



stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

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VOLUME XXIII, NO. 8

HOMELESS ID PROJECT needs you!

By JOHN FRAILING

The Modesto Peace/Life Center is embarking on a new initiative: the Homeless ID Project. To implement it we need you.

For over a year Board member John Lucas and newly elected Board President Leng Power, along with Richard Anderson and Frank Ploof, have been recording video interviews with homeless people. Their effort is called the Modesto Homeless Documentary Project. (To see their work, visit the project's website at <http://www.modestocahomeless-documentary.org> or LIKE the project on Facebook.) Out of their work arose the idea for the Center's Homeless ID Project.

What they realized, interview after interview, is that homeless people without a photo ID are stuck.

They aren't eligible for local and county assistance, they can't get senior or discount passes for transportation, and, most importantly, they can't get a job. In short, without a photo ID, they have little or no hope of getting out of being homeless.

So the Center's Board recently approved a project to assist homeless people in obtaining an ID. A subcommittee is working out the details but here's a rough outline. We will open our Center one day a week for four hours starting in May. Before then we'll hold a training session so volunteers can learn how to prepare the paperwork necessary to obtain the ID through the DMV. This will involve talking directly with homeless people, most of whom will have scheduled an appointment with the Center. The volunteer work may also involve other tasks, for example, going to the DMV with the homeless person to help complete the process.

To get this project off the ground, we have **three main needs**. The first, we hope, involves you: we need **volunteers**. Our goal is 12 volunteers willing to commit to 4 hours a month. Here's a chance to help people in real need take a step up toward a better future.

We also need a **notary** who will offer his or her services free or at a discount rate. This will lower the expenses required to obtain an ID. So if you, or someone you know, is a notary and would be willing to volunteer time or give the Center a cut rate, that will be a great help.

Third, we need **money**. We estimate the cost per client will be approximately \$30. To seed this project, we would like to start with \$1000. If you can't volunteer, perhaps you can provide a donation specific to this project. Make your check out to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, and in the memo, write:

"Homeless ID Project." Send it to:

The Modesto Peace/Life Center
P.O. Box 134
Modesto, CA 95353-0134

The Center's history is filled with efforts aimed at national or international issues.

This project represents our resolve to also act locally. It roots our commitment to economic and social change in helping individuals, one by one, move beyond an obstacle to improve their lives.

Here's a concrete way to work for peace and social justice for all. We need your help.

ACTION: To help, contact John Lucas, lucasjal@sbcglobal.net or call 209-527-7634.



Celebrate Earth Day twice in April!



Visit the Modesto Peace/ Life Center's booth at this month's two Earth Day celebrations. The first will be on Saturday April 18, at Graceada Park, Needham and Sycamore, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The second, sponsored by MJC's Operation Green and the Civic Engagement Project, will be held on Wednesday April 22 at Modesto Junior College's West Campus, in front of the Science Community Center from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Learn about the environment and ways you can contribute to its preservation and betterment!

NOTICE: THERE WILL NOT BE A MAY ISSUE OF STANISLAUS CONNECTIONS. PUBLICATION WILL RESUME FOR THE JUNE ISSUE.

40th Annual Pancake Breakfast

Sunday June 7, 2015

8:00 a.m. — Noon

*Benefit for
the Modesto Peace/Life Center*

Modesto Church of the Brethren
2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto



All-Star Favorites

• Blueberry • Buttermilk •
• Scotch Oaties • Piña Colada •

Deborah's 2015 Specials:

• Lavender Almond •
• Zucchini with Feta •
• Citrus •

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

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

Adults: \$10, Children: \$5

Helpers and food needed. Call 545-0590
A good community project for students

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

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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/>

33rd Annual Peace Camp June 26, 27, and 28, 2015



Camp Peaceful Pines
near Pinecrest, California



Registration Form

Adults \$75 before May 1; \$80 before June 8; \$85 after June 8

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

Total \$ _____

Youth (ages 4 -18) \$55 before May 1; \$60 before June 8; \$65 after June 8

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

Total \$ _____

Child (ages 3 & under FREE)

1. _____ Age _____ 2. _____ Age _____

Voluntary Donation to provide a camper scholarship = \$ _____

GRAND TOTAL = \$ _____

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

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

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

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

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

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

Parent authorization for minor children (must be signed if applicable)

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

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian (PRINT) _____

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian _____ Date _____

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

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

Register for Peace Camp, June 26-28

By KEN SCHROEDER

Join us for the Modesto Peace/Life Center's 33rd annual Peace Camp in the Sierra, June 26-28 at Camp Peaceful Pines on Clark Fork Rd. off Hwy 108, about 100 miles east of Modesto. That's one-third of a century of workshops, good food, hikes, campfires, singing, crafts, recreation, and stimulating people of all ages.

Lori Wong will lead the workshop "Meeting Challenges Through Vulnerability and Compassion to Effect Change: Embodying Peace to Create a Peaceful World." In this workshop, we'll explore our relationship with difficult emotions such as anger, sadness, and despair, and how accepting them with honest awareness and acceptance can evoke genuine compassion and the motivation to act from peace rather than anger, hatred, fear, or anxiety. We'll also learn that these elements are necessary ingredients for efficacy in promoting change.

Lori Wong is a Stanford-certified Compassion Cultivation Training™ (CCT) teacher, trained through Stanford University's Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education. Lori is also the founding teacher of Insight Meditation Central Valley, a graduate of Spirit Rock's Community Dharma Leader program, a board member of Sati Center for Buddhist Studies, a former volunteer for the Buddhist Pathways Prison Project, and has been offering mindfulness and dharma teachings in the Central Valley since 2009.

Guadalupe (Lupe) Martinez, Assistant Executive Director of the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment (CRPE) will facilitate a workshop on **environmental justice**. CRPE is a national environmental justice organization providing legal and organizing assistance to grassroots groups in low-income communities and communities of color. They have focused on issues such as clean air, fracking, climate justice, toxic waste and green economic development.

Lupe lives in Delano in the southern San Joaquin Valley, where he worked as a farm worker and became a union organizer with Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers. Lupe served the Union as an organizer, contract administrator, negotiator, Regional Director and National Organizing Director. In 1996 he was elected to the UFW Executive Board and subsequently was elected third vice president. Lupe was the first full-time organizer with the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment. He has worked there for over 10 years, following his passion for organizing for justice. He MC'd the Climate March on February 7 in Oakland.

Scott Gifford, our song leader, was a teacher at Fremont Open Plan in Modesto for 20 years. He'll bring Appalachian dulcimers and ukuleles; bring whatever else you play. He says, "I love that the English word for what musicians do is 'PLAY'." If there's a favorite song that you'd like to sing around the campfire this year, let him know by email (scottgifford@sbcglobal.net). Peace Camp regular **Reo Maynard**

2015 Peace Essay Contest Winners, Finalists and School Winners*

The 28th annual Peace Essay Contest is a project of the Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th Street, Modesto, CA 209-529-5750. Co-sponsored by the Modesto Junior College Department of Literature and Language Arts. Contact us at: peaceessay@juno.com

Division I (Grades 11 & 12)

	Student	School	Teacher
First Place	Sarah O'Leary	Whitmore Charter HS	Kelly Hayes
Second Place	Cica Akpovi	Modesto HS	Jennifer Periera
Third Place	Eliana Montalvo	Whitmore Charter HS	Kelly Hayes
Honorable Mentions:	Daisy Ochoa	Central Valley HS	Lila Gonzalez
	Princess Pe	Central Valley HS	Lila Gonzalez
	Lorena Rubio	Whitmore Charter HS	Kelly Hayes
Finalists:	Molly Cluff	Whitmore Charter HS	Kelly Hayes
	Chris Cordrey	Whitmore Charter HS	Kelly Hayes
	Mary Curry	Whitmore Charter HS	Kelly Hayes
	Simaran Dosanjh	Central Valley HS	Lila Gonzalez
	Sophie Eisman	Whitmore Charter HS	Kelly Hayes
	Heidi Ekstrum	Whitmore Charter HS	Kelly Hayes
	Bianca Fernandez	Central Valley HS	Lila Gonzalez
	Kaitlyn Hebb	Ceres HS	Ben Middleton
	Saray Gonzalez	Ceres HS	Ben Middleton
	Chelsea Heras	Ceres HS	Ben Middleton
	Itzayana Rodriguez	Central Valley HS	Lila Gonzalez
	David Toepfer	Whitmore Charter HS	Kelly Hayes
	Jalyn Vander Wal	Whitmore Charter HS	Kelly Hayes
	Joshua Villegas	Central Valley HS	Lila Gonzalez

*School Winners are awarded to the top essay in schools that submitted ten or more essays in this division:

