evil-in-trumps-valley/>

Modesto Sound proudly presents the California Audio Roots Project!

Sponsors and partners include:

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!



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

MAY

1 TUES: 2nd Annual Stanislaus County Interfaith Council Prayer Supper. Cost: \$12.50. Purchase by check (SCIC, PO Box 3365, Modesto, CA 95353) or by credit card, by going online to <https://prayersupper2.brownpapertickets.com/> or www.BrownPaperTickets.com, enter the search words “Prayer Supper”. Questions, call or text Rev. Michael Schiefelbein at 209-596-9538.

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

5 SAT: 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

6 SUN: Café Shalom: Jewish Food & Cultural Festival. Food, silent auction, music, tours. Congregation Beth Shalom, 1705 Sherwood Ave., Modesto. Ticket info. at <http://www.cbsmodesto.org/cafe-shalom.html>

12 SAT: 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.bgcstan.clubevent.info. Info: Laura Ward, (209) 549-2765, email Laura@WardPromotional.com.

19-20 SAT-SUN: 25th Anniversary Modesto Relay for Life. Sponsored by the American Cancer Society. Johansen High School, 9:00 am. Contact Donna. Stephens@cancer.org (209) 524-7241. Visit www.relayforlife.org/modestoca.

20 SUN: The Modesto Film Society and The State Theatre presents *In a Lonely Place*. 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://www2.thestate.org/calendar/event/905>. Become a member of the State Theatre and get perks! Visit <http://www.thestate.org/membership>

LOOKING AHEAD

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

June 22-24: Peace Camp in the Sierra, Camp Peaceful Pines, Clark Fork Rd. See registration form and article, on page 2. Discount for early registration!

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 español. 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/>

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.

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 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, jpmadesto@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; jpmadesto@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.