



Five Myths about the Homeless: Part II

By ERIC CAINE

The Myth of Drugs

When the musician and entertainer Prince died earlier this year, news that he had overdosed on the powerful opioid Fentanyl stunned his legions of fans. Though reclusive in his private life, Prince was known to prefer a vegetarian diet and healthy lifestyle. Drug use simply didn't make sense to those who had known him only through his public image.

As his addiction was confirmed, insiders spoke of years-long battles with pain brought on by his energetic performances. He was defended and even lionized for bravery in the face of excruciating agony.

Like almost any celebrity, Prince was not condemned for his drug use. His pain was viewed sympathetically, his early death seen as tragic.

Contrast drug use among homeless people. It's almost always viewed both as the cause of their homelessness and a character defect. Demonized as addicts, homeless drug users are treated with contempt and deemed deserving of the fate they have freely "chosen."

In, "*Methland: The Life and Death of an American Small Town*," Nick Reding describes in graphic detail what happened to a small Iowa town when it lost its job base to globalization and an economic bust. In Oelwein, Iowa, drugs didn't lead to an economic disaster, they followed one.



Scottie

This doesn't necessarily mean there was a cause and effect relationship. It does mean, however, we should be cautious when blaming homelessness on drug use. As often as not, drug use is a consequence of poverty, not a cause.

Our nationwide opioid epidemic has affected people at all economic levels, but it is the homeless heroin user who evokes horror and loathing. In fact, almost any homeless person will be seen as a drug-user first, a

deadbeat second, and a human being rarely.

When Jeb Bush and Carly Fiorina announced that members of their families had

suffered from drug use, they both advocated more and better treatment, not contempt and punishment. Decades ago, when former First Lady Betty Ford's addiction to alcohol and opioids was revealed, the primary topic was her highly stressful life.

The lesson for all of us is that it is extreme poverty that brings about contempt and condemnation for homeless drug users. Drug use among celebrities and wealthy people is treated far differently.

Addiction may cut across class boundaries, but only among the poor and vulnerable is it seen as a failure of character. For the Fords, Bushes, and Fiorinas, it's a health problem demanding sympathy and professional treatment.

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All Aboard: "Toxic Tours" of Classified Weapons Labs

Tri-Valley CAREs is organizing community tours this fall inside the classified fence lines of the Livermore Lab Main Site in Livermore and its Site 300 high explosives testing range near Tracy. These tours will visit areas where toxic and radioactive contaminants have been released. The pollution is undergoing cleanup pursuant to the federal "Superfund" law.

Community members will receive briefings from Dept. of Energy, Livermore Lab and Tri-Valley CAREs staff on cleanup techniques, timelines and more. Tri-Valley CAREs is offering seats on a "first come-first served" basis.

The Site 300 tour will be held on Wednesday, November 30 from 9am to 12:30pm. Site 300 was established to conduct open-air bomb tests with toxic and radioac-

tive materials. Current operations allow for contained tests and open-air detonations; high explosives R&D, machining and manufacturing; and waste burning and storage.

We are in discussion with the Lab about precisely which areas we will visit at Site 300, but we are planning to go to one of the open-air "firing tables" where high explosives and uranium-238 were detonated; unlined dumpsites where the groundwater aquifer has mixed directly with toxic and radioactive wastes resulting in a 2-mile long contaminant plume; a corrective action management unit for PCB-contaminated soil; and, the off-site contaminant plume under Corral Hollow Road.

The Main Site Superfund tour will be held on Thurs., Dec. 1 from 9am to 12:30pm. The Main Site contains most of the Lab's princi-

pal nuclear weapons development facilities, including the plutonium facility and vaults, hardened engineering test building, tritium facility, radiography facility, high explosives application facility, National Ignition Facility, and others.

We have requested to visit an aquifer treatment facility to which contaminated off-site groundwater is brought via a pipeline; one of the areas with radioactive hydrogen (tritium) pollution in the groundwater aquifer; a waste drum storage yard; and several "pilot project" cleanup areas, including one where injection studies with naturally-occurring "bugs" to break down volatile organic compounds (industrial solvents) is scheduled to begin full operation.

For either tour, participants must call or email us and provide their badging informa-

tion on or before Thursday, November 17. However, do not wait until the last minute. If you are interested in attending one of these unique tours, please reserve your space today. Often when we arrange these tours there are more requests than there are spaces available.

Livermore Lab is a classified nuclear weapons facility and you must get a badge to go on either tour. Email marylia@trivalleycares.org or call us at 925-443-7148 for details. The required data for badging includes: Your full name, valid drivers license or passport number, date and place of birth, social security number and current address and phone.

<http://www.trivalleycares.org/new/11n1-toursblog.html>

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Audio Technician Training at Modesto Sound

By BRENDA FRANCIS

Modesto Sound offers an after school program for high school, college students and Adults called The Job Circle. It is a seven week program, taught by *Lucky Lew* and *Mark Oesau*, that meets twice a week, is open to students from any school in the area, and is supported by volunteers, grants, and donations.

Students learn skills that are useful at any job such as verbal and written communication, teamwork, general job etiquette, plus skills specific to the audio industry. Participants in the Job Circle can, through knowledge testing, earn an Audio Technician Certificate. This internship, and certificate, becomes a work and college application reference for them. For example, it is recognized by employers such as the Gallo Center for the Arts.

There are two levels of training: Audio Technician 1 and Audio Technician 2. The cost for this 7-week program is \$200 and there are scholarships available for very low income families (a scholarship awarded student pays just \$40).

The 7-week training meets Tuesdays and Thursdays 4-7pm. The **next class starts October 4th**. To reserve your place register on-line modestosound.org or call 573-0533.



Out of This World Music Benefit Concert October 15th

Feel good stories are music to our ears. Hearing teen after teen rave about their love for music is inspiring and is why Modesto Sound got started. Founded in 2005 by MBA entrepreneur, Brenda Francis, it has become a public benefit community service. The facility has now recorded over 800 teen musicians, worked with 182 youth interns to learn job skills, and held hundreds of community radio shows and concerts.

Mark Oesau, once an intern at Modesto Sound, now has his own sound company and continues to give back to teens who once like himself wanted to learn more about audio technology. His reggae band A' La Lune will be performing at this year's event. Another performer will be Tristan Gianelli who attended several of Modesto Sound's music camps. Joseph Rykert's opera trio, who just won The Grand Prize at the Valley's Talent Project, recorded at the studio while in high school, and they will perform too!

Keep the good news coming.

What: Modesto Sound's Annual Fundraiser "Out of This World."

When: Saturday, October 15th, 5p.m.

Where: The Portal 1324 Coldwell Ave., Modesto.

Cost: \$25 adults, \$10 students includes dinner.

Money Supports: youth scholarships to music camp and audio job training.

Contact: 573-0533, studio@modestosound.org



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Film Night at the Center features *The Last Colony* Wednesday, October 19

In 1898, the United States invaded and colonized Puerto Rico as part of the Spanish American War. For 114 years the people of Puerto Rico have maintained a polarizing debate on the STATUS ISSUE that has been front and center of the political discourse on the Island. Puerto Ricans (American citizens since 1917) constantly dispute between the options of Statehood, Independence and Commonwealth.

On November 6, 2012 the people of Puerto Rico held the fourth plebiscite in the Island's history to try to redefine the political relationship with the United States.

Weeks before the plebiscite vote, three-time Emmy Award winning filmmaker Juan Agustin Marquez traveled back to his homeland and interviewed leading politicians, historians, sociologists, and economists to dissect the status debate in a multilayered conversation about the pros and cons of each option on the ballot.

His mission: To explain the status debate to the people of the United States, Congress and the President, and bring the American people up to date on this century old question: Will there be a change in status in America's Last Colony?

In honor of this Latino Heritage Month (which started September 15), the Modesto Peace/Life Center will show *The Last Colony*, a documentary and critical look at the state of political and economic relations between the United States and Puerto Rico, its last colony. Come see this important film on Wednesday, October 19, at 6:30 p.m. at the Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St. in Modesto. Join in the lively conversation afterwards.

To see a trailer, go to <http://thelastcolony.com/videos/>



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2017 Peace Essay Contest

Everyone has the right to have a place
they call home.



Every community has many individuals and families experiencing homelessness -- sleeping on the street, in a car, in a shelter, or some other place. As the number of homeless people has grown, each community struggles with ways to deal with this situation. Sometimes residents view this as an unsolvable problem and blame the homeless instead of working toward solutions -- solutions that will work for all and build a sense of community instead of fostering resistance and resentment.

The 30th annual Peace Essay Contest challenges students to research and consider why people become homeless and then to focus on one specific plan that might help to improve this issue by creating a sense of "home" for everyone in the community.

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

By talking with others and researching, gain an understanding of both the common reasons why people become homeless and solutions which have been tried in various communities throughout our country. In an Argument essay of 500-1000 words, do the following:

- Focus on one reason why people become homeless in our area. Then, create your own plan that would address this particular reason in order to decrease homelessness in our community. Be creative! Think outside the box!
- Describe this plan in detail. By using specific examples and reasons, explain how your plan would decrease homelessness. If your plan includes participation by a government agency, local groups, community volunteers, or homeless people themselves, include those details. In addition, explain what part you would like to play in implementing this plan.
- Anticipate an argument against your plan and provide logical, well-developed reasons to show that your idea is strong and realistic, while a different approach has weaknesses.
- Provide a strong conclusion that supports your plan and shows how it fosters a sense of "home" for everyone in the community.

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

By talking with others and researching, gain an understanding of why people become homeless and some solutions which have been tried in various communities throughout our country. In an Argument essay for Division III and Opinion essay for Division IV of 250-500 words, do the following:

- Think about reasons why people become homeless in our area. Focus on one reason. Then, create your own plan that would address this particular reason in order to decrease homelessness in our community. Be creative! Think outside the box!
- Describe this plan in detail. By using specific examples and reasons, explain how your plan would decrease homelessness. If your plan includes participation by a government agency, local groups, community volunteers, or homeless people themselves, include those details. In addition, explain what part you would like to play in implementing this plan.

** Anticipate an argument against your plan and provide logical, well-developed reasons to show that your idea is strong and realistic, while a different approach has weaknesses. ** Required only for DIVISION III

- End your essay with a strong conclusion that supports your plan and shows how it fosters a sense of "home" for everyone in the community.

You might consider these resources: recent articles in the Modesto BEE and Stanislaus Connections; articles online which describe plans that have been tried in other communities; your own, personal experiences with someone who has been homeless; books you have read about this issue.

To qualify for an award, your essay must answer each part of the prompt. Each essay will be judged on the quality of the writing, the strength of the argument you make in support of a specific plan to reduce homelessness, and the personal connection you make to this plan. At the end of your essay, please provide a list of sources you used in your research; do not include graphics (e.g. charts, tables).

Deadline for Entries: November 18, 2016 Notification of Winners: February 28, 2017

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

2017 Peace Essay Contest

Rules & Submission Directions



1. The Peace Essay Contest is open to all fifth through twelfth grade students who are residents of 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. Print & complete the Entry Form and attach to the front of your essay (may be found at: <http://peaceessaycontest.weebly.com> OR www.stanislausconnections.org OR email peaceessay@juno.com).
5. Cite any quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge. If you are uncertain about plagiarism, ask your teacher.
6. You must do your own work. However, you may ask a teacher, parent, or friend for constructive criticism.
7. The Modesto Peace/Life Center reserves the right to reprint entries. Entries will not be returned.
8. Entries may be delivered to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., Modesto, from 2pm-5pm November 16 - 17 - 18, 2016. You may also mail all entries, postmarked no later than November 18, 2016 to:

2017 Peace Essay Contest
Modesto Peace/Life Center
P.O. Box 134
Modesto, CA 95353-0134

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 demonstrate concern for establishing a more peaceful world?
 - B. Has the writer used relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples to fully develop their ideas?
 - C. Does the essay address the given topic?
2. **Style**
 - A. Is the essay original and interesting?
 - B. Did the student establish and maintain a formal writing style?
 - C. Does the voice of the writer come through?
3. **Clarity of Expression**
 - A. Is the topic introduced clearly?
 - B. Is the essay well organized with a clear introduction and conclusion? Is the essay well organized with clear transitions from one idea to the next?
 - C. Are the ideas clearly stated with factual support?
4. **Mechanics**
 - A. Has the writer attempted to use appropriate transitions, precise language, and a formal 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?
 - D. Does the essay stay within the word limit?

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, 2017, winners will be notified through the student's teacher. Prizes will be presented at an Awards Reception in the spring. All participants, teachers, judges, and sponsors will be invited as guests of honor.

2017 Peace Essay Committee: Indira Clark, Steve Collins, Nancy Haskett, Peggy Hoover, Linda Lagace, Deborah Roberts, Sandy Sample, Shelly Scribner, Jann Spallina and David Tucker
This **30th 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

Drop by Drop

By JENIFER WEST

Although we did get some rain last year, and this year's rainy season's coming up, we should all still be looking for ways to conserve water. Every drop we can save will make a difference. Most people have made at least a few changes, and there's always more we can do.

One Saturday evening, for example, I suddenly realized it was dinnertime and I hadn't prepared anything, and there weren't any leftovers. So I opted for that old favorite: Pasta. I've really hesitated to cook this quick & easy, if water-intensive food for a while. But, there's a trick that can put pasta back on the menu: It doesn't actually need to be cooked in a vat of water. Simply pour the pasta, dry, into a pot, toss in a good pinch of salt, and add water just to cover. Bring to a boil, stirring a time or two, then put the lid on and turn off the heat. Ten minutes later, viola – perfectly cooked pasta. With real savings in water and gas – and time. (This technique, which uses retained heat to cook food, is called thermal cooking. It can be used for many different kinds of food, and can be done with improvised or specially designed cooking equipment.)

Other ways to save water in the kitchen: Fill a large bowl halfway or so, and use it to wash veggies. Wash the



least gritty veggies first, like lettuce (unless it's homegrown, which tends to hold more grit), followed by carrots or other veggies more likely to leave a bit of sand or grit behind. The same water can be used to give the dishes a quick rinse before they're loaded into the dishwasher, used to water a plant, or for any other purpose for which less-than-pristine water will do. Unless you have one of the newer, no-rinse dishwasher models, rinse dirty dishes immediately after a meal, before food residue has a chance to dry on them. Put just enough water in the largest pan or bowl to allow a quick swish to remove food residue. Bonus points if you've saved a netting bag from onions, oranges or other produce, and cut it into pieces to use instead of a purchased scrubby sponge. It'll do the job, without scratching like the scrubbies can. Surprisingly, a dishwasher actually uses less water than handwashing – provided the machine is run with a full load.

Another thing to consider is a recirculating hot water pump system. These work by constantly circulating hot water from your water heater through the pipes, with a valve at the furthest sink in the system that sends the (now slightly-cooled) water back to the water heater to be reheated. They use very little energy, and you can either set them to come on at specific times each day, or you can allow them to run constantly. (They're not compatible, however, with 'instant' or 'on-demand' water heaters.) Before we installed one, it seemed to take forever to get hot water in the master shower, which is the furthest point from the water heater. Which meant, of course, a fair amount of wasted water. Now, the delay is only the few seconds it takes for the heated water to get from the

continued next page

Science for the Community at Modesto Junior College West Campus

MJC Fall Science Colloquium, Science Community Center, Room 115, West Campus, 3 pm - 4 p.m. Contact: Teri Curtis (209) 575-6775 curtist@mjc.edu.

Oct. 5: Steve Murov, MJC Chemist (Ret) "Exploring Matter: An Inexpensive, Interactive Chemistry Museum Exhibit."

Oct. 12: Laurie Hatch, MJC Child Dev. (Ret) "Adverse Childhood Experiences: How Early Trauma Affects our Brains, Bodies and Lives."

Oct. 19: David Martin, MJC A/P, "Medical Applications of 3D Printing."

Oct. 26: Emily Basnight, MJC and CSU Stan Economics student: "Pricing Carbon: Is Cap and Trade or Free and Dividend - Best?"

Nov. 2: Doug Singleton, CSU Fresno, "The Mysterious Dark Energy in Our Cosmos."

Nov. 9: Des Orsinelli, Brown Caldwell Engineer, "Notes on the Cost to Save the World (Or What Would a 'Tax' on Carbon Really Cost Us?)."

Nov. 16: Roland Nyegaard, M.D., "Dying Well — Magical Thinking or Possible?"

Nov. 30: Bobby Hutchinson, MJC Professor, "World AIDS

Day." <https://www.mjc.edu/instruction/sme/colloquium.php>

Modesto Area Partners in Science (MAPS) free public programs *except as noted*. 7:30 p.m., MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall, Room. 132.

Oct. 21: *Dr. Al Chemist and the Mischiefs* present "A Halloween Chemistry Show." Fundraiser for the Great Valley Museum and MAPS. \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door. Special time: 7:00 pm.

Oct. 28: "Mathematics: A Human Endeavor." MJC Prof. Dr. Heidi Meyer presents a fascinating perspective on mathematics.

Nov. 18: "Pluto Up Close." Mark Showalter of the SETI Institute discusses NASA's New Horizons Pluto mission. Images of this mysterious frigid world show ice mountains, glaciers and a thin blue atmosphere.

Dec. 2: "Fusion: Building a Miniature Star on Earth." Dr. Tammy Ma is an experimental physicist at the National Ignition Facility at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory where rapid progress is being made in the quest for sustained thermonuclear fusion.

Be informed!

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

Drop by Drop

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sink to the shower. Real water savings (thanks, Dad)!

Which brings up another topic: Showering. Shower heads that can be used both fixed and hand-held are excellent for those of us who wish to conserve water. Ideally, one turns the water on for rinsing only, saving water that would otherwise have gone down the drain. The hand-held units are great, as water can be directed to wherever it's needed – even less water waste!

Replacing older toilets and other fixtures/appliances with more recent, water-conserving versions can also make a difference. Some cities even offer rebates – check with the Public Works or Finance department of your city.

There are ways to conserve water outside, as well. Some cities have banned the use of water for hosing down sidewalks and driveways or allow it in special circumstances; others still allow it but require the use of a nozzle that automatically shuts off. Either way, use water outside only when it's truly needed, and take care to direct it to the landscaping. Allowing it to run down sidewalks and gutters needlessly wastes this precious resource.

Trees are a special concern. Most experts agree that less-frequent, deeper watering is more effective than watering lightly, more often. In other words, water applied at a very slow rate over a number of hours has a chance to seep down into the earth to where it's most needed. This practice also directs roots down, while frequent, shallow watering encourages roots to come to the surface.

Conserving water really doesn't take any major effort. We can all do it, and we can all make a difference – drop by drop.



Friday, Oct. 21, 2016, 7 – 8:30 pm

MJC West Campus

SCI 115 or Sierra Hall 132, TBD.

Admission includes visit to the Great Valley Museum (6 pm – 9:30 pm) and the brand new interactive and original exhibit, Exploring Matter.



Dr. Al Chemist and the Mischiefs
present

A Halloween Chemistry Show

A fundraiser for the Great Valley Museum and MAPS
\$10 in advance, \$15 at the door (URL TBD)



NEW MODESTO RADIO STATION COMING SOON!

The Modesto Peace/Life Center has been granted a full power radio station license and needs YOUR help!

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- ⇒ Feedback on future programming from YOU!
- ⇒ Volunteers with radio backgrounds & experience
- ⇒ Local Music, Arts and Entertainment connections
- ⇒ Community partners



To get involved or learn more about the new station, contact James Costello, (209) 402-9191 or jcostello@igc.org. You can donate by sending your check to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, P.O. Box 134, Modesto, CA 95353 with "Radio Station" in the memo. You can also donate online at <http://peacelifecenter.org>



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Five Myths about the Homeless, Part III: The Myth of Government

By ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen

Among the most powerful myths about homelessness today, the one that claims “Government can’t help” might be the most pervasive. Despite a wealth of contradictory examples, the claim sticks to people’s minds like lint to Velcro.

But the 2008 bailout of the U.S. auto industry wasn’t even the first time government has “helped” by saving thousands of jobs and entire corporations. Auto bailouts go back to 1979, when government intervened to save the Chrysler Corporation.

Government’s long history of help in the form of subsidies for agriculture gets headlines only when particularly lurid examples attract media attention, like the 1986 subsidized slaughter of dairy cows, when a Stanislaus County dairyman was among several who received millions of government dollars for killing his cows. And only government could have provided the vast water delivery system California residents and farmers today take for granted.

So why the myth that government can’t help? It’s a result of a decades-long campaign to promote anti-tax and anti-government hysteria even while government provides handsomely for those who can pony up enough bucks to buy into our pay-to-play political system.

