



Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

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Modesto Peace/Life Center presents a John McCutcheon Benefit Concert

By JOSEPH HOMER

Dear Engaged community member!

When was the last time you went to a folk concert? Saw your friends at the Center? Took a night off for a good cause?

The Modesto Peace/Life Center cordially invites you to our upcoming John McCutcheon Benefit Concert for the Peace/Life Center.

John plays several instruments (from the guitar to the hammer dulcimer), earned six Grammy nominations (made 30 albums), and never misses a chance to visit Modesto! So this is the event for you.

Not to mention, you'll be supporting all of the great projects the Center is working on!



Advance tickets are \$20, door tickets \$23, and youth tickets \$7. We accept check or cash at the Church of the Brethren (2301 Woodland, Modesto; 523-1438) or downtown at Beads of Contentment (1028 J, Modesto; 523-6335). Tickets are also available online at <http://mccutcheonmodesto2016.eventbrite.com>

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*

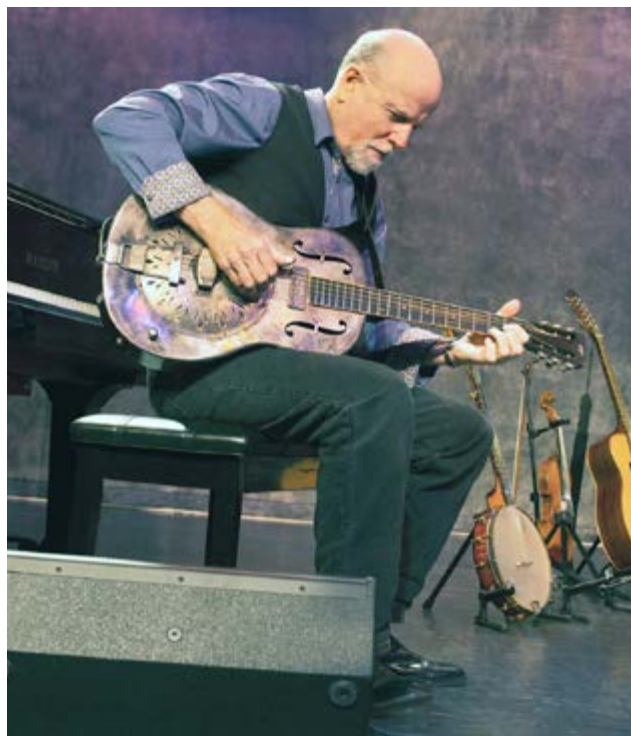
Piano — \$300 *Eight tickets*

Hammer Dulcimer — \$500 *Sixteen tickets.*

Sponsorship checks should be mailed by January 5th to Michael Jurković, 2309 Vicki Dr., Modesto CA 95350-3450. For information on sponsorships, contact Michael at 209-614-1573, mzjurkovic@gmail.com

For updates, follow us on Facebook at "Modesto Peace/Life Center," where you can RSVP for the event! Other questions? Call Ken Schroeder, 209-480-4576 or email Joseph Homer at jhomer42@gmail.com

Don't wait too long to buy either. Tickets go quickly, and we want to see you there!



Historian Taylor Branch will speak at the 22nd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration

By JAMES COSTELLO

Taylor Branch will to speak at the free 22nd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration on Saturday, **January 23 at 7:00 p.m.** at Modesto Junior College's Performance and Media Center on East Campus. Mr. Branch will speak on "Freedom and Gridlock: Lessons From Martin Luther King."

There will be a public reception for Mr. Branch at the West Modesto King-Kennedy Center, 601 S. Martin Luther King, Jr. at 5:00 p.m. Students will meet with him there at 4:00 p.m. [All students are welcome!].

Taylor Branch is best known for his landmark history of the civil rights era, *America in the King Years*. The trilogy's first book, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63*, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1989. Two successive volumes also gained critical and popular success: *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-65*, and *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-1968*. All three books remain in demand.

Branch's latest book, *The King Years: Historic Moments in the Civil Rights Movement* (2013) presents eighteen key episodes across the full span of the era, knitted together from the trilogy, each chapter with new introductions. The result is a compact, 190-page immersion for readers in this transformative period of American history. This book will on sale at the event.

Branch's other works include *The Clinton Tapes: Wrestling History with the President* and the "The Shame of College Sports"



[October 2011 *The Atlantic*.] which "may well be the most important article ever written about college sports." [Sports commentator Frank DeFord.]

Mr. Branch has discussed doctrines of non-violence with San Quentin prisoners, and with officers at the National War College. He has presented seminars on civil rights at Oxford University and in sixth-grade classrooms. His 2008 address at the National Cathedral marked the 40th anniversary of Dr. King's last Sunday sermon from that pulpit. In 2009, he gave the Theodore H. White Lecture on the Press and Politics at Harvard.

Branch began his career in 1970 as a journalist for *The Washington Monthly*, *Harper's*

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Hightower to be keynote speaker at Motherlode MLK Celebration

By PAT CERVELLI

Music and mind tickling commentary will be featured at this year's annual Motherlode Martin Luther King, Jr. event on Sunday, January 24, 2:30 pm at the Sonora High School Auditorium. The free event will host nationally known columnist, radio commentator, journalist, public speaker and author Jim Hightower, and the musical talents of the Gwen Amey Gospel Choir, Michelle Allison and Dennis Brown.



Twice elected Texas Agriculture Commissioner, Hightower believes that "the true political spectrum is not right to left but top to bottom." He is a leading voice for those he designates "the 80 percent of the public who no longer find themselves within shouting distance of the Washington and Wall Street powers at the top." As he describes his life, he "has spent four decades battling the powers that be on behalf of the powers that ought to be: working families, small businesses, and just-plain-folks." His nationally distributed newspaper column appears on the opinion page of the Union Democrat.

Jim Hightower has been called many things, including irascible and a hilarious curmudgeon. He has been compared to Will Rogers who, in 1939, also spoke at the Sonora High School Auditorium.

American historian Studs Terkel said of Hightower, "Thank God for Jim Hightower. Instead of leaving us stewing in anger and despair, he rallies us with stories of our own history and of our own neighbors, inspiring us to take charge of our own democracy's destiny. And he leaves us laughing

and thinking at the same time."

Hightower talks about democracy as something that happens not just at election time, and not just with one event. He stresses that it's an ongoing building process. "What created democracy was Thomas Paine and Shays' Rebellion, the suffragists and the abolitionists and on down through Martin Luther King, Jr., and César Chávez. And now it's

down to us," Hightower says. He speaks about dialogue and grassroots partnerships to advance democratic values. It is these "partnerships" that lie underneath much of America's can-do and know-how society.

Jim Hightower, "America's most popular populist," reinforces President Abraham Lincoln's statement in the Gettysburg Address: "...government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the Earth." The Motherlode Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee is bringing Jim Hightower to Sonora to share his ideas and invites the public to be a part of the conversation. His website is <http://www.jimhightower.com/>.

The 21st annual Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday celebration organized by the Motherlode MLK Jr. Committee also features the Gwen Amey Gospel Choir from Merced, as well as singers Dennis Brown and Michelle Allison. Following the program there is a free reception to which all are invited. The MLK Committee website is <http://mlmartinlutherkingjr.org/>. For more information contact MLK Committee member Pat Cervelli at patcervelli@frontiernet.net, or call 928-3494.

Taylor Branch

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and *Esquire*. He holds honorary doctoral degrees from ten colleges and universities and was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 1999.

The event is free. However, we depend solely on donations of money or services from our co-sponsors, caring groups, businesses, and individuals. *Will you help us bring Taylor Branch to our community?*

ACTION: Make your tax-deductible check payable to "Modesto Peace Life Center-MLK." Send it to Jim Costello, 1849 Richard Way, Ceres, CA 95307-4504. The Peace/Life Center is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization; EIN #94-2800825. Information: jcostello@igc.org

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Climate Change: There Is No Consensus

By DAN ONORATO

What the hell? you probably fumed on reading that headline in *Connections*. So, now that I have your attention, January's Film Night features *Merchants of Doubt* that spotlights the "silver-tongued pundits-for-hire" that make such spurious claims and the tactics they use to manipulate public opinion.

