



stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

A MODESTO
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CENTER
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132: How Not to Build a Freeway

By **BRUCE FROHMAN**, The Valley Citizen

In the mid-1990's, I served on the Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee for the Stanislaus Area Association of Governments, currently called the Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG). After each meeting, I would corner Dana Cowell, the Caltrans representative appointed to attend our monthly meetings. I always had questions for Mr. Cowell. Very knowledgeable, he patiently answered each one.

After one meeting, we discussed Route 132, west of Modesto. I asked Mr. Cowell why a freeway had not been built. I said that I did not want to see a freeway built through the beautiful wildlife refuge at the San Joaquin River but that many people did. He replied that the traffic count could not justify construction as volume would need to at least double before a freeway should be built.

I told Mr. Cowell of an idea I had to reduce traffic volume: Change the signage on Freeways 99 and 580. He liked the idea and had it done. The sign on northbound freeway 99 was changed from, "132 San Francisco Downtown Modesto," to "132 Vernalis Downtown Modesto" and a second sign was added reading "San Francisco Use Route 120." On freeway 580 at the 205 junction, the sign was changed from "Modesto Use 132" to "Modesto Use I-205." This reduced traffic by encouraging motorists to use I-205 and Route 120.

The signage change also increased the volume of traffic on I-205, enabling the widening of that freeway to three lanes in each direction.

From the Mid 1990's to 2010, the volume of traffic on Route 132 remained fairly constant, with year-to-year changes varying with the economic conditions. For example, in 2008, when the recession hit, traffic volume

plummeted. (Note: Data on traffic counts is available from Caltrans.)

Around 2012, local developers initiated a joint effort with the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors to convince Caltrans to build the 132 Freeway from Modesto to Interstate 5. I made the case that the roadway still did not have enough volume to justify construc-

tion. Because my statement was true, the best Caltrans could offer was construction of a freeway in four phases. The state was not willing to build the entire freeway because the cost could not justify the benefit.

The first phase would start in Modesto as a two-lane expressway and connect with Maze Boulevard somewhere west of Modesto.

Traffic would be encouraged to use Route 132 to San Francisco rather than Route 120 so that traffic volume would increase. To make it easier to obtain funding for a second phase, the road would be built so that congestion would be created at Franklin and Needham

continued page 10

John McCutcheon returns to Modesto Jan. 9

By **KEN SCHROEDER**

Six-time Grammy nominated folk musician John McCutcheon performs in his 16th benefit concert for the Modesto Peace/Life Center on Tuesday, Jan. 9 at 7pm at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave. Johnny Cash called him "the most impressive instrumentalist I've ever heard." John plays the guitar, banjo, hammer dulcimer, piano, autoharp and fiddle. His socially and politically conscious songs inspire us, his songs about family and everyday life move us and his wicked sense of humor entertains us. Beyond entertainment, his concerts bring us together in a sense of community and shared values.

John's latest (and 39th!) album, *Ghost Light*, was just released. John says, "This was an unplanned, unexpected, but quite wonderful project to undertake. I sat down this past Memorial Day weekend and a single line came tapping: "Billy didn't come home last night..." I wondered, "Who is Billy, where is home, where is he?" And it was off to the races. When I'm in that kind of writing mode, the senses are heightened, everything

is game...The songs simply poured out... The studio fun is over and it's time to send these songs toddling out into the world on their little coltish legs. I hope you enjoy them and that they do their job. It's the most I can

hope for." John also shares, "My trusty tour manager, Tommy Slothower, underwent heart surgery in July, putting him out of commission until (October). He's been my traveling companion for nearly 30 years and my dear friend for far longer. Many of you know him as well as you know me from our years of touring together... He's gradually making his way back and is his usual agreeable and genial self. His crappy jokes are even coming back. Give him a greeting when next you see him."

Tickets are \$23 in advance, \$26 at the door and youth 18 and under are \$10. Online tickets sales are at <http://mccutcheonmodesto2018.eventbrite.com>. Tickets can be purchased in person by check or cash at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., 523-1438 (church office closed 12/25-1/1) or at Beads of Contentment, 1028 J St., Modesto, 523-6335 (until 12/21).

Information: Ken Schroeder 209-480-4576. John's website is www.folkmusic.com

You can sponsor the John McCutcheon concert

Please consider becoming a sponsor of the concert. You will receive tickets to the concert, your name in the program, and reserved seating. Five levels of sponsorship are available:

Autoharp — \$40 *One* ticket



Guitar — \$75 *Two* tickets

Banjo — \$150 *Four* tickets

Piano — \$300 *Eight* tickets

Hammer Dulcimer — \$500 *Sixteen* tickets,

Information on sponsorships: Joseph Homer, 209/681-3596 or Jhomer42@gmail.com.

You can dedicate your sponsorship to another. Specify how you would like the dedication to appear in the program (such as "In Honor of ..." or "To the Memory of ...") The Modesto Peace/Life Center is a tax-exempt organization under the IRS code section 501(c)(3).

INSIDE CONNECTIONS

LOCAL	2
DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS	3
IMPACTS	4
RESILIENCE	5

DISARMAMENT	6
BURNING MAN	7
MALE POWER	8
ACTIVISM	10
LOVING-KINDNESS	11

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Potluck Song Fest Friday, December 8

By DAN ONORATO

You like adventure in your food? A mix in your music? Good people with lively conversation? Doing a kind deed? Chances are you nodded yes to at least three. So, you're ripe, ready, overdue probably, for a good party. And we've got just the thing for you—the Peace/Life Center's Annual Holiday Party at the Onorato's on Friday evening, December 8, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at 1532 Vernon, Modesto.

It's a potluck, so that's where the adventure comes in. But judging from past experience, the luck is a sure thing. Bring one of your favorite tasty dishes and a beverage—enough to share, and you'll make eyes dilate, mouths salivate, and stomachs leap like Irish step dancers in a trance.

As for music, we'll sing merrily, from "Christmas is Coming" to "Light One Candle," from "Study War No More" to "Froggy Went a Courtin'," from "La Bamba" and "Joe Hill" to "Step by Step" and "We Shall Not Be Moved" and many more. Master musician and troubadour John Poat, lead singer for the local band "Wooden Nickel," will help us soar in song as well as merriment.

Lively, congenial conversation will be the thread that weaves from one to another throughout the evening, tying us together more closely into the community that enriches our lives and gives us strength when we most need it.

And the good deed? Once again, we'll carry on a tradition initiated by Jana Chiavetta: **we ask everyone or every family to bring with them a gift, an unwrapped new book**

(or more than one) for a child (K-1 to K-6), that Jana will distribute at Wilson Elementary School where she teaches. Eighty-nine percent of the kids at Wilson qualify for free or reduced meals at school, and 20% come from families whose parents didn't graduate from high school. The majority of the students at Wilson score below proficiency on state tests in English and math. The likelihood is most of the children don't have many books in their homes. Thus, this extra touch at this time of year when the spirit of giving generously is so palpable.



ACTION: Mark your calendar now, imagine the culinary magic you'll add to our feast, start exercising your vocal chords, and have fun picking the book that will bring a happy smile and grateful heart to a child at Wilson School.

We look forward to seeing you for a memorable evening!



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

RADIO UPDATE

By JAMES COSTELLO, KCBP Radio Manager

We are now continuously **WEBSTREAMING** at <http://kcbpradio.org/>.

Last issue, I reported that we were in negotiations with Entravision (KTSE FM) to acquire a place on their radio tower. Unfortunately, these negotiations did not succeed. We are now looking for a site on which to build our own tower on land just west of the city of Patterson. I will update you in our next issue.

Our enthusiastic Programming Committee continues to create offerings for broadcast. We are fine tuning our software so that actual broadcast times for various programs can be published. Stay tuned! A new crop of volunteers continues to train. We will need more volunteers!