When the Supreme Court ruled that campaign contributions constitute an exercise of the First Amendment right to free speech (Buckley vs. Valeo 1976), politicians became more dependent on big donors than ever before. And well before the court ruling, none other than John Fitzgerald Kennedy had warned about the combined power of money and media to sway elections:

“It [television] can be abused by demigods, by appeals to emotions and prejudice and ignorance,” he said...If all parties and candidates are to have equal access to this essential and decisive campaign medium, without becoming deeply obligated to the big financial contributors... then the time has come when a solution must be found to this problem of TV costs.”

Prescient as he was, Kennedy could never have imagined the myth-building power of money and media once they provided big donors with the means to stack government in their favor. Today, the one thing supporters of Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, and Bernie Sanders all agree on is that government isn’t working for most Americans.

For middle class and lower middle class people, the American dream has become a daily struggle with diminishing incomes and rising costs. Essentially disenfranchised, poor people don’t even register on the political scale.



John

So why the myth that government can’t help? It’s a result of a decades-long campaign to promote anti-tax and anti-government hysteria even while government provides handsomely for those who can pony up enough bucks to buy into our pay-to-play political system.

housing problems objective criteria gave way to political preference and cronyism, and favoritism supplanted fairness. ‘Discretionary’ became a buzzword for ‘giveaway.’”

HUD never really recovered, and a decades-long rise in housing costs has included devastating hits to the middle class in the form of outsourcing, downsizing, automation, union-busting, and a growing pool of cheap and illegal labor. Today, financial success is more closely tied to the status of one’s parents than to hard work. People born to wealthy parents are likely to become wealthy. People born poor are likely to stay poor.

Despite its reputation, America has lagged behind European countries in social mobility—the ability to move up in economic class—for decades. Hard work and the virtues of thrift, honesty, and selflessness no longer provide the benefits of shelter for millions of Americans. Instead, the poor and homeless are demonized for their failures to thrive in what has become a mythological, “land of opportunity.”

The “government can’t help” myth is routinely cited

Abraham Lincoln’s “government of the people, by the people, for the people,” is gone. It has become a government of the few, by the few, and for the few. The upward concentration of wealth in the United States has been accompanied by an upward concentration of political power.

Homelessness is an inevitable result of decades of government policies favoring the few at the expense of the many. The number of mentally ill people on our streets burgeoned after a 1980s decision to discontinue funding for the Mental Health Systems Act. It was also during the 1980s that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) became a symbol for government corruption and inefficiency:

“Housing programs established to benefit the poor were abused. During much of the 1980’s, HUD was enveloped by influence peddling, favoritism, abuse, greed, fraud, embezzlement and theft. In many

Talk-show hosts and talking heads rave incessantly about welfare waste and “enabling” slackers, but a look at any discretionary spending pie chart shows just how little the nation sets aside for social services. Over half the budget is devoted to military spending alone.

whenever poor people are involved, but if the cries for help come from Wall Street, government offers a blank check. Talk-show hosts and talking heads rave incessantly about welfare waste and “enabling” slackers, but a look at any discretionary spending pie chart shows just how little the nation sets aside for social services. Over half the budget is devoted to military spending alone.

When George W. Bush authorized a \$17.4 billion bailout of Chrysler and General Motors in 2008, he issued a cautionary message about the dangers of allowing free market ideology to determine the fate of American workers:

“If we were to allow the free market to take its course now, it would almost certainly lead to disorderly bankruptcy...In the midst of a financial crisis and a recession, allowing the U.S. auto industry to collapse is not a responsible course of action...My economic advisers believe that such a collapse would deal an unacceptably painful blow to hardworking Americans far beyond the auto industry.”

Last year, Chrysler and General Motors joined Ford Motor Company in the biggest year for auto sales ever in American history. The government bailout has been paid back many times over with incomes, jobs, and security for millions of Americans.

Government, “of the people, by the people, and for the people,” can raise minimum wages and help provide affordable housing. It can help mentally ill homeless people. The myth that government can’t help has dealt “an unacceptably painful blow” to too many citizens for too long. “We the people” can and should, “promote the general welfare.”

<http://thevalleycitizen.com/five-myths-about-the-homeless-part-iii-the-myth-of-government/>

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Peru: Maxima Acuña and Partner Attacked by Mining Firm's Guards

From teleSUR

Campesino activist Acuña refused to sell her land in 2011 as the Yanacocha firm was setting up the largest gold-mining project in South America.

Ed. Note: Connections featured this winner of the Goldman prize in the May issue. Read it at: <http://stanislausconnections.org/connections%20May16.pdf>

Peru's internationally-renowned environmentalist Maxima Acuña and her partner were severely hurt Sunday morning in an attack by alleged hitmen hired by the mining company they are fighting against, reported Acuña's daughter.

At around 9.30 a.m. local time, "people hired by mining firm Yanacocha illegally broke into the property and started damaging the lot with various tools," said Ysidora Chaupe, daughter of Acuña and Jaime Chaupe.

"When Maxima and Jaime approached them and demanded they stop invading the property, the mining firm's security staff violently attacked Maxima and Jaime, hitting Maxima in the head and body with a weapon, leaving her seriously hurt," she added.

Acuña's husband, who was badly injured, managed to report the attack to the police at around 12 p.m. But the police did a routine check, leaving both campesinos in critical condition and in urgent need of medical attention.

Acuña won the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize for stopping Yanacocha, a subsidiary of U.S.-based mining giant Newmont, from constructing an open-pit gold mine that threatened to contaminate the water supply and cause water shortages for thousands of people living in this agricultural and cattle-rearing region.

Acuña was one of the few campesinos who refused to sell her land in 2011 in the northern region of Cajamarca as Yanacocha was setting up the largest gold-mining project in South America called Minas Conga. The International Finance Corporation, the lending arm of the World Bank, owns a 5 percent stake in the project.

She is still fighting in court for the property rights for her piece of land, although a December 2014 appeals court deci-

Latin America is the most dangerous place in the world for environmental activists. In Peru alone, 61 activists were killed in the past 10 years, according to the human rights organization Global Witness.

sion overturned an earlier sentence of three years in prison for her and her husband for allegedly invading Yanacocha's property.

In April, Acuña told teleSUR about the daily fear she and others were forced to live under, saying the mining company kept intimidating any campesinos leaders who dared to protest for the right of land and water.

Foreign mining companies operating in Peru often hire police as security guards, while the Peruvian government often deploys police, military and intelligence personnel on behalf of mining, gas and oil companies to crush any dissent and local resistance.

On March 3, Berta Caceres, one of last year's winners of the Goldman Environmental Prize, was assassinated in her home in La Esperanza, Honduras. Latin America is the most dangerous place in the world for environmental activists. In Peru alone, 61 activists were killed in the past 10 years, according to the human rights organization Global Witness.