School	School	Student	Teacher
Winners:	Central Valley HS	Daisy Ochoa	Lila Gonzalez
	Whitmore Charter HS	Sarah O'Leary	Kelly Hayes

Division II (Grades 9 & 10)

	Student	School	Teacher
First Place	Amber Coston	Independent Home Sch	Susan Janis
Second Place	Vinay Channaveerappa	Modesto HS	Mike Chiavetta
Third Place	Ryan Choeb	Riverbank HS	Stacy Blevins
Honorable Mention:	Carlos Aguilera	Riverbank HS	Stacy Blevins
	Denae Fargo	Johansen HS	Connie diCristina
	Genevieve Peterson	Riverbank HS	Stacy Blevins
Finalists:	***	Valley Oak Jr/Sr HS	Mary Durr
	Jaime Ibarra	Stanislaus Military Acad	Georgette Williams
	David Jasuan	Valley Charter HS	Nirona Samuel
	Kyle Kendrix	Johansen HS	Connie diCristina
	Katie Larson	Riverbank HS	Stacy Blevins
	Daniel Medina	Johansen HS	Connie diCristina
	Tyler Moore	Stanislaus Military Acad	Georgette Williams
	Angelina Moreno	Riverbank HS	Stacy Blevins
	Samantha Romero	Johansen HS	Connie diCristina
	Megan Saavedra	Valley Charter HS	Nirona Samuel
	Mohamad Sabri	Whitmore Charter HS	Virginia Aguilera
	Abigail Sloan	Independent Home Sch	Susan Janis
	Alondra Valdez	Riverbank HS	Stacy Blevins
	Charity Vasquez	Valley Charter HS	Nirona Samuel

*** Student moved out of school district after submitting essay

*School Winners are awarded to the top essay in schools that submitted ten or more essays in this division:

School	School	Student	Teacher
Winners:	Johansen HS	Denae Fargo	Connie diCristina
	Riverbank HS	Ryan Choeb	Stacy Blevins

Jews and Arabs Refuse To Be Enemies

First Place ~ Division I

Sarah O'Leary

Whitmore Charter High School

Kelly Hayes, Instructor

"Homo homini lupus," is a phrase often attributed to the great Roman playwright, Titus Plautus. "Man is a wolf to man," although initially used in one of his comedies, Plautus's words shed an interesting light on the human condition. In the great expanse of human history, mankind has consistently and tragically experienced anger, war, and hate. Perfidious wrongs and innumerable sorrows litter the battlefields of both the past and present. Peace is very rare, if not impossible. Yet, in recognition of these truths, two students, Sholom Neistein and Mohamed Ghumrawi, started the "Jews and Arabs Refuse to be Enemies," campaign. Based on the concept that peace is possible in Palestine, this campaign promotes not only harmony between peoples, but also non-violent resolutions between Jews and Arabs. These two young men, one a Jew and one an Arab, have grown tired of the constant violence and hate that plagues their people. They have recognized the same condition expressed 2000 years before their births, that man is indeed a wolf to man, and have decided to do something about it.

Jews and Arabs have been enemies for many, many years. Since the Jewish return to Palestine, tensions have heightened to all-out war. In fact, less than a week after the reestablishment of Israel as a country, it was attacked by several Arab nations. The root of this conflict lies deep within both races. Many Arabs believe that the Jews have taken their homeland, while many Jews claim that the land was theirs long before the Arabs took up residency. Moreover, these two people's leading religions (Islam and Judaism) often come into direct

conflict with one another. As a result, enemies have been living side by side with one another for decades. All the while, distrust and hate have been festering between them.

In light of these things, Sholom Neistein and Mohamed Ghumrawi, have decided that the conflict must stop. Though they hold opposing viewpoints on the conflict in Palestine and even have friends and family members in direct opposition with one another, these men have decided that peace is more important than which side is in the right. Thus, their "Jews and Arabs Refuse to be Enemies" campaign, launched in direct response to the conflicts they and the world have witnessed in Palestine, is a banner that is meant to encompass two distinct groups who are asked not to put aside their unique identities, but to accept and value that of their "enemy." Through various forms of media, they have gained supporters, many of whom post pictures of examples of the peaceful relationships that can be found between Jews and Arabs. They have started a potential landslide effect as a book has been published and several newspapers have written articles about this viral campaign. Moreover, in August, a rally was held in Tel Aviv where thousands of Jews and Arabs called for peace.

These people's search for common ground can be inspirational not only to Jews and Arabs, but to the rest of the world. Their recognition that compromise, conversation, and harmony is something far more worthwhile than any cause

continued p 8

Division IV (Grades 5 & 6)

	Student	School	Teacher
1st Place	Dalyce Farnon	Fremont Open Plan	Dorene Arnold
2nd Place	Avni Parmar	Agnes Baptist Elem	Toni David
3rd Place	Agustin Valdes	Lakewood Elem	Christine Malekos-Quick
Honorable Mention:	Sung Jae Bae	Agnes Baptist Elem	Toni David
	Jacob Christopher	Hart-Ransom Charter	Susan Janis
	Lily Wohlstadter	Fremont Open Plan	Dorene Arnold
Finalists:	Allie Barnes	Whitmore Charter	Kathie Knudsen
	Mekhi Blanco	Fremont Open Plan	Dorene Arnold
	Meredith Cantrell	Lakewood Elem	Christine Malekos-Quick
	Aynsley Conner	Agnes Baptist Elem	Gary Carpenter
	Danielle Haubrich	Lakewood Elem	Christine Malekos-Quick
	Jeremy Kline	Lakewood Elem	Christine Malekos-Quick
	Angela Machado	Lakewood Elem	Christine Malekos-Quick
	Maaria Mirza	Agnes Baptist Elem	Gary Carpenter
	Isabelle Riddle	Agnes Baptist Elem	Gary Carpenter
	Allison Shewfelt	Agnes Baptist Elem	Toni David
	Milla Skowron	Lakewood Elem	Christine Malekos-Quick
	Brooke Stehle	Agnes Baptist Elem	Gary Carpenter
	Gianna Youkhaneh	Agnes Baptist Elem	Gary Carpenter
	Amna Ikram	Coswell Elem	Cristina Deniz

*School Winners are awarded to the top essay in schools that submitted ten or more essays in this division:

School	School	Student	Teacher
Winners:	Agnes Baptist Elem	Avni Parmar	Toni David
	Coswell Elementary	Amna Ikram	Cristina Deniz
	Cloverland Elem	Connor Bok	Tammie Rhoads
	Fremont Open Plan	Dalyce Farnon	Dorene Arnold
	Lakewood Elem	Agustin Valdes	Christine Malekos-Quick
	Magnolia Elem	Madeline Takaki	Mrs. Larrabee
	Siphend Elementary	Brendan Westcott	Jeanne White
	W. M. Brown Elem	Kimberly Huerta	Mr. Frolund
	Whitmore Charter	Allie Barnes	Kathie Knudsen

Division III (Grades 7 & 8)

	Student	School	Teacher
1st Place	Haylee Grass	Mark Twain Jr. High Sch	Mrs. Ortiz
2nd Place	Erika Gottlieb	Oakdale Jr. High	Dee Hawksworth
3rd Place	Gustavo Hernandez	Chavez Jr. High Sch	Mr. Aldrich
Honorable Mentions:	Cole Marganite	Chavez Jr. High Sch	Mr. Aldrich
	Jacob Martinez	Chavez Jr. High Sch	Mr. Aldrich
	Elaine Stamy	Hart-Ransom Charter	Susan Janis
Finalists:	Israel Arellano	Whitmore Charter Sch	Morgan Shapses
	Michelle Borges	Chavez Jr. High Sch	Mr. Aldrich
	Brianna Boston	Prescott Jr. High	Mrs. Neuman
	Kylea Coston	Independent Home Sch	Susan Janis
	Kyle Franklin	Oakdale Jr. High	Dee Hawksworth
	Caroline Hamilton	Oakdale Jr. High	Dee Hawksworth
	Ariana Jimenez	Whitmore Charter Sch	Morgan Shapses
	Nirveen Kaur	Prescott Jr. High	Maia Tobin
	Mikaila Koenig	Whitmore Charter Sch	Morgan Shapses
	Sarah McColley	Turlock Junior High Sch	Brandi Decator
	Morgan McKay	Prescott Jr. High	Maia Tobin
	Mehar Nijjar	Prescott Jr. High	Maia Tobin
	Ryan Pedersen	Prescott Jr. High	Maia Tobin
	Calvin Reed	Oakdale Jr. High	Dee Hawksworth

*School Winners are awarded to the top essay in schools that submitted ten or more essays in this division:

