



stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

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CASA: Advocating for Children in Foster Care

An interview by **TOM PORTWOOD**

“At any given time in Stanislaus County there’s somewhere between 800 to 1,000 children in foster care,” recently lamented Steve Ashman, who serves as the Executive Director of **CASA of Stanislaus County**. “Children in foster care are not in foster care because of something they did, but, rather, something that’s been done to them. A lot of kids live in multiple places, and their lives are upside down,” continued Mr. Ashman. “There’s often no stability for them. We have to ask the question – what are we teaching them about relationships, what are you teaching them about people, what are you teaching them about the value of the system.”

“**CASA** is an acronym for **Court Appointed Special Advocates**, explained Mr. Ashman. “A number of years ago, the State Supreme Court decided it would be beneficial to have a program set up to advocate for children who were in foster care. **CASA** was started in 1977 in Seattle, and locally our program began in 2002.”

The large number of children in the foster care system in our area may come as a surprise to some, but it mirrors alarming national trends. **Children’s Rights**, an advocacy group based in New York reports that “on any given day, there are nearly 443,000 children in foster care in the United States. In 2017,

more than 690,000 children spent time in U.S. foster care.”

As Mr. Ashman noted, the number of children in the foster care system far exceeds the number of adults who volunteer as advocates for those children. “Right now we have about 110 advocates. To become an advocate, you must go through 36 hours of training, 10 hours of court observation, as well as interviews and background checks. Once you complete the training, if we think you are appropriate for our program, a judge swears you in as an officer of the court, and you come in and pick one of the cases

on our waiting list. When someone becomes an advocate, we don’t so much assign them a case as much as they choose it themselves – because we want the advocate to own it,” he further noted. “Everybody has limitations – some people might be uncomfortable dealing with a case that involved sexual abuse, while others might want to work with boys, or with girls, or perhaps they have in mind a specific age group. It’s all over the map, but our advocates do a remarkable job.”

“Our advocates often have very strong relationships with the kids. I am an advocate myself,” he remarked. “I’ve been the executive director for about 11 and a half years and during that time I’ve been an advocate for

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Dr. Harry Edwards to speak at MLK Commemoration

By **JAMES COSTELLO**

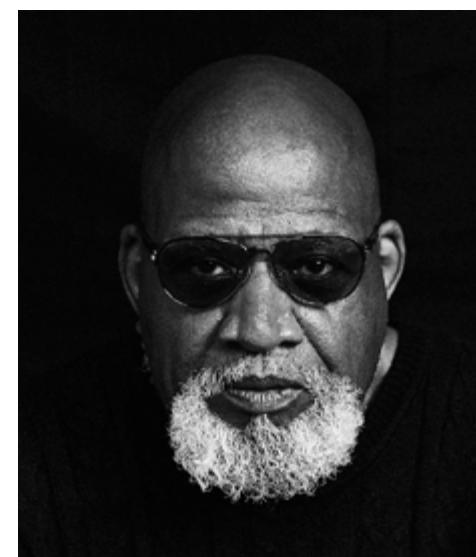
The Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration invites you to attend the 26th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration on Saturday, February 22, 2020. Dynamic lecturer, teacher and author, Dr. Harry Edwards, will speak at Modesto Junior College’s Performing Arts & Media Center, 435 College Ave. at 7:00 p.m.

As part of the Commemoration, Leng Power will present to community activist and advocate for the homeless, Frank Ploof, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Legacy Award for his community service (see article, this issue).

Earlier at 4:00 p.m. students are invited to meet Dr. Edwards at the King-Kennedy Memorial Center, 601 S. Martin Luther King Dr., Modesto. At 5:00 p.m. there will a reception open to the public.

Harry Edwards grew up in East St. Louis, Illinois. After an outstanding career at East St. Louis High, he graduated in 1960 and was awarded an athletic scholarship to San Jose State University from which he graduated in 1964 with high honors. He subsequently was awarded a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship and a University Fellowship to Cornell University where he completed a M.A. and a Ph.D. in sociology. He was on the faculty of California at Berkeley from 1970 – 2001 and currently is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Sociology.