ACTION: To volunteer your help in programming, contact Sue Bower at subower@prodigy.net. To donate, send your check to Dave Tucker, memo: Radio KCBP, at Modesto Peace/Life Center, P.O. Box 134, Modesto, CA 95353. Or go <http://kcbpradio.org/> and click on Donate, OR go to our Gofundme page at <https://www.gofundme.com/kcbp-community-radio-startup>



Speaker: Labor Leader Dolores Huerta



SATURDAY, January 20, 2018

24th Annual
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Commemoration

Performing Arts & Media Center
Modesto Junior College, East Campus
435 College Ave., Modesto

- 6:00 p.m. - Doors Open
- 7:00 p.m. - Free program

—Sponsors—



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City of Modesto Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Dept.; Modesto Junior College; Modesto Peace/Life Center; California State University; Stanislaus; Associated Students of Modesto Junior College. *Sponsors needed. Email jcostello@igc.org*

Peace/Life Center looking for volunteers

The Modesto Peace/Life Center needs volunteers to assist with projects, events, our radio project (radio knowledge, skills needed), fundraising, and administrative activities. No experience necessary. Experience in social media, Word, Excel, or other special skills are desired for some volunteer positions. We need volunteers for a few hours per week, or an ongoing commitment.

For more information, contact our volunteer/outreach coordinators: Susan Bower or Jocelyn Cooper at the Peace Life Center (209) 529-5750.



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Christian Theology and Modern Science Can Be Unified, Even in Several Ways?

By **RICHARD ANDERSON**, Ph.D., Professor emeritus of Biology, Modesto Junior College

In its 23 years of programs, MJC's Science Colloquium series has never had a speaker on unifying biblical and scientific accounts of creation.

Rev. John Roberts, of Oakdale's St. Matthias Anglican Church, will fill this gap at his December 6 presentation, "Adam & Eve & Evolution: Seeking a Synthesis of Faith with Science," 3:15-4:15 in Room 115 of the Science Community Center, MJC's West Campus.

In my 73 years of church life, I have never heard a pastor explain how traditional Bible scripture is compatible with science. I refer here to my experiences as part of an Adventist, Congregational, Disciples of Christ and 3 Methodist Churches, and with Bahá'í over the years.

The Methodist churches (I am Methodist) I have been in, for example, just let the science be true, then ignore it. That is one path to peace between science and religion—keep them separate—per Stephen J. Gould's "non-overlapping magisteria" in his short book, *Rocks of Ages*. The sparks start to fly when Science tries to force itself into Religion, or Religion tries to boss around Science.

Have you ever joined thousands of locals attending a Ken Ham rally for scriptural literalism at Modesto's Calvary Chapel? His solution to the conflict is to deny the reality of the pertinent astronomy, physics, geology, biology and anthropology that to a scientist form an ironclad fabric of description of who we are and how we got here. Thus freed, Ham's scriptural literalism shines brilliantly, unfettered by Fake Science.

Rev. Roberts' talk will be an honest and open exploration of how he and other theologians see unity is possible between modern science and sound biblical interpretation.

The Science Colloquium is free and open to the public. Temporary Parking Permits can be purchased for \$2 from dispensers located near MJC West Campus entrances.

ACTION: Attend Dec. 6 "Adam & Eve & Evolution: Seeking a Synthesis of Faith with Science," 3:15-4:15, Room 115, Science Community Center, MJC's West Campus.

8 Tips to Get You Through Difficult Conversations This Holiday Season

By **SARAH VAN GELDER**

It's a year since the election. You're preparing to get together with friends or family for a Thanksgiving feast or looking ahead to end-of-year holidays, but there's one thing you're dreading: the conversation with the family member or friend who voted for Donald Trump.

What do you say? How do you deal with a divide that has fractured a nation and even reached into our families?

I recently sat down with Linda Stout, founder of Spirit in Action, who grew up in a poor, white community in rural North Carolina, and who has, for years, organized poor people across race, class, and political lines. Her insights helped me to see the opportunities in these kinds of difficult conversations. So, inspired by her stories, here's an eight-step plan for getting through the holidays:

1. Prepare in advance.

Bring short statements of gratitude, poems, a song, or a story to the gathering. Or perhaps bring history: Stout used to read aloud from Howard Zinn's *People's History of the United States* so her children would hear the unsanitized version of early encounters between settlers and Native people.

2. Listen

When difficult political discussions come up, listen first, Stout said, even to those you disagree with. Listen especially for the other person's struggles and hopes. When people feel

The point isn't to win.
It's to ignite understanding.

heard, they are more open to other viewpoints.

3. Acknowledge the other person's experience and opinions

Ask respectful questions based on authentic curiosity about their lives.

4. Share stories

Tell your story, too. Center your story in your heart: Explain why you care, what worries you, what you hope for. Allow yourself to be vulnerable.

Stout told me that her family has a tradition of storytelling, but if it doesn't come naturally to you, prepare stories to share in advance. The best stories are ones you or someone close to you experienced. But you can also turn to stories you've heard or read. The main thing is that they are true and heartfelt.


5. Share facts, but sparingly

Talk about what you know to be true, but don't use information as a weapon; use it to increase understanding. Especially in a time when so many are suspicious of experts, trusted friends and family can be better at breaking through the fake news and offering a reality check.

6. Avoid jargon

Many progressives speak in ways that "leave people behind," Stout said. Avoid in-group language. This may

continued page 8




Modesto Junior College Arts, Humanities & Communications Division presents

CHURCH & STATE

A play about the politics of God and guns by Jason Odell Williams



January
January 27, 28, and 29 at 8:00 p.m.
February
February 2, 3, and 4 at 7:00 p.m.
February 4, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.



Jon Johnson Charlene West Kimberly Dwyer Tony Agustin

MJC Performing Arts Building Television Studio

Tickets: \$11 General / \$9 Students and Seniors
Box Office Phone #: (209) 573-6776 Hours: Tues-Fri Noon-5:00pm
Online: mjc.tix.com

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At Modesto Sound

Bigger Blasts = More Pollution at Tracy's Site 300

From Tri-Valley CARES

The Livermore Lab's 11-square mile Site 300 high explosives testing range is about to become more dangerous, if the nuclear weapons designers get their way.

This month the government quietly released a shocking proposal to increase the amount of high explosives used in open-air tests at Site 300 from 100 pounds per day to 1,000 pounds per day, **a 10-fold increase**.

Similarly, the proposal increases the annual amount of high explosives used in open-air detonations from 1,000 pounds per year to 7,500 pounds per year, **a more than 7-fold increase**.

The detonations would occur on a flat, outdoor "firing table" measuring more than 7,000 square feet. The huge open-air tests employ no air pollution control technology.

The document containing the proposal, called an "Environmental Assessment" or EA for short, is often hyper-technical and runs 117-pages long, including a permit application to begin the tests.

The reason for the tests is nuclear weapons, according to the EA. And, although the large open-air explosions could pose serious threats to workers, the public and the environment, the government plans to cut off public comment on December 7.

More than 120 hazardous poisons will become airborne in these tests, according to the proposal. Many of the listed pollutants are known to damage organs, cause cancer and other diseases and may lead to prompt or premature death, including beryllium, vinyl chloride, phosphine, hydrogen cyanide and dioxin. The proposal does not include radioactive materials, which are currently used in high explosives tests conducted at Site 300's Contained Firing Facility.

In addition to toxic airborne releases, the open-air detonations will result in extraordinarily sharp, loud noises and other problems. Site 300's nearby neighbors include Tracy Hills, a new development consisting of 5,500 homes, and a State Park (the Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area and Campground). The EA refers to Site 300's neighbors as "receptors."

The EA fails to adequately consider that these new tests will occur on a firing table already heavily contaminated by past explosions, including many that involved radioactive material.

This firing table is at the precise location where Site 300 personnel inadvertently discovered 80-pounds of uranium-238. The radioactive metal was found in chunks measuring 3-inches or more in diameter and scattered in the topsoil. Additional soil tests found more areas of elevated radioactivity in the area.

The proposed blasts will complicate cleanup. Indeed, Site 300 policy states that any cleanup will be delayed for as long as the firing table remains active.