A.O. Scott of the *New York Times* writes that the documentary "examines the history of corporate-financed public relations efforts to sow confusion and skepticism about scientific research. The filmmakers interview scientists, activists and whistle-blowers who have tried to expose such activities, as well as some of its perpetrators, repentant and otherwise. . . . Their tactics included sending dubiously credentialed experts out into the world to disguise dishonesty as reasonable doubt. "We just don't know." "The science is complicated." "We need more research."

The film's examples range over decades and include the propaganda surrounding cigarettes, pharmaceuticals, and now climate change.

Scott concludes his review on a sober note: "the film as a whole" expresses "the faith that reason and facts can defeat propaganda and falsehoods. There is plenty of cause for

Delegation to Nicaragua: Food Sovereignty & Agroecology June 20 - July 1, 2016

Submitted by SHELLY SCRIBNER

The Alliance for Global Justice is a co-sponsor of this important delegation.

While mainstream US media tends to focus on the poverty in Nicaragua, social movements and local community organizing in this Central American nation are alive and well. Nicaragua is the regional gathering place for *La Via Campesina*, a global movement made up of rural peoples, small farmers, and indigenous communities. This movement coined the term "food sovereignty" in resistance to the corporatization and industrialization of the food system. *La Via Campesina* sees agroecology, a form of low-input sustainable agriculture, as a pillar of building food sovereignty.

Our delegation includes visits to peasant schools that provide political and technical training in agroecology. We will see agricultural cooperatives that sustain local communities and are addressing issues like gender equity and climate change. To understand the political context in which social movements in Nicaragua operate, including its revolutionary history and membership in ALBA, our delegation will also include visits with Nicaraguan officials and citizens.

Cost: \$1250 plus airfare.

Trip fee includes lodging, meals, in-country transport, translation, and staff coordination. Scholarships are available.

For an application or more information, contact:

Erika Takeo, Friends of the ATC National Coordinator erikatakeo.atc@gmail.com

Visit the *Alliance for Global Justice* web page at www.afgj.org



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Pre-deciding About Violence

By ELIZABETH TRAUBMAN, BA, MSW and LIONEL TRAUBMAN, DDS, MSD

As loving parents who raised two children during the era of the Vietnam War, we were inspired by the work of child psychologist Haim Ginott who observed: “Misbehavior and punishment are not opposites that cancel each other. On the contrary, they breed and reinforce each other.”

We asked ourselves: Is it possible that spanking – smacking, some say – has a ripple effect into our community and inter-nationally? And so we challenged two rarely-questioned, often-implemented axioms of our times:

Violence is a good way to get what you want.

You can end violence with violence.

Surprisingly, both behaviors remain popular in our culture. A recent ABC News poll suggests that half of American parents still spank their children. Political policy makers are leading the charge, despite a growing mountain of proof that these ideas are obsolete – still used, but replaced by better ways.

We were so impressed by Haim Ginott’s work and a growing body of supporting research that in disciplining our daughter and son we challenged ourselves to rule out spanking. Pre-deciding “no” to physical punishment threw us into sometimes feverish searching for alternatives to improve behavior and keep our daughter and son safe. Doubtful at first, we kept discovering creative, nonviolent alternatives that worked and kept us and our kids together and (mostly) behaving our best. We soon realized that rejecting violence was possible, do-able in real life, and desirable.

Pre-deciding about violence, beginning at home and then rippling out globally, is the most urgent need of our time.

It is our best hope in this era of widespread atomic, biological, and chemical weapons when even a few people can do a lot of harm. Whether with physical punishment or all-out war, the stunning paradox of our time is that rejecting violence and dignifying our adversary – not humiliating, harming, or excluding – is the response that gets the best results.

What does smacking your child have in common with the fast-spreading violence we read about in headlines from every continent like terrorist attacks in Paris, Beirut, and Jerusalem, and drone strikes that kill innocent women and children?

They all are part of the cycle of cruelty. Yet as today’s headlines clarify for us, violence primarily fuels more flames of hostility.

Take the case of the war on terrorism. One pilot who directed drone strike assassinations of terrorist leaders – which often kill innocent woman and children – admitted: “We kill four and create 10 [new terrorists].”

Whose idea was it that the best way to fight terrorism is to create more terrorists? And how have they been so successful

at selling this idea?

The mathematics of violence is simple: The cycle grows exponentially, like pouring gasoline on a fire. The more violence you dish out, the more you get back.

If this is true on the battlefield, how true is it in neighborhoods and homes?

Interestingly, Mahatma Gandhi said that subtle forms of violence are actually the most dangerous, because they are unquestioned by society, everywhere on Earth, and never ending.

Research clarifies that parental use of physical punishment is often copied from the authorities who raised us. By imitation, we learn violence from childhood.

Today child, spouse, neighbor, and “other” abuse – sometimes justified as retaliation or self-defense – dominates the evening news. Smacking-to-teach may be justified, yet few parents deny having hit harder than intended out of rage or fear. More abusive treatment easily follows. Now realizing this at-home cause-and-effect makes seemingly small family choices about punishment matter a lot more for humankind’s future together. In today’s violent world, we parents matter more than ever.

Dr. Ginott reminds us that it is neither passivity nor punishment, but mutual empathy that is the foundation of effective parenting and family health. Pre-deciding to master listening and become an artisan of communication best helps parents relate to their children in an understanding way that improves behavior and dignifies everyone without diminishing parental authority.

That’s why it is always the right time to reject corporal punishment. Discipline without hitting is easier for both parent and child, especially if hitting was never used earlier or at all. This practice makes better communicators of the whole family, and parents become better teachers for their children by responding creatively – and nonviolently – to their own anger and fear.

What is true on the micro-level of the family unit is equally as true on the macro-level of international relations. To prevent war, one must pre-decide. In the midst of the blazing fire, it is too late to get the oily rags out of the garage. Amid chaos and anxiety about real or imagined threats, it is too late to decide against the primitive, violent act of war. In fear, our brains do not even work correctly, save to rationalize old thinking and cruel acts that destroy life and relationships. The creative possibility is not available – eclipsed by our visceral, reptilian reactions.

Consultant Lisa McLeod notes that we often agonize over non-critical, material decisions that affect our lives very little: hair styles, paint colors, car purchases, eyeglass frames. Yet when it comes to behavioral decisions and responses to more critical events including life-and-death crises, “people often just react.”

Gergana Sabeva Yordanova’s extraordinary doctoral re-

search, *Effects of the Pre-Decision Stage of Decision Making on the Self-Regulation of Behavior*, affirms the importance of pre-decision in our lives. Without it, a lack of self-regulation gives way to virtually every problem of our society – emotions and impulses that lead to money mismanagement, compulsive eating, greed, alcohol and drug addiction, abusive behavior, and ceaseless violence.

Our thirty-five years of facilitating serious adversaries internationally in a healing and peacebuilding process continues to strongly validate how a new path toward reconciliation works with very diverse people who pre-choose to decline aggression in favor of sitting down face-to-face. The new experience of listening-to-learn and being heard – we call it Authentic Dialogue – allows antagonists around the world to experience this dependable and transformative truth: “An enemy is one whose story we have not heard.”

As with our children and Dr. Ginott’s prescription of empathic communication, the pre-intention to engage in Authentic Dialogue enables so-called enemies to feel less isolated, hopeless, or desperate. Rather than being swept downstream in a flood of violence and bloodshed, they discover that they have more eloquent options.

This is the face-to-face entry point to life beyond war. We’ve experienced it facilitating and mentoring citizen-driven engagement for Soviets and Americans, Palestinians and Israelis, Armenians and Azerbaijanis, and most recently Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, adversaries in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and once-warring tribes in Cote d’Ivoire. Authentic Dialogue – the technique of listening-to-learn and being heard – time and again delivers seemingly miraculous results.

The daily brutality in the news headlines is proof: We are pushing the violence button too quickly and too often.

The evidence favors that we choose “communicating with” not “battling against.” Pre-choosing Authentic Dialogue has served our parenting and enabled many sworn adversaries we’ve watched create their new life together – beyond war.

McLeod’s prescription may be the urgently needed preventive and cure, not only at home but among nations: “The pre-decision... gives you a tool for making decisions as your best self, so when the worst day happens you’ve already decided how you want to react.”

Being one’s best self at home and also among nations often works a small miracle. And sometimes a great one.