From 1992 through 2001, Dr. Edwards was a consulting inmate counselor at the San Francisco County Jail and periodically worked with inmate programs at California’s San Quentin State Prison. From 2001 through



2003, Dr. Edwards was Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation for the City of Oakland, California.

Dr. Edwards has a long and storied history of activism focused upon developments at the interface of sport, race, and society. The combination of his experiences as an African-American, as an athlete in the 1960’s, and his

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MJC Civic Engagement Project's Film & Lecture Series

March 12th: The Great American Lie

Thursday 7-9 pm in Forum

110 (East Campus): *The Great American Lie* calls the American Dream into question by focusing on examples of social and economic immobility in our country. The film argues that many of the equity gaps we see increasing today are rooted in cultural values that prioritize stereotypically "masculine" ideals, such as individualism, power, and wealth, at the expense of valuable qualities often regarded as "feminine," such as caring for and cooperating with others.



March 25th: Richard Rothstein Lecture

Wednesday 7-9 pm in the Mary Stuart Rogers Student Center (West Campus):

In *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, Richard Rothstein focuses on mid-twentieth century government policy that was used to enforce residential racial segregation. His research suggests that many inequities African Americans face today are the result of this history of injustice. According to Rothstein, "The core argument of [my] book is that African Americans were unconstitutionally denied the means and the right to integration in middle-class neighborhoods, and because this denial was state-sponsored, the nation is obligated to remedy it."

Ricard Rothstein is a distinguished fellow at the Economic Policy Institute and a fellow at the Thurgood Marshall Institute of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. He resides in California, where he is a fellow of the Haas Institute at the University of California, Berkeley. His book *The Color of Law* was nominated for a National Book Award for best nonfiction book in 2017.

Following the lecture will be a Q & A session with Rothstein and a panel of invited guests: local activists Dave and Sharon Froba and NAACP President of Stanislaus County, Wendy Byrd.

April 9th: No Small Matter

Thursday 7-9 pm in Forum 110 (East Campus): *No Small Matter* shares stories of families and teachers struggling to provide young kids with quality education, and showcases the science that suggests how important it is that they receive it. The film argues that the most overlooked, underestimated, and powerful force for change in America is investing more in the care and education of our young children.

Amazing John McCutcheon Concert

By KEN SCHROEDER

The Modesto Peace/Life Center appreciates John McCutcheon and Red Tail Ring for the wonderful performance at our annual benefit concert in January. The room was filled with energy and a sense of community.

Additional appreciation goes to all those who attended, sang a little louder than they thought they should, laughed, got teary-eyed, worked on the planning, made copies, prepared the mailer, coordinated sponsors, became sponsors, sold tickets, put up posters, coordinated the tech work, set up the sound, moved the chairs, brought food, staffed the refreshments, handed out programs and collected tickets, sold CD's and books, staffed the Peace/Life table, emceed, coordinated volunteers, made donations, promoted the concert, set up hospitality, drove long distances to attend, showed people where to park, handled finances, and came early and stayed late.

Special thanks to the Modesto Church of the Brethren for hosting for 18 years. We'll be back in January 2021 with another concert!

The Campaign Nonviolence National Conference

**Albuquerque, New Mexico
August 6-9, 2020**

In Partnership with The Aug. 6 & 9 Peace Vigils at Los Alamos, NM

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Hosted by Pace e Bene's Kit Evans-Ford and George Martin.

The Conference takes place Friday evening and Saturday at the Hotel Albuquerque. Space is limited. Purchase tickets early. Peace and Goodness Circle members receive 10% off tickets!

Register at <https://paceebene.org/cnvconference2020>



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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.

Frank Ploof: 2020 Martin Luther King, Jr. Legacy Award Honoree

By **LENG POWER**

"What are you doing for others?" — Martin Luther King, Jr.

Each year as part of the Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Celebration, the event committee selects an individual to honor with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Legacy Award. Frank Ploof will be honored as the 2020 Legacy Award Honoree at the commemoration event scheduled for Saturday, February 22, 2020, at 7 p.m. at the Modesto Junior College Auditorium. The keynote speaker for the evening is Dr. Harry Edwards. The event is free and open to the public.