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Peru-Maxima-Acuna-and-Partner-Attacked-by-Mining-Firms-Guards-20160918-0018.html>

Ed. Note: 60 Goldman Prize winners have joined to protest Maxima Acuña's treatment (excerpts):

"We are outraged at the latest attack on Máxima Acuña and members of her family from security contractors hired by the U.S. Colorado-based Newmont Mining Corporation and/or its subsidiaries or partners in Peru, who trespassed



into her property to destroy their crops. This is just the most recent attempt to harass and force them to leave her home in Tragadero Grande, located in the northern Peruvian highlands of Cajamarca, in order to try to develop the proposed Conga mine....

"We also urge the Peruvian government to take all necessary measures to guarantee Máxima Acuña and her family's safety, including their right to live on their land. Their human rights must be respected and upheld, as guarantee under the Peruvian Political Constitution, the precautionary measures granted by Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) on May 5, 2014, the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and as supported by the latest determination of the International Criminal Court in The Hague to prosecute company executives, politicians and other individuals under international law for crimes linked to land grabbing and environmental destruction.

"We denounce any acts of violence that have been carried out against Ms. Acuña and her family, and strongly request Newmont and its subsidiaries to immediately withdraw its security contractors encircling Ms. Acuña's property and its immediate vicinity. Likewise, we ask Newmont and its subsidiaries to cease any further harassment or intimidation, including any legal action against Máxima, the Chaupe family, or other community members.

"We also urge the Peruvian government to take all necessary measures to guarantee Máxima Acuña and her family's safety, including their right to live on their land...."

Read the full statement at <http://www.goldmanprize.org/blog/goldman-prize-winners-stand-maxima-acuna/>

Prison Imperialism Delegation to Mexico!

The Alliance for Global Justice will take a delegation to Mexico November 11-21, 2016. The delegation begins in Tucson, Arizona with a forum on "**The Drug War: Today's Big Lie**". We will hear about the relation between the "War on Drugs" and the police and prison industrial complex on both sides of the border.

We will then go to Cananea and visit striking miners and communities affected by Grupo Mexico's 10.5 million gallon sulfuric acid spill, the largest environmental disaster in the Mexico's history. We'll travel to Hermosillo and meet members of the labor and popular movement and possibly visit the US funded federal prison in Hermosillo, the first privately managed, for-profit prison in Mexico.

Then, it's on to Oaxaca, where we will meet with leaders of the teachers union, popular and student movement organiz-

ers, indigenous activists and families of political prisoners. We'll finish the delegation in Mexico City. We will visit with labor leaders, human rights activists, ex-political prisoners, activists against torture, and experts on police militarization and the Mexican prison system. On November 20 we will attend closing activities of the **We Defend Mother Earth Campaign**.

Cost of the delegation is \$1400. This includes meals, housing, transportation (except your initial flight to Tucson and home from Mexico City), and other delegation expenses. Deposit of \$300 is due with application. Some discounts may be available.

Register for this Delegation at http://afgj.org/mexico_delegation2016



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

Green Tips for A Green Planet: October Green To Do's to insure a safe and comfy cold season

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

- ☐ Check the air pressure in your tires. Cooler temperatures lower tire pressure and that, in turn, lowers fuel efficiency. So check your tires and make sure that they are properly inflated.
- ☐ Clean and test the furnace. Dust and debris not only affect performance, but could cause a fire. Right now before it gets cold check your owner's manual, check here or call a furnace maintenance company. Have gas furnaces professionally inspected annually.
- ☐ Move furniture or any obstructions from vents, baseboard heaters, floor registers or radiators so air moves freely, and vacuum to remove any dust or debris.
- ☐ If you have a radiator... place a reflecting panel behind it...purchase one at a home center or make one yourself with a plywood panel and aluminum foil.
- ☐ Remove window air conditioners for the winter or seal them with caulking or tape and cover them with an airtight, insulated jacket.
- ☐ To do's for keeping refrigerators running at peak proficiency: Vacuum refrigerator coils Be sure refrigerator is level (door should automatically swing shut). Check door seals (close it on a dollar bill...if it can be pulled out easily, time to replace the gaskets). Take care not to over fill it. Allowing room for cool air to circulate will keep everything at the right temperature.
- ☐ Clean the ducts and area behind the dryer, clean the filter after every use and wash the filter occasionally.
- ☐ Windows should be properly caulked. Replace single-pane windows, with double paned glass. Adding a plastic film over windows also will reduce heat loss.
- ☐ Check doors for weather stripping and replace as necessary. If necessary replace the threshold or block the drafts with a rolled-up towel or blanket.
- ☐ Check roof for any missing or damaged tiles or shingles.
- ☐ Clean the roof gutters and make sure downspouts are pointed away from the house. Install a rain barrel, so water can be directed where it's needed rather than draining into one spot.
- ☐ Electrical outlets, especially on outside walls, and light fixtures are prime places for cold air to leak into your home. Turn off the power at fuse box or circuit panel in

order to add foam gaskets behind covers and switch plates, and use safety plugs in unused outlets.

- ☐ Install foam covers over outside water spigots to prevent freezing.
- ☐ Check for water leaks both inside and outside.
- ☐ Wrap the water heater with an insulating blanket.
- ☐ If you have a ceiling fan, reverse the direction ... the fan should be run in a clockwise direction, which pushes the air up against the ceiling and down the walls to gently recirculate the warm air without creating a cooling "wind chill effect."
- ☐ Fireplace safety and efficiency: have the chimney cleaned and get vent systems checked.
- ☐ If your home has no sidewall insulation help block cold air by placing heavy furniture like bookshelves, armoires and sofas along exterior walls, and use decorative quilts as wall hangings.
- ☐ Bring in any houseplants that have spent the summer outdoors. They'll help clean the air.
- ☐ Autumn leaves: consider raking them rather than using a "blower". Raked leaves can be as mulch to protect plants throughout the winter or added to a compost pile.
- ☐ Go through summer clothes to determine which items to keep, which items to repurpose (cleaning rags, craft projects, etc.) and which to donate.

Inspired by Reduce Footprints, <http://reducefootprints.blogspot.com/>

Enter the Kid's Calendar Contest!

By ANTHONY PRESTO, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, Northern Region Office

Do you know a kindergarten through high school student in the San Joaquin Valley with a passion for drawing? Here's an opportunity to showcase their work in the 2017 Healthy Air Living Kids' Calendar!

Every year the District produces a bilingual calendar, produced with the artwork and clean-air messages from students illustrating how Valley residents can live healthy air lives.

Twenty-thousand copies are printed and distributed free of charge to schools, community groups, healthcare facilities, churches and nonprofit organizations Valley-wide.

Guidelines for creating a winning Healthy Air Living calendar entry:

- Paper should be placed sideways, in landscape orientation, so it is 8-1/2 inches high and 11 inches wide
- Artwork should be in color. Produced by paint, pen, crayon, marker, pencil or even computer-generated art. Vivid colors are recommended.
- Artwork should contain a message about how to live a Healthy Air life. Examples of past messages are "Less cars, more feet," "Hacer del mundo un lugar mejor," "Don't pollute! Keep the air clean."
- Bilingual and Spanish-language messages are encouraged.