Elizabeth “Libby” Traubman is a retired clinical social worker and co-founder of the 23-year-old Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue. Lionel “Len” Traubman retired after 38 years from his San Francisco practice of pediatric dentistry. The Traubmans have co-produced five documentary films of traditional adversaries reconciling. Married 48 years, they reside in San Mateo, CA, and continue nurturing two children, three grandchildren, and relationship-builders internationally. The deep roots and global influence of the Living Room Dialogue are described in Wikipedia at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish-Palestinian_Living_Room_Dialogue_Group

Contact: Libby and Len Traubman, 1448 Cedarwood Dr., San Mateo, CA 94403 Phone: 650-574-8303 Cell: 650-200-8913 Skype: libbyandlentraubman E-mail: LTraubman@igc.org; Web: <http://traubman.igc.org>

A Fresh Start: Purchase Less, Recycle (and make) more

By JENIFER WEST

Happy 2016! If you've made New Year's Resolutions, here's hoping you're off to a flying start!

In keeping with the spirit of making positive changes, the theme for 2016 at our house is doing more with less. 'The Sustainable 3 R's' – Reduce, Reuse, & Recycle – have been part of our lives for quite a while now. But there's always more we can do. So this year, my goal is to purchase less, and recycle (and make) more.

One thing that will help with that goal is natural yeast starter. You may recall a mention in this column of *The Art of Baking with Natural Yeast* by Caleb Warnock and Melissa Richardson, from whom one can obtain a bit of dried, 'sweet' yeast starter for bread and other baked goods (email calebwarnock@yahoo.com to get your own). That starter has been with us since, through times of plenty (used and refreshed often), and, recently, leaner times as well (when I, um, sort of left it to its own devices for a while). I finally worked up the courage to open the crock and check to see if it was still alive. Yikes!! A blue-green mold blossomed on one side, and a 1/2-inch layer of thin, black liquid floated on the top. After pouring off the black stuff, I examined the starter underneath. Amazingly, it appeared to be fine. Tart as a lemon, but it seemed to be alive. Most fed the compost pile, and a teaspoon went into a clean mason jar, mixed with some fresh flour & water. Next day, a reassuring layer of thin, brown liquid lay on the top – the yeast beasts were alive & kickin! Now back in its crock (put through the dishwasher in the meantime), it's fresh & ready to go at any moment.

Recently-revived yeast probably won't be ready to leaven bread in a hurry, but it will make perfectly fine crêpes – the French version of pancakes. They're surprisingly easy to make, and, believe it or not, are another way to recycle!



That leftover chicken or Sunday roast hanging out in the fridge? Toss it with some veggies, maybe cheese or a cream sauce, or even a can of un-reconstituted cream-of-whatever soup; warm it up, and viola – instant crepe filling for a quick weeknight dinner! Just about any leftovers you might have in the fridge can be wrapped in savory crêpes. And there's really no need to buy any special equipment – if you have a non-stick frying pan that can handle fairly high heat and a pancake turner, you're good to go!! (I use a pair of small, cast iron griddles, and a pair of thick, silicone oven gloves to handle them.)

Crêpes can also be sweetened and eaten hot off the press, or filled with mild cheese and served drizzled with maple syrup, honey or jam; or filled with sliced fruit, or any other sweet treat that comes to mind. With a chocolate filling and a sprinkling of powdered sugar on top, they make a decadent dessert! Sweet or savory, your imagination's the only limit. The recipe I use, adapted from the book, is below. Add the

optional vanilla and sweetener if you're making the crêpes for breakfast or dessert; leave them out if they'll be the main attraction at lunch or dinner. (Note: Crêpes can be made without pioneer yeast – plenty of recipes are available online.)

Crêpes

- 1 cup starter
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup flour (white or whole grain)
- 3 eggs
- 2 tbsp. butter (softened)
- 1/4 - 1/3 cup sugar (white, brown, coconut), or more, to taste (optional)
- 1/2 - 1 tsp. vanilla (optional)

It's easiest to mix up the batter in a blender. The batter should resemble a thin pancake batter. Refrigerate for an hour before using it (optional – you could even blend the batter in the morning, toss it into the fridge, and make the crêpes after work). If you're using a cast iron griddle or pan, let it preheat while the batter rests. The pan should be fairly hot – the crêpes should cook quickly. Use a slightly hotter pan for savory crêpes – the sugar in the sweet ones caramelizes at a lower temperature, browning them quickly.

Coat the cooking surface with your choice of fat (with its high smoke point, ghee – clarified butter, used in East Indian cooking -- works great). Pour about 1/4 cup of batter onto the pan (setting the blender on a plate will catch the inevitable drips) and quickly swirl it around into a circle. The rest of the operation is pretty much like cooking pancakes – except that, due to the thin batter and high heat, you don't necessarily have to cook both sides. Crêpes are best served immediately, but will keep, refrigerated, for several days.

Bon appétit, and Happy 2016!

Paul Hemmings Ukulele Workshop

By LORRIE FREITAS

Paul Hemmings from New York City has agreed to stop by the Central Valley and give local ukulele enthusiasts a look and listen to his style and talent. He teaches and performs at ukulele festivals around the world. His knowledge of the ukulele fretboard is extensive. He has books and tutorials for players in all stages of discovery.

Paul's six albums bring together modern jazz, improvisation and American roots music inspiring a reviewer to write: "Hemmings' mixture of cultures, influences, and genres,

exploring the edges of harmony and rhythm, is remarkably fresh and a complete success." <http://www.paulhemmings.com/>


Friday Morning
9:30 a.m. January
15, 2016, Church of
the Brethren 2301

Woodland Ave. Modesto Potluck lunch follows at noon.
\$25.00

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After 14 years of War on Terror, the West is great at fomenting barbarism and creating failed states

By VINCENT EMANUELE

For the last several years, people around the world have asked, "Where did ISIS come from?" Explanations vary, but largely focus on geopolitical (U.S. hegemony), religious (Sunni-Shia), ideological (Wahhabism) or ecological (climate refugees) origins. Many commentators and even former military officials correctly suggest that the war in Iraq is primarily responsible for unleashing the forces we now know as ISIS, ISIL, Daesh, etc. Here, hopefully I can add some useful reflections and anecdotes.

Mesopotamian Nightmares

When I was stationed in Iraq with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 2003-2005, I didn't know what the repercussions of the war would be, but I knew there would be a reckoning. That retribution, otherwise known as blowback, is currently being experienced around the world (Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, France, Tunisia, California, and so on), with no end in sight.

Back then, I routinely saw and participated in obscenities. Of course, the wickedness of the war was never properly recognized in the West. Without question, antiwar organizations attempted to articulate the horrors of the war in Iraq, but the mainstream media, academia and political-corporate forces in the West never allowed for a serious examination of the greatest war crime of the 21st century.

As we patrolled the vast region of Iraq's Al-Anbar Province, throwing MRE (Meal Ready to Eat) trash out of our vehicles, I never contemplated how we would be remembered in history books: I simply wanted to make some extra room in my HUMVEE. Years later, sitting in a Western Civilization history course at university, listening to my professor talk about the cradle of civilization, I thought of MRE garbage on the floor of the Mesopotamian desert.

Examining recent events in Syria and Iraq, I can't help but think of the small kids my fellow marines would pelt with Skittles from those MRE packages. Candies weren't the only objects thrown at the children: water bottles filled with urine, rocks, debris, and various other items were thrown as well. I often wonder how many members of ISIS and various other terrorist organizations recall such events?

Moreover, I think about the hundreds of prisoners we took captive and tortured in makeshift detention facilities staffed by teenagers from Tennessee, New York and Oregon. I never had the misfortune of working in the detention facility, but

I remember the stories. I vividly remember the marines telling me about punching, slapping, kicking, elbowing, kneeling and head-butting Iraqis. I remember the tales of sexual torture: forcing Iraqi men to perform sexual acts on each other while marines held knives against their testicles, sometimes sodomizing them with batons.

However, before those abominations could take place, those of us in infantry units had the pleasure of rounding up Iraqis during night raids, zip-tying their hands, black-bagging their heads and throwing them in the back of HUMVEEs and trucks while their wives and kids collapsed to their knees and wailed. Sometimes, we would pick them up during the day. Most of the time they wouldn't resist. Some of them would hold hands while marines would butt-stroke the prisoners in the face. Once they arrived at the detention facility, they would be held for days, weeks, and even months at a time. Their families were never notified. And when they were released, we would drive them from the FOB (Forward Operating Base) to the middle of the desert and release them several miles from their homes.