For the most part, Frank is an unassuming presence, preferring the back of a room or blending with the crowd. Despite his deep involvement with multiple community-wide projects, you may not ever find him at a ribbon cutting or networking luncheon. You would more readily see Frank driving a homeless veteran to a medical clinic two hours away or lending support to a young family in need of housing assistance. For the past decade since his retirement as a computer scientist, Frank has dedicated his days to helping those who are the most vulnerable in our community. He has made a second vocation of walking alongside those among us who are disadvantaged, impoverished, powerless and voiceless. Frank has been a tireless advocate to the population of homeless individuals in our community. He is unwavering in his commitment to exercise unconditional acceptance to help people "where they

are," and has successfully gained the trust and friendship of those who have exhausted or have lost faith in the system.

When asked about receiving this honor, Frank humbly deflects the nature of his work. He feels that it is simply what he is called to do in this chapter of his life. He is grateful for the heartening support of his wife, Nan Walsh-Ploof and his children. He jokingly adds that his wife has finally accepted

The call to action inspired by Martin Luther King, Jr. is the central question of "What are we doing for others?"

that he is not really retired.

In honoring the legacy of the civil rights leader, Frank envisions the same conditions as Martin Luther King, Jr. for creating a beloved community where people practice the concept of radical acceptance and work to help people get to a better place.

Though a lot of his work has been in direct partnership with those who are experiencing homelessness, Frank also has extensive other experience in the community as a volunteer for Hutton House through the Center for Human Services, working with the United Way to implement programming, and serving on the grant review committee. He was active in bringing awareness and resources on Solar Energy to the Valley and was an active member of the Salida Municipal Advisory Council.

In the areas of homeless and housing, Frank served on the City of Modesto's Homeless Blue-Ribbon Committee, Modesto Citizens Housing and Community Development Committee, was a board member of Community Impact Central Valley, and currently serves as a Housing Authority Commissioner and Board Member for the Behavioral Health

and Recovery Services with Stanislaus County. Frank is a member of the Homeless in Modesto Documentary team and in partnership with the Modesto Peace/Life Center, co-created the Homeless & Low-Income ID Project that has aided over 300 eligible individuals needing to obtain vital documents like birth certificates and Identification Cards. Frank was instrumental as the City of Modesto liaison among the population at the Beard Brook Village homeless encampment as well as the Modesto Outdoor Emergency Shelter (MOES).

When asked about a memorable experience throughout his career of community service, Frank warmly refers to the case of Phil, a veteran who had been homeless for many years. Phil was elderly, frail, and estranged from family. It was hard to believe that he had survived the streets in his condition and for so many years. Frank was dedicated to getting Phil to that "better place." Through a tenacious and relentless friendship that spanned a couple of years, Frank was able to help Phil sort out his veteran's benefits, secure a housing unit and get connected to steady health care services. It was discovered that Phil had a serious terminal illness and passed away shortly after becoming housed.

Frank's friendship with Phil extended beyond Phil's passing. Frank was surprised to learn that he was the only person listed on Phil's contact information at the hospital. Tasked with collecting Phil's belongings and being in charge of all of his matters, Frank embarked on a search for Phil's family. Piecing together details that Phil had shared throughout the years, Frank was able to locate Phil's family and provide them a chance to say goodbye. Frank recounts much of his time with Phil with a softness in his spirit that conveys the compassion he brings to all whom he encounters.

The call to action inspired by Martin Luther King, Jr. is the central question of "What are we doing for others?" Frank Ploof completed all of his coursework to receive a ministry degree in his mid-life. Though he did not continue on that path formally, his life and work serve as both solace and inspiration for many.

Democracy vs. Autocracy

By **ADAM SCHIFF**

The following remarks were delivered during the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump on January 22, 2020.

We have, for generations, been the shining city upon a hill that President Reagan described. America's not just a country, but also an idea. But what worth is that idea when tried we do not affirm the values that underpin it? What will those nascent democracies conclude? That democracy is not only difficult, but maybe that it's too difficult? