



Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

A MODESTO PEACE/LIFE CENTER PUBLICATION

NOVEMBER, 2018
VOLUME XXVII, NO. 3

Building Your Community Radio Station continues!

By **JAMES COSTELLO**, KCBP General Manager

Great news! Construction on our permanent radio tower west of Patterson is continuing! A large hole has been dug, trenching for the ground wire is in progress (see photos)

KCBP, your local community radio station is now on the air from 2:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. at 95.5 FM, and web streaming at www.kcbpradio.org

kcbpradio.org 24 hours a day.

To truly serve the community, we need volunteers with and without radio experience to help program local shows, music, poetry, plays and discuss current issues and events. We also need donors and businesses to underwrite our programs.

ACTION: to volunteer, contact outreach

coordinator Jocelyn Cooper at the Peace/Life Center (209) 529-5750, or email jocelyncoper2012@gmail.com. To donate, send your check to Dave Tucker, memo: "Radio KCBP" at Modesto Peace/Life Center, P.O. Box 134, Modesto, CA 95353. Or go the KCBP Radio website at <http://kcbpradio.org/> and click on the Donate button



Don't let Trump exploit the migrant caravan to fuel hate and fear!

By **KATHRYN JOHNSON**

Since mid-October, a caravan of migrants has been traveling north from Honduras. The group includes people of all ages, including families and children – many of whom are escaping violence and poverty and seeking asylum in the U.S. and Mexico.

But instead of responding with compassion and humanity, President Trump is portraying migrants as a security threat. And he's using the caravan to stir up xenophobia and advance his anti-immigrant agenda, from detaining families to further militarizing our border.

Don't let Trump exploit the migrant caravan to fuel hate and fear! You can take a stand against his xenophobic rhetoric by calling on our elected officials to protect the rights and dignity of all immigrants.

Take action today:

Tell Congress to defund hate at the border.

Trump is using the caravan to support his efforts to further militarize our southern border. But we know that walls and other border enforcement have had a deadly impact on our communities, including thousands of migrant deaths and rampant abuse of com-

munity members by Border Patrol agents. Tell Congress to stop funding cruelty against immigrants today!

Speak out against family detention.

The Trump administration is working on a plan to detain immigrant families indefinitely. Its proposal would supersede a decades-old agreement that limits how long children can be detained – and create a system of indefinite family detention. Tell the government: Immigrant families belong together and not in jail!

Spread messages that show support for migrants.

We need to speak out against hateful, anti-immigrant language and policies at every chance we get. And it's important that we ask our family, friends, and communities to do the same. Use our messaging tips on how to talk about the migrant caravan, and share them on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) and [Twitter](https://www.twitter.com).

From the American Friends Service Committee, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102, <https://www.afsc.org/>



Annual Modesto Peace/Life Center Holiday Party Potluck & Song Fest

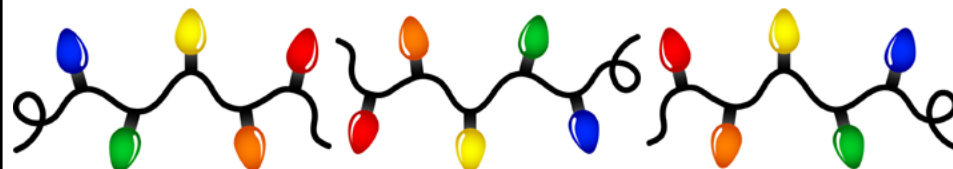
Friday December 7, 2018

6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

At the home of Dan & Alice Onorato

1532 Vernon Ave., Modesto

Bring your festive spirit and food to share!
Bring a new, unwrapped Children's book (K-1 to K-6)
Information: 526-5436



INSIDE CONNECTIONS	
LOCAL	2
PEACE ESSAY CONTEST	3
PEACE ESSAY CONTEST	4
ACTIVISM	5
CAN DEMOCRACY LAST?	6
CLIMATE CHANGE	7
ACROBAT	8
GATHERING OF VOICES	9
FORGIVENESS	10
60 MINUTES INTERVIEW	11

READERS!

Sign-up for our e-edition!

Get the latest e-edition of Stanislaus Connections delivered right into your email box!

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/>

Children's Home of Stockton's Signature Event of Hope & Heart

By LAURA PEDRAZA

Children's Home of Stockton (CHS) along with supporting partners, The Eleanor Project and United Way of San Joaquin County, invite you all to *Believe, Belong and Become: A Signature Evening of Hope & Heart* from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. on November 8, 2018, at the Bob Hope Theatre in Stockton. Please join us for a memorable evening of hors d'oeuvres and cocktails for a noble cause while listening to author, awarded child advocate, and motivational speaker, Regina Louise as she describes her life's journey, including successfully navigating thirty foster home placements, one of which was the Children's Home of Stockton. Regina was a ward of the Juvenile Court system and her story will be shown on film, as a movie is being released this year.

Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available. For individual tickets, please text "CHS" to 40403. For more information contact Laura Pedraza, CHS Development Director, at 209-395-3539. Proceeds support CHS' important work with foster youth.

The mission of the Children's Home of Stockton is to provide at-risk youth an opportunity for a productive life through treatment and education in a safe, nurturing environment.

CHS is one of the largest social services organizations in Stockton, and the only licensed Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) in San Joaquin County. It has served approximately 150 at-risk youth each year in California, for over 136 years. It offers professional counseling in a 52-bed Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP). It also provides special educational services in a K-12 Non-Public School (NPS) setting and operates on-campus one. Vision classes for up to 108 students.

CHS is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. For more information, to get involved, or to tour the campus, please call 209-466-0853.

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.

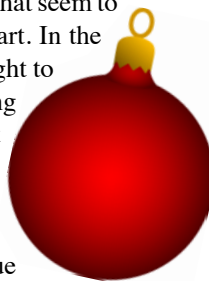
Feast, sing, and bring a book, Friday, December 7

By DAN ONORATO

Despite the bombs, racism, and fear that seem to engulf our world, we refuse to lose heart. In the face of hatred and bigotry, we hold a light to the darkness, and we'll keep on building community and caring, as we'll do at the Peace/Life Center's Annual Holiday Potluck Songfest on Friday, December 7, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm at Alice and Dan Onorato's home at 1532 Vernon Avenue in Modesto.

It's a potluck so bring your favorite dish and a beverage to share. After a hearty feast we'll sing with gusto—not just holiday songs but folk and pop favorites, with maestro John Poat, lead singer of the local band Wooden Nickle, coaxing our voices and spirits to soar with gleeful abandon.

And don't forget to bring a new book or two for a K-6th grade child at Wilson Elementary School. Many of the families and households of students there are low-income and don't have many books. So, each year at this event, we try to gather as many new books as gifts. Don't wrap the book(s) you bring. That way the teachers can give the right reading level to each student.



TRT's Canoe - Paddle with the Salmon!

Join us as we paddle with spawning salmon and get ready to experience first-hand how this winter has affected river flows, local ecology, and recreation. A brief canoeing lesson, history of the river, and overview of Tuolumne River Trust's work in the area will be included in the day's activities.

Tickets for non-members are \$65 each. Member tickets are \$55 each. Children 12 and under may participate for just \$30.

Register to reserve your spot today – space is limited!

Saturday, November 10th from 9am to 1pm

Sunday, November 11th from 9am to 1pm

For full details on each trip, including meeting location, what to bring, what to expect, etc., please visit the registration site by clicking the button below. We look forward to seeing you on the river!