After we cut their zip-ties and took the black bags off their heads, several of our more deranged marines would fire rounds from their AR-15s into their air or ground, scaring the recently released captives. Always for laughs. Most Iraqis would run, still crying from their long ordeal at the detention facility, hoping some level of freedom awaited them on the outside. Who knows how long they survived. After all, no one cared. We do know of one former U.S. prisoner who survived: Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS.

Amazingly, the ability to dehumanize the Iraqi people reached a crescendo after the bullets and explosions concluded, as many marines spent their spare time taking pictures of the dead, often mutilating their corpses for fun or poking their bloated bodies with sticks for some cheap laughs. Because iPhones weren't available at the time, several marines came to Iraq with digital cameras. Those cameras contain an untold history of the war in Iraq, a history the West hopes the world forgets. That history and those cameras also contain footage of wanton massacres and numerous other war crimes, realities the Iraqis don't have the pleasure of forgetting.

That history and those cameras also contain footage of wanton massacres and numerous other war crimes, realities the Iraqis don't have the pleasure of forgetting.

Unfortunately, I could recall countless horrific anecdotes from my time in Iraq. Innocent people were not only routinely rounded-up, tortured and imprisoned, they were also incinerated by the hundreds of thousands, some studies suggest by the millions.

Only the Iraqis understand the pure evil that's been waged on their nation. They remember the West's role in the eight year war between Iraq and Iran; they remember Clinton's sanctions in the 1990s, policies which resulted in the deaths of well over 500,000 people,

largely women and children. Then, 2003 came and the West finished the job. Today, Iraq is an utterly devastated nation. The people are poisoned and maimed, and the natural environment is toxic from bombs laced with depleted uranium. After fourteen years of the War on Terror, one thing is clear: the West is great at fomenting barbarism and creating failed states.

Living with Ghosts

The warm and glassy eyes of young Iraqi children perpetually haunt me, as they should. The faces of those I've killed, or at least those whose bodies were close enough to examine, will never escape my thoughts. My nightmares and daily reflections remind me of where ISIS comes from and why, exactly, they hate us. That hate, understandable yet regrettable, will be directed at the West for years and decades to come. How could it be otherwise?

Again, the scale of destruction the West has inflicted in the Middle East is absolutely unimaginable to the vast majority of people living in the developed world. This point can never be overstated as Westerners consistently and naively ask, "Why do they hate us?"

In the end, wars, revolutions and counterrevolutions take place and subsequent generations live with the results: civilizations, societies, cultures, nations and individuals survive or perish. That's how history works. In the future, how the West deals with terrorism will largely depend on whether or not the West continues their terroristic behavior. The obvious way to prevent future ISIS-style organizations from forming is to oppose Western militarism in all its dreadful forms: CIA coups, proxy wars, drone strikes, counterinsurgency campaigns, economic warfare, etc.

Meanwhile, those of us who directly participated in the genocidal military campaign in Iraq will live with the ghosts of war.

Vincent can be reached at vincent.emanuele333@gmail.com

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Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's 2015 Distinguished Peace Leadership Award to courageous Peace Leader Setsuko Thurlow

By DAVID KRIEGER

Good evening and thank you for being part of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's 32nd Annual Evening for Peace. A special welcome to all the students with us tonight. We hope that this evening will be a great learning experience for you – both educational and inspirational.

Our honoree this year, the 70th anniversary year of the atomic bombings, is a hibakusha – a survivor of those bombings. She, like other hibakusha, has the truest perspective on the horrors caused by the atomic bombs, the perspective of being under a nuclear detonation.

Before I introduce our honoree to you, I'd like to make a few comments about nuclear weapons and the work of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation to abolish them.

The atomic bombs used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki were relatively small nuclear weapons when compared with those of today. Nonetheless, they were very effective killing devices, killing 210,000 to 220,000 persons in the two cities by blast, fire and radiation by the end of 1945.

Nuclear weapons are not the friend of humanity or other forms of life. In fact, they are the enemy of all Creation. They are illegal, immoral, tremendously costly and undermine the security of their possessors.

The only reasonable number of nuclear weapons on our planet is Zero, and it is our collective responsibility to go from where we are to Zero. This has been the goal of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation since our founding in 1982.

We've progressed from 70,000 nuclear weapons in the world in the mid-1980s down to under 16,000 today. This is progress, but it is not sufficient. We still face the prospect of a Global Hiroshima – a nuclear war, by accident or design, which could end civilization and even the human species.

There is far too much complacency around this issue. I worry about ACID, an acronym for key elements of complacency: Apathy, Conformity, Ignorance and Denial. We must change these acidic forms of complacency to engagement by changing Apathy to Empathy; Conformity to Critical Thinking; Ignorance to Wisdom; and Denial to Recognition of the nuclear threat.

One important way we do this is through our work as a consultant to the Republic of the Marshall Islands in their lawsuits against the nine nuclear-armed countries in the International Court of Justice and in US federal court. The Marshall Islands does not seek compensation in these lawsuits. They seek only that the nuclear-armed countries negotiate in good faith for nuclear disarmament as they are obligated to do under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and customary international law.

The Foundation has helped establish legal teams to support these cases, and the attorneys working on the cases have



We still face the prospect of a Global Hiroshima – a nuclear war, by accident or design, which could end civilization and even the human species.

given thousands of hours to this work on a pro bono basis. Two of these lawyers are here this evening and I'd like you to join me in recognizing them: Laurie Ashton and Lynn Sarko.

I'd also like you to join me in recognizing Dan Smith, another pro bono attorney who has submitted amicus briefs on behalf of other civil society organizations in support of the Marshall Islands.

When you support the Foundation, you are supporting the courage of the Marshall Islanders and their legal efforts to achieve a victory for all humanity.

Another way we work to shift complacency to engagement is through our project, "Humanize Not Modernize." This project opposes the US and other nuclear-armed countries upgrading, modernizing and generally making their nuclear arsenals more usable. The US alone plans to spend \$1 trillion over the next three decades on modernizing its nuclear arsenal. It will only benefit the arms manufacturers at the expense of meeting human needs for the poor and hungry and those without health care.

When you support the Foundation, you are supporting the shift from nuclear insanity to human security.

Still another way we work to combat nuclear complacency is by educating a new generation of Peace Leaders. Paul Chappell, the director of our Peace Leadership Program, travels the world teaching people the values and skills needed to wage peace. We also have a great internship program at the Foundation, led by Rick Wayman, our Director of Programs.

Our interns make valuable contributions to the Foundation's work.

When you support the Foundation, you are supporting the development and training of committed young peace leaders.

Tonight we shine a light on courageous Peace Leadership. This is the 32nd time we have presented our Distinguished Peace Leadership Award. It has gone to some of the great Peace Leaders of our time, including the XIVth Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Carl Sagan, Yehudi Menuhin, Jody Williams, Jacques Cousteau, Helen Caldicott and Medea Benjamin.

We are honored to be presenting our 2015 award to an exceptional woman, who is a hibakusha and child victim of war. She was just 13 years old when the US dropped an atomic bomb on her city of Hiroshima. She lost consciousness and awakened to find herself pinned beneath a collapsed building.


She thought she would die, but she survived and has made it her life's work to end the nuclear weapons era and to assure that her past does not become someone else's future. She is a global leader in the fight to prevent a Global Hiroshima and assure that Nagasaki remains the last city to suffer a nuclear attack. Our honoree is a Peace Ambassador of the United Nations University of Peace in Costa Rica, a Peace Ambassador of the city of Hiroshima, and was a nominee for this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

I am very pleased to present the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's 2015 Distinguished Peace Leadership Award to a courageous Peace Leader and member of the human family, Setsuko Thurlow.

David Krieger delivered these remarks at the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's 32nd Annual Evening for Peace on October 25, 2015.