The Environmental Protection Agency placed Site 300 on its "Superfund" list of most contaminated locations in the country in 1990. Due to already-extensive contamination of soils, surface waters and springs, and multiple groundwater aquifers the cleanup is expected to be multi-generational, lasting up to 80 more years, i.e., until 2097.

Tri-Valley CAREs is committed to ensuring that Site 300 is cleaned up in a comprehensive and much more timely manner.

We aim to stop these huge, open-air explosions from happening. Indeed, this proposal is similar to the plan for bigger blasts that we did stop ten years ago. (Livermore Lab propos-

als are like zombies, they often come back from the dead.)

We are confident that vigilance - and an active public opposing this plan - can stop it again now!

Toward that end, **we have initiated a petition calling for closure of all open-air firing tables at Site 300**. The petition is available to download, below, in English or Spanish. Please sign and circulate it among your friends and family.

Tri-Valley CAREs submitted a letter to the government requesting a 60-day extension of the public comment period and a public hearing on this proposal. December 7 is not sufficient time to review the proposal and submit comments. Moreover, no public hearing is planned.

Further, **we invite you to send your own letter or short note** asking for an extension of the public comment period. Send your note by email to LFOPublicComment@doe.gov or send your postal mailed request to NEPA Document Manager, NNSA, Livermore Field Office, PO Box 808, L-293, Livermore, CA 94550-0808.

We thank our members and friends for all you do for peace, justice and a healthy environment.

To download the PETITION to close the open-air firing tables at Site 300 in English and Spanish, and to see for our LETTER requesting a 60-day extension of the public comment period and a public hearing, visit <http://www.trivalleycares.org/new/BiggerBlasts%3DMorePollutionatTracy%E2%80%99sSite300.html>

For the ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT and Permit Application to conduct the blasts at Site 300 visit http://www.trivalleycares.org/new/S300_DOEEA-2076_PermitApplication.pdf

New Series Highlights Impact of Federal Tax Proposals

From the California Budget & Policy Center

A number of major proposals, supported by President Trump and Republican leaders in Congress, have the potential to fundamentally change federal tax policies, with dire consequences for low- and middle-income people in California and across the nation. In order to highlight some of the critical choices faced by federal policymakers, the California Budget & Policy Center has launched a blog series examining federal tax proposals and related issues, and what they mean for California. Initial posts include the following:

- A Tax Proposal That Can't Be Fixed and New Estimates Show How Far the Benefits of the House Tax Bill Tilt to the Wealthy. These posts, from Chris Hoene and Esi Hutchful, respectively, examine the tax bill released by Republicans in the House of Representatives on November 2. Closely aligned with the overall tax framework that President Trump and Republican congressional leaders released earlier this year, (see next bullet) the House tax bill overwhelmingly tilts tax cuts to wealthy households and large corporations.
- GOP Tax and Budget Plans Would Benefit the Rich and Unfairly Burden Low- and Middle-Income Families. This post examines the overall tax framework proposed by

President Trump and Republican congressional leaders. A congressional budget resolution paves the way for "fast track" approval of a set of tax cuts that heavily favor the wealthy. (This analysis was highlighted in the Sacramento Bee.)

- Repeal of the Estate Tax Would Reduce Federal Resources While Key Public Services Are on the Chopping Block. This post examines one key component of the GOP tax framework: the proposed repeal of the federal estate tax. Repeal would benefit the few very wealthy estates that pay this tax, while resulting in significant lost revenue in the coming years.

The California Budget & Policy Center, 1107 9th St., Suite 310, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 444-0500; (916) 444-0172 fax. Email: contact@calbudgetcenter.org

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

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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>

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

By Lillian Vallee

80. In Praise of Gentle Men

In the last month two important books have made their way into my hands, *Starving Season: One Person's Story* by Modesto doctor, Seang M. Seng, and *Scared: Coming Full Circle* by Monolin (Manny) Moreno, Yaqui/Tarascan poet and writer who grew up in Livingston. While the books are very different in diction and the trajectory of personal history, they are both powerful studies of human resilience and capacity for transformation. The stories of Dr. Seng and Manny Moreno illuminate, in many ways, the intricate and often invisible immigrant histories of so many Central Valley residents.

Dr. Seng's account of the Khmer Rouge takeover of Cambodia when he was two years away from completing medical school in Phnom Penh is also the collective history of the killing fields in which over 1.7 million people lost their lives. His account is the heart-wrenching, often guilt-ridden, testimony of a young man who used his many gifts to outwit death but emerged with a burden he carried for decades until he was able to lay it down, in words, in his personal account of the Cambodian holocaust in a book written for his children and grandchildren:

All that matters about my personal story is that I lost everyone in my family. In 1975, our family of 24 persons was trucked into the countryside and trudging into the killing fields: mother and father, my five sisters and me, my grandparents, my uncle's family, my mother's siblings, and my sister's family.

Four years later, I hiked out of the killing fields alone.

He was alone and convinced his country had been abandoned by the world. When the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia, Seang Seng and his girlfriend Srey (now Mrs. Seng and mother of their three adult children) hiked out of the charnel house that was their country. In a Thai refugee camp, they became friends with the American administrators, doctors and nurses who saw to the health and well-being of thousands of refugees; the camp became the successive ordeal for a population already stressed by malnutrition and grief. Some of the Americans became fast friends and these good people offered their accounts of that time during the book launch at Dr. Seng's house on November 4. At the urging of his son Kosal (all three of Seang and Srey Seng's children have become doctors), Dr. Seng read haltingly of checking himself into a hospital in which everyone around him was in a state of hunger-induced torpor, plagued by flies, waiting to die. At one point, he is consumed with remorse at the thought of all his father had done for him, and that not once, had he, the son, done something to show his love and gratitude.

In *Scared*, Manny Moreno's father is also, in many ways, at the center of the story. Eldest child of immigrants fleeing the Mexican Revolution, his father had to work early to help support a family of eleven children. A loving father and husband but also an alcoholic capable of exacting and violent behavior, he dies at 37 in a car accident after being thrown into a canal. He is not found for three days and when he is, the entire family is bereft.

It is Manny's father who urges on his son his first taste of alcohol, and in the footsteps of father and paternal grandfather, an orgy of self-destruction begins in his teens. Despite the heroic efforts of Manny's mother and the accepting presence of his maternal relatives, especially his Grandpa Manuel,



of young men without compass. I remember an Indian elder admonishing his listeners to understand that there is nothing more dangerous than groups of young men without elders to curb their behavior. Manny's story bears out the truth of this observation. His floundering identity and fatherless vulnerability lead to dangerous alliances and thirteen accidents; in one he is almost eviscerated and in another close to dying in the canal that entombed his father.

The road to recovery from addiction is long and harrowing, and it is only when Manny meets two Indian elders, Barry Beaver Turner and Harry Jack, who invite him to ceremonies at Three Rivers Indian Lodge in Manteca, that he begins to recover a sense of his identity and self-worth. He eventually becomes the house manager at the Lodge and helps many young men with experiences like his own. He takes a four-year vow to complete the Sundance at Green Grass, South

who urges Manny not to forget that his roots are indigenous "Tu eres indio, nunca olvides, nunca tengas verguenza" [You are Indian, never forget, never be ashamed], he enters the society

Dakota, and finds, through his suffering for others, that all he really wants is to be a good human being.

After almost twenty years of sobriety and participation in the ceremonial life of native peoples, after unearthing family records going back to the eighteenth century, Manny has pieced together his Yaqui/Tarascan lineage and is an enrolled member of the State Recognized Texas Band of Yaqui Indians. He is learning his native language and has fulfilled his grandfather's wish not to forget who he is:

I try every day to send up cedar and sage smoke to give thanks for this breath of life. I'm not scared anymore. I know who I am and where I come from. I am just a common pitiful man.