School	School	Student	Teacher
Winners:	Chavez Jr. High Sch	Gustavo Hernandez	Mr. Aldrich
	Mark Twain Jr. Hi. Sch	Haylee Grass	Mrs. Ortiz
	Oakdale Jr. High School	Erika Gottlieb	Dee Hawksworth
	Prescott Jr. Hi. Sch.	Mehar Nijjar	Maia Tobin
	Whitmore Charter Sch	Ariana Jimenez	Morgan Shapses

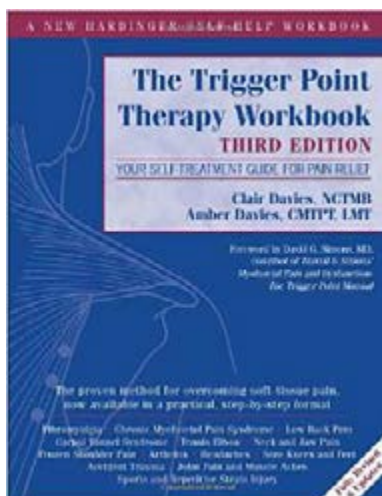
Staying on Point

By JENIFER WEST

An odd-looking self-massage tool called the “Body Back Buddy”, which resembles some sort of medieval torture device, recently arrived in the mail. It was actually a gift for my dear husband, though I ended up trying it first, and was pleasantly surprised at the relief it seemed to bring. But it wasn’t until I got the book, *The Trigger Point Therapy Workbook: Your Self-Treatment Guide for Pain Relief* by Clair Davies, that I really began to understand how to use it.

Mr. Davies suffered from chronic pain himself, and eventually stumbled onto the work of Dr. Janet Travell and Dr. David Simons, which identified myofascial trigger points: tiny contractions within muscles. Though small, these contractions can cause pain, along with a laundry list of other, sometimes surprising, symptoms. They can be detected using MRE – Magnetic Resonance Elastography – although this isn’t really necessary – running your fingers over one will tell you exactly where it is! (Because of this work, Dr. Travell became President Kennedy’s personal physician – Kennedy suffered from back pain so severe that he often worked standing up.) Chronic pain is notoriously hard to treat with modern medicine. Compounding the challenge, pain caused by trigger points is often ‘referred’, or felt, elsewhere. And they can cause a surprisingly wide variety of symptoms, including headaches, dizziness, a chronic runny nose, digestive problems, that frustrating itch deep in your ear, prostate or menstrual problems, even an irregular heartbeat (any symptoms involving the heart should, of course, be checked by a licensed medical practitioner). Even fibromyalgia can be treated with trigger point therapy, although the treatment must be very gentle, and requires a skilled practitioner.

The Trigger Point Therapy Workbook provides the information needed so that one can identify, and therefore treat, his or her own trigger points. A distinct advantage of trigger point therapy is that it can easily be learned, and requires little more than one’s hands, a tennis, lacrosse or ‘high bounce’ ball, and maybe a tool like the Body Back Buddy, or similar tools available at nominal expense. It is not an overnight cure – it took most of us some time to develop our trigger points, after all! But applied 2 or 3 times a day, for just a few seconds on each trigger point, trigger point therapy can bring significant relief, in a surprisingly short amount of time. Having identified them, I find that treating the trigger points responsible for causing discomfort a few times a day can really help keep it under control – it’s all about figuring out which triggers are causing the problem, and working with



them gently several times a day.

Even better, learning trigger point therapy encourages awareness of one’s muscles – which means you learn to identify which positions, activities and habits are contributing to your chronic pain. I was surprised to realize, for example, that driving was part of my problem: both shifting gears and holding the steering wheel at the classic “10 and 2” position. (Fortunately, both of those problems have been remedied – I’m now the proud driver of a Kia Soul EV – all electric vehicle, automatic, with tilt steering wheel. But that’s a topic for another time...)

Perhaps the best thing about trigger point therapy, aside from the fact that it relieves pain and other symptoms, is that it works best if used for self-treatment. Unlike muscle spasms, the classic ‘knots’ that can come from injury, overwork or other muscle ‘abuse’ (the book’s term), trigger points aren’t necessarily obvious – unless the person looking for them is the one who feels them. That doesn’t mean you shouldn’t try to help someone else, though – rolling a tennis ball over a friend or partner’s back, for example, can bring significant relief if they have active trigger points there – and most of us do! Another challenge trigger point therapy can help with is tennis elbow – rolling a tennis or other ball around on the points just above the elbows can help a lot. Since trigger points can occur virtually wherever muscles are, there are lots of other things trigger point therapy can help with.

Like most things in life, though, there are a few caveats, and they are important: first, please do some research before attempting to work on your trigger points, and never massage a pulse. For the most part, trigger point therapy is safe. However, caution is necessary on certain parts of the body, as it can be difficult to isolate a trigger point from a nearby artery – and massaging an artery can release plaque, sending it places you really don’t want it to go – like the heart or brain. Too-frequent treatment is also to be avoided. It won’t hurt you, but it can make you pretty sore, and so slow down your progress for a day or two.

If chronic pain affects you or someone you love, trigger point therapy is definitely worth considering – you just might feel a lot better if you stay ‘on point’, too!



Anything you can do

Two Can Do

for you

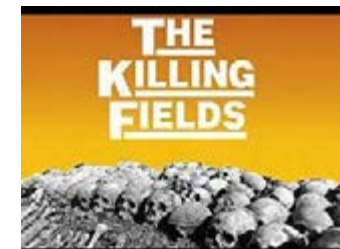
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(209) 524-2314

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April Film Night: The Killing Fields

By DAN ONORATO

On April 15 the Center’s third-Wednesday-of-the-month Film Night will feature the highly acclaimed 1980’s film, *The Killing Fields*. Its context is the genocide 40 years ago of over



2 million Cambodians from 1975 to 1979 (out of a 1975 population of 8 million people), carried out by the Khmer Rouge under its leader Pol Pot. Its dramatic center is the story of *New York Times* reporter Sydney

Schanberg and his Cambodian friend-assistant, Dith Pran, who in real life was a doctor and survivor of the Khmer Rouge’s death camps.

The late *Chicago-Sun Times* film critic Roger Ebert gave it an enthusiastic Thumbs-Up: “The film is a masterful achievement on all the technical levels—it does an especially good job of convincing us with its Asian locations, the exchanges of trust, the waiting around, the sudden fear, the quick bursts of violence, the masterful desperation.”

Stockton has one of the largest concentrations of Cambodian refugees in the country, and Modesto is home to thousands as well. This film will help viewers understand better the background of this group of post-Vietnam War immigrants to our area.

The film starts at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome. Newly elected Chairperson of the Peace/Life Center Board, Leng Power, an active member of the local Cambodian Community, will provide some brief background to the genocide before the film, and will lead the discussion following it. The Modesto Peace/ Life Center is located at 720 13th St., Modesto.