Support the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation at <https://www.wagingpeace.org/donate-2/>

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Excerpted from Setsuko Thurlow's Acceptance speech

Read the complete speech at <http://www.wagingpeace.org/setsuko-thurlows-award-acceptance-speech/>

In the summer of 1954, after my graduation from university, I travelled to the U.S. to attend college on a scholarship. At a press interview I was asked to elaborate on and give my opinion regarding the unprecedented birth of a massive anti-nuclear movement in Japan. The interviewer was referring to the U.S. testing of the largest hydrogen bomb, up to that time, at the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands on March 1, which caused the Islanders severe public health problems and environmental damage. In addition, all members of the crew of a nearby Japanese fishing boat were covered by radiation fallout, "ash of death," and became seriously ill. One fisherman died. Suddenly, Japanese realized that the U.S. had no regret or remorse about the massive consequential suffering of nuclear weapon victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and now of the Marshall Islands, for the purpose of testing, production, and the potential future use of nuclear weapons. Almost overnight this anti-nuclear movement became nationwide, with citizens' groups collecting 20 million signatures, and pushing for the passage of a resolution for the abolition of nuclear weapons at all levels of government. My response to the interviewer was frank and critical. I strongly called for the ending of the U.S. nuclear testing. As a result of my remarks I began to receive unsigned hate letters. This was my introduction to the United States.

I was deeply disturbed by the way many Americans uncritically and blindly followed the government line justifying the atomic bombings. It was a chilling reminder for me of the wartime behavior of Japanese in unthinkingly swallowing government propaganda and brainwashing. The hostile reaction I received forced me to do some soul-searching. It was a temptation to quit and remain silent, but I came out of this traumatic experience with a stronger commitment to keep speaking out against the indiscriminate massacre of civilians with new types of mass killing devices.

During this lonely time, I discovered the writings of some U.S. scholars with profound analyses of the issue. Such work inspired and supported me. One of these thinkers was Richard Falk, Professor of International Law at Princeton University, who I understand is now working with you in this organization, who said to this effect:

The bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki were viewed as contributions to the ending of a popular and just war. Therefore they have never been appraised in the necessary way as atrocities. They have never been understood as they

certainly would have been understood had Hiroshima and Nagasaki been located [in an Allied country]. Somehow we have got to create that awareness, so that Hiroshima is understood to have been on the same level of depravity, and in many ways far more dangerous to us as a species and as a civilization than was even Auschwitz.

The failure to see Hiroshima and Nagasaki as atrocities, the regarding of those two bombs as "good bombs" that contributed to winning and ending a just war, helped the American consciousness to accept the subsequent development of nuclear weapons, thus linking the justification of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the disastrous nuclear arms race and Cold War.

Living in North America as a Hiroshima survivor advocating for the abolition of nuclear weapons has given me many challenges as well as rewarding opportunities. In the 1950s and even in the 1970s, I often felt like a lone voice in the wilderness facing peoples' indifference, denial, justification, and even open hostility. An example of this hostility was a bomb scare at the Hiroshima-Nagasaki photographic exhibition, which was organized at the National Gallery of Art, causing the evacuation of the entire building. But there were also times when I felt euphoric, for example in 1982 when one million people from all over the world marched in downtown New York to Central Park demanding nuclear disarmament! After the fall of the Berlin Wall, however, people went back to sleepwalking with the dream that the nuclear arms race was no longer threatening the world.

Unfortunately, nuclear weapons are more dangerous today than at any time during the brief history of the nuclear age, due to a wide variety of risks including: proliferation (with some 16,000 nuclear bombs possessed by 9 nations) and modernization (with \$1 trillion planned by the U.S. alone over the next three decades); human error; computer failure; complex systems failure; radioactive contamination already in the environment and its toll on public and environmental health; as well as the global famine and climate chaos that would ensue should a limited use of nuclear weapons occur by accident or design. There is also the danger of terrorists acquiring nuclear weapons.



On top of the increasing risks of nuclear weapons use, it is profoundly disturbing to see the lack of tangible progress in diplomatic negotiations in spite of the fact that it has been 45 years since the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was introduced. The nuclear weapon states are not genuinely committed to the treaty as demonstrated by their not having complied with their legal obligation under Article VI to work toward nuclear disarmament in good faith. They are acting as if it is their right to keep their nuclear weapons indefinitely, and are manipulating the negotiation process to suit their perceived national interests. This unacceptable nuclear status quo has been driving many impatient non-nuclear weapons states and NGOs to negotiate a legally binding tool to achieve the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

Tonight I am delighted and most hopeful to witness the mounting momentum from a rapidly growing global movement, the Humanitarian Initiative, involving 121 non-nuclear weapon states and the NGOs working together to outlaw nuclear weapons. In the past two years, Norway, Mexico, and Austria have hosted International Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and, together with UN agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), have been reframing the narrative away from the abstract military doctrine of security and deterrence toward the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, with the result being a strong push for a Ban Treaty. The Humanitarian Pledge, introduced by Austria, "to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons" is now supported by 121 countries. These developments are breathtakingly exciting and empowering for all of us campaigners around the world.

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“I want my story to be heard.”

By DR. HAKIM, *Voices for Creative Nonviolence*

Kunduz MSF Hospital U.S. Bombing Survivor, “I want my story to be heard.”

Former MSF Kunduz Hospital pharmacist, Khalid Ahmad, recuperating at Emergency Hospital in Kabul

“I feel very angry, but I don’t want anything from the U.S. military,” said Khalid Ahmad, a 20 year old pharmacist who survived the U.S. bombing of the Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) / Doctors Without Borders Hospital in Kunduz on the 3rd of October, “God will hold them accountable.”

The actions of the U.S. military elicit the same contempt from Khalid and many ordinary Afghans as the actions of the Taliban or the ISIS.

Khalid was a little wary when Zuhul, Hoor and I were introduced to him in a ward of Emergency Hospital in Kabul, where he has been recuperating from a U.S. shrapnel injury to his spine that nearly killed him.

But, immediately, I saw his care for others. “Please bring a chair for him,” Khalid told his brother, not wanting me to be uncomfortable in squatting next to him, as we began our conversation in the corridor space outside the ward.

Having just recovered strength in his legs, he had walked tentatively to the corridor, making sure his urinary catheter bag wasn’t in the way as he sat down.

The autumn sun revealed tired lines on his face, as if even ‘skin’ can get permanently traumatized by the shock of bomb blasts.

“The Taliban had already taken control of all areas in Kunduz except the MSF Hospital and the airport. I felt I could still serve the patients safely because neither the Afghan /U.S. military forces nor the Taliban would bother us. At least, they’re not supposed to.” Khalid paused imperceptibly.

“As a neutral humanitarian service,” Khalid continued, “we treat everyone alike, as patients needing help. We recognize everyone as a human being.”

“I wasn’t scheduled to be on duty the night of the incident, but my supervisor asked me to help because the hospital was swarmed with larger numbers of patients that week.”

“I was sleeping when the bombing began at about 2 a.m. I went to see what was happening, and to my horror, I saw that the ICU was on fire, the flames appearing to shoot 10 meters up into the night sky. Some patients were burning in their beds.”

“I was petrified.”

“It was so frightening. The bombing and firing continued, and following after the bombs were showers of ‘laser-like flashes’ which were flammable, catching and spreading the fire.”

What were those laser-like flashes?

“With two other colleagues, I rushed to the guard house,

which was about five metres from the hospital’s main gate. In the guard house were four security guards. We all decided to make a run for the hospital gate, to escape the bombing.”

Khalid’s eyes cringed a little, disappointment soaking his voice. Such shock can be too much for a human being to bear; irreparable disappointment at the U.S. military for attacking a humanitarian, medical facility, and an unfair guilty disappointment with self for having escaped death while colleagues were killed.

“The first person ran. Then another. It was my turn.”

“I took off and just as I reached the gate, with one foot outside the gate and one foot inside the hospital compound, a shrapnel hit me on my back.”

“I lost power in both legs, and fell. Dazed, I dragged myself to a nearby ditch and threw myself in.”

“I was bleeding quickly from my back, the blood pooling at my sides. Feeling that my end was near, I was desperate to call my family. My colleagues and I had taken out the batteries from our cell phones because the U.S. military has a way of tracking and target-killing people by picking up their cell phone signals. With one good arm, somehow, I pulled out my phone and inserted its battery.”

“Mom, I’m injured, and don’t have time. Could you pass the phone to dad?”

“What happened, my son?”

“Please pass the phone to dad!”

“What happened, my son?”