Register Now

If a pop-up window doesn't open upon clicking the "Register Now" button above, please complete your registration here (you will be redirected to Flipcause, a secure platform).



22nd Stanislaus County Interfaith Council Thanksgiving Celebration

The annual Stanislaus County Interfaith Council Thanksgiving Celebration will be held this year at the Modesto Centre Plaza on Monday, November 19, beginning at 6:45 PM with gathering music.

Presenters representing several faith communities throughout Stanislaus County will bring messages of thanksgiving with song and spoken word. Those who attend the event are asked to bring non-perishable food items, which will be donated to Interfaith Ministries' food pantry. A free-will offering will also benefit Interfaith Ministries.



Film: Reinventing Power: America's Renewable Energy Boom

When: Friday November 9, 7 PM

Who: Yokuts group Sierra Club

Where: College Ave. United Church of Christ, 1341 College Ave., Modesto

Please join Sierra Club members and friends at our monthly program meeting to view and discuss this important film.

Reinventing Power:

America's Renewable

Energy Boom takes us

across the country to

hear directly from the

people making our clean energy future achievable. These individuals are working to rebuild what's broken, rethink what's possible, and revitalize communities. Their stories are proof that America does not need to choose between keeping our lights on and protecting our communities.

Over the film's 50 minutes, we will meet people in eight states whose lives were changed by the renewable energy industry while exploring various aspects of the clean energy industry from innovation to installation. Critically, *Reinventing Power* underscores the notion that we don't have to sacrifice jobs for a clean environment. Supporting a clean energy future means building a better, more prosperous future for everyone.

All community members are welcome to attend. Refreshments will be served.

<https://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts>



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

Film Night at the Center presents *Audrie & Daisy*

On the heels of the controversial Kavanaugh confirmation hearings in Washington, the Modesto Peace/Life Center will be showing a documentary film about two other cases of high school sexual assault. It chronicles the attendant personal challenges and public shame the young women faced in making the truth public in the context of the ultra-modern world of cyber-bullying.



Snacks will be provided, and we hope to see you there! Watch the trailer at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29Dr4ChJUBc>

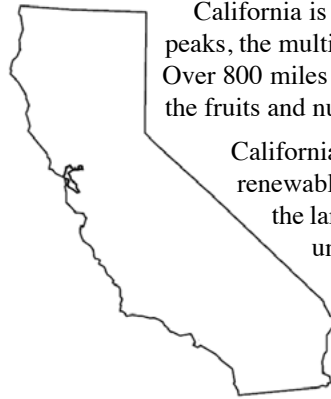
For more information, visit <http://www.audrieanddaisy.com/>

CA ballot propositions

Organizations: League of Women Voters of CA (LWVCA), CA Federation of Labor (CFL), Sierra Club, CA Conference of Churches (CCC), CA Democratic Party (CA Dem), CA Republican Party (CA Rep), Modesto Peace/Life Center (MPLC), CA Chamber of Commerce (CA CoC)

	LWVCA	CFL	Sierra	CCC	CA Dem	CA Rep	MPLC	CA CoC
1 Veterans & Affordable Housing Bond	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
2 Homeless Housing bond	Y	Y		Y	Y	-	Y	Y
3 Water Bond	N	Y	N	Y	-	-	N	Y
4 Children's hospital bond	N	-		Y	Y	N	Y	Y
5 Property tax	N	N		-	N	Y	N	Y
6 Gas tax repeal	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
7 Daylight savings time	-	-		-	Y	-		
8 Dialysis	-	Y		Y	Y	N	Y	N
9 Removed from ballot	-	-	-	-	-	-		
10 Repeal Costa Hawkins (would allow local rent control)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
11 Ambulance drivers	-	N		N	N	Y	N	
12 Farm animals	-	Y	Y	N	Y	N		

2019 Peace Essay Contest



California is a diverse and incredible place to live. From the lowest desert to the towering mountain peaks, the multitude of eco-regions are home to a vast variety of plants and animals as well as humans. Over 800 miles of coastline grace our state and a large agricultural economy produces two thirds of all the fruits and nuts and half of the vegetables grown in the U.S.

California has big cities as well as a landscape dotted by small towns. It is a testing ground for renewable energy and is well known for being on the cutting edge of technology. California has the largest public university system in the nation as well as world-renowned public and private universities.

California has a history that includes people from many ethnic groups around the world, who each bring unique experiences & perspectives to our state. A wide range of languages, traditions, stories, arts and music can be found among Californians.

Numerous categories make up the whole experience of a state. Political, environmental, wildlife and land conservation, ethnic diversity, job opportunities, health and social services, education, and housing are just a few. Within each of these categories are the day-to-day experiences of the people who call this state their home.

Wildfires, mudslides, drought and earthquakes are all hazards of living in California. In addition to dealing with these occurrences, we must successfully meet the challenges of creating a community that allows people to live and thrive safely together.

The 2019 Peace Essay Contest invites you to reflect on the many positive things living in California offers and to also think about what might need to be improved. Write your essay of 500-1000 words following the prompt below:

Divisions I (grades 11-12) and Division II (grades 9-10):

Begin your essay by briefly describing what makes you glad to live in California. Considering the general categories listed in the introduction, or adding one of your own, choose a specific area that you think could be improved to provide a better quality of life for those who live in California. Do some research about your choice. Then, continuing your essay,

- **Identify and describe** the specific area that concerns or worries you.
- **Share** some ideas from your research that might help improve it.
- **Explain** why this improvement would make a positive difference in the lives of Californians.

Conclude your essay by explaining how working to improve life in our state is an important step toward creating a more just and peaceful world. (Include your word count at the end of your essay.)

Divisions III (grades 7-8) and Division IV (grades 5-6):

Begin your essay by briefly describing what makes you glad to live in California. Considering the general categories listed in the introduction, or adding one of your own, choose a specific area that you think could be improved to provide a better quality of life for those who live in California. Do some research about your choice. Then, continuing your essay,

- **Identify and describe** the specific area that concerns or worries you.
- **Share** some ideas from your research that might help improve it.

Conclude your essay by explaining why this improvement would make a positive difference in the lives of Californians. (Include your word count at the end of your essay.)



Deadline for Entries:

November 16, 2018 ~ Notification of Winners: Late February 2019

Essays that are outside of the directed word count will not be considered for judging.

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

Download flyers/entry forms/submission rules:
<http://peaceessaycontest.weebly.com>

View information:
www.stanislausconnections.org

OR
www.facebook.com/PeaceEssayContest
Email questions to: peaceessay@juno.com



is published monthly except in August by the Modesto Peace/Life Center 720 13th St., Modesto, CA 95354.

Open by appointment.
Mailing address: P.O. Box 134, Modesto, CA 95353
209-529-5750

2019 Peace Essay Contest

Rules & Submission Directions

1. The Peace Essay Contest is open to all fifth through twelfth grade students who live in Stanislaus County or attend any public, private, or home school in Stanislaus County.
2. Submit one copy of your essay. Essays in Division I & II must be typewritten, double spaced. Essays in Divisions III & IV must be either typewritten or written in dark ink, double spaced, using one side of white paper 8 1/2 x 11 inches. Number the pages consecutively. Your essay must be of a quality to photocopy legibly. **YOUR NAME OR IDENTIFYING INFORMATION SHOULD NOT BE ANYWHERE ON OR IN THE ESSAY.**
3. **Give your essay a title.** Place it on the first page where you begin your essay. DO NOT use a separate title or cover page.
4. **IMPORTANT:** Place the word count at the end of your essay. Essays that are outside of the directed word count will not be considered for judging.
5. Print & complete the Entry Form and staple to the front of your essay. Form may be found at: <http://peaceessaycontest.weebly.com> OR www.stanislausconnections.org OR email request: peaceessay@juno.com
6. Cite any quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge. If you are uncertain about plagiarism, ask your teacher.
7. You must do your own work. However, you may ask a teacher, parent, or friend for constructive criticism.
8. The Modesto Peace/Life Center reserves the right to reprint entries. Entries will not be returned.
9. Entries may be delivered to the **Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., Modesto, from 2pm-5pm on November 14 - 15 - 16, 2018.** You may also mail all entries, postmarked no later than November 16, 2018 to:

**2019 Peace Essay Contest
Modesto Peace/Life Center
P.O. Box 134
Modesto, CA 95353-0134**



JUDGING

IMPORTANT: Essays that are outside of the directed word count will not be considered for judging.

A distinguished group of local writers, educators, and peacemakers will judge the essays. Judging guidelines (in order of weight) include:

1. **Content**
 - A. Does the essay clearly address the assigned topic?
 - B. Does the essay show that the student researched their category and/or specific area of concern?
 - C. Has the writer used relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples to fully develop their ideas?
2. **Style**
 - A. Is the essay original and interesting?
 - B. Does the voice of the writer come through?
3. **Clarity of Expression**
 - A. Does the essay have a distinguishable introduction and conclusion? Is it well organized with clear transitions from one idea to the next?
 - B. Are the ideas clearly stated with factual support?
4. **Mechanics**
 - A. Has the writer attempted to use appropriate transitions, precise language, and an engaging style?
 - B. Are grammar, spelling, and punctuation reasonably correct?
 - C. Does the author cite all quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge?

First, Second, and Third prizes will be awarded in each of the four divisions which have at least 15 entries. In the event that fewer than 15 entries are entered in any one division, all prizes may or may not be awarded in that division at the discretion of the judging panel. Up to 3 Honorable Mentions may be awarded in each division. Group entries (more than one author) are welcome; however, a student may only enter one essay.

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

Notification of Winners

In late February, 2019, winners will be notified through the student's teacher. Prizes will be presented at an Awards Reception on Friday March 8, 2019. All participants, teachers, judges, and sponsors will be invited as guests of honor.

2019 Peace Essay Committee:

Indira Clark, Peggy Hoover, Linda Lagace, Deborah Roberts, Sandy Sample, Shelly Scribner and David Tucker

This **32th Annual Peace Essay Contest** is a project of the Modesto Peace/Life Center (209) 529-5750 and is co-sponsored by: Department of Literature and Language Arts, Modesto Junior College

Green Tips for a Green Planet: Thanksgiving

By **TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL**

A first note for Thanksgiving...Giving thanks and being green can be a mindfulness part of your every day. If you are reading this you probably already have chosen daily gratitude and mindfulness.

The Harvard Longwood Campus Eco Opportunity Team has suggested the following sustainable Thanksgiving tips to think about and incorporate into your green practice:

1. Use reusable dinnerware, glasses and cloth napkins. All are better for the environment, and they point out no one "likes cutting turkey with a plastic knife" or worrying about gravy soaking through a paper plate.

2. Consider preparing local and organic foods, as well as free range and naturally fed animals. The Team points out that the price difference is well made up through the taste and organic benefits. Eating lots of raw foods also is beneficial to humans and the environment.

3. Eating mindfully...taking the time to enjoy your food and eating with a purpose...just might avoid the misery of feeling stuffed like the turkey. Then go outside into the crisp Autumn air for a walk and some natural sun Vitamin D will enhance your mood and give you another reason to be thankful.

4. Try eating less meat, says the Team, citing the meat industry as the number one source of methane gas, a major contributor to climate change. It also warns a meat-eating diet leads to depletion of natural resources. So go easy on the turkey or whatever animal protein you may be serving and load up on the tofurkey and sides.

Finally, if you are seriously dedicated to green celebrations and eating mindfully, consider the benefits of solar cookers and energy saving appliances like the latest multipurpose super-fast pressure cooker-steamer-rice cooker...up to 10 function pots.

And whatever you choose, ENJOY A WONDERFUL THANKSGIVING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS!

Help! "Kitchen Korner" needs small kitchen items for the Homeless

By **SHELLY SCRIBNER & SANDY SAMPLE**

The Peace/Life Center's Homeless Project's "Kitchen Corner" urgently needs donations of SMALL gently-used kitchen items. We're especially in need of pots and pans, dishes, serving dishes, can openers, and cooking tools of all kinds.

ACTION: Call Sandy (209) 523-8445, Shelly (209) 521-6304, or Frank (209) 556-2376, to arrange a time to meet you at the Peace/Life Center to receive your items and give you a receipt.



1,500+ organizations launch nationwide push against Trump regulation rigging immigration system for the wealthy

Proposal Would Deny Immigrants for Meeting Basic Needs

From **Protecting Immigrant Families**

More than 1,500 national, state, and local advocates representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia spoke out Wednesday, urging the public to oppose dangerous new Trump Administration regulations proposed this morning. Advocates for immigrant families, economic opportunity, health, nutrition, women, and faith communities signed a joint statement (below) urging the American people to submit public comments opposing the regulation.

The Administration's "public charge" regulation effectively restricts immigration access based on income. It would put people at risk of immigration denials if they use Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicare's prescription drug benefit, housing assistance, or other programs. Experts warn that the plan would worsen hunger, unmet health and housing needs, and other problems by making immigrant families — including families with U.S.-born children — afraid to get the help they need. The proposal gives preference to applicants with annual incomes above \$62,000. Advocates warned that the proposal would put wealthy immigrants ahead of families and expands a policy that has been historically abused.

"The proposal is reckless, deeply unfair, and inconsistent with core American values. It equates worth with wealth and

"The proposal is reckless, deeply unfair, and inconsistent with core American values."

moves families who have already waited years to the end of the line. But the law gives us all a voice on proposed regulations, so we can still stop this one. We urge all who care about children and economic opportunity to fight back, by submitting public comments and encouraging others to speak out," said Olivia Golden, executive director of the Center for Law and Social Policy.

White House aide Stephen Miller, architect of the Administration's child separation policy, is reported to have led the "public charge" effort. Historians have warned that public charge regulations have been abused in the past to deny otherwise-eligible applicants access to lawful immigration avenues, based on race and religion. Because it would primarily affect family-based immigrants, the Trump proposal will disproportionately affect families of color, especially Latinos and Asian- American and Pacific Islanders.

"The same Administration that used your tax dollars to tear babies from their mothers' arms wants sweeping new powers to decide what American looks like. They've proven they can't be trusted with that power, so we must not let them have it. Take the power back by submitting public comments

and demanding that our elected representatives tell you where they stand on this issue, before you step into the voting booth in November," said Marielena Hincapie, executive director of the National Immigration Law Center.

Federal law requires that the Administration give the public an opportunity to comment on this expansive proposal, when and if it is formally proposed. Commenters will not be required to give their address or divulge their immigration status. Members of the public may post official comments through the advocacy website www.protectingimmigrant-families.org.

QUESTIONS? If you have specific questions regarding the public charge rule, please submit your questions here: bit.ly/askPIFcampaign

As many call for abolishing nukes, U.S. pulling out of treaty

"Trump's announcement that the United States would leave the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces, or INF, treaty brought sharp criticism on Sunday from Russian officials and from former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, who signed the treaty in 1987 with President Ronald Reagan."