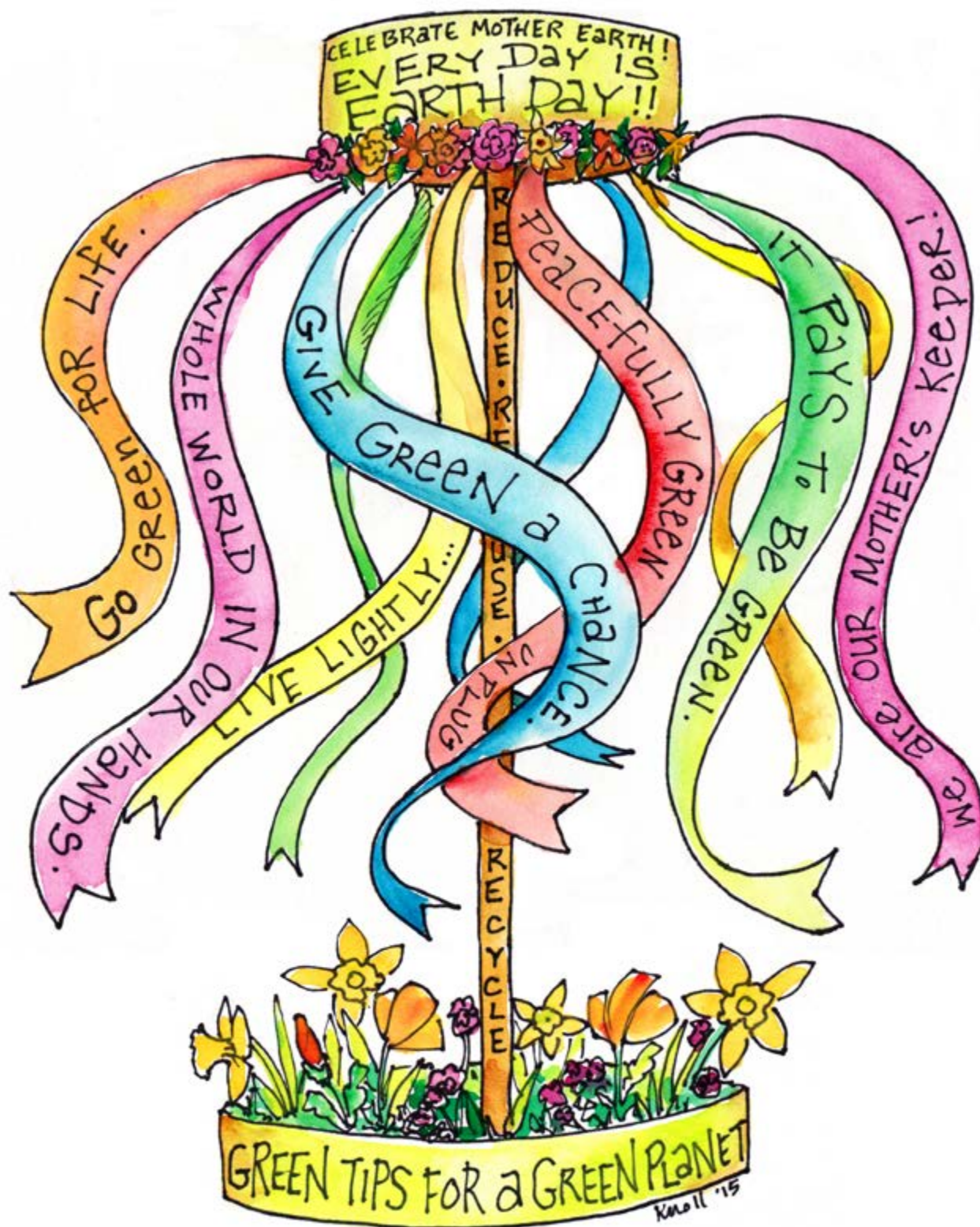
View a trailer of the film at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Z1sj7gzcK

Be informed!

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

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Stanislaus Audubon to show local documentary at State Theater on April 12

The Stanislaus Audubon Society (SAS) has produced and will show a one-hour movie depicting local birds and wildlife at the State Theatre on **Sunday April 12 at 3:00 p.m.**

Filmed all in Stanislaus and Merced counties, David Froba's "Wings Over Our Two Counties" follows the seasons through the calendar and leads you on a treasure hunt of nature through Del Puerto Canyon, Modesto's Thousand Oaks Park, the National Wildlife Refuges near Vernalis and Merced, and the foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

There are stunning close-ups and engaging action. Bald Eagles at Woodward Reservoir dive bomb ducks. An Anna's Hummingbird aggressively feeds its young in a tiny nest in a Modesto backyard. A flock of hundreds of White Pelicans with their nine-foot wingspans soar over the San Joaquin River NWR on Beckwith Road. Several species do mating dances and a number lustily sing for the camera, while grey foxes and coyotes lurk in the understory.

You will be so entertained that you will not realize that you have in the process also learned the basic skills of birding. You will never walk your neighborhood or drive your roads the same way again.

This film will be a double feature with another one-hour documentary, "Birders: The Central Park Effect".

More about the films at Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/457>

Visit the SAS at <https://sites.google.com/site/stanislaus-audubonsociety/>

Visit Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/stanislaus.audubon>



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Julian Bond's MLK Commemoration Speech

(WITH PERMISSION FROM MR. BOND, WHAT FOLLOWS IS AN EXCERPTED VERSION OF HIS KEYOTE ADDRESS AT THE RECENT MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ANNUAL COMMEMORATION GIVEN AT MODESTO JUNIOR COLLEGE ON FEBRUARY 7, 2015. FOOTNOTE REFERENCES HAVE BEEN DELETED.)

The racial picture in America has improved remarkably in my lifetime, so much so that a black man is in the White House and a statue of Martin Luther King is on the Washington Mall.

But Barack Obama's election and re-election was testament to one man's singular abilities and not to racial nirvana across the land.

His victory did not herald a post-civil rights America or mean that race had been vanquished. It could not eliminate structural inequity or racist attitudes. . . .

America is race – from its symbolism to its substance, from its founding by slaveholders to its rending by the Civil War, from Johnnie Reb to Jim Crow, from the Ku Klux Klan to Katrina, from Emmett Till to Trayvon Martin to Michael Brown. . . .

We look back on the years between the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 and the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 with some pride.

Those were the days when politicians from both parties supported the struggle for civil rights. Now they struggle to be civil. . . .

Those were the days when we had a war on poverty, not a war on the poor.

Those were the days when voters chose their politicians, unlike today when self-serving gerrymandering and political manipulation allow politicians to choose their voters. . . .

But those were not "the good old days."

In those days, "[t]he law, the courts, the schools, and almost every institution ... favored whites. This was white supremacy."

When the Supreme Court announced in May 1955, in the second Brown decision, that the white South could make haste slowly in dismantling segregated schools, I was a year older than Emmett Till.

. . . Emmett Till's death terrified me. But in the fall of 1957 a group of black teenagers encouraged me to put that fear aside. These young people – the nine young women and men who integrated Little Rock's Central High School – set a high standard of grace and courage under fire as they dared the mobs who surrounded their school. . . .

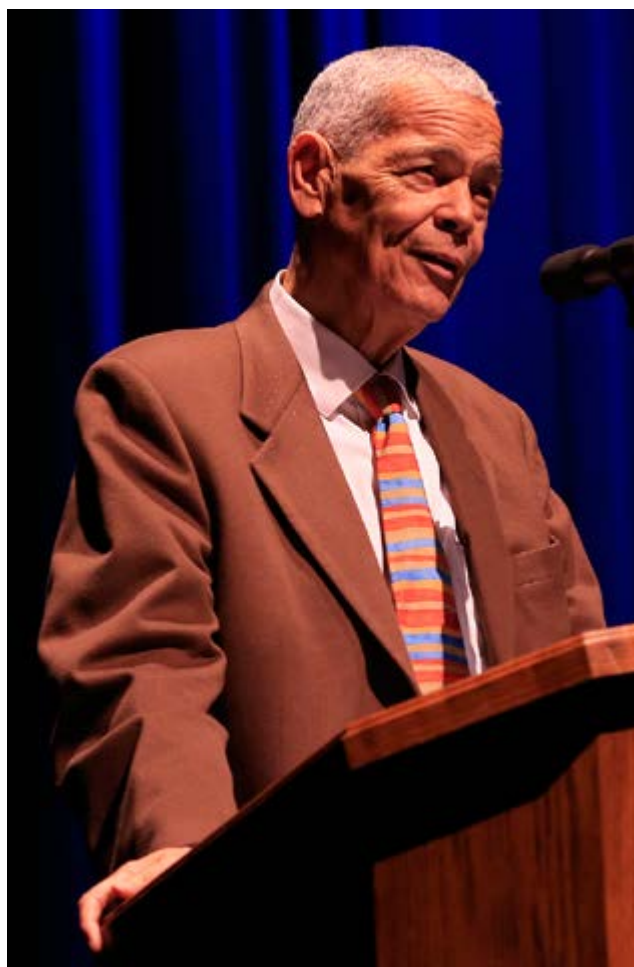
My first arrest was in Atlanta when I was twenty years old.

It was March 1960, during the Jim Crow era. I had led a group of my fellow students to the segregated cafeteria in the basement of Atlanta's City Hall. . . .

Martin Luther King was the most famous and best known of all the modern movement's personalities, but this was a people's movement.

Most of those who made the movement were not famous – they were the faceless. They weren't the noted – they were the nameless, the marchers with tired feet, the protestors beaten back by fire hoses and billy clubs, the unknown women and men who risked job and home and life.

Two years ago we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington. Last year was the 50th anniversary of



America is race – from its symbolism to its substance, from its founding by slaveholders to its rending by the Civil War, from Johnnie Reb to Jim Crow, from the Ku Klux Klan to Katrina, from Emmett Till to Trayvon Martin to Michael Brown. . . .

the 1964 Civil Rights Act. And this year we mark the 50th anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. As we celebrate these milestones, we celebrate the ordinary women and men who made the movement mighty. . . .

Now it falls to all of us to continue the fight.

Looking back at that movement from today, we now see a very different view of the events and personalities of the period. . . .

Instead of famous orations made to multitudes, we now also see the planning and work that preceded the triumphant speech.

Instead of a series of well-publicized marches and protests, we now also see long organizing campaigns and brave and lonely soldiers often working in near solitude.