Fourteen pieces of art will be selected for the calendar. Artists must include their name, address, phone and email contact, age, grade and school on the back of the entry. Please mail art flat, not folded or stapled, to: 2017 Kids Calendar, Valley Air District, 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., Fresno, CA 93726, or submit your art at the nearest District office.

The deadline for entries has been extended – if you are dropping off the entries in person please be sure to have them in by **5pm Monday, Oct. 10** and if you will be mailing them in they need to be **postmarked no later than Monday, Oct. 10, 2016**.

For an example of this year's calendar and entry forms, visit www.valleyair.org/kidscalender. Questions? Email public.education@valleyair.org or call a regional office: in Fresno (559-230-6000), in Modesto (209-557-6400) and in Bakersfield (661-392-5500).

In Memoriam

Richard H. Anderson

March 23, 1922 — August 7, 2016

*Richard served as board chair of the
Peace/Life Center's Working Committee*

The Great Wall of Trump

Ignorance is bliss
 As the veil of darkness impedes our vision,
 we don't know what we miss
 Blood-curdling cries, echo over the land of
 oppression
 The voices bounce off each other, as the
 helpless bounce off each other
 screaming, yelling, and begging to be
 heard
 Small hands reach forward to grasp the
 impossible
 to remove the blindness of which we
 emplace upon ourselves.
 Suddenly a crack of thunder booms
 through the cloudless sky
 A small hand falls from the crowd, finding
 its stomach where the hand quickly
 becomes slick
 with wet blood.
 We are afraid.
 Stuck in the perpetual cycle of self
 blindness
 We fear anything which threatens to rip
 off our tinted glasses and expose us to the
 harsh light
 The light of which's power is a million
 times stronger than the sun
 The power which threatens our fragile state
 of mind, in which we delude ourselves to
 the illusion
 of safety and comfort.
 We scurry to fix any tear in the thin fabric
 that shields us from the outside world.
 We fear what is on the other side of that
 veil of ignorance.
 We fear the unknown.
 We,
 fear change.
 Our stability cannot be threatened.
 Our t.v. shows cannot be interrupted.
 Our snapchats cannot be taken away from
 us.
 Our attention spans must be distracted
 consistently,
 And constantly,
 Constantly,
 Constantly.
 or else.
 Or else we might care.
 We cannot care, we cannot allow our
 emotions get a hold of us.
 We know what they are capable of.
 They come to change our ways
 They come to overwhelm us
 to steal and pillage

to rape our virgin land
 they will take our jobs
 they have in the past, there's evidence for it
 There's evidence for it!
 Don't confuse me with facts i know what i
 know and those people will kill us!
 This mentality which is ingrained in our
 society, that causes us to duck behind the
 great wall of
 Trump.
 To have such a xenophobic outlook that we
 regard the man who protects us from the
 irrational,
 as our savior.
 This fear is spreading.
 Like an epidemic is plagues our developed
 nation.
 All over the world our developed nations
 hide from the helpless, the powerless.
 We put up walls to keep them out, and to
 keep us safe.
 In Syria, In Rwanda, In Mexico, In
 Honduras.
 They come...to us.
 When they reach our gates,
 Our society, mislead by fear, pulls the
 trigger.
 The guns boom.
 The children crumple to the ground,
 helpless,
 hungry,
 hurt.
 The only words we mutter when peering
 down our scopes; "God Bless America"

— Nick Adair



Nick Adair

The Scope of America

Chick chick Kaboom
 A young African American man is gunned down in Chicago
 Chick chick Kaboom
 The Flint water crisis continues to poison people in an endless saga
 Chick chick Kaboom
 15.3 million children cry out in anguish begging for survival
 Chick chick Kaboom
 Miles away the well-nourished are completely entitled
 Chick chick Kaboom
 The rich endeavor to find offshore banks to avoid taxes
 Chick chick Kaboom
 Meanwhile the middle class is assured that income inequality is being
 dismantled with axes
 Chick chick Kaboom
 Cries from the left and the right promise to fix it
 Chick chick Kaboom
 Fear mongering, reminds us of McCarthy and Nixon
 Chick chick Kaboom
 You think your vote doesn't count?
 Chick chick
 Think again.
 KaBoom.

— Nick Adair



Dear President Obama,

I miss you already.
 Most days,
 I can barely hear your reasonable rhetoric,
 drowned out by the crazy chaos
 of this current campaign,
 the media's obsessive focus
 on those who desire your position,
 as if these final months
 can be discounted,
 as if even now
 you are old news.

Amidst the name-calling,
 denials, ad-libbed remarks,
 it is always refreshing
 when you walk to the podium –
 level-headed, calm, confident,
 reassuring.

I am already missing
 your dead-pan humor,
 intellect, grace, and pride,
 your honest humanity,

strong convictions, steady hand,
 common sense,
 your genuine excitement
 at the White House Science Fair,
 your tears that still fall
 for the Newtown first graders.

I am missing the way
 you ask the hard questions,
 say we can do better,
 will be better;
 the way you respect us –
 and perhaps, most of all,
 the way you love this country
 you have served
 despite the barriers,
 pervasive obstructionism,
 which has been thrown at you
 for the past eight years

and I will grieve when you are gone

— Nancy Haskett

Select California Ballot propositions

Summary of positions taken in favor and against a select propositions. The League of Women Voters explains each proposition and the positions of supporters and opponents at <https://cavotes.org/vote/elections/2016-06-07-000000>

Organizations listed include CTA- California Teachers Association, CFL- California Federation of Labor, CA ACLU- California American Civil Liberties Union, CLCV- California League of Conservation Voters and MPLC – Modesto Peace/Life Center.

Ballot Proposition	Sierra Club	CTA	CFL	CA Republic ans	CA Democr ats	CA ACLU	CLCV	MPLC
55- Tax Extension to Fund Education and Healthcare (will maintain tax rates on wealthiest Californians)		Y	Y	N	Y		Y	Y
56- Cigarette Tax to Fund Healthcare, Tobacco Use Prevention, Research, and Law Enforcement	Y		Y	N	Y		Y	Y
57- Criminal justice. Juvenile criminal proceedings and sentencing reform			Y	N	Y			Y
58- California EdGE Initiative- (overturn restrictions on bilingual education)	Y	Y	Y	N	Y			Y
59- Citizens United (urges amendment to overturn Citizens United decision in order to allow campaign contribution limits and clarify that corporations should not have the same rights as human beings)			Y		Y			Y
62- Repeals death penalty			Y	N	Y			Y
63- Firearms. Ammunition Sales. (Bans possession of large capacity ammunition magazines, require background check on ammunition sales)				N	Y			Y
64- Marijuana legalization				N	Y	Y		Y
66- Death penalty speedup			N	Y	N			N
67- Ratify Ban on Single-Use Plastic Bags	Y		Y	N	Y		Y	Y

NAACP Modesto/St Stanislaus County Branch 1048 holds its 2016 Election of Officers and Executive Committees

Please note the following General Membership meetings of the NAACP Modesto/St Stanislaus Branch 1048 Branch are for the purpose of election of officers and at-large members of the executive committee.

In order to vote in a Branch election, one must be a member in good standing of the Branch 30 days prior to election. A form of identification is required.

On September 20th, 2016 at Christ Unity Baptist Church, 1320 L Street, Modesto, CA 95354 at 6:00 PM, there was an election individuals for the Nominating Committee.

Petitions for office (election of officers and at-large members of the executive committee) must be received at the NAACP office no later than noon October 17th to be considered for elections. Petitions were mailed to members in good standing. If you did not receive on, you may get one at the October 18 meeting.

On October 18th, 2016 at 6 PM, there will be a report from the Nominating Committee, receipt of Nominations by Petition, and election of the Election Supervisory Committee.

On November 15th 2016, the election of officers and at-large members of the Executive Committee will take place Christ Unity Baptist Church, 1320 L St., Modesto, CA 95354. The Polls will open from 11a.m. to 7p.m.

Stanislaus County Election Results and Registered Voter Numbers

To inform an understanding of the coming election, look at the election results from the 2016 presidential primary and the last two presidential elections in Stanislaus County.

Candidate and Party	Votes
June 2016 Primary	
Hillary Clinton (Dem)	24,359
Bernie Sanders (Dem)	22,384
Donald Trump (Rep)	28,198
Jill Stein (Green)	56
Gary Johnson (Libertarian)	196

November 2012 General Election	
Barack Obama (Dem)	77,724
Mitt Romney (Rep)	73,459
Jill Stein (Green)	563
Gary Johnson (Lib)	1,499

November 2008 General Election	
Barack Obama (Dem)	80,279
John McCain (Rep)	77,497
Ralph Nader (Peace & Freedom)	1,309
Cynthia McKinney (Green)	393
Bob Barr (Lib)	635

Numbers of registered voters by party in Sanislaus County over the last two years

Registered voters	Oct. 2014	June 2016	Aug 2016
Democrats	78,884	83,065	87,980
Republicans	88,364	87,043	87,285
Green	606	498	563
Libertarian	1,250	1,324	1,401
Nonpartisan	36,270	40,320	38,576

Carter Center Launches Webpage on Election Observation in the United States

ATLANTA — The Carter Center, with partners at the National Conference of State Legislatures, today launched a webpage on election observation in the United States. The page houses research that examines access and current regulations for election observers in each of the 50 states, including a state-by-state breakdown of access and accreditation for different types of observers.

The findings show that while observation by representatives of political parties and candidates is almost invariably permitted, several states have no statutory provisions for observation by international or domestic nonpartisan organizations. That does not necessarily mean that nonpartisan observers can’t observe elections, but it often leaves granting access to the discretion of county officials.

The Carter Center has observed 102 elections in 39 countries, but has no plans to observe U.S. elections.

“The Carter Center focuses its election observation work internationally, with the goal of ensuring transparency and building confidence in credible elections. As in elections around the world, transparency is also necessary in U.S. elections,” said former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. “Credible

election observation is a key way to ensure that citizens can understand and be included in supporting good electoral processes in the United States.”

The 2005 Carter-Baker Commission, which President Carter co-chaired, noted that the highly decentralized nature of American election administration complicates possibilities for credible and comprehensive observation.

The new webpage makes information about election observation in the U.S. more accessible and asks what impact credible election observation could have on U.S. elections and, more broadly, on American democracy.

“*Waging Peace. Fighting Disease. Building Hope.* “A not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization, The Carter Center has helped to improve life for people in over 80 countries by resolving conflicts; advancing democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity; preventing diseases; and improving mental health care. The Carter Center was founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, in partnership with Emory University, to advance peace and health worldwide.

<https://www.cartercenter.org/>

Report: US to Fail Paris Emissions Pledge Without 'Fundamental Change'

By **NADIA PRUPIS**, staff writer, **Common Dreams**

The U.S. is on track to miss its 2025 emissions reduction pledge agreed to in the Paris climate accord last year—because it doesn't have the proper policies in place to meet the target, according to new research.

In fact, the country is so far behind in emissions slashing that even if it implemented a slew of new clean energy programs now, it could still miss its 2025 target by nearly 1 billion tons, the study published in the journal *Nature* has found. In the Paris accord, the U.S. pledged to reduce emissions by 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels.

According to authors Jeffery Greenblatt and Max Wei of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the evidence shows it is necessary for the U.S. to make "fundamental changes" to its energy and economic sectors.

"If the policies were locked today, there would be a low likelihood of meeting the target," Greenblatt told the *Guardian*. "I wouldn't disparage the U.S.'s efforts so far, but we need to do more as a nation and globally to reduce emissions. However we splice it, that's hard to do. We can't make small alterations to our economy—we need fundamental changes in how we get and use energy."

The study comes as President Barack Obama's landmark climate change policy heads to court for a critical decision on whether or not it should be overturned. Measuring previous government projections against updated climate data, Greenblatt's study finds that even if the Clean Power Plan—which would place emissions caps on every state—is kept and implemented, the U.S. could still miss its target by anywhere from 356 million to 1.8 billion tons of greenhouse gases.

Scientists at a University of Oxford conference last week similarly warned that greenhouse gas emissions are not being

reduced quickly enough to prevent the Earth from reaching the agreed-upon 1.5°C global warming threshold in a decade. Meanwhile, a report by the environmental group Oil Change International also released last week found that the world has 17 years to get off fossil fuels entirely to prevent reaching the even more lenient 2°C warming threshold.

The country still has time to close the gap, but it will take more than just the existing or proposed measures, Greenblatt said. And it means we must act even faster and bolder than before.

"We won't get there with existing policies but it doesn't mean we are doomed," he said. "This is a call to action to ensure we close the remaining gap."

And, he added to *The Verge*, "If the United States is successful it's very likely that a number of other countries will follow suit and re-strengthen their own commitments. It's a kind of a self-reinforcing process when large nations are able to take a bold stand and follow through."

Environmental lawyer David Bookbinder, who was not involved in the study, similarly told *The Verge* that evading that dire temperature milestone will require large-scale system change.

"The problem is we built our economy on fossil fuels,

there's no way around it," he said. "What we need to do is simply change how our economy works. And that's not something that's easy to do in any shape and form."

Especially considering that the government is unlikely to support such a shift, Bookbinder continued. The Obama administration "made the U.S. commitment knowing full well that there's no way the United States is going to meet that commitment," he said.

But any action is preferable to the climate future the U.S. could face, under a Donald Trump presidency, experts warned. Maria Belenky, a senior associate at the policy firm Climate Advisers, told *The Verge* that "The key here is political will from the next administration and that's gonna be extremely integral to whether or not we're able to meet our targets."

And John Sterman, director of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Sloan Sustainability Initiative, added to the *Guardian*, "The problem is a political problem and an implementation problem. The U.S., and the world, needs deeper and sooner cuts."

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2016/09/26/us-fail-paris-emissions-pledge-without-fundamental-change-report>

Five Myths about the Homeless: Part II

... from page 1

The Myth of Family Values

In, "Struggling to Get By," the United Way presented a carefully researched study of poverty in California. The data show that, "One in three families struggle to meet their basic needs." In Stanislaus and Merced Counties, the number of struggling families is closer to forty percent.