ALICE SLATER, alicejlater@gmail.com. Slater is the New York Director of the [Nuclear Age Peace Foundation](http://www.nuclearagepeacefoundation.org), and serves on the Coordinating Committee of World Beyond War. She wrote the piece "[The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons Is Honored With a Nobel Peace Prize](http://www.thenation.com/story/2018/11/01/the-international-campaign-to-abolish-nuclear-weapons-is-honored-with-a-nobel-peace-prize)" for *The Nation*.

She just wrote: "Now is an opportunity to take a time-out on nuclear gamesmanship, new threats, trillions of wasted dollars ... on weapons systems that Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev acknowledged, back in 1987 at the end of the Cold War, could never be used, warning that 'A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.'

"Now in 2018, more than 30 years later, when 69 nations have signed the treaty to ban the bomb and 19 of the 50 nations required to ratify the treaty for it to enter into force have put it through their legislatures. The United States and Russia are in an unholy struggle to keep the nuclear arms race going with the U.S. accusing Russia of violating the Intermediate Nuclear Force treaty which eliminated a whole class of land-based conventional and nuclear missiles in Europe, and Russia planning new weapons systems in response to a whole stream of U.S. bad faith actions, the most egregious of which was President Bush walking out of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty negotiated with the Soviet Union to ratchet down the nuclear arms race.

"An honest appraisal of the bad actors in this frightening scenario for the destruction of all life on earth, must conclude that the U.S. has been the constant provocateur in the relationship. ..."

Information: contact the Institute for Public Accuracy: Sam Hussein, (202) 347-0020, institute@igc.org

Denver's Casa de Paz welcomes newly released migrants with fresh clothes, food and compassion

By **GABE ORTIZ, Daily Kos Staff**

Sarah Jackson said she was "just living my perfect little life" when she went with her church to visit the U.S./Mexico border eight years ago. "I didn't know immigrant detention centers existed ... it was not even a blip on my radar." It would become a trip that could not only change the course of her life, but the lives of many others. She just didn't know it yet.

For six years, Jackson has operated Casa de Paz - House of Peace - offering recently released Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainees "a place to stay as well as food, clothing and transportation. It is also Jackson's home, and guests are treated like family." Outside, there's no signage on the two-story house in order to attract as little negative attention as possible. Inside, guests are welcomed with fresh clothes ("guests are released from the detention center wearing the outfit they were arrested in") nutritious food, toiletries, even cell phones.

Jackson's has welcomed more than 1,400 people from nearly two dozen countries over the years, and guests can stay for up to three days. Oftentimes, they already have relatives in the United States they are "eager to meet up with," *The Guardian* reports. But even three days can make all the difference for a vulnerable asylum seeker leaving traumatic detention.

"Most of us who have passed through the border and the detention centre have a bad impression of America and are

"Guests are welcomed with fresh clothes, nutritious food, toiletries, even cell phones."

not expecting any good from anybody," an African asylum seeker currently staying at Casa de Paz told *The Guardian*. "You are released into this strange place with no money in a country that has treated you poorly. Then you have this home where there's free food, clothes, everything."

Jackson, "who has a day job selling software to churches," has raised funds for Casa de Paz through volleyball tournaments, as well as relying on donations and volunteers. "Jackson is about a third of the way through raising \$400,000 to buy a bigger house next to the detention center. Without rent to pay, the money from the volleyball league can go towards paying someone to staff the house all day, which will allow Casa de Paz to help more people."

She credits her visit to the border long ago, along with hearing the stories of vulnerable people who fled their home countries for their lives, with pushing her in her mission to welcome the stranger with dignity and respect. "Over and over the Bible talks about treating the sojourner or immigrant as one of your own," she said. "That's not how we treat our own."

Are humans actually capable of Democracy?

By FRANCES MOORE LAPPÉ

Elsewhere I've made the case that democracy isn't a choice. It's our only pathway forward, but my claim can provoke some pretty charged challenges. I can hear the fears of the discouraged asking, "Is democracy even possible? Do we humans actually come equipped for it?"

With democratic norms of civility and transparency shattering, it's no surprise that many of us question whether humans are up to the challenge. To doubters, I can say with some confidence that indeed we are capable: both because we evolved to be emotionally wired for democracy's key requirements and because we've already proven ourselves capable of manifesting democracy...even if imperfectly.

So—first, let's explore what democracy demands of us: Certainly, the capacity for empathy and cooperation, as well as a sensitivity to fairness are required. And, both the human experience and science now confirm that most of us do come equipped.

First, empathy?

It shows up early in our species. Newborns cry at the sound of another baby crying. By the age of 12 months, babies begin to comfort those in distress and children as young as 14 months spontaneously display helping behaviors.

With democratic norms of civility and transparency shattering, it's no surprise that many of us question whether humans are up to the challenge.

Cooperation?

When we cooperate, our brain's reward system lights up in ways not unlike eating chocolate. What great evidence that evolutionary selection has long rewarded cooperation, as it helps us to survive. In fact, humans are the most cooperative species. What makes us different from our nearest relatives, according to scientists at the Max Planck Institute in Germany, is our capacity for "shared intentionality," by which they mean the "ability of humans to learn through other persons and their artifacts, and to collaborate with others in collective activities."

The Institute's Michael Tomasello reports that "even very young children have a natural tendency to help other persons solve their problems, even when the other is a stranger and they receive no benefit at all." He adds that "there is very little evidence . . . that children's altruism is created by parents or any other form of socialization."

On fairness?

Adam Smith, whose views have for two centuries been mis-appropriated to reduce our character to narrow self-interest, in fact wrote poignantly about human feelings for each other. In his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith observed that we are "in a peculiar manner tied, bound and obliged to the observation of justice."

Even capuchin monkeys are sensitive to fairness. Really. In one experiment they happily accepted a snack of cucumbers as long as their nearby capuchin buddies were getting the

"...more than fifty democracies now score higher than ours in "electoral integrity"

same. But on seeing a neighbor monkey getting grapes while they still had to settle for cucumbers, some said, effectively, "Hell, no," throwing their cucumber treats right back at their caretaker. Fairness runs deep through our genetic roots.

All right, so most of us come equipped with empathy, and cooperation and a sense of fairness, but where's proof that we can put these characteristics to work for democracy?

Certainly, the fact that more than fifty democracies now score higher than ours in "electoral integrity"—covering everything from gerrymandering to voting rights—offers evidence that indeed these constructive dimensions of the human character can be put to work in shaping effective rules defining democracy.

I'd argue also we draw on these three traits every time any society works to create fairer rules governing the creation of wealth and opportunity. Here in America, from 1933 to 1938, for example, citizens backed the creation of Social Security, the right of workers to organize, and the establishment of a minimum wage. All dramatically narrowed the gap between most of us and a tiny minority at the top. More specifically, from the early 1960s to the early 1970s, we cut the US poverty rate in half.

It makes sense to me that our sense of fairness and empathy helped make all these advances possible.

Or take Scandinavian countries, among Europe's most unequal societies a century ago. Then, citizen movements challenged a thousand years of oppression and built thriving democracies. Now, voter turnout there is about 80 percent or more, way higher than our 56 percent. And, citizens in these countries have used their voices to diminish the income gap between rich and poor to among the world's lowest.