Instead of prayerful petitions for government's deliverance, we now see aggressive demands and the ethic of self-reliance and self-help.

We now realize our view of the movement's goals was narrow too. Seeking more than the removal of racial segregation, the movement did not want to be integrated into a burning house; rather, it wanted to build a better house for everyone. It marched on Washington for freedom and jobs, not for abstract freedom alone. . . .

Each of the three great civil rights milestones of the 1960s was followed by tragedy. . . . This exemplifies the freedom struggle in America – triumph followed by tragedy, victory by defeat, hope by despair, two steps forward, one step back.

We are such a young nation so recently removed from slavery that only my father's generation stands between Julian Bond and human bondage. Like many others, I am the grandson of a slave. . . .

While we struggle toward [what my grandfather called] "greater efforts and grander victories," we are still being tested by "hardships and adversity."

The rich have been sitting at the banquet table, and the rest of us have been on the menu.

Plutarch warned, "An imbalance between rich and poor is the oldest and most fatal ailments of all republics."

More recently, another great man counseled:

"...In this system, which tends to devour everything which stands in the way of increased profits, whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenseless before the interests of a deified market, which becomes the only rule."

That was Pope Francis, speaking in late 2013.

People of color, of course, are more likely to be poor than rich, and they are worse off than their white counterparts. They too are "fragile" in the face of "a deified market."

The median wealth of white households is 20 times greater than that of black households and 18 times greater than that of Hispanic households, the largest ratios since the data were first collected a quarter century ago.

Almost every social indicator, from birth to death, reflects black-white disparities. Infant mortality rates are 134 percent higher for blacks; chances of imprisonment are 570 percent higher; rate of death from homicide 493 percent higher; lack of health insurance 33 percent more likely; the proportion with a college degree 53 percent lower. And the average white American will live almost 4 years longer than the average black American. . . .

American slavery was a human horror of staggering dimensions, a true crime against humanity. The profits it produced endowed great fortunes and enriched generations, and its dreadful legacy embraces all of us today.

Two hundred and forty-six years of slavery were followed by 100 years of state-sanctioned discrimination, reinforced by public and private terror, ending only after a protracted struggle in 1965, two years after Barack Obama was born.

If you are 50 years old or older, it is only in your lifetime that racial equality before the law became a reality, not before.

For only roughly 50 years have all black Americans been granted the full rights of citizens, only 50 years since legal segregation was ended nationwide, only 50 years since the right to register and vote was universally guaranteed, only 50

continued next page

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years since the protections of the law and Constitution were officially extended to all.

We are now asked to believe that 200 years of being someone's property, followed by 100 years of legal oppression in the South and discrimination in the North can be wiped away by five decades of half-hearted remediation and one black president.

We are now asked to believe that despite more than three centuries of horror, no permanent damage was done to the oppressors or the oppressed. We are asked to believe that we Americans are now a healed and whole people.

As one historian observed, "The greatest impediment to achieving racial equality is the narcotic belief that we already have."

The truth is that Jim Crow may be dead, but racism is alive and well. That is the central fact of life for every non-white American, including the President of the United States. It eclipses income, position, and education. Race trumps them all. . . .

So we have work to do – none of it is easy, but we have never wished our way to freedom. Instead, we have always worked our way.

If our progress remains incomplete, and if too many of us



Our task is to continue to litigate, to organize, to mobilize, to form coalitions of the caring and concerned, joining ranks against the comfortable, the callous and the cold-hearted.

have left the back of the bus for the front of the unemployment line, let us take heart. Today, we have much more to work with and we take strength that so much has changed. The changes that have come have everything to do with the work of the modern movement for civil rights.

If there is much more to be done, we now have much more to do it with, much more than those pioneers who brought us this far.

We have more than a century's history of aggressive self-help and voluntarism, in church and civic club and neighborhood association, providing scholarships, helping the needy, and financing the cause of social justice. . . .

We must not forget that Martin Luther King stood before and with thousands, the people who made the mighty movement what it was. We need a constantly growing and always reviving activist movement across America if we are going to maintain and expand victories and our vision for the country.

Our task is to continue to litigate, to organize, to mobilize, to form coalitions of the caring and concerned, joining ranks against the comfortable, the callous and the cold-hearted.

We marched and picketed and protested against state sanctioned segregation, and brought that system crashing to

its knees. Today's times require no less, and in fact, insist on more.

We must fight discrimination wherever it raises its ugly head - in the halls of government, in corporate suites or in the streets.

We must demand that "criminal justice" cease being an oxymoron. We know that race, more than any other factor, determines who is shot in the street by police, who is arrested, who is charged with what crime, who receives what length of punishment, and who receives the maximum sentence.

And we know our policemen, whom we revere and respect, are not immune from criticism.

We must realize our full political potential, making sure every citizen registers and votes. Anyone who does not vote is failing the rest of us. . . .

In his "Letter from the Birmingham Jail," King wrote:

"We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people."

So too, he would say to us: Good people, don't be silent! Speak. Don't sit idly by. Act.

Racial justice, economic equality, and world peace – those were the themes that occupied Martin King's life. They ought to occupy ours today.

We have a long and honorable tradition of social justice in this country. It still sends forth the message that when we act together we can overcome.

(The full speech, copyright 2015 by Julian Bond, is entitled "From Civil War to Civil Rights." Julian Bond was Chairman of the NAACP Board of Directors from February 1998 until February 2010 and is now Chairman Emeritus. He is a Distinguished Scholar in the School of Government at American University in Washington, DC, and a Professor Emeritus in History at the University of Virginia.)

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John McCutcheon back to perform “Joe Hill’s Last Will” June 11

By KEN SCHROEDER

John McCutcheon returns to Modesto to perform “Joe Hill’s Last Will,” an inspiring one-man play about the famed labor activist’s life and death. Join us on Thursday, June 11 at 7PM at the Prospect Theater Project, 1214 K St., Modesto.

The scene is a cell in the Utah State Prison at 4:00 a.m., one hundred years ago. Joe Hill, American Labor’s most iconic songwriter is awaiting execution at dawn and he’s got a story to tell. It’s the story of his life. But it’s also the story of the growth of the Labor Movement in early 20th century America. It’s a story of humor and love and injustice and courage. It’s the story of America.

Joe Hill was a Swedish immigrant to the United States who, like so many others, worked at a variety of trades, trying to make his way in his new country. But like no other, he was a musician, a writer, a man of wit and insight, who knew how to craft songs that informed, inspired, and inflamed. He created a template for songwriting that was used by Woody Guthrie and by the Civil Rights Movement: taking well-known melodies and crafting new words that made the songs leap to life in a new and changing world.

Songwriter and labor historian, Si Kahn, created the play based largely on Hill’s own words and using all of Hill’s music. Never before has Joe Hill’s entire catalog been presented at once. And in the hands of multi-Grammy nominee and folk music legend, John McCutcheon, rarely have they had such expert treatment. McCutcheon’s tour-de-force acting, his rich voice, and stellar instrumental skills present Joe Hill and his music as never before. The story takes the issues of labor, immigration, workers’ rights, the death penalty, and war from the annals of 1915 to the headlines of 2015. It’s a



story that America has been wrestling with for 100 years now.

The production is spare and flexible. The scene is a simple jail cell, with a bed, a chair, and a window. From there, with a compelling script, a handful of great songs, and a guitar, Joe Hill’s Last Will takes the audience on a wild, inspiring ride through a world of change.

Tickets are \$23 and will go on sale on April 28. The show is for one night only in a small venue, so a sell-out is expected. Get your tickets early. Check

the Modesto Peace/Life Center Facebook page or website (www.peacelifecenter.org) for details on how to purchase tickets. We are working to set up an online purchase option.

Sponsorships are available and come with tickets and recognition in the program and on a poster at the event. The levels of sponsorship are: Activist- \$100 (2 tickets); Organizer- \$250 (2 tickets); Sisterhood and Brotherhood- \$500 (4 tickets); Solidarity- \$1000 (4 tickets). For information on sponsorships, contact Michael Jurkovic, 209-614-1573 or nikitabroz@gmail.com. You can dedicate your sponsorship to another. The Modesto Peace/Life Center is 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

“Hill was a prolific songwriter before his execution in Utah in 1915 and McCutcheon does them all ... one song after another seemed to ring home today as we battle for workers rights again.” -Larry Cohen, President, Communications Workers of America

“Joe Hill’s Last Will- A must see! The words and music of iconic labor activist Joe Hill come to life...John McCutcheon’s performance as Hill is absolutely riveting.” -KALW, San Francisco

Reflections on Israel/ Palestine May 26 in Modesto

“Narratives in search of an ending: Reflections on six weeks in Israel/Palestine” will be presented by Tom Hampson on Tuesday, May 26 at 7 PM at College Avenue Congregational Church, 1341 College Ave., Modesto.

Tom spent six weeks studying at the Tantur Ecumenical Study Center in Jerusalem last year. He worked on the national staff of Church World Service, an international humanitarian agency, for over 30 years. He is the co-author of two books: *Make a World of Difference: Creative Activities for Global Learning* and *Tales of the Heart: Affective Approaches to Global Education*.

College Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ and the Modesto Peace/Life Center are the sponsors of the event. Both organizations advocate for an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory.

Admission is free.

Division I Peace Essay Winner

that either side has been fighting for, could help to prevent further conflict and bloodshed. Differences between peoples are unavoidable. However, acceptance of those same differences can make peace attainable for all humankind. Neistein and Ghumrawi have led a movement that has given voice to those who have long desired peace and they have illustrated that all that is required is for people to treat each other with acceptance and respect, a concept that can be used on both a small and large scale, and in one’s own personal life.

In my own life, as a student and an American citizen, I have never experienced such a large scale call for peace. However, as most people do, I have encountered situations where conflict ruled. Moreover, I will continue to witness circumstances where injustice, anger, and discord affect the minds and actions of those around me. Though these things are inevitable, they can also be changed. By keeping in mind that all humans are deserving of respect, and by living as an example, peace may be put into effect. Man does not have to be a wolf to man. Man can simply be a friend.

As members of the human race, we have more similarities than differences. In the quest for peace, it is required that we see this truth and grab hold of it. If people continue to follow

John McCutcheon releases new album, *Joe Hill’s Last Will*

John McCutcheon’s new album, *Joe Hill’s Last Will*, is now available. His one-man play of the same name will be performed in Modesto on June 11. (See accompanying story)

From John’s newsletter: “It’s always with a little melancholy that I walk out of the studio after the final mix is done. A project like this occupies your life for months on end. You learn the songs, mull over treatments, juggle musicians’ schedules, inevitably find yourself at a dead end of a song only to have to back up and start again with a different approach. And then, after you’ve poured over each tiny bit a hundred times, it’s done. You shoo it out the door and see what it grows up to be. So, yeah, some melancholy. But, with the project, I found myself filled with enthusiasm, as well. The end result is so much more diverse, interesting, and just plain fun than I imagined it would be.

First, there are the songs, a few of which are known to true folk music and labor nerds, but most of which will be revelations. You can’t help but be impressed with both his wit and his linguistic agility, this Swedish immigrant who wrote exclusively in his adopted tongue. But these songs, none of them written earlier than a century ago, find a kind of resonance in today’s world...where presidential candidates equate union members and terrorists...that seems startlingly contemporary.

... this is one of the most fun albums I’ve ever done (and I’ve done a few...) and I’m excited to get it out there and get folks thinking about this songwriter whose voice was never recorded, whose songs, he believed, would die with him, and who is a remarkably influential and obscure musician, hopefully about to get his due, a hundred years after his death.”

The CD will be available at the concert and at John’s website, www.folkmusic.com

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selfish goals and hold on to past grievances, they can never move forward. It is our duty as citizens of Earth to fight for a better world. Holding onto our anger is like carrying a hot stone. The longer we hold it, the more we get burned. As Neistein and Ghumrawi and countless others have illustrated, refusing to be enemies is the first step in experiencing harmony between peoples. The sooner the world realizes this, the sooner anger, vengeance, violence, and hate will cease. As Nelson Mandela said, “If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.”

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MeterMaids celebrate Mother Earth on 25th Anniversary

MeterMaids is a group of women writers who have been meeting since 1990 to express their individual responses to life and the world around them. Meetings are a safe, creative place to bolster and listen to each other for more good reasons or results than can actually be perceived or measured. Each meeting has us coming away richer, believing something important has shifted in the universe. (thoughts shared by Linda Prather)

Climbing the Tree of Life

The naked trees await their spring
The blossoming buds
Protrude like pregnant women
Longing for summer births
Standing on the embedded roots
We begin to climb the sturdy limbs
Like four-legged creatures
The view from the highest branch
Holds our attention
Commanding our compassion
For the growing green
Expanse before us
The flourishing flowers
The evolving leaves
Breathtaking mountain peaks
Consume our lives
Until we overflow
With gratitude
For the capacity
Of our mother
The Earth
To multiply our blessings
By providing
Tiny fingers and toes
That will walk the paths
Of next year's soil
The fruits of bursting buds
Will feed the cells
Of a multitude of life forms
From our caretaker position
We make our choices
Measuring, balancing ourselves
On the scales of evolution

— Carol Miller



31 Spring

Springtime in New York, mere farce
Timely buds sway in distant memory
Warm rays thwarted by gusts of winter peril
Sink down lower into blankets of comfort
Darken eyes, link arms
Cower in shadowy corners
Lusting after summer days
She swells
Bursting forth - May Day

— Haley Greenwald-Gonella

My Stepmother

Oh my stepmother Earth,
it felt so right
when I was a girl,
having good times in the garden of Eden
where I derived such pleasure
hurting you
tearing off yellow daisies
from your summer dress.
In my twenties,
falling in love with gardening,
I used your flesh to grow peaches
poisoning you with pesticides.
I made you cry with acid rains.
In my forties,
I inserted my parents' coffins
in your aching belly,
but you never talked back,
never complained —
you ignored me then.
Now you tell me
that I behave exactly like my father
who deserted you
and moved in with that barren Venus.

It is difficult to forgive my birth father
for his cruelty —
it is impossible to forgive you,
my stepmother Earth,
for your permissiveness.

— Elena Kanevsky

Dry Creek September 12, 2014

What will I write that needs to be written
concerning this place and time?

It's September and lingering summer along these parts.
Dry, dusty, and hot tonight,
sun down at 7:30, yet, still light out.

What is there to say that hasn't been sufficiently said by me
or someone else about the days of Dry Creek? Plenty.

A little excitement about a mountain lion around here this week...
man claims a sighting, a suspicious paw print,
or phantom at the foot of an oak —
a big cat after ground squirrels?

More likely was the report:
horse taken down on the west side, out in Hilmar.

Some folks talk about displacement of the animals —
foxes, cats, coyotes, birds in the wrong habitat.
Weren't they here first?
Are we the ones who have lost our way, our intentions,
original and ordained?

All creation groans, the book says,
as we wait for the redemption of all things.
And maybe the lion looks forward to the day
he can rest from the hunt, lie down with the lamb.

— Linda Marie Prather

OUR EARTH

Verdant.
fruitful,
temperamental,
exquisite,
mercurial,
brooding,
gleeful,
capricious,
forgiving,
nurturing,

Mother Earth!
Of course she is a woman!

— Lynne Sutton

What Unkind Skies

What a morning, what a bright white day!
Clouds glow overhead and shimmer
flat bottomed over this dry land
but the parched yellow soil receives
no moist drop, no early mist or evening fog
too far from sea to taste that salty breeze,
nearby lakes so shrunken, fish must die,
foxes seek in vain for their wild prey
all missing as the grape vines wither
and corn stalks grow but half-size--
what unkind skies to tease us
with that silvery dawn that draws
us to windows in hope
that bright white-dust air of morning
might turn to long-lost rain by evening.

— Cleo Griffith

Ancient music and A Creative Exploration concert and workshop

By BONNIE MUNSON

Ancient sounds and vibrations will be featured in an upcoming concert on **Friday, April 10**. Rene' Jenkins will play a variety of ancestral wind instruments in collaboration with three other accomplished musicians (Ian Dogole, Deborah Titus and Tom Finch) to create an evening of uplifting music full of tribal rhythms and a sense of sacred community spirit. Selections from his newest CD "Weya" will be played, as well as some grooves unique to this particular evening.

The event will be held at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto at 7:30 p.m. Admission will be \$25 at the door, or advance \$20 tickets are available through Brown Paper tickets on-line at www.brownpapertickets.com/event/1332207. While on-line, check out www.vibetherapy.org to learn more about the interesting ways Rene' uses these ancient instruments to bring health and positive change to his listeners.

On **Saturday, April 11**, there will be A Creative Exploration workshop at the same location from 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., which will include journaling, painting, examining vibrational and energetic shifts through sound, and creating a personalized, artistic "home" for your intentions and memories. The instruments Rene' has collected will be displayed, discussed and demonstrated.

There is a \$10/discretionary donation fee for materials at the workshop. Advance registration is advised. At 7:00 p.m., Rene' will be back with the vocalist and intuitive from his ensemble, Deborah Titus to perform a Healing Ceremony for a select group of individuals. Cost for this in-depth personalized experience will be \$100. Send inquiries and confirmations about both Saturday events to: sacredsoundsevent@gmail.org.