Manny has become a widely respected elder and prayer man, often called in to comfort the sick and dying. I have witnessed his prayers around a fire, at the deathbed, watched him tuck a bit of eagle down into the sock of an expiring friend. I have seen him alert at the sight of a homeless woman clearly in agony and know he is sending a prayer in her direction, and, if she asks, his last dollar.

Scared and *Starving Season* express the liberating courage of two gentle men, each walking in two worlds, unafraid to tell their stories of human failings and turbulent times. We live among many such stories and should tender our deepest respect to those who find the strength to transmute an unbearable grief into weighty self-knowledge, into communal healing and, ultimately, surprisingly, into joy.

132: How Not to Build a Freeway

from page 1

Avenues in Modesto and along Maze Boulevard to the west. The added congestion would trigger citizen complaints, adding impetus toward securing funds for phase 2 of freeway construction and subsequent phases.

The worst part of the plan is that 20 years would be needed for completion of the 19 miles of freeway. This means residents of Stanislaus County would be inconvenienced with unnecessary congestion, construction issues and aggravation for 20 full years! Whereas 200 miles of I-5 was built in one phase in a five-year period, Stanislaus County would need 20 years for only 19 miles!

Fly in the Ointment

My role in all of this was like a fly in the ointment, being a real pest in an effort to get the plan revised to a facility that would better serve the public.

When I heard about the toxic waste dump in the future freeway right of way, I screamed loud and long about the need to remove it. Caltrans has not removed it and probably never will because they want to put a cement cap over it that will crack and leak in the long run. We will all forget about the toxic dump and it will become a problem for future generations.

When I heard about the plan, I again screamed loud and long about its mediocrity and insisted that construction be delayed until enough funds could be secured to do the project the way it should be done from the outset.

Apparently, my protests had an effect because Caltrans decided to withdraw the project to submit a new plan later. All of the supervisory engineers who participated in the introduction of the four-phase plan retired and have been replaced by new project managers. In early 2017, Caltrans introduced an entirely new four phase plan that was almost exactly as the original, except slightly worse because it elimi-

nated essential access and egress from the future Carpenter Road Interchange.

When invitations to write comments about the Environmental Impact Report came out, I wrote a 20-page treatise about how Caltrans had failed to do a wildlife impact assessment at the San Joaquin River refuge, about how air pollution would be created via added congestion during the four phases of construction, about adverse impacts to intersections, and about the toxic waste dump that still had not been removed.

As of this writing, I presume the EIR is being reworked so that Caltrans can claim that my comments had no merit. Rather than try to get more money to mitigate or counter my complaints, if they can find a way to circumvent them, I expect that they will.

When I wrote *The Modesto Bee* article about the new Kasson/River Road-Route 132 signal, I

saw that as an initial step in creating more traffic congestion. One would think that if they expect to build a full four lane freeway within 20 years, every road and intersection improvement would be designed to fit in with a completed freeway project. Instead, the way the intersection was done, when the freeway is built, the signal will have to be removed and the roadway will need to be realigned.

When the Manteca Bypass Freeway 120 was built, no roadway realignment was needed for the expansion from two lanes to four lanes. In that case, planning the freeway was driven by demand and clear thinking. Planning for Highway 132 has been much more haphazard.

Bruce Frohman served on the Modesto City Council from 1999-2003. He believes the best way to build a better community is to have an informed citizenry.

<http://thevalleycitizen.com/132-how-not-to-build-a-freeway/>

Papal Audience for Delegates Attending Conference on World Free from Nuclear Weapons and For Integral Disarmament

On Friday 10th November 2017, Pope Francis granted a Papal Audience to Religious and Political Dignitaries from around the World, including Secretary General UN, and 5 Nobel Peace Laureates.

Nobel Peace Laureate Mairead Maguire, Ireland, addressed the conference. Before leaving Belfast, she said: "Pope Francis has been active in promoting peace and the ban on all nuclear weapons, and the Pope's message to the United Nations conference, (New York 27th 31st March 2017) to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, has given great hope and inspiration to all of us working for disarmament and peace."

Maguire said "Pope Francis gives great moral and spiritual Leadership to the world in his clear message against nuclear weapons and war, and for peace and diplomacy. Humanity is tired of weapons militarism and war and Pope Francis' unambiguous rejection of violence finds resonance in the human hearts of many people. Believing passionately in peace, and working for Peace, makes Peace possible."

The Peace Process in Northern Ireland

Mairead Maguire's address to the Conference on a World Free FROM Nuclear Weapons and for Integral Disarmament Buon Pomeriggio,

Eminences, Excellencies, Colleagues Nobel Laureates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is good to be with you all, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your work for Peace and Humanity.

Thank you also for giving me the opportunity to speak about the Peace Process in N. Ireland.

N. Ireland is a deep ethnic/political conflict, and Religion plays both a negative and positive role in our society. This was brought home to me, when in the early 1970s a young Irish Republican man, told me he was in the Armed Struggle of the IRA fighting a Just War and that the Catholic Church blesses "Just Wars". We need to throw out the Just War theory, a phony piece of morality. Instead we can develop a new Theology of Peace and Nonviolence and articulate a clear unambiguous rejection of violence. Religion cannot be used to justify war or armed struggle.

There are many lessons to be learned from the Northern Irish conflict. One lesson is that violence never works, be it State, Relational, Paramilitary violence, or the violence of sectarianism, discrimination or injustice. For many years these methods were used and they plunged our country (one and a half million people) into the darkness of death and further segregation and polarization. A Light in the darkness came when in 1976 thousands of people, 90% women, marched to call for an end to violence and for peace. They called for all inclusive, unconditional talks, including with those using violence, insisting we must talk to our perceived enemies, be reconciled together and find solutions. They insisted the UK Government uphold Human Rights and International Laws and not put aside the Rights of people, or use means which were illegal and counter-productive. In the first few months of this Civil Society movement for peace and reconciliation, there was a 70% drop in violence.

One lesson is that violence never works, be it State, Relational, Paramilitary violence, or the violence of sectarianism, discrimination or injustice.

After a long process of dialogue, and diplomacy, across the communities, between people, paramilitary groups, and politicians, mediated by Civil Community and members of Clergy, eventually a Good Friday Agreement was reached in 1998. This Agreement, based on Power Sharing between the Unionists, Nationalists, and others, was a ground-breaking achievement in that it brought together many Political parties and tackled hard issues. Unfortunately, many of the Policies agreed upon were not fully implemented and continue to cause dissension within our Executive, Assembly and Community. What could have been set up was an independent body charged with the implementation of the Agreement whose recommendations for resolving disputes would be binding on the parties. In the absence of this, the Executive is obliged to address every crisis on a case by case basis and with no commitment to accepting recommendations to resolve the crisis.

Unfortunately, our Executive has had many problems working on a power sharing basis but it is hoped that as time goes on they will adopt a more co-operative and compromising approach in working these institutions. For many the key to progress lies with the community where people live their daily lives. The integration of our society is very important and integrated Education, Peace Education, Therapy, Counselling, etc., will be ways in which to heal and reconcile our society. At the heart of a peace culture is a recognition that every person's life and their humanity is more important than a person's ethnic inheritance. This peace culture only develops when every citizens humanity is valued above that citizens ethnic/religious inheritance. Where a citizens' vote is sought and cast on the basis of human worth rather than on perceived inheritance or identity. Empowering local grassroots communities, including women and youth, to get involved in community peacebuilding, job creating, etc., will give hope and build self-belief, confidence and courage.

Post conflict we know how long and difficult the task before us. We accept this challenge to change ourselves and deepen our virtues of compassion, empathy, love, so necessary to change our society. Seeing the person in everyone and loving and serving them will help us transcend selfishness, bigotry and sectarianism. Deepening our relationships, with family, friends, society, will keep us strong and give us wisdom and courage in the hard times. In a spirit of enjoyment and enthusiasm, aware of the beauty of life, creation, within and without, we can live joyfully each moment and celebrate the gift of being alive.

We join with everyone around the world to build a demili-

tarized peaceful world. We thank Pope Francis for his clear moral/spiritual leadership in calling for the abolition of the death penalty and Nuclear Weapons. It is an illusion that we are in control and that these weapons give us security. Above all for any of us to harbour the thought that we have the right to use nuclear weapons and commit genocide is the most disturbing thing of all. We have yet to learn the lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. An apology to the Japanese people by the US Government, those responsible for the genocidal act of using Nuclear bombs will help the healing of relationships and ensure such genocidal acts will never happen again. The policy of Nuclear weapons, show that we have lost our moral compass. It is long overdue that we abolish nuclear weapons and put resources, human and financial, into abolishing poverty and meeting human security as set out in UN Development goals.

However, we need to do more than this. Be brave and imaginative. Join together for a common vision – the total abolition of Militarism and war. We do not need to limit ourselves to civilizing and slowing down militarism, (which is an aberration and system of dysfunction), but demand its total abolition. We can offer a new hope to suffering humanity. Follow the vision of Nobel on global co-operation to remove the scourge of militarism and war, and implement the architecture of peace based on Human Rights and International Law.

People are tired of armaments and war, which release uncontrollable forces of tribalism and nationalism. These are dangerous and murderous forms of identity and above which we need to transcend, lest we unleash further violence upon the world. Acknowledge that our common humanity and human dignity is more important than our different religions and traditions. Recognize our life and the lives of others are sacred and that we can solve our problems without killing each other. Accept and celebrate diversity and otherness. Heal the old divisions and misunderstandings. Give and accept forgiveness and choose love, nonkilling and nonviolence as ways to solve our problem.

Peace and Justice are necessary, and the ways of dialogue and diplomacy must be seriously undertaken, must be insisted upon by the International Community, as shown in the Iranian nuclear deal, and as could work for a North Korean Peace Treaty. We can transform the erroneous mindset that violence and threats of violence works, weapons and war can solve our problems. Punitive Policies do not bring peace.

We can take courage and confidence, from the fact that the Science of War, is being replaced by a Global Science of Peace based on love, Harmony, reverence for life and creation. Thank you to Pope Francis and the Vatican Dicastery* for Promoting Integral Disarmament. Your work of diplomacy, mediation, fearlessly speaking Truth to Power whatever the cost, gives hope to all of humanity.

Gracie! (Thank you),

Mairead Maguire – www.peacepeople.com

From Voices for Creative Nonviolence, <http://vcnv.org/>

Ed. Note: the Dicastery is a department of the Roman Curia, an administrative arm of the Vatican.

Why I take my son to Burning Man

By TIRZA LYN HOLLENHORST

I am posting this for those of you who asked and not because I am looking for feedback on my parenting choices.

If you have never been to Burning Man, then I assure you whatever you have heard is true and represents only some of the aspects of a very diverse place. Why would I choose to expose my son to a week of harsh conditions, bad music, confusing messages, and naked people? It is a playground, a practice field for building the leadership skills of resiliency, creativity, and collaboration required to thrive during the next 100 years.

Resilience

The rate of change and the frequency of course altering disasters is already overwhelming our systems and will only intensify in the immediate future. I am keenly aware that I am raising a child who will witness uncontrollable fires that burn through hundreds of miles of forest, epic migrations as millions of people abandon regions left uninhabitable by war and climate change, and mass extinction of species, cultures, and entire ecosystems. I know he will witness these things, because they are already happening. Burning Man compresses the intensity of our time into an apocalyptic landscape that promises self-expression, artistic achievement, and social reverie only to blow it all into oblivion with 40 mile an hour dust filled winds. The qualities of resilience, optimism, self-reliance, and cooperation, allow some people to thrive in the face of oppression and disaster while others crumble into despair, depression and isolation. Burning Man creates the environment to develop the skills

of resiliency with a great deal of built in safeguards against failure and rewards for success.

Building capacity to respond appropriately and maintain emotional freedom, regardless of the external circumstances, is a must for future leaders. In the tightly controlled, predictable environment of San Francisco, we rarely face inconveniences greater than a delayed Uber or the shop is out of salted caramel ice cream. We arrived at the gate to Burning Man in a dust-storm so ferocious they had stopped processing entrances. After 4 hours of waiting, it was time to venture to a porta-potty. I suited Alon up in his protective gear, grabbed his hand and we headed out. Just getting to a bathroom 20-feet away required directions from 2 people and test of will. Alon learned that we don't complain about what is happening, we suit up, take appropriate precautions and cooperate with our community.



Photo: StephanCom, English Wikipedia

Creativity

In a world where anything that can be automated will be automated, the people who add real value will be the creators, those who can see new possibility and enlist a team to bring it to reality. In the desert, creativity is currency. We value the architects and artists who create the structures we play in and the art we play on. We value the musicians who entertain us and get us dancing. Creativity in your costuming and your character is regarded as a public service. Burning Man provides the opportunity to test out new creative muscles and explore new talents and skills.

Alon is in an education system that is preparing him to live in a world that no longer exists. I could point to so many different data points, but let's just pick one. A residential college education is rapidly becoming a relic of the past. The idea that you are going to gather information for 4 years while producing no value is an artifact of the 20th century. An elementary school that sees itself as preparing 2nd graders to "go to college" is clearly not keeping pace with the rate of change in ed tech and online training and it is not teaching him to add value and be a creator. The system is teaching him to accumulate knowledge that grants him access to the next level of knowledge accumulation. A week in the desert made creative expression and value creation real in a way the school does not.

Artists and designers all over the Playa were kind enough to explain to Alon how their pieces were an application of engineering and math. He was able to engage with innovative approaches to water management and recycling. He experienced resource scarcity and *jugaad* in action. *Jugaad* is a colloquial Hindi word that describes creativity used to make existing things work or to create new things with meager resources. There is such a concentration of people who make, do, design, and deploy at the festival, most people come away excited to make something new happen. Alon came away with a new willingness to challenge himself and express himself. He also came away with a new appreciation for those who

create and a real sense of pride for the LED lights on our bikes that he helped load the code for and allowed us to go out as a pack, all displaying one of 16 different light patterns.

Cooperation

No project of importance makes it to the Playa without a team. This is true of anything in the world, but we still have a hero culture that likes to idolize a single person (generally a male) and hold them up as the creator. On the Playa we create together and we create for others. Art is not complete without a participant.

and some other thoughts...

Quantum Creation

I believe that we are all here learning one lesson - cause and effect. We learn it at different levels and in different circumstances. One of the more advanced levels of the of cause and effect lesson teaches that your thought is also a cause. The Playa is an exceptionally good teacher of this (it's also a pretty fierce teacher of gravity and the effect of blunt force trauma on the human body, so choose your adventure wisely). The unstructured nature of the Playa and the ability for everything to move about in a seemingly chaotic pattern, free from our very constrained Newtonian existence of roads and repeated schedules, the quantum field is able to exert more influence. In other words, because we are not following roads and habituated schedules "coincidence" is more likely to occur as people and things are attracted to things of similar resonance. The magic of just right timing and French fries showing up 45 seconds after you think - some fries would be good right now, is a joyous reminder that we are all connected and what you think about you bring about, so watch your thoughts.

Plenty of Kitties but no Cats

Burning Man is the only place I have ever been where women celebrate themselves and stroll about naked with no cat-calling. I am not suggesting that there is no assault, abuse, or exploitation at Burning Man. I have met trafficked women and I have seen a distinct rise in prostitution on the Playa. But what I do not see is cat-calling and the pedestrian degradation of women, their safety and physical autonomy. By and large you see women who feel safe to be sexual and that is a huge lesson for our young men. Our boys are growing up in a toxic soup of porn filled with consistently violent and degrading images. Rape is not sexy. But where is boy going to learn that a safe, autonomous, confident woman has access to gates of sexual expression and ecstasy that are more than enough to keep him entranced for a lifetime if he learns to man-up and be what she needs rather than looking for her to fill his. I have no clue how to teach this, but I know I see healthier expressions at Burning Man than anywhere else.

Family Fun

Most importantly my son is great adventure buddy. I genuinely have a great time doing things with Alon. He is kind, funny, adventurous, flexible, practical and considerate. We have a great time together doing stuff and having adventures. You can keep your cruises and all-inclusive resorts. I am taking my kid to Burning Man.

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Silk Stockings and a Cigar

Power is the aphrodisiac.
Each boardroom, corporation lounge,
and government bureaucracy
has one who sits in power.
One whose mere presence
shimmers with energy
sexual as a summer storm.

Those who command boardrooms,
corporations and high government offices
view those below as subjects or possessions.

*I can fulfill your dreams...
they say.
What is it that you want?
I made you vice chairman of marketing
and with a word
I can make you chairman of production or...*

Legs...
encased in nylon flowing longer than the Nile
— scissor through the halls of power
bringing plans and documents,
important messages from other
important men in high office.
Bringing more than coffee.

The scissoring of the stockings makes
a hissing sound. For just a second,
powerful men stop talking... and listen.

The sound they hear was first heard in their teens.
A sound made by mothers and aunts,
made by father's girlfriend,
— a much younger woman.
A woman of an age
a teenage boy could engage
in an imaginary relationship,
— could imagine control.

With the mind's eye,
in just beginning manhood,
they have seen girls doing the
things they have commanded,
things mothers and aunts never did.

If only they had known what to say...

Now, safely layered in the towers of power,
in the chairs of plenty,
in the seats of control,
they know what to say:
come here.
*bend over.
slip off a stocking.*

It is as if
once again,

one can live again
those stifled thoughts of mom or auntie,
or dad's second wife...
after mom moved out.

Now there is no one to say stop...
as dad did with a glance.
A look was all it took.

Well... there's no look now.
Now *The Look* is here,
in this tower,
in this chair, this seat of power.

A look that says...
*stay a bit,
have you worked here long?
do you like your job?
perhaps I can be of some help?*

He finds it incredible, how things not really
explicitly asked for, are provided willingly.

It had been fun for a fifteen-year-old-boy
to fantasize a powerful commanding role.
This dance around the edge is less direct
than that remembered fantasy.

Conquest remains — but pales beside the chase.
A fish wiggling on the line for sport and not necessity.
Just a hint of what could or couldn't be,
—if only—
And what of her...
with her stockinged legs and flat belly.
Legs so slender that up high
close to her sex where they meet
there is room enough a man can slip a hand,
fingers curling in anticipation.

It is a ticklish situation.

A powerful man and a women half his age.

When the novelty wears off,
— which it will after the third or fourth encounter.
What then?

Silk stockings and a cigar!

The implied promise of a better job or money
is not entirely mute. The story will be told to
close friends over more than one drink.

Before the tale is finished, it will already be familiar.

Ed Bearden

Conversations

from page 3

be difficult if you mainly talk to activist friends or to other people in your profession; in both cases, language signifies your identity and your community—and excludes people. Specific, simple, straightforward words are most powerful.

Stout told me about her conservative, Southern relatives who were complaining to her about a nearby Occupy encampment. Stout explained that the occupiers objected to growing inequality—that corporations were getting huge tax breaks and government giveaways while hard-working families couldn't catch a break. Then there was silence, she told me. "Why don't they explain it so people can understand it," they asked her. While language about the "99 percent" had no meaning to them, Stout's explanation worked for them.

7. Be patient

If things go off the rails, back up and try a different approach, Stout said. The point isn't to win points. It's to ignite understanding.

8. Make a request

Consider making one modest request. (And be ready to accept a challenge to do something different yourself.) Stout told me about a cab driver in Savannah, Georgia, who was railing against Obamacare. She told him about her nephew's emergency appendectomy and the huge medical bills that resulted. Then she made one request. Stout asked the cab driver to watch news stations other than Fox each night for just one week. When she took another ride with him a week later, he told her how much he liked Chris Matthews from MSNBC because he "was a good ol' boy" and that he had decided to limit his Fox News viewing to just one night per week.

The divides in our country have become profound. Fear of an uncertain future, economic dislocation, fake news, social isolation, and the belligerence of our tweeter-in-chief have contributed to this. And racism, sexism, and other "isms" are always just below the surface, ready to pop up when people are stressed. These divides keep us distracted and distrustful of each other, while dirty energy corporations continue polluting our air and water, and the military-industrial complex continues to threaten our future.

During the holidays, we might be able to turn down the volume of hostility and create some threads of understanding. And that would be something to be thankful for.

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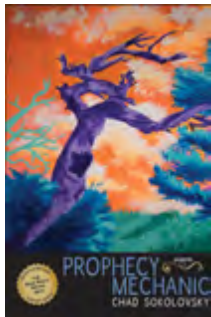
<http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/8-tips-to-get-you-through-difficult-conversations-this-holiday-season-20171122>





POET: Chad Sokolovsky

Chad Sokolovsky is a Bay Area native and graduate of UC Berkeley and Modesto Junior College. Chad has been writing and publishing poetry since 2002. In addition to poetry, he has also written political articles for *Stanislaus Connections* and Modesto Junior College's *Pirates' Log*. While at Modesto Junior College, Sokolovsky was president and co-founder of the first Activist's Club focused on raising political awareness on campus. Sokolovsky won the *Quercus Review* annual book award in 2016 for his book *Prophecy Mechanic*.



America Moves into the Neighborhood

You came for the gold
but stayed for the land,
it wasn't easy work at first
but without a down payment
and a credit check
it was a head start.
Sure, there were already
a few neighbors scattered
about like sparse white clouds
in an April sky, but their tents
were easily moved out of the way.

From dense birch tree forests
you built fences, milled paper,
and drew lines of latitude
and longitude, because
the gentle curves of roaming
bison painted on cave walls
or petroglyphs etched
in sandstone would never
hold up in court against
maps and survey lines
intersecting at right angles.

An Imaginary Legacy

I want to be a stowaway
on your train of thought,
with my red bandana bundle
bobbing over my shoulder
like a ripe apple in September.
I dangle one leg out
of the open boxcar
and hope we're heading
towards a daydream

where you'll do nothing
more than eat cherries
on a large balcony
and pluck the stems
from your fresh lips,
and I'll be a head of state
behind a mountain
of decrees awaiting
the precision of my signature

and processions of black
sedans marching like ants.
They'll pile tulips and lilies
beside my river of speeches,
and I will fall like loose change
from the pockets of
children along the tracks,
my copper minted face
flattened on the rails.

Constructing the West

I built the Alamo
in fifth grade-
surveyed the boundaries
on a plywood scrap,
stretched out a lake
of Elmer's glue
and sprinkled sand
like ashes of the dead
over the surface.

Balsa wood walls
braced against plastic
Mexican soldiers,
their elongated muskets
frozen mid-aim.
I fashioned Davy Crockett's
coonskin hat from playdough
and baked it till it hardened
like knuckles curling
into a taut fist.

I didn't realize
the early Texans
had lost or what
the phrase
"Remember the Alamo"
even means, but like
most 10-year-olds
that lived huddled
against the salt-kissed
fog of the Pacific, I just
assumed we always won.

Memorial Day

We used to burn ants with a magnifying glass
watching their thorax's smolder on the sidewalk

Honed the bayonets of our sharp tongues
against orders to divide fractions and decode Dickens

Legos always made for shitty swords but we kept interlocking
mismatched bricks together like ill-equipped field medics

Any L-shaped scrap of wood was a gun
but a pointed finger and a flintlock thumb would do in a pinch

Armed with a #2 pencil to battle a Scantron
with its green ovals like landing lights in a storm

Girls were mushroom clouds blooming towards
the shallow trenches of our sunken chests

Drowned out by the screaming of air raid sirens
as the bomb doors of their new bodies slowly opened overhead.

Modern Art

I was assembled from
3 different jigsaw puzzles,
the pieces that didn't fit
hammered into place

my head a swirling chunk of Starry Night
my torso, Washington crossing the Delaware
an arc of Saturn's rings where my feet should be

the curator has found
a suitable corner to hang me,
right next to a silhouette
on a chunk of sidewalk

dug up from Hiroshima,
the experimental art of atoms
dropped on a concrete canvas
unframed, unsigned.



INSPIRE: Ending violence against children

From the Centers for Disease Control

INSPIRE is an evidence-based resource for everyone committed to preventing and responding to violence against children and adolescents – from government to grassroots, and from civil society to the private sector. It represents a select group of strategies based on the best available evidence to help countries and communities intensify their focus on the prevention programs and services with the greatest potential to reduce violence against children. The seven strategies are: Implementation and enforcement of laws; Norms and values; Safe environments; Parent and caregiver support; Income and economic strengthening; Response and support services; and Education and life skills. Additionally, INSPIRE includes two cross-cutting activities that together help connect and strengthen – and assess progress towards – the seven strategies.

The seven INSPIRE strategies are most effective when implemented as part of a comprehensive, multisectoral plan that harnesses their synergies, as the strategies are intended to work in combination and reinforce each other. Though stakeholders in many countries are working to eliminate violence against children, their efforts are not always well coordinated and supported, and few are undertaken at a large

scale. Coordination mechanisms are therefore essential, as no single sector can deliver the full package of interventions, and no individual government can tackle the growing threats to its children that now transcend national borders. Efforts to implement the package should therefore encourage cooperation and learning both within and between countries.

INSPIRE's vision is a world where all governments, with the strong participation of civil society and communities, routinely implement and monitor interventions to prevent and respond to violence against all children and adolescents, and help them reach their full potential. It reinforces the protections guaranteed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which obliges States Parties to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect children from all forms of violence while in the care of parents, legal guardians, or any other person who has the care of the child. It reflects the urgent need to address the huge public health and social burden created by violence against children.

To learn more, visit <http://www.togetherforgirls.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/INSPIRE-report.pdf> and <https://blogs.cdc.gov/global/2017/11/22/end-violence-against-women-girls/>

5th Annual Haunted McHenry Museum attracts 1,400

By VERONICA JACUINDE

Approximately 1,400 young people and their families attended the Boys & Girls Clubs of Stanislaus County's Haunted McHenry Museum. The three-night community event was held October 26th through 28th.

F&M Bank was the presenting sponsor for the family friendly special event designed to entertain children ages five through twelve. The celebration offered fun, but not too much fright, and featured seven themed rooms, Halloween crafts, face painting and a variety of games. Sponsor Kit Fox Trolly, an event planning group specializing in creative and unusual fundraising events, provided live character actors who portrayed popular spooky Halloween characters.

This was the fifth annual event, and it surpassed last year's total of 1,200 guests.

"We are pleased to present this event as a fun Halloween activity for area children, and really appreciate the assistance of our sponsors, McHenry Museum staff, all of the dedicated volunteers and board members that made the event successful."

– Lincoln Ellis, President/Chief Professional Officer of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Stanislaus County

Other key sponsors included: City of Modesto, Delta Sierra Beverage, Modesto Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods, North Modesto Kiwanis, Coca Cola, Standard Party Rentals, Doctors Medical Center, Mountain Mike's Pizza, Modesto Rotary Club, Walmart, The West Experience, Ward Promotional Marketing Solutions, Chris Ricci Presents and MTC. Bee Media Services, Hot 104.7 FM, Contentment Health Magazine, Modesto Living Magazine, Studio Warner, and Stanislaus Connections provided media sponsorship support.

Linking Access to Reproductive Health Care to Labor Market Opportunities for Women

By KATE BAHN

Far too often, any discussions about reproductive justice are considered special interest matters in political debates, separate from a broader policy agenda aimed at economic empowerment. However, a recent Center for American Progress report concluded that "Women's economic contributions often depend on having access to comprehensive reproductive health services, as well as to education, jobs with livable wages, and workplace supports." The report also shows that women's economic empowerment is correlated with stronger measures of upholding reproductive rights and health care access. When women have secure control over family planning, they are able to invest in their own careers and take risks in the labor market.

The states where women workers have better access to reproductive health care services are also the states that create better conditions for women to have more opportunities in the labor market, including higher-quality job opportunities, better wages, and less occupational segregation. Read more at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2017/11/21/442653/linking-reproductive-health-care-access-labor-market-opportunities-women/>

IT'S YOUR WORLD:
Get Involved.



Janet Smith and Ken Schroeder protest in front of Congressman Jeff Denham's office. PHOTO: Lucia Núñez.

"tenderness and loving-kindness"

By VASU MURTY

The Baha'i faith began in Persia. Today, there are an estimated five million members of the Baha'i faith in some twenty thousand Baha'i communities in over 150 countries throughout the world. The founder of the Baha'i religion, Baha'u'llah ("Glory of God," 1817-92), taught that all the world's religions should unite and that the human race are one people under God. Animals and the rest of creation are seen as part of the unity of the earth and the cosmos. Baha'u'llah has been quoted as saying: "Not a single atom in the entire universe can be found which doth not declare the evidences of His might, which doth not glorify His holy name... So perfect and comprehensive is His creation that no mind nor heart, however keen or pure, can ever grasp the nature of the most insignificant of His creatures."

Compassion for animals is a tenet of the Baha'i faith. Baha'u'llah called upon humanity to "show kindness to animals," and wrote: "Look not upon the creatures of God except with the eyes of kindness and mercy." Abdu'l-Baha (1844-1921), Baha'u'llah's eldest son and successor, wrote that "tenderness and loving-kindness (to animals) are basic principles of God's heavenly kingdom, and said, "the Lord of all mankind hath fashioned this human realm to be a Garden of Eden, an earthly paradise."

"Briefly," explained, Abdu'l-Baha, "it is not only their fellow human beings that the beloved of God must treat with mercy and compassion, rather must they show forth the utmost loving-kindness to every living creature. For in all physical respects, and where the spirit is concerned, the selfsame feelings are shared by animals and man... What difference is there when it cometh to physical sensations? The feelings are the same whether you inflict pain on man or

beast. There is no difference here whatsoever. And, indeed, you do worse to harm an animal, for man hath a language, and he can lodge a complaint... But the hapless beast is mute, able neither to express its hurt nor take its case to the authorities... Therefore, it is essential that ye show forth the utmost consideration to the animal, and that ye be even kinder to him than to your fellow-man."

Abdu'l-Baha recognized the value of a humane education: "Teach your children from their earliest days to be infinitely tender and loving to animals. If an animal be sick, let the children try to heal it, if it be hungry, let them feed it, if thirsty, let them quench its thirst, if weary, let them see that it rests."

The Baha'i faith endorses vegetarianism: "Regarding the eating of animal flesh and abstinence therefrom... he (man) is not in need of meat, nor is he obliged to eat it. Even without eating meat, he would live with the utmost vigor and energy... Truly, the killing of animals and the eating of their meat is somewhat contrary to pity and compassion, and if one can content oneself with cereals, fruits, oil and nuts, such as pistachios, almonds and so on, it would undoubtedly be better and more pleasing."

In 2017, the 200th anniversary of the birth of Baha'u'llah, with current trends in animal liberation theology worldwide, and a growing number of theologians, clergy and activists in all the world's great religions jumping on the PETA bandwagon, it must be pointed out: the animal rights movement really began as a secular and nonsectarian civil rights movement, and is now courting all the world's great religions for inspiration, blessings, and support. An article in *The People's Almanac* (1975), said meditation is endorsed by all the world's great religions, and animal advocates would like to see it happen with vegetarianism. Vegetarian writer Steven Rosen, in his 1987 book, *Food for the Spirit: Vegetarianism and the World Religions*, tried to show that all the world's great religions support the vegetarian way of life: to win people of different faiths to vegetarianism through friendly moral persuasion.

Catholic Concern for Animals and some progressive churches (Episcopal, Methodist, Quaker, Unitarian) have shown interest in animal rights issues. The Baha'i faith endorses vegetarianism, and the ancient eastern reincarnationist religions which predate Christianity (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism) all teach *ahimsa*, or nonviolence towards humans and animals alike, to the point of vegetarianism, and are vegan-friendly. Frances Arnetta of Christians Helping

Animals and People endorses vegetarianism as "God's best for good health, the environment, to feed the hungry." She writes: "When we Christians are compassionate to animals, we are imitating our Heavenly Father. If non-Christian people are leading the way in respect for the lives of animals, it is because we Christians have failed to be the light Jesus commanded us to be. We should be an example of boundless mercy."

The International Network for Religion and Animals (INRA) was founded in 1985. Its educational and religious programs were meant to "bring religious principles upon humanity's attitude towards the treatment of our animal kin... and, through leadership, materials, and programs, to successfully interact with clergy and laity from many religious traditions... Religion counsels the powerful to be merciful and kind to those weaker than themselves, and most of humankind is at least nominally religious. But there is a ghastly paradox. Far from showing mercy, humanity uses its dominion over other animal species to pen them in cruel close confinement; to trap, club, and harpoon them; to poison, mutilate, and shock them in the name of science; to kill them by the billions; and even to blind them in excruciating pain to test cosmetics. Some of these abuses are due to mistaken understandings of religious principles; others, to a failure to apply those principles. Scriptures need to be fully researched concerning the relationship of humans to nonhuman animals, and to the entire ecological structure of nature. Misinterpretations of scripture taken out of context, or based upon questionable theological assumptions need to be re-examined."

INRA's Executive Director, Reverend Marc Wessels, concluded on Earth Day, 1990:

"It is a fact that no significant social reform has yet taken place in this country without the voice of the religious community being heard. The endeavors of the abolition of slavery; the women's suffrage movement; the emergence of the pacifist tradition during World War I; the struggles to support civil rights, labor unions, and migrant farm workers; and the antinuclear and peace movements have all succeeded in part because of the power and support of organized religion. Such authority and energy is required by individual Christians and the institutional church today if the liberation of animals is to become a reality."

Contact the author at vasumurti@netscape.net

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

Stockton

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

DECEMBER

Modesto Area Partners in Science (MAPS) free, community science programs, Fridays, 7:30 pm, MJC West Campus Sierra Hall 132 except where noted. **Dec. 1** – Garry Hayes, MJC Geology Professor: “The Earth Has a History: Rates of Geologic Change and Global Warming.”

MJC Fall Science Colloquium, Science Community Center, Room 115, West Campus, 3:15pm – 4:15 p.m. Contact: Teri Curtis (209) 575-6775, curtist@mjc.edu. **Dec. 6** – Rev. John Roberts, “Adam and Eve and Evolution: Seeking a Synthesis of Faith with Science.”

6 WED: Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGIL: STOP GUN VIOLENCE. McHenry & J St., 4:00-5:00 pm. (Note new time).

8 FRI: Annual Holiday Potluck Song Fest. Celebrate our Peace Community at the Onorato's, 1532 Vernon Ave., Modesto. Bring your favorite dish and beverage to share, your merry Holiday spirit, and your eagerness to sing. 6 to 9 pm. Bring an unwrapped children's book (K-6). All welcome.

10 SUN: The Modesto Film Society and The State Theatre presents *Remember the Night* 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://ww2.thestate.org/calendar/event/900>. Become a member of the State Theatre and get perks! Visit <http://www.thestate.org/membership>

18 MON: The State Theatre presents first showing of *A Christmas Story*. 1307 J. St., 5:00 pm. Visit <http://ww2.thestate.org/calendar/event/417>. Become a member of the State Theatre and get perks! Visit <http://www.thestate.org/membership>

19 TUES: The State Theatre presents first showing of *It's a Wonderful Life*. 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://ww2.thestate.org/calendar/event/418>. Become a member of the State Theatre and get perks! Visit <http://www.thestate.org/membership>

19 TUES: NAACP “End of Year” General Membership Meeting, Grand Seafood Buffet, 2400 Coffee Rd. 'O', Modesto, 7:00 pm. Info: Angela Dallas, 209-345-9444.

20 WED: Film Night at the Center. No film this month.

LOOKING AHEAD

Tuesday, January 9, 2018: Annual John McCutcheon Concert. See article, front page.

Sunday, January 14: Sunday Afternoons at CBS: Matt Eakle, best known as the flutist in the David Grisman Quintet, returns to Sunday Afternoons at CBS with his band. All concerts held at 1705 Sherwood Ave. at 3 pm. Tickets available through the CBS office and at the door. Single Tickets (with the exception of Feb.): \$25/Adults; \$20/Seniors & Students; \$10 children. Call (209) 571-6060 for tickets or info. Learn more at sundaysatcbs.com

Saturday, January 20: Dolores Huerta speaks at the 24th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration. Modesto Junior College Auditorium. 7 PM.

Saturday January 27: The West Modesto Community Collaborative's First Annual Crab Feed. Crab, tri-tip, no host bar, music, live and silent auction, raffle. Doors open 5:30 PM. Dinner 6:30 PM. Tickets \$45 each. Get them early! Only 300 will be sold. Veterans Foundation Event Hall, 3500 Coffee Rd., Suite 15, Modesto. Call 209-522-6902 or, email adminassist@westmodestocollaborative.com

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 (in the UUFSC sanctuary). 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

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

TUESDAYS

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

NAACP Meeting: Christ Unity Baptist Church, 601 L St., Modesto, 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. 209-645-1909, email naacp.branch1048@gmail.com

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

Ukulele Jam led by Lorrie Freitas. 6 p.m. Songbooks provided. Telle Classrooms Trinity Presbyterian Church, 1600 Carver, Modesto. Donation. Info: 209-505-3216. 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,

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), 4:00-5:00 pm. Call the Center for info: 529-5750.

MEDIA: Listen to Peace/Life Center radio, KCBP 95.5 FM streaming at <http://www.KCBPradio.org> (not on the air yet)

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

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

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

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

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: mercedboard@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/>

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, jpmadesto@gmail.com, 559-280-3864.

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

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

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>

Valley Heartland Zen Group: every Thurs 6:30 to 8:30 pm, Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2310 Woodland Ave. Meditation. Newcomers welcome. Info: 535-6750 or <http://emptynestzendo.org>

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

FRIDAYS

Game Night and Potluck, third Friday of each month. For 21+ only. Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St., Suite 2, Modesto. 7 pm to 10 pm. Info: John Aguirre, (559) 280-3864; jpmadesto@gmail.com

Funstrummers Ukulele Band every Friday, 9:15 am-noon, Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto. Donation. Info: 209-505-3216; www.Funstrummers.com

Latino Emergency Council (LEC) 3rd Fridays, 8:15 am, El Concilio, 1314 H St. Modesto. Info: Dale Butler, 522-8537.

Village Dancers: Dances from Balkans, Europe, USA and more. Fridays, Carnegie Arts Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock. 7:30-9:30 pm, \$5 (students free). Info: call Judy, 209-480-0387.

Sierra Club: Yokuts group. Regular meetings, third Friday, College Ave. Congregational Church, 7 pm. Info: 300-4253. Visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts> for info on hikes and events.

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

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

SATURDAY

Divine Feminine Gathering. Join us for a time of ritual, song and conversation as women come together to celebrate one another and the Divine among us and within us. 3rd Saturday of the month, 3:30-5:00 p.m. Stockton, CA. Contact Rev. Erin King, 209-815-0763, orkingenne@gmail.com

Citizens' Climate Lobby, Modesto Chapter, meets every first Saturday, 10:30 a.m., 937 Oxford Way, Modesto. Questions: Call Kathy, 523-5907.

So Easy ~ So Good: Vegetarian/Vegan/Wannabe Group. Potlucks, guest speakers, field trips, activist activities, movie nights, etc. Third Saturday of every month. Info: Kathy Haynes (209) 250-9961 or email kathyhaynesSESG@gmail.com

SERRV: 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. nonprofit organization. <http://www.gaycentralvalley.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.