I could almost hear his distraught mother wondering what could have happened to her son who should have been safe in the hospital environment.

“Mom, there’s no time left. Pass the phone to dad.”

“I then asked my dad for forgiveness for any wrong I had done. I was feeling faint, and dropped the phone.”

“In my half-consciousness, the phone rang and it was my cousin. He asked me what had happened, and instructed me to use my clothes to stop the bleeding. I yanked a vest off myself, threw it behind my back and laid on it.”

“I must have passed out, as my next memory was of hearing my cousin’s voice and other voices, and being taken to the kitchen of the hospital where some basic first aid was being given to many injured persons.”

“I saw people with amputated limbs. Some of my colleagues, some of my colleagues....what wrong had we done? Is this what we get for serving people?”

As I struggled emotionally to register Khalid’s story in my mind, I remembered my own training and practice as a doctor in hospitals, and I wished there was a global conversation about the failure of the Geneva Conventions to protect civilians, and health facilities. The European Council in Brussels in 2003 estimated that since 1990, almost 4 million people have died in wars, 90% of whom were civilians.

I also wished that more individuals could respond to UN



It struck me from Khalid’s account that the U.S. military could bomb a health facility by what Kate Clark of the Afghan Analysts Network suggested as ‘ripping up the rule book’, and then, not take any measures whatsoever after the bombing to treat casualties like Khalid and many others. If you are a civilian bombed by the U.S. military, you’ll have to fend for yourself!

High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres who declared in a June 2015 press release that “We are witnessing a paradigm change....It is terrifying that on the one hand there is more and more impunity for those starting conflicts, and on the other there is seeming utter inability of the international community to work together to stop wars and build and preserve peace.”

A positive way to respond would be to join MSF, as well as ICRC President Peter Maurer and UN Head Ban Ki Moon in saying, “Enough! Even war has rules!” , that is, we can sign MSF’s petition for an #independent investigation of the Kunduz MSF Hospital bombing.

Passively accepting the Pentagon’s confessional report of ‘human error’ resulting in the killing of 31 staff and patients in the Kunduz Hospital bombing would allow the U.S. and other militaries to continue breaching laws and conventions with impunity, like in Yemen right now.

The International Committee of the Red Cross reported in October that nearly 100 hospitals in Yemen had been attacked since March 2015. Just as recently as 2nd December, Khalid’s haunting story repeated itself in Taiz, Yemen, where an MSF clinic was attacked by the Saudi coalition forces, prompting Karline Kleijer, MSF operational manager for Yemen, to say that every nation backing the Yemen war, including the U.S., must answer for the Yemen MSF clinic bombing.

Khalid’s story was already haunting me, “To transport me, they used body bags meant for the dead. Feeble as I was, I panicked and made sure they heard me protesting, ‘I’m not dead!’ I heard someone say, “We know, don’t worry, we have no choice but to make do.”

“My cousin brought me to a hospital in Baghlan Province which had unfortunately been abandoned because of fighting in the area. So, I was taken to Pul-e-Khumri, and on the way, because I had slightly long hair, I heard shouting directed at us, ‘Hey, what are you doing with a Talib?’. My cousin had to assure them that I was not a Talib.”

So many possible fatal ‘human errors’ and mistakes....

“There was no available help in Pul-e-Khumri too, so I was finally brought to this hospital in Kabul. I’ve had five surgical operations so far,” Khalid said, his voice fading off a little, “and I needed two litres of blood in all.”

FAMILY TIES

All connections shattered between us
dropped in haste and anger
on the cold tile floor of the family

Looking backward from my generation
I see where this rancor began
Beyond the covered wagon trek,
from Missouri to California
from the farms of Mankato
to the shipyards of Richmond
From the port cities of Cork and New London
to the Tory settlements in the New World

Each connection cut like a suture -
vain attempt to stop the legacy of
Drink, ignorance and hard intolerance
Flowing from one generation to the next

Each voice vowing
as the back is turned in refusal:
"I will not be who you are"

Until I alone in my generation hold this chain of genetics
In my DNA, my double helix

How arrogant of me to think I can stop this.

I look forward to you, my son
so diligently charting your way
back through the past
of Mormon Records
and ancestor.com
Five Generations on each side!!
you proudly state

I hope you find the self you look for in these people
These cold strangers who glare back from
Darkened daguerreotypes
Daring you and me to be better than they

"Just try it"
they say
"See how you fare"

How foolish of me to see hope
and progress and love
in you my son

Foolish or not
What I see is as real as the new day
As your son touches your cheek and calls you "Papi"
(*en español*)
You take your daughter's hand.
A smile of knowing flashes between you.

A CALIFORNIAN LOOKS
AT FIREFLIES

Screened in and sheltered
From blood seeking Virginia 'skeeters
We watch the gathering dusk
As the world sweats the end of day

Suddenly the flash and squeal of
"There's one!" and I see it
For the first time in my life
That spark like a question
"Where are You?"

"Why do fireflies do that, grandma?"

"I don't know. I'll have to study up on fireflies.
We don't have fireflies in California."

"Why", he asks

"I guess they don't like living there."

"Why?"

"Maybe it's too cold"
"Do you like living in California?"

"Yes, I do"

"Why?"
"I guess because I always have"

"Why?"
"Because I was born there"

"Why?"

"Because my mother and father lived there"

"Why?"

"Because their mother and father lived there, or rather my
grandmother's father came there and...it's
Complicated

"Why?"

"People move and travel to new places"

"Why do you stay in California?"

"Because I live there"

"Why?"

And so it goes as the fireflies question one another in
Their
Bright language this hot Virginia night
"Where are you?"
"Where are you?"

FAMILY GATHERING

Another Year
Clean white linen is the constant
I billow it like a cloud
Over the round oak table
Feeding the family

Faces change in
This oak circle
Some gathering into themselves
In wrinkles and the glow of years
Some disappearing altogether
When my own hands stiffen
I'll still reach for the new baby
Child of this child I hold

I'll slice this bird of feast
Sacrifice again with silver
As the breast bone hinges time
Feeding the family

Another year
Clean white linen is the constant
I billow it like a cloud
Over the round oak table
Feeding the family

For Linda: A Celebration of Her
Poetry for Three Voices

These poems were written by Linda Johnson (June 10,
1949 - November 7, 2015) between 1980 and 2015. They
express her love of family, her world and the pleasure she
took in the smallest things. Linda lived every day of her



adult life in pain, but she
never complained. She
saw beauty and wonder
all around her. Even in
her darkest hours she
felt that gratitude always
surrounded her. [Note: the
references to voices have
been removed so the poetry
flows better for the reader.]



Green Tips for a Green Planet: Resolve to Just Do It!

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

This is reminder month...time to start a new year...12 months of clean slate lay ahead. How will you be green in 2017? The categories are many. Use your imagination. The rule of thumb for all environmental sustainability is to **reduce** first, then **reuse**, and finally, only **recycle** the small amount that should be left after reducing and recycling.

You might start by just adding a new awareness every week and then acting upon it one day at a time. The crucial awareness right now would be water conservation - yes even in an El Nino winter.

The easy water actions are using full washers and dishwashers. Try to use dishes for duo purpose preparation and serving. Serve salads on the same plates as main courses. Use one glass per family member per day. Cook double recipes to last more than one meal.

Turn automatic sprinkler systems off during rainy weather. Check your local outside watering allowance, which is only 1 weekend day per odd or even numbered address in Modesto. Use a broom or rake whenever possible. Current water restrictions forbid using a hose for cleaning sidewalks and driveways.

Try to go paperless whenever possible. Reuse one-sided junk and business mail for notes or computer copies. Lobby lawmakers to require less one-sided and blank sheets from businesses and paper mailings.

Take reusable bags to the store. Some great bags come with memberships to great environmental and social justice organizations.

Minimize automobile use by planning ahead to coordinate errands, meetings and appointments. Walk or bike for exercise and/or use public transportation use. Keep vehicles maintained.

Keep your heater at 68 degrees or no higher than 70. Enjoy a cozy gas log, pellet stove or eco log fire. Avoid sending polluting smoke into the atmosphere.

Thoughts about "garbage": When you throw something away...where is away? Use your green can for all biodegradable food and yard waste and/or compost leaves and yard prunings.

Reduce, reduce, reduce...reuse, reuse, reuse.