More information: (209) 505-4355. For an interview or more background information from Rene Jenkins, call him: (707)696-8777

Modesto Garden Club Spring Tour, April 18

Celebrate Earth Day with the Modesto Garden Club's April 18 Spring Garden Tour. The tour includes six gardens in Riverbank's River Heights, the historic Bald Eagle Ranch gardens in rural northeast Modesto, and the demonstration gardens at the garden club office. All gardens will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Gardens may be visited in any order. Maps and helpful garden tour tips are included when you buy tickets. Tickets are \$20 general and \$10 for children under 10 (no strollers). Visit www.modestogardenclub.org for online ticket purchases and retail ticket locations.

Contact: Maree Hawkins, 209-529-1517 or maree-hawkins@comcast.net

Kathy Kelly to Speak on Drone Warfare at Delta College

When: Thursday, May 7, 2015

Where: San Joaquin Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton, Holt Center Room 133, 12:30-1:30 p.m.*

Kathy Kelly, recently got out of prison and is coming to Stockton to speak about drone warfare. Kathy is a peace activist, pacifist and author, who speaks widely throughout the U.S. She was one of the founding members of Voices in the Wilderness, and is currently a co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence.

As part of peace team work in several countries, she has traveled to Iraq twenty-six times, notably remaining in combat zones during the early days of both US-Iraq wars. Her recent travel has focused on Afghanistan and Gaza, along with domestic protests against U.S. drone policy. She has been arrested more than sixty times at home and abroad, and written of her experiences among targets of U.S. military bombardment and inmates of U.S. prisons.

Learn more about Kathy Kelly at <http://vcnv.org/kathy-kelly-long-version>

*Parking at the college is by permit costing \$2.00/day. Find the campus map at <http://www.deltacollege.edu/info/general/map/campusmaps.html>



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

STANISLAUS Artist Open Studio

Tour the Studios of 65 Stanislaus County Artists
April 25 / 26
11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Preview Shows:
Sat. April 11, noon-3
Nasco, 4825 Stoddard Rd.

Fri. & Sat. April 17-18, 5-9 p.m.
Gallo Center, Downtown Modesto

Tour maps on sale at
Modesto Convention and Visitors Bureau,
Chartreuse Muse Gallery, Mistlin Gallery,
Oakdale Chamber of Commerce, Carnegie Art
Center Turlock or from participating artists.
\$10 adults, under 18 free

Look for information at
<http://stanislausaos.wordpress.com>
or Stanislaus County Artists
Open Studio Tour on Facebook.
Email: openstudio.stanislaus@gmail.com
Phone: 209-222-TOUR

Enter to WIN a \$200
gift certificate good for
purchase of original art
from participating artists.

Peace Camp

from page 2

will lead a nature hike. Reo is a nature enthusiast from Fresno who works as an Infection Control Consultant. He has a B.S. in Biology, collects and studies insects and is currently writing screenplays on speculation for movie studios. Tim Smart returns to guide us through the night sky on a star walk. Tim has been a professional naturalist and astronomy instructor. He is currently a public school teacher in Modesto.

At the 6,200-foot elevation in the Stanislaus National Forest near the Clark Fork of the Stanislaus River, Camp Peaceful Pines is a beautiful setting for Peace Camp. Camp Peaceful Pines features kitchen and bathroom facilities, rustic cabins and platform tents and a cabin for those with special needs. Depending on the number of campers, cabins may be shared. Campers share in meal preparation, cleanup, and other work. Families and individuals are welcome.

The camp fee covers program, food and lodging for the weekend. Adults are \$75 before May 1, \$80 before June 8 and \$85 after June 8. Young people 18 and under are \$55 before May 1, \$60 before June 8 and \$65 after June 8. Ages 3 and under free. Minors under 18 need to be accompanied by an adult. Partial scholarships and day rates are also available. Donations for scholarships are appreciated. Campers may arrive after 2:00pm on Friday. The camp opens with supper at 6:00pm on Friday and closes after the morning workshop on Sunday. Directions and other information will be provided to participants before camp.

Information: Ken Schroeder, 209-480-4576, kschroeder70@yahoo.com. Download the registration form at <http://stanislausconnections.org/PCamp%202015%20reg%20form%20pdf.pdf>

15 good reasons to participate in Peace Camp

- People who share your values for justice and peace
- The beauty of the Sierra Nevada
- Fun, fun, fun
- Singing around the campfire
- S'mores made with organic fair trade chocolate
- Practice in being the change we wish to see in the world
- Friendly old folks and young folks and in between folks
- Sunrise Rock
- Something new to learn
- The talent (loosely defined) show
- Cool summer air
- The sights, sounds and fragrance of nature
- Renewal
- The creek running through camp
- The amazing stars and darkness

Valley Improvement Projects: An Environmental and Social Justice Organization based in Modesto

By TOM HELME

In 2012, a group of Modesto community organizers came together under the name Valley Improvement Projects (VIP) and developed the following mission statement: "To improve the quality of life of underrepresented and marginalized residents of California's Central Valley by promoting social and environmental justice issues through youth outreach, education, technology, and art."

In June 2013, the group opened the VIP Community Center for Social and Environmental Justice in downtown Modesto, but unfortunately the center was closed in September of 2014 due to lack of stable funding.

While the center was open, VIP offered physical resources to our local community including donations of clothes, jackets, shoes, and blankets at our monthly Really Free Market. Our center provided access to drinking water, a bathroom, a place to sit with heating and air conditioning, a phone, computers and internet. We strived to bring dignity and compassion to community members who struggle with poverty, homelessness, mental health, and addiction by helping to fix and build bicycles, collaborating with the Modesto Syringe Exchange, and hosting the Mindful Distress peer-led mental health meetings. We also provided educational resources through our monthly Know Your Rights workshops as well as CopWatch trainings on observing, recording, and reporting interactions with police. We acted in solidarity with tenants and assisted them in their struggles with unfair landlords through direct actions and community engagement. As a collaboration of community members we hosted dinners and

film-screenings as well as art nights and exhibitions, hip-hop, concerts, and musical events.

After closing down the Community Center, VIP volunteers have been working to determine the best way forward and to ensure that we stay true to our mission statement. We have tried to focus our work in five main areas:

- 1. Environmental Justice and Public Health:** VIP works to promote the good health of people and the planet by emphasizing natural and sustainable agricultural and business practices by participating in regional and statewide environmental justice movements and coalitions that advocate for clean air, water, and soil as well as more efficient and sustainable community development and transportation methods.
- 2. Youth Outreach and Alternative Education:** Many of our volunteers work with local young people, and other community members, and assist them with productive recreational activities and with socially and culturally relevant and accurate educational workshops and literature.
- 3. Homeless Outreach and Empowerment:** We reach out to community members that are without stable living conditions to help find the resources they need, providing information on local resources for the homeless community, as well as advocating for homeless rights and against anti-homeless ordinances and laws that criminalize instead of humanize.
- 4. Tenant/Worker Rights and Solidarity:** VIP assists local residents being harassed or treated unfairly by their landlords or employers and works toward building solidarity amongst them in order to take the actions needed to receive fair treatment, compensation, and justice.
- 5. Law Enforcement/Prison/Immigration Accountability:** VIP works to ensure police, immigration, prison, and jail officials and institutions are held accountable for their actions in cases of abuse and participate in events, demonstrations, and meetings with state-wide and regional coalitions against police/prison/immigration abuse and for accountability.

At our first meeting of 2015, fifteen local citizens got together at a local bowling alley to discuss the projects that VIP will be involved with for the next few years. The meeting consisted of founding members of VIP as well as a host of new members joining for the first time. The diversity of voices in that meeting, ranging from students, church leaders, and educators, cultivated a wide range of opportunities for VIP.

The variety of topics and issues included the need for resources and drop-in centers for local youth with mental health issues in Modesto and Turlock. Drawing inspiration from actions in Ferguson, New York, and other places around the country, some volunteers expressed interest in organizing around issues of police brutality, accountability, racial profiling, and incarceration. VIP is continuing to work with the California Environmental Justice Coalition (CEJC)

to reform California's Department of Toxic Substances Control (which is overseeing the contaminated barium site in Modesto and the lawsuit against Gallo Glass) and our work with the California Cleaner Freight Coalition (CCFC) and the California Air Resources Board to help our state's process of transporting goods become a zero-emissions system. We will also continue working with statewide coalitions and dozens of environmental justice groups like the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition (CVAQ) and the Central California Environmental Justice Network (CCEJN) to educate and put pressure on local agencies such as the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District that was set-up to improve the area's poor air-quality problem. Locally, we have advocated to the Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG) for less sprawl and for more resources for low-income communities impacted by poor environmental practices.