Homelessness is only the most visible evidence of the extreme poverty that has swept a nation where decades of stagnant wages and rising costs have made it harder and harder for families to make ends meet. Anyone with a few hours and the desire to confirm the facts can find young people in our parks and streets who were born to homeless mothers.

Most of those young people are drug users and have petty criminal records. Consider for a moment the stark differences of their lives compared to the lives of people born into families like the Fords, Bushes, and Fiorenas. With fewer options and far less family support, they had far more likelihood of living in poverty.

For decades, American citizens have been told that government can't help and education and family values are the answer to poverty and crime. But when wages stagnate and the cost of living escalates, families too often fracture and fall apart.

Since the 1980s, the costs of education have risen far faster than the inflation rate. So too have the costs of housing. Rarely have these rising costs been associated with poverty and homelessness. Instead, poor and homeless people are routinely accused of "choosing" poverty.

In October of last year, citing studies by Harvard University and the American Community Survey of 2014, writers for *The Fiscal Times* concluded that the housing crisis must be addressed at all levels of government:

"Beyond these federal efforts, state and local governments



Soup line for homeless people

also have an important role to play in fostering a greater supply of affordable housing. In addition to providing public funds for this purpose, these levels of government set land use regulations and policies that have the potential to spur affordable housing production. But all too often, they deter affordable housing production through complex and costly approval processes as well as limits on the types of housing that can be built."

Other than political activism, there is nothing poor families can do about rising living costs and wage stagnation. Minimum wage levels, outsourcing American jobs, cuts to funding for social services, land use regulations, and the criminalization of drug use are the result of government policies, not family values. No one should be surprised when homelessness is an outcome of such policies.

<http://thevalleycitizen.com/five-myths-about-the-homeless-part-ii/>

Peace Life/Center ID Project

**Free/Low-cost ID and/or
Birth Certificate Application
Assistance**

Volunteers ready to assist!

Call 209-222-8624 to set an appointment!

Modesto Peace/Life Center
720 13th, Modesto, CA 95354







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

ACTIONS FOR PEACE

Sonora - Stockton

SONORA: Contact Alice at lewisalice090@gmail.com

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

its 25th Anniversary Season. The season continues with Clive Carroll, virtuoso UK guitar master who opened for Tommy Emmanuel at Modesto's State Theater. Includes a special beer tasting and savories intermission with beers provided by the Last Call Brewing Company of Turlock. All concerts held at 1705 Sherwood Ave. starting at 3 pm. Tickets available through the CBS office and at the door. Learn more at sundaysatcbs.com

LOOKING AHEAD

Saturday Nov. 12: Pax Christi Northern California's Annual Regional Assembly. "Building Peace in a Conflicted World." Ken Butigan, keynote speaker, reports on April's Rome Conference which urged the Vatican to replace the Just War tradition with the evolving just peace tradition. Workshops on Gandhian nonviolence, nuclear abolition, the new sanctuary movement, Islamophobia and police-community relations in communities of color. 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, St. Elizabeth's High School, Oakland.

John McCutcheon returns January 10, 2017.

January 15, 2017: Annual MLK Birthday Celebration, will feature Dr. Mimi Kim speaking on "Restorative Justice." 2 p.m., Sonora High School auditorium. s music and winners of the 2016 MLK essay contest.

23rd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration TBA

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.

Weekly insight meditation and dharma talk, 9:00 am-10:15 am, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC parking lot). Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: insightmeditationcentralvalley@gmail.com

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

MONDAYS

StanCounty Radical Mental Health: a peer facilitated support group open to people living with mental health issues. Mondays, 7 pm at the Modesto Peace/Life Center 720 13th St., Modesto. We strive to create a safe, non-judgmental space. Information: email stancountyrmh@gmail.com or contact Sue at 209-247-4659.

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

Pagan Family Social, third Tuesdays, Golden Corral, 3737 McHenry Ave, Modesto, 6:00 pm. Info: 569-0816. All

MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

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

MEDIA: Listen to local Valley Community Radio KQRP 104.9 FM, <http://www.kqrp.com>

PEACE LIFE CENTER BOARD MEETING, FIRST Thursdays, 720 13th St., Modesto, 6:30 pm, 529-5750.

MEDIA COMMITTEE of Peace Life Center. Meetings TBA. Call John Lucas, 527-7634.

CONNECTIONS EDITORIAL MEETINGS: Info: 537-7818, jcostello@igc.org

PEACE/LIFE CENTER MODESTO, 720 13th St. Call 529-5750. We'll get back to you with current info on activities.

newcomers, pagan-curious and pagan-friendly welcome.

Ukulele class/play-a-long led by Lorrie Freitas 5 p.m. Beginners Lessons 6 p.m. Play Along in songbooks provided. Trinity Presbyterian Church, 1600 Carver, Modesto. Donation accepted. Info: 505-3216. www.funstrummers.com

Weekly Insight Meditation And Dharma Talk, 6:30 pm-8:30 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC parking lot). Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: insightmeditationcentralvalley@gmail.com

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: merced-board@gaycentralvalley.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/>

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

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

GLBT 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

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. Meeting dates: Sept. 29, Oct. 27, Nov. 17, Dec. 15: No meeting/ Winter Mixer. Dedicated to promoting well-being in the LGBTQA community. John Aguirre, jpamodesto@gmail.com, 559-280-3864.

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

Third Thursday Gallery Walk, Downtown Modesto, downtown art galleries open—take a walk and check out the local art scene. 5-8 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

Latino Community Roundtable (LCR) meets on the second Thursday of each month at Noon at the Red Event Center, 921 8th St., Modesto. Info: call Maggie Mejia, (209) 303-2664, <http://lcrstan.org>

The Book Group, First & third Thursdays. College Ave UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 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>

NAACP. King-Kennedy Center, 601 S M.L. King Dr., Modesto, 7 pm, 3rd Thursdays. 549-1991.

Art Gallery Walk, downtown Modesto, third Thurs., 5:30 to 9 pm. Info: <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>

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

Funstrummer Ukulele Band every Friday, from 9:15 am until noon, Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto. Info: 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: 549-9155. Visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts> for info on hikes and events.

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

Hispanic Leadership Council, 1st & 3rd Fridays at 7:00 am, El Concilio, 1314 H St. Other meetings at Terrace Cafe, Double Tree Hotel. Info: Yamillet Valladolid, 523-2860.

SATURDAY

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 kathyhaynesSES@gmail.com

SERRV: Saturdays, 10 - Noon and after church Sundays or by appointment. Call Mary, 522-6497 or 523-5178. Gifts from developing countries. Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland, Rm. #4, Modesto.

1st Saturday Stories and Art: A chance for the whole family to make art inspired by children's books. Mistlin Gallery, 1st Saturday of each month, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. 1015 J Street. <http://ccaagallery.org>

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. For up to date information, visit www.stanislausconnections.org/calendar.htm