An interesting irony is that Americans dismiss lessons from Scandinavia because they see it as "socialist;" but the gap between CEO pay and worker pay there is considerably closer (but still much greater) to what Americans say they would prefer.

Their societies' greater participation and fairness seems to make them happy, too. Today four of the top five of the world's happiest countries are Scandinavian.

My conclusion? Not only is it clear that humans come

equipped with key emotional requirements for democracy, there's also evidence that—if we trust and act on them—it can work.

Warning! In a future blog I declare that while we evolved with traits that serve democracy well; we humans come with an Achilles heel. It is our tendency to skirt responsibility by pointing a finger at those we perceive as different. This dangerous trait also appears to be deeply engrained, scientists find.

But we can take heart, for evidence shows that, with enough courage, humans can tap the three positive capacities celebrated here to keep us out of its trap.

Bottom line, we have no excuses. We can't blame human nature for our predicament. Rather, our species' challenge is to build on our strengths and keep the negative in check on the journey of democracy described *What is Democracy, Anyway?*

Note: Don't miss watching the companion video to this article - one of Frances Moore Lappé's Thought Sparks Video Series in which she opens her heart about what fortifies her in this scary time. Each week for nine weeks or more, her Small Planet Institute will release an informal 2-to-5-minute video in which Frances shares her often-surprising, liberating takes on hope, democracy, and courage.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License

Do you value outcomes that include a sense of belonging, a feeling of security, increased self-esteem and confidence, and enthusiasm towards life?

Want to empower at-risk youth to become successful members of society through positive interactions with role models and peers while developing useful job skills?

Consider visiting Modesto Sound's free open-to-the-public monthly board meetings where decisions are made on things such as the best way to involve the community with grants received from the National Endowment of the Arts and the California Arts Council. Since 2005 Modesto Sound has provided audio recordings to 685 artists, trained over 248 youth on audio and job skills, held hundreds of concerts, recorded 165 radio shows, and recorded thousands of public service announcements.

Details for the monthly meeting:

Where: Media Building on the corner of Santa Barbara and Yosemite Boulevard (110 Santa Barbara Avenue, Modesto)

When: The second Tuesday of every month 7:00 - 8:15 p.m. Get a warm welcome from Janet Seay, Executive Director of Modesto Sound, who welcomes your ideas!

Why: It's fun to get out and meet new people while helping others! Why sit on the sidelines when you could get involved and see what resources are available now to help young people in our area gain useful job skills: such as teamwork, verbal & written communication, and leadership, all while creating music and artistic media.

More Info: 209-573-0533 modestosound.org





Mistlin Gallery
Central California Art Association

Buy locally crafted jewelry, art, ceramics and more at our Gift Shop!

1015 J Street, Modesto • (209) 529-3369
Tues. - Thurs. 11:30-5, Fri. 11:30-8, Saturday 12-4
www.ccaagallery.org

3 Things You Can Do to Help Avoid Climate Disaster

Hint: Putting solar panels on your house and walking to work are not on the list.

By **STEPHANIE FELDSTEIN**

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a dire warning last week: We need to cut greenhouse gas emissions, and we need to do it fast to avoid catastrophic climate change.

At the current rate, our global carbon budget will be spent in the next 10 to 14 years. We can't wait another day to start drastically reducing emissions if we hope to stay below 1.5 degree warming.

In response to the report, articles have advocated for individual actions like turning off lights, eating less meat, and recycling. One article advised that, if you can't change your commute by walking or taking public transportation, you might benefit from upgrading to a new hybrid or electric car.

While personal choices such as investing in renewable energy and eating less meat can certainly make a difference, it's not always that simple. For many of us, putting solar panels on our house, walking to work, or buying a hybrid car aren't easy choices.

Emphasizing personal action puts the responsibility on the shoulders of individuals rather than addressing the structures we live in—such as capitalist markets that reinforce income inequality and institutionalized racism that propels discrimination. These structures shape our choices, and they're what got us into this mess in the first place.

1. Fight poverty

There's no question that we need to keep fossil fuels in the ground and rapidly shift to renewable energy. But while some people can afford home solar panels or electric cars, these choices are out of reach for others.

Entire neighborhoods lack public transportation, and people working multiple jobs may lack the time to take it. And when it's a challenge to pay the heating bill, it may be a luxury to think about investing in weatherization, even if it might ultimately save a few bucks.

Research published earlier this year shows that socioeconomic disparity increases the risk of failing to meet emissions reduction targets. If we're going to address climate change, we need to address wealth disparity. Without living wages, many people can't afford to make climate-friendly choices that are good for the planet and their pocketbooks, too.

And low-income communities are often hit first and hardest by climate-related disasters. After the storm hits, it only gets worse—about half of the people affected by Hurricane Harvey had no savings to help them recover from the damage, and FEMA assistance is anything but certain.

It's a vicious cycle where low-income communities are more vulnerable to climate-related losses, which increases the economic stress that only makes it harder to cope with climate change.

By fighting poverty, we can make it possible for people to take action against climate change, while building more resilient communities in the process.

Support campaigns for living wages such as the Fight for \$15. Connect with groups fighting for paid leave and affordable child care, like MomsRising. Urge your city council to improve basic services like public transportation and health care for low-income neighborhoods and include those neighborhoods in disaster response planning discussions. And demand policies that remove barriers to sustainable alternatives—like solar panels and hybrids—and make them more affordable.

2. Hold corporations accountable

Trash accounts for about 3 percent to 5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, so recycling isn't going to be enough to keep global warming below catastrophic levels, even if all of your plastic is making it into the right bin. And resources are needed to take recycled plastic and turn it into something usable again.

So, when it comes to what we buy—from plastic bottles to burgers to cheap clothes—the real climate savings won't be found downstream at the landfill or recycling center. They'll be found upstream, with the companies that manufacture these goods in the first place.

If we're going to effectively reduce production-related emissions, we need to produce less, and corporations need to be held responsible for their cradle-to-grave carbon footprints.

Demand accountability from corporations for their contribution to climate change by supporting policies that remove subsidies and government bailouts that make more sustainable alternatives less competitive. And support local policies that would require corporations to pay for climate change impacts.

3. Disrupt oppression

A study released earlier this year found that climate deniers are more likely to hold racist beliefs. The researchers note that while this trend was apparent during Obama's presidency, Trump has further fueled it with rhetoric tying "White grievance and resentment" to climate change and energy policy.

We also see that those who disregard the threat of climate change are the same people who disregard women's rights and voices. The nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court was challenged by multiple allegations of sexual assault. It was also challenged for his dangerous environmental record, which Kavanaugh lied about under oath.

At the same time, women and communities of color are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change. And their voices are often shut out of the conversation. Only 5 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs are women—and that's down 25 percent from last year. In the entire history of Fortune 500, there have only been 15 Black CEOs. Eighty-one percent of Congress is White, compared to 62 percent of the U.S. population, and only 20 percent of members of Congress are women. And among many environmental groups, senior positions and boardrooms are still predominantly White and male.

We can all work to dismantle the structures of oppression and rebuild a society that's based on inclusion and equity.

We need to amplify the voices of people of color and women in the climate movement and among politicians making climate change policy. Green 2.0 is helping bring diversity, equity, and inclusion to the forefront of the environmental movement. Demand that your city council put justice and equity at the core of any climate action or other sustainability plans, and that it does so by bringing marginalized voices to the table. Vote for local city council or congressional candidates from affected communities and support organizations such as She Should Run and Democracy in Color, which are working to bring equality and representation to all levels of government.