Happy Green New Year!



Modesto-Stanislaus (MoSt) Poetry Festival

The fourth annual Modesto-Stanislaus (MoSt) Poetry Festival will be held on Saturday February 6, 2016 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1528 Oakdale Rd in Modesto. The festival will feature workshops, a poetry contest, luncheon, readings and author book tables.

Workshop presenters and readers will be Troy Jollimore and Heather Altfeld., both published poets and professors at California State University Chico.

The festival is sponsored by the recently formed Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center. Our president and Modesto Poet Laureate, Gillian Wegener, will emcee the event.

Visit the MoSt website for information, guidelines for the



contest (submission deadline January 11), and registration form. www.mostpoetry.org, or email info@mostpoetry.org

Registration fee: \$30 for MoSt members; \$35 for others. Includes luncheon and contest fee. MoSt Poetry, P.O. Box 578940, Modesto, CA 95357

To All Operation 9-2-99 Clean-Up Participants

By CHRIS GUPTILL

I would like to thank everyone who participated in our latest Operation 9-2-99 river cleanup on December 12th on the north bank of the river. This was our 18th cleanup event and we were able to clean up parts of Dry Creek and Beardbrook Park, and all of Gateway Park. Check out the before and after photos here. Taking the place of the blight in this area is a new trail that is open for hiking, biking, and horseback riding stretching 4 miles in length from Beardbrook Park to Carpenter Road along the scenic Tuolumne River.

Saturday's 25 volunteers did an outstanding job of returning this entire area to a state the community can be proud of. We removed 5 shopping carts, 10 tires, and completely filled a 40 cubic yard dumpster for a total of about 4 tons of garbage and material removed from the riverbank, creek, and park areas. On a busy holiday Saturday, this small but mighty group of individual volunteers stepped up when their community needed them most. Special thanks to Captain Phil McKay with Fish and Wildlife, Ed Aguilar with Tuolumne River Trust, Todd Rocha with Parks for the restroom, gloves, grabbers, and bags, Vicki Rice with the City of Modesto Recycling Program for recycling the tires, Duane Becker for providing the trucks, Del Ambris with Cost Less Foods who helped remove the shopping carts, and Brian Gini at Collins Electric for the tools. What a successful end to the year.

We have a lot more work to do in 2016 though and we need as many volunteers and partners as we can get. Spread the word via social media. Tell a friend, a family member, a church or club or team member, a neighbor, or a co-worker that we need them. Direct them to the website at <http://tinyurl.com/operation9-2-99>. Have them sign up on the form to receive reminders via e-mail.

I hope to see even more people at our January 23rd cleanup as we work on the area behind the wastewater treatment plant of the north bank of the river for the first time. Next year we envision establishing an Adopt -A-River Program that will provide ongoing stewardship of one of our most valuable natural resources and recreation areas. Check out the details on the website or the links below to see the difference we are making.

Website - <http://tinyurl.com/operation9-2-99>

If you are interested, join or donate to our partner the Tuolumne River Trust here.



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

The key lesson of the post-9/11 abuses — from Guantanamo to torture to the invasion of Iraq — is that we must not allow military and intelligence officials to exploit the fear of terrorism to manipulate public opinion. Rather than blindly believe their assertions, we must test those claims for accuracy. In the wake of the Paris attacks, that lesson is more urgent than ever.

— Glenn Greenwald

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Speaker Series: Ending the Culture of Violence: Continuing the Conversation

By SHARON HAWLEY-CRUM

The third program in this 2015-2016 speaker series is titled “*Supporting Children – Community, Peace and Children’s Rights: One Educator’s Perspective.*” It will be held Thursday, January 21, 2016, at the Stanislaus County Library in the Community Auditorium at 7:30 p.m.

Heather Sherburn, an educator for 27 years and a product of Modesto City Schools, will be the guest speaker addressing her learning and experiences as a successful school administrator, along with her work to initiate a successful child centered peace-building program in the schools she last administered. She will also address how she was able to connect her schools within the community by providing a network of support to students and their families. Heather believes that, “Ultimately, in high risk communities, supporting students’ success and well-being as teens and adults, requires a full circle of support for the whole child and family.”

This *free event, which is open to the public*, is a partnership of the local affiliates of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), Oakdale-Riverbank-Escalon Branch, Turlock-Modesto Branch, and the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International (DKG), Alpha Epsilon and Epsilon Nu Chapters.

Khalid Ahmad from page 8

It struck me from Khalid’s account that the U.S. military could bomb a health facility by what Kate Clark of the Afghan Analysts Network suggested as ‘ripping up the rule book’, and then, not take any measures whatsoever after the bombing to treat casualties like Khalid and many others. If you are a civilian bombed by the U.S. military, you’ll have to fend for yourself!

Khalid sighed, “I’m grateful that I’ve been given a second life. Some of my colleagues...they weren’t so lucky.”

Khalid was exhausted. I understood from working in Afghanistan over the past years of a worsening war that his exhaustion wasn’t just physical. “I’m angry. The U.S. military is killing us just because they want to be the Empire of the world.”

Khalid asked why we wanted to take his photograph. His question reminded me of what we as individuals can do: taking and seeing his photo in this article isn’t going to be enough.

He steadied himself in the chair, placed his urine bag out of the camera’s view and said with full dignity, “I want my story to be heard.”

<http://vcnv.org/2015/12/08/i-want-my-story-to-be-heard/>

2015 Bridge-builders Light Paths to Each Other, Human to Human

By LEN & LIBBY TRAUBMAN

The future is not some place we are going, but one we are creating.

The paths are not to be found, but made. And the activity of making them changes both the maker and their destination.

~ John Schaar

We are all at once both a composition and a composer. We have the ability not only to compose the future of our own lives, but to help compose the future of everyone around us and the communities in which we live.

~ Maya Angelou

Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass. It’s about learning how to dance in the rain!

~ Anonymous

Out of proportion and betraying humankind, stories of human failures irresponsibly dominate news to excite and awaken exaggerated fear among citizens and policy makers. Citizens are deprived of great acts of courage, goodness, and reconciliation, while print and broadcast journalists profit.

“If it bleeds, it leads” guides many editorial and marketing decisions. Yet conscientious broadcast journalist Edward R. Murrow (1908-1965) pleaded for citizens to be aware of news reporting that would only “entertain, amuse, and insulate” us from a whole view of life events.

In this 2015 Season of Light “If it succeeds, it leads” can be a balancing standard to adopt, thus helping to more wholly illuminate the greater reality-on-the-ground of human imagination, compassion, and coexistence with one another and Earth.

Here are stories to lift us to our best and highest, beyond passivity and despair, beyond fear and war, lighting our way onward and upward together.

Shining Light on Better Communication Together

Faced with toxic videos and virulent online attacks, we can still create the world of engagement. A troubled Jerusalem resident, like many others, pleads for civil conversations.

She says: “We can choose the kind of words that allow for shades of gray. We can choose to say, ‘I respect you even though I disagree.’”

“Words create worlds. “We can succumb to the world of yelling people, or we can create the world of the tent.” READ more: “Talking our way to a better world,”

The Times of Israel, 18 December 2015, <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/talking-our-way-to-a-better-world/>

Middle East Tour Guides to Shine Light On Many Places and Multiple Human Narratives

During the December 2015 Season of Light Holy Land darkest of times, many say 34 women and men tour guides and six hosts eagerly arrived at the Dead Sea.

They came from the West Bank and Israel to face one another with the intention to become agents of change.

Only two weeks earlier, a sole Israeli citizen had broadcast an invitation to Palestinian and Israeli tourism professionals to meet at the EcoME Center <http://ecomecenter.org> to invent how they might maximize their tour guiding to expose travelers to more diverse voices and places, and humanize everyone for those thousands of tourists they lead every year.

The carefully planned, facilitated day allowed the Muslim, Christian, and Jewish tour guides to discover one another, increase their own communication skills, find new meaning for their own personal and professional lives, and see themselves as bridges of understanding.