VIP is supporting Californians Against Fracking (CAF) and other organizations fighting to move dependence away from fossil fuels and to get the state out from under the influence of big oil companies. Recently, VIP brought some of our volunteers and other local residents to represent the Central Valley at the March for Real Climate Leadership, the largest ever anti-fracking demonstration in the country. Over 8,000 people marched in both rain and sunshine in Oakland on February 7th to demand that Jerry Brown institute a statewide ban on fracking.

We have been meeting and corresponding with city officials on possible ways to improve the city's annual Earth Day Festival, which VIP members have long criticized for its lack of integrity and its inconsistency with a just climate and environment. One of the main critiques we have presented is that two of the event's main sponsors are Boyett Petroleum, an oil company, and Covanta, a trash incinerator that pollutes the air in west Stanislaus County.

VIP is looking to reach out to any local organizations, groups, or individuals that share these common interests and goals. If you are interested in getting involved with VIP, please contact us through any of the ways listed below.

Valley Improvement Projects: "Working *with* the Community to *Improve* the Community"

Contact us at our new address, by phone, or on the web:

Valley Improvement Projects (V.I.P.), P.O. Box 4214, Modesto, CA 95352. (209) 589-9277.

www.valleyimprovementprojects.org ; valleyimprovementprojects@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/valleyimprovementprojects

Check out our interview with the *Modesto Bee*: <http://www.modbee.com/news/local/article3167135.html>

Stanislaus CONNECTIONS, published by the non-profit Modesto Peace/Life Center, has promoted non-violent social change since 1971. Opinions expressed DO NOT necessarily reflect those of the Center or Editorial Committee. We welcome pertinent, signed articles, 800-1000 words or less, and letters with address, phone number. DEADLINE: 10th of the Month PRECEDING the next issue. Send articles and ads to Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org. Submit PHOTOS as high-resolution JPEGs; ADS as PDF files.

EDITOR: Jim Costello

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: Jim Costello, Luella Cole, Tina Driskill

LAYOUT EDITOR: Linda Knoll

ADVERTISING: (vacant)

ONLINE EDITION: Jim Costello

COLLATING & DISTRIBUTION: Shelly Scribner, many appreciated volunteers

ADS must be consistent with Peace/Life Center tenets. No ads for candidates for public office or for liquor. Advertisers do not necessarily support Peace/Life Center views nor does the Center endorse advertised products or services. To ADVERTISE, email Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org



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

APRIL

MJC Science Colloquium. Free and open to the public, Wednesdays 3 to 4 p.m., Rm. 15, Science Community Center MJC West Campus, 2201 Blue Gum Ave. Info: Richard Anderson, (209) 529-5182, email.andersonr@mjc.edu, www.mjc.edu/instruction/sme/colloquium.php. **April 1: David Seaborg**, World Rainforest Fund, "Rainforests and Ecosystem Survival." **April 8: Ron Durbin**, UC Merced, "New Research and Developments in Solar Technologies." **April 15: Aaron Yakligian**, Mid-State Solar, "The Local Solar System; How it Works."

12 SUN: Stanislaus Audubon Society's production of David Froba's film "*Wings Over Our Two Counties*." State Theatre, 3 PM. See article, this issue. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/457>

15 WED: Film Night at the Center presents *The Killing Fields*. Discussion after. 6:30 pm, Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., Modesto. 6:30 pm. See article, this issue.

16 THURS: The State Theatre presents Matt Shepard is a Friend of Mine. In 1998, Matthew Shepard was brutally beaten, tied to a fence and left to die because he was gay. Years later, Michele Josue, a close friend of Matt's, revisits the shocking case with never-before-seen photos, rare video footage, as Matt's all-too-brief life is remembered through the vivid testimonies of those whose lives he touched. 7 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/491>

18 SAT: Modesto's Earth Day in the Park. Learn about the environment and ways they can contribute to its betterment in a family friendly atmosphere. 10 am – 5 pm, Graceada Park, Modesto.

18 SAT: Modesto Garden Club's Spring Garden Tour. Tickets: \$20 general, \$10 for children under 10 (no strollers). Visit www.modestogardenclub.org for online ticket purchases and retail ticket locations.

19 SUN: The Modesto Film Society presents *The Way We Were*. State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/337>

22 WED: Earth Day at MJC, 10 am – 3 pm, West Campus.

23 THURS: The Delta Kappa Gamma Society, Epsilon Nu hosts yearly "Fun" Raiser at the State Theatre at 5:30 p.m. Food, wine, drawings. The classic movie *High Society* starts at 7:00. \$25 Donation tickets available from the State Theatre, at the door, or by calling (209) 545-0883. Benefits Education Foundation of Stanislaus County, Children's Books at the Library, CSUS and MJC Scholarships. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/463>

25/26 SAT/SUN: 5th Annual Stanislaus Artist Open Studio Tour. A driving tour of 42 studios throughout the county. Visit <http://www.stanislausaos.wordpress.com> for more information, or call 222-TOUR.

26 SUN: MFS Cinema Club present, *The Shawshank Redemption*. State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/358>

MAY

2 SAT: Friends of the Modesto Library's Annual Used Book Sale. Hardbound books \$1; paperback 50 cents. 8 am-3 pm. Thousands of books: children's, fiction, mystery, bio/memoir, more. West portico of the Modesto Library, 1500 I St. Donations of books accepted until mid-April. Contact Clare Noonan, 522-5054 or clarenoo@gmail.com

7 THURS: Kathy Kelly to Speak on Drone Warfare at Delta College. San Joaquin Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton, Holt Center Room 133, 12:30-1:30 p.m. Permit parking, \$2.00. See article, this issue.

17 SUN: The Modesto Film Society presents Alfred Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt*. State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/338>

24 SUN: The Modesto Film Society presents *Pan's Labyrinth* State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/342>

26 TUES: "Narratives in search of an ending: Reflections on six weeks in Israel/Palestine" by Tom Hampson at College Avenue Congregational Church, 1341 College Ave., Modesto., 7 pm. See article, this issue.

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.

LOOKING AHEAD

June 7: Annual PLC Pancake Breakfast, Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto, 8 am – Noon.

June 11: John McCutcheon performs his one-man play, "*Joe Hill's Last Will*." Benefit for the Peace/Life Center at the Prospect Theater Project. See article, this issue.

June 26-28: 33rd Annual Peace Camp in the Sierras. See info., this issue.

ONGOING

CALCULATORS FOR A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT: valuable website which contains car payment and car use calculators and links to many calculators to help people reduce their energy footprints. <http://www.carpaymentcalculator.net/calcs/environmental.php>

VALLEY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT's mission is to improve the quality of life of under-represented and marginalized residents of California's Central Valley. For ongoing events visit V.I.P. at <http://valleyimprovement-projects.org/about>. Email: valleyimprovementprojects@gmail.com Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ValleyImprovementProjects?ref=br_tf

GREAT VALLEY MUSEUM of Natural History: Classes for children. Museum exhibits and nature store open Tues. to Fri., 9 am to 4:30 pm. Info: 575-6196. Call for info about classes.

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA ART ASSOCIATION AND MISTLIN GALLERY. Exhibits by local artists; art classes for children and adults. 1015 J St., in Tenth St. Place. Open 11 to 5, Mon. through Fri., Sat. 12-4. Information 529-3369 or <http://www.ccartassn.org>

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

CENTRAL VALLEY DEMOCRATIC CLUB.

Monthly meetings: Modesto, Patterson, and Oakdale. For more information, call Neil Hudson at 847-0540.

CHILDRENS STORY HOURS Stanislaus County Library: Modesto, WiggleWorms! Program for children age 2 and younger and their caregivers; combines age appropriate stories and movement activities that promote essential pre-reading skills. Mondays: 10:15 am & 11:15 am, Tuesdays, 11:15 am. Preschool StoryTime (children ages 3 - 6 years) Tuesdays: 6:15 pm; Wednesdays: 10:15 am. Cuentos en espanol-jueves, 6:15. Bilingual StoryTime/Cuentos bilingües – Saturdays 10:15 am. All Library branches have story hours. All branches closed Fridays. Info: http://www.stanislauslibrary.org/tk_kids_storytime.shtml#mod

Habitat for Humanity's RE-STORE: used and new quality materials, 630 Kearney Ave (across from Post Office), and at 3124 McHenry Ave., Modesto. Funds benefit homes built by Habitat in Stanislaus County. Visit <http://www.stanislaushabitat.org/home/restore>

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

For complete calendar information and regularly scheduled activities, visit <http://www.stanislausconnections.org/calendar.htm>

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