Stephanie Feldstein wrote this article for YES! Magazine. Stephanie is the Population and Sustainability Director at the Center for Biological Diversity and the author of *The Animal Lover's Guide to Changing the World* (St. Martin's Griffin). Follow her on Twitter @sfeldstein.

Work with Musicians!
Learn Job Skills!
Join us at The Job Circle.

Audio Technician Course
* LIVE Sound
* Recording Bands
* Producing, Mastering
* Electronics, ProTools
Hands-On Learning

Modesto Sound
LIVE
Recording | LIVE Sound
Education

New classes every 8 weeks.
Space is limited, call now!

ModestoSound.org
209-573-0533

B&F

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

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

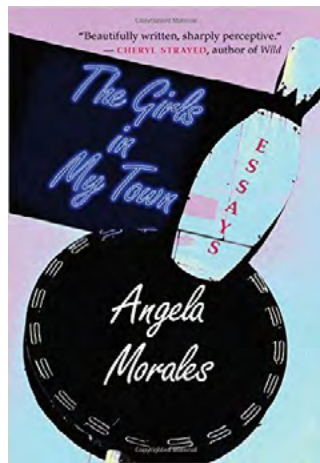
e-mail b_f@modestocpas.com
1120 14th Street, Suite 2
Modesto, CA 95350

The Girl from Our Town: Writer Supreme Angela Morales

By ERIC CAINE

Angela Morales was hired to teach English at Merced College in 1997. A graduate of the prestigious Iowa Writing Program, Morales proved to be a gifted teacher and valued associate. Few could have guessed, however, that their quiet and unassuming colleague would prove to be the writer extraordinary she became a few years later.*

A hint of things to come arrived when one of Morales's essays was featured in *The Best American Essays of 2013*. "The Girls in My Town" presents a piercing look at teen motherhood in our own Valley town of Merced. It's a brilliant dissection of the poverty, pop culture, and misaligned social services that help define a region widely known as "The Appalachia of the West." Here's an excerpt, about a young girl from a family Morales calls, "The Meth Joads":



The girl, Misty Joad—no more than sixteen and heavily pregnant—paces the sidewalk and talks languidly on the phone like she's waiting for someone to pick her up and take her somewhere. Every few days a red-faced teenage boy shows up and the two of them drive away in his Mustang. Then the boy stops coming. Eventually Misty Joad walks the sidewalk with her newborn baby. But imagine her power. Even with dirty bare feet and no plans, her body has declared a coup: "If you won't love me, here's a person who will."

Brilliant as it is, "The Girls in My Town" might not be Morales's best work. That became evident when The University of New Mexico Press published an anthology of Morales's essays earlier this year.

Named after the featured essay, *The Girls in My Town* includes twelve masterpieces of the essay form. It won the *River Teeth Nonfiction Book Prize* over 270 other submitted manuscripts, and even such an honor can't begin to signify just how fine a collection this really is.

Reading Angela Morales is like watching an acrobat with moves you've never seen—what will she do next? Who else could make an obsession with bowling into a fascinating essay into adolescence ("Chief Little Feather, Where Are You?")?

Her subjects are all familiar—pets, death in the family, marital discord, troubled students—but her illumination of those subjects is magical. "Walking upright takes its toll," writes Morales, but it's a toll she bears with unusual grace, paying not only her own way but offering dividends of insight and inspiration for the rest of us.

One passage she's the sly kid with answers to questions most of us don't dare ask, the next she's a conjurer of light in dark places we don't dare look. A master of macabre humor and mordant wit, she's also a genius at delivering us from what the late David Foster Wallace called today's curse of

irony.

In, "An Elegy (and Apology) to Dogs I've Loved," Morales captures exactly that combination of devotion, guilt (for not loving more and better), and longing that marks the loss of a childhood pet:

My darling Tiger, I am learning about the folly of men. I am stroking your nose, watching you squint against the sun, and I want to keep you here forever, gentle Tiger. Some men do not believe in the souls of animals, perhaps because they do not believe in the souls of themselves. I am sorry that I did not stop him, that bricklayer man working in our backyard who wanted to amuse me by hurling you into the sky, who laughed his head off as he flung you up and then barely caught you as you sailed into his rough, brown hands. I still see his cement-streaked face and your reflection in his sunglasses—your legs askew, eyes bulging with terror. I am sorry my tongue froze that day. Since then I have learned to speak up, and I think you would be proud (if dogs can be proud). I once saw a man pounding his dog with his fist and I told him, "How about punching someone your own size, you loser?" and he said, "Shut up, bitch, before I punch you," and I said, Oh, please do, be my guest."

Morales's elegies to her dogs—Taco, Max, Petunia, and all the others—poignant as they are, mark only a small fraction of her broad emotional landscape. She finds telling significance in small details (an infant's headband, ammonia-scented hallways, the creases across a rat's paws) and in quotidian routines of experience, shining the light of courage and comprehension in ordinary places with extrasensory perception.

Anyone who's ever tried to teach anything to a troubled young person must read "Bloodyfeathers, RIP." A memorial, a foray into writing as existential inquiry, and a candid portrayal of teaching's often harsh demands, "Bloodyfeathers RIP" poses the ultimate writer's question:

Do we assign too much significance to these lives that randomly crisscross ours, or not enough?

In the case of Angela Morales, the answer to her question is "neither." She assigns just enough significance to leave us wanting more, much more.

*Morales now teaches at Glendale Community College in Pasadena.

This article was published in May 31, 2016 issue of the *Valley Citizen*.

MoSt to host 7th Annual Poetry Festival

The Modesto-Stanislaus (MoSt) Poetry Center will host its 7th Annual Poetry Festival on Feb. 2, 2019 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church facilitated once again by Indigo Moor, poet, playwright, teacher and current poet laureate of Sacramento.

The festival features a poetry contest open to attendees of the day-long workshop. The 2019 contest categories include:

1. Here In This House,
2. What Remains,
3. The Edge of the Sea,
4. In and out of Fashion (Life a la Mode).

Flyer and registration forms for the festival and contest are available on the MoSt website (www.mostpoetry.org). The contest deadline is January 11. Registration fees (\$35, \$30 MoSt members or \$10 high school/college students), include the contest (op.), workshop, a delicious luncheon, an author's table and fellowship with poetry aficionados from throughout Northern California. Entries can be submitted by mail to Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center, PO Box 578940, Modesto, CA 9535. Info@mostpoetry.org



Poem by Joseph Homer

The Law Office of
PATRICIA MELUGIN COUSINS
Attorney At Law

P.O. Box 520
Ceres, CA 95307

Phone: (209) 538-9795
FAX: (209) 538-0227

Email: pmcousins@aim.com

LAW OFFICES OF
ROCKWELL, KELLY & DUARTE, LLP

1600 G Street
Suite 203

DAVID N. ROCKWELL
SHARON E. KELLY
JEFFREY DUARTE
MARKUS URSTOEGER
Attorneys/Abogados

P.O. Box 0142
Modesto, CA
95353-0142
(209) 521-2552
FAX (209) 526-7898



Barbara West grew up in a family of Christian activists, including her aunt and uncle who co-pastored the Modesto Church of the Brethren for two decades. Now a Buddhist, she still attends church camp every summer. She lives in a cohousing community and works as a Wound/Ostomy Nurse. Previous publications include *Full of Crow*, *Brevities*, *Medusa's Kitchen*, and *Sacramento Voices*. Her first book *...and I felt the simple sweetness of me* was published last year by Cold River Press. She is currently working on a memoir, *Hunger to Help: Sorting an Extraordinary Legacy* which explores the tension between Christian/Buddhist directives to “help others,” and 12-step Recovery work, which directs her to “focus on yourself.” Find her work at Barbara-West.com

Grace Loescher is an artist, poet, professional advocate for homeless youth, part time emcee/host, and full-time activist who holds a BA in Studio Art. Her work has been exhibited in a variety of locations.