Participants said: “Why did no one think of this before?” “Today was like water in the desert.” The facilitator said: “It was all about being together, feeling one in our shared vision, collectively inspiring each other, believing we can influence change. We tour guides experienced Light.” “Tour Guides as a Bridge Between Humans: A Historic Meeting at the Dead Sea”

<http://www.tour4change.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/tourguides.pdf>

Easy Internet Technology Lights Up Living Rooms Worldwide

On December 7, 2015, easy-to-use Internet communication technology was maximized by citizen relationship builders meeting face-to-face around the planet. The personal hour to meet, speak, and listen to one another for mutual international learning and inspiration was Zoom-facilitated from a California home during the 281st meeting of the Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue on the San Francisco Peninsula.

2015 Season of Light Global Video Bridge, <http://traubman.igc.org/light2015.htm>

Choosing Light by Pre-deciding About Violence

“As loving parents who raised two children during the era of the Vietnam War, we were inspired by the work of child psychologist Haim Ginott who observed: Misbehavior and punishment are not opposites that cancel each other. On the contrary, they breed and reinforce each other.

“We asked ourselves: Is it possible that spanking smacking, some say, has a ripple effect into our community and inter-nationally?”

And so we challenged two rarely-questioned, often-implemented axioms of our times: *Violence is a good way to get what you want. You can end violence with violence.*

This message is on the Web at <http://traubman.igc.org/messages/690.htm>

Hundreds of other success stories are preserved at <http://traubman.igc.org/messages.htm>



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

JANUARY

ONGOING: Modesto Area Partners in Science, Fridays, 7:30 pm, Sierra Hall 132, MJC West Campus except where noted; <http://murov.info/MAPS-spring.pdf>. **January 29:** *El Niño: Earth's Climate Heartbeat*, Noah Hughes, Professor of Earth Science, MJC. **February 26:** *Aging and Chronic Disease - a View from the Aging Side*. Brian Kennedy - Biologist, CEO and President of the Buck Institute for Research on Aging. <http://murov.info/kennedy.pdf>. MJC East Campus Auditorium. **March 25:** *Can Desalination Solve California's Water Problems?* Tom Luster, analyst, California Coastal Commission; <http://murov.info/luster.pdf>. **April 15:** *Everything You Wanted to Know about Climate Change But Were Afraid to Ask*. Daniel Kammen (UCB) and Linda Rudolph (Public Health Institute), <http://murov.info/climate.pdf>. 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm, MJC West Campus, Mary Stuart Rogers Student Center.

WEDNESDAYS: MJC SCIENCE COLLOQUIUM, 3 to 4 p.m. Science 115, West Campus, 2201 Blue Gum Ave. FREE. Campus parking: \$2.00. Events TBA.

12 TUES: Annual John McCutcheon Concert. Tickets: \$20 in advance, \$23 at the door; youth 18 and under, \$7. Purchased in person by check or cash at the Brethren Church, 2301 Woodland Ave., 523-1438 or at Beads of Contentment, 1028 J St., Modesto, 523-6335. Online tickets sales are at <http://mccutcheonmodesto2016.eventbrite.com>

15 FRI: Join the **Funstrummers** for a **Special Workshop with Paul Hemmings**. 9:30 a.m. until noon. Potluck. \$25.00. Church of the Brethren 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto.

17 SUN: The Modesto Film Society presents *The Woman*. State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/515>

20 WED: Film Night at the Center presents *Merchants of Doubt*. 6:30 pm, Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., Modesto. See article, this issue.

21 THURS: "Supporting Children - Community, Peace and Children's Rights: One Educator's Perspective." Speaker: Heather Sherburn. Stanislaus County Library Community Auditorium, 7:30 p.m. FREE. Sponsors: American Association of University Women (AAUW); Delta Kappa Gamma Society International (DKG), Alpha Epsilon and Epsilon Nu Chapters.

23: SAT: Operation 9-2-99 Clean-Up. 9 a.m. - Noon. Detailed information at <http://tinyurl.com/operation9-2-99>

23 SAT: 22nd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration. Speaker: Historian, Taylor Branch. Modesto Junior College, East Campus, 7 pm. See article, this issue.

24 SUN: Motherlode Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration with Jim Hightower, Sonora High School Auditorium. 2:30 pm. See article, this issue.

24 SUN: Sunday Afternoons at CBS: Tom Rigney & Flambeau specialize in fiery Cajun and zydeco two-steps, low-down blues, funky New Orleans grooves, and heartbreakingly beautiful ballads and waltzes—a musical gumbo of tasty global sounds stirred together with Rigney's virtuosic talent, charismatic stage presence. 3:00 pm 1705 Sherwood Ave., Modesto. Tickets: \$25/Adults; \$20/Seniors & Students; \$7 children. Call (209) 571-6060. Visit <http://sundaysatcbs.com/> for information on concerts starting in January.

LOOKING AHEAD

Peace Essay Contest Awards. TBA

REGULAR MEETINGS

SUNDAYS

Modesto Vineyard Christian Fellowship, 10:00 am at the MODSPOT, 1220 J St. Call or text 209-232-1932, email modestovineyard@gmail.com; All Welcome.

LifeRing Secular Recovery: Sunday 10:00 am, Kaiser CDRP, 1789 W Yosemite Ave, Manteca. LifeRing Secular Recovery: Support group for people who choose to live free of alcohol and other addictive substances. We avoid discussion of politics and religion in our meetings so each person can focus on building their personal sobriety recovery plan. (209) 591-8741, www.liferingmodesto.org

Weekly mindfulness meditation and dharma talk, 9:00 am-10:30 am, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC parking lot). Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <http://imcv.org/>

MONDAYS

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.

TUESDAYS

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.

LifeRing Secular Recovery. Tuesday 6:30 pm, Jana Lynn Room, 500 N 9th St, Modesto. 591-8741.

Ukulele class/play-a-long led by Lorrie Freitas 5 p.m. Beginners Lessons 6 p.m. Play Along in songbooks provided. Trinity Presbyterian Church, 1600 Carver,

MODESTO 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 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.

Modesto. Donation accepted. Info: 505-3216. www.funstrummers.com

Weekly mindfulness meditation and dharma talk, 6:30-8:30 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC parking lot). Info: Contact Lori for more information at 209-343-2748 or see <http://imcv.org/>
Adult Children Of Alcoholics, Every Tuesday, 7 pm at 1320 L St., (Christ Unity Baptist Church). Info: Jeff, 527-2469.

WEDNESDAYS

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

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/>

LifeRing Secular Recovery. Wednesdays 6:30 p.m. , Center for Human Services Building, 1700 McHenry Way, Room 12 Modesto.

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: Stan, 549-7770, stanhopecunningham@yahoo.com , or Anne, 521-6977.

Compassionate Friends Groups. 2nd Wed., 252 Magnolia, Manteca.

THURSDAYS

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

Third Thursday Art Walk, Downtown Modesto, downtown art galleries open - take a walk and check out the local art scene. 5-9 pm every third Thursday of the month. Info: 579-9913, <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>

Refuge Recovery: A Buddhist Approach to Recovery from Addiction Insight Meditation Central Valley. Jana Lynn Community Rm., 500 N. 9th St., Modesto. Thursdays 6:30-8 pm. FREE (donations accepted). Info: email RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com

Latino Community Roundtable (LCR) meets on the second Thursday of each month at Noon at Bel Piatto Italian Cucina, 1000 Kansas Ave., Modesto, CA. Info: call Maggie Mejia, (209) 303-2664, <http://lcrstan.org>
The Book Group, First & third Thursdays. College Ave

UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 pm. Info: mzjurkovic@gmail.com

The Compassionate Friends, Modesto/Riverbank Area Chapter. 2nd Thursday of the month. Contact: Joanna Rose-Murray, 209-484-8276, jrmcompassionate@gmail.com, <http://www.tcfmodesto-riverbankarea.org>

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

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

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

FRIDAYS

Funstrummer Ukulele Band every Friday, from 9:15 am until noon, Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto. Info: 505-3216; www.funstrummers.com

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

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

Sierra Club: Yokuts group. Regular meetings, third Friday, College Ave. Congregational Church, 7 pm. Info: 549-9155. Visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts> for info on hikes and events.

Mujeres Latinas: last Friday, lunch meetings, Info: Cristina 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

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

So Easy ~ So Good: Vegetarian/Vegan/Wannabee Group. Potlucks, guest speakers, field trips, activist activities, movie nights, etc. Third Saturday of the month, 11:30 AM-1:30 PM. Info: Kathy Haynes, 209-250-9961; 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.

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