A co-founder of Speak Out Sacramento, she hosts a local open mic and breeding ground for creatives. She also works with Waking the Village, a local non-profit working to better the lives of Sacramento's homeless youth and is the creator and director of the Waking the Village artistic leadership program, “Creation District”, a safe haven for Sacramento youth and young adults to focus on creation, discovery, activism, daring, and dream-making. She partners with local charter schools to teach social justice through the arts, to teach art, theatre, and writing to high school students from underserved communities.

In conjunction with singer/songwriter, Jordan Moore, Grace recently released her first full-length spoken word album, *Some Call It Holy*. Find her work at www.grace-makesstuff.com

Grace and Barbara collaborated on this poem in 2017, when they were 25 and 50 years old. Barbara was reflecting on what had occurred in her life during her second 25 years, and how they differed from the first. Grace found herself particularly drawn to Barbara's poem “Missing Jeff” from her 2017 book published by Cold River Press. Starting with an excerpt from that poem, they built “Now That You're Dead” to illustrate their different vantage points on their experience of friends (or patients) who were suicidal or putting their lives at risk in some way.

The poem starts in Grace's voice (shown in italics), moves to Barbara's voice (shown in plain text), alternates between the two, then culminates with them speaking the last line together.

Now That You're Dead

*Before you kill yourself
Make sure you cash in your dreams
Make sure your heartstrings are tuned to lightening
Make sure you're writing that suicide note in graffiti under
the over pass*

*Let every car that passes know you are here
In permanent ink
Start writing love letters in permanent ink*

*Before you kill yourself
Throw away all your pencils
No time left for erasing because you're replacing every
tomorrow with today*

*And today, you are still alive
Before you kill yourself remember that today
You are still alive*

Now that you're dead, we can
each claim our little piece of you
as you slip
and slip through our grasp

As we stretch for the smell
of the dough you kneaded
long for the way you worked
your calf muscle
on the soccer field

So many years we trusted
you'd come back from your
two-week solo
backcountry ski trip
And for all those years you did.

We wonder – were you being careful
when you set the ropes that day
at Yosemite?
Or was that last one
a free climb?

Now it's our turn to be the bread-dough
piano keys
muscle
soil and fur
your fingers keep working through

*Before you kill yourself
Keep working through
Remember that you are made up of matter and stardust
And while you're heart's a little rusty
Trust that there's glitter pumping through your veins
And nobody sane never thought about ripping them open
Just to see yourself shine*

*Before you kill yourself
Stop drinking beer for breakfast
At least try a glass of wine
Water your plants
Pick up a new instrument
Use only your heartbeat to keep time
Keep time sacred
There's not much left*

Now that you're dead
There's not much left
I don't blame you
You only had weeks to live
and it wasn't looking good

I thought I'd satisfied your question
about if it got bad enough
could we help you sleep through
peacefully
til the end?

I know your wife
wouldn't stop talking
about herself
even then
Your dramatic exit with the
lights and sirens
was certainly a statement.
And we had to tell the state,
we'd done the best we could.

*Before you kill yourself
Do the best you can
Just because you make a plan
Doesn't mean you have to follow through
You still have time to run with wildflowers woven into
your feet*

*Let God mix a hundred more beats on your heart
Before you kill yourself
Start
By waiting*

Waiting to drive into a light pole until after
you'd had so many it was hard to walk
isn't exactly the same as suicide
meaning we don't really know

But it meant staying alive
wasn't on the tip top
of your mind in that moment.

Now that you're dead,
we wish it had been.
We still argue that it should have been.
We are hungry for your smile
your easy song
and silly sexy moves
We didn't get enough of them.

*Before you kill yourself
Make sure the world gets enough of you
Which is to say, don't ever choose to die
Because goodbye is a word I'm still cutting out of every
dictionary I own*

*And countless stories have shown me that
We have to be careful with this life.
This precious, precious life.
So, before you kill yourself,
Look at the stars one last time
And consider
That if just one star chose to burn out early
The sky would be so much darker
For those of us
Praying for enough light
To make it to morning*

We are still mourning you, now that you're gone.

Before you kill yourself

We both have to move on.

OPINION: Forgiveness in the Aftermath of Trump

By MARK S. HASKETT

The good news is, forgiveness awaits just beyond the horizon. The bad news?... so does the daunting work of social and spiritual reconciliation.

As a lifelong student of the world's faith traditions, I have followed the convergence of religion and politics since the rise of Donald Trump with ongoing fascination... and almost continuing incredulity. Studies showing that more and more Americans are no longer guided by their affiliation with a religious community might help explain why such a flawed human being could be seen as Presidential material by so many. The stunning subservience of our evangelical brothers and sisters to both the candidate and current President, however, belies that theory.

There are any number of sociological explanations for this glaring disparity between principle and practice. Foremost among these may be America's pervasive media culture where constant exposure to film/drama fantasy and morally-ambiguous entertainment can overwhelm the spiritual guideposts that might otherwise inform our judgment. While many Christians and Jews look the other way, Islamic voices aren't shy about decrying our country's insidious degradation of community standards via an anything-goes media. True, that tradition's sometimes extreme solutions may be anathema to our democratic sensibilities. But the fact that our family-room familiarity with a reality-show host can translate into a top-rated TV series broadcast from the White House is a jaw-dropping display of our collective need for, well, to use the time-honored term, *salvation*.

Even as the world's faith traditions offer somewhat differing interpretations of that concept, forgiveness is an essential and almost universal precursor to it. Spiritual healing and re-commitment to a morally-rooted lifestyle cannot happen when an individual who now sees the error of his ways continues to be ostracized, or otherwise treated as an unredeemable sinner. The community must welcome the truly repentant one back into the fold with no strings attached.

So it is with those who fell for the wolf in sheep's clothing, who succumbed to the sales pitch about gaining the world at the price of one's soul. As the downfall of Trump becomes increasingly likely, if not morally and politically necessary, it's time for those who saw through the falsehoods and façade from the beginning to consider their own responsibility for the train wreck that is Trump. *And* how best to join with his former loyalists in rebuilding the rail bed.

I do not say this with any sense of moral or spiritual superiority. We have all ignored our better angels at times. We have failed to do the right thing, stumbled off the straight and narrow in search of an easier way. We are not so much fallen as *susceptible to falling* — for the offer that's too good to be true, for the huckster with the cure-all only he can deliver, for the highway to heaven that leaves the toll for someone else to pay.

Like most of us who make a choice we later come to regret, many Trump voters have already begun to realize the seriousness of their mistake. The problem is, confessing one's errors demands that we admit just how vulnerable we are to deceit, how readily we can rationalize the canard that "The end justifies the means." All too often, the more obvi-

"We are not so much fallen as susceptible to falling — for the offer that's too good to be true, for the huckster with the cure-all only he can deliver, for the highway to heaven that leaves the toll for someone else to pay."

ous our misjudgment, the more we tend to double-down on our original choice, the more militant and self-righteous we become in attempt to save face... and the more resistant we are to that crucial turning point recovery programs call "hitting bottom," and religious traditions variously describe as "the dark night of the soul."

This is where forgiveness clears the way forward, not only allowing for these essential turning points but enabling the social and political reconciliation that must happen for our body politic to survive. Because those who are ready to repent need assurance, *beforehand*, that the stigma of their past errors will be washed away, that their original sin wasn't so abhorrent after all. Or at least aberrant.

Because the fact is, it *wasn't*. While Trump voters were technically in the minority (except in our outmoded electoral college), a near-equal portion of patriotic Americans were eager to plunk down their hard-earned cash for the snake oil our would-be autocrat was hawking. And if that's true, something about our culture or educational system or religious leadership — or a caustic combination of all three — left many of us unable to distinguish empty promises from a proven record, self-serving ambition from a genuine eagerness to serve the public.

For that *systemic failure*, we all share the blame. And if a clinically narcissistic, endlessly prevaricating, Twitter-feeding tyrant can survive the vetting process of our electoral primaries, followed by two years in our highest and most sacred political office, *all* of us now stand in need of forgiveness.

During the ten-day span comprising the Jewish High Holy Days, concluded this past September, prayers seeking God's forgiveness are never recited in the singular. The formula calls for the faithful to recite aloud, "WE have sinned," followed by an explicit enumeration of more than forty examples — from the sins of "contentiousness" and "violence" to "unchastity" and "breach of trust." Even if an individual congregant might be able to plead innocence for any such sins over the preceding twelve months, this communal litany acts as a binding affirmation of each person's responsibility for everyone else. And if there is anything short of denying another's freedom that members of the larger community might have done to prevent the transgressions of another member, *no one* is blameless.

Trump is symptomatic of an ongoing transgression for which our larger community must share blame. To acknowledge this does not thereby provide a free pass for those

individuals who voted for the President, or who enabled his continuing lies and perverted policies after he took office. Nor does it shift the blame to some amorphous entity so one's personal culpability vanishes like smoke over the Temple's sacrificial altar.

Jewish tradition, for example, demands three specific responses from each of us, the first of which requires that we sincerely admit our transgressions, face to face, to anyone we may have offended. Secondly, we must accept others' forgiveness even as we forgive those who've transgressed against *us*. Third — and most important — is our solemn rededication to the ongoing project of creating a new and better version of both ourselves and our wider community in the aftermath of that reconciliation.

A related theme runs through Eastern as well as Western, Abrahamic traditions. Indeed, it is the very key to our eventual salvation as individual human beings and as a human race: *We sin that we may learn how not to.*

Let us embrace this spiritual truth, this forward-looking faith, and rededicate ourselves to the daunting work that is living witness to what forgiveness means.

Mark Haskett is past president and current board member of the Stanislaus County Interfaith Council and author of several books, both fiction and non-fiction, inviting his readers to explore the deeper dimensions of everyday life that provide meaning and mutual understanding.

Chefs of New York
ITALIAN CUISINE FROM OLD FAMILY RECIPES

2307 Oakdale Rd., Modesto
209-551-0163

1325 J St., Downtown Modesto
209-857-5102

Open 7 Day a Week!
www.ChefsOfNewYork.com
Follow us on Facebook!
@chefsofnewyork

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

Community Hospice Volunteer Receives National Points of Light Award

Ms. Inez Lewis, a longtime Community Hospice Volunteer, has been awarded a Daily Points of Light award for her outstanding service and dedication.

The Daily Points of Light Award, created by the administration of President George H. W. Bush, honors one individual or group each weekday that has made a positive impact in their community.

Ms. Lewis has spent the last 11 years volunteering for Community Hospice in many different capacities including: visiting patients, providing support at the Community Hospice Alexander Cohen Hospice House and traveling the Central Valley to educate community members on resources offered by Community Hospice.

Donald Trump's 60 Minutes interview was both terrifying and boring

By **MARK SUMNER, Daily Kos Staff**

In a lengthy interview broadcast on Sunday evening, Leslie Stahl presented Donald Trump a long series of questions. Though she occasionally got answers—many of them unrelated to what was asked—and many of those answers were deeply laced with equal parts ignorance and arrogance, the most horrifying part of the whole event was how familiar it all seemed. *60 Minutes* with Donald Trump seemed much like every other minute with Donald Trump. And that's a problem.



In all the questions she asked, Stahl discovered ... nothing, really. Trump hates the press. We knew that. Trump is ready to claim that he knows more about science than the scientists. We knew that. He says he understands the military better than

his generals. We knew that. When pressed on any issue he resorts to attacking the "unfairness" of the press rather than provide a straight answer. We knew that.

Though the interview did serve as a reminder of Trump's readiness to pretend to knowledge he doesn't have, his utter inability to admit the truth even when caught in an obvious lie, and his horrifying incoherence in attempting to describe even the simplest facets of policy, there was perhaps just one moment that broke through. Pressed beyond multiple repetitions of whining about the media's meanness, Trump declared "I'm president, and you're not." Besides being the only, regrettably, truthful thing said during the interview, the phrasing adopted the self-serving arrogance of a first-season *Saturday Night Live* in-joke. Then and now, it was a statement meant to dismiss all questions by declaring a post-Papal level of infallibility. The only difference is that when Chevy Chase said it, it was funny.

Besides the reliable level of lies, the most notable thing about Trump's responses was just how empty they were. The press is unfair... somehow. Politicians are deceptive ...

in some way. Negotiations with other countries are hard ... sometimes. The level of detail behind any of Trump's statements was such that all of the facts revealed in the interview could be inscribed on the head of a pin. With a crayon.

The worst thing about Trump's *60 Minutes* interview was that it showed how statements that in the past would have resulted in *60 Minutes* reporters following up, cracking down, and ultimately confronting someone who was shamefacedly forced to admit their lies, simply ... went past. Trump's lies and exaggerations have become so vast and commonplace that Stahl barely blinked at blatantly untrue declarations again and again. Trump didn't just pass one enormous lie and misstatement after another, he made them boring.

Trump claimed that before he settled in the White House, America was headed for war with North Korea. He said the trade deficit with China is \$500 million, and that China meddled in the 2016 election. He said he knew more about NATI than General Mattis. He said that climate was not a sure thing and that "it could go back;" whatever that means. All of these things were simply lies.

Trump's interview showed that he's unwilling to listen to anyone, even subject area experts who he selected as advisers. It shows he's unable to admit a mistake, or confess to a lie, when faced with the truth. And it shows he's utterly unfit for office. But again ... we knew that.

Mostly this interview, like several by the *New York Times*, showed the pointlessness of interviewing Trump at all in a traditional sense. You can't ask him questions and expect answers. There's no information to be gained. Unless an interview with Trump takes the form of an interrogation, with the interviewer prepared to present the truth on every point and pin Trump down on his lies, it's not worth proceeding.

And really, maybe it's better to just leave it to actual prosecutors. From the Daily Kos.

View the interview here.



Modesto Sound proudly presents the California Audio Roots Project!

Sponsors and partners include:








Local Public Radio

104.9 FM

The Best Local Bands

www.KGIG.Org

93.3 FM

KPHD

Independent Radio for Independent Minds



FM 93.3

KPHD

Independent Radio for Independent Minds

Unpasteurized, Raw California Almonds

Just in Time for Holiday Baking!

Grown without pesticides or synthetic fertilizers.

Place your order at www.betterdigsorganics.com

Mike and Patty Ruhland
Better Digs Organic Farm
Hughson, CA

Email: betterdigs@att.net Voice mail: 209.883.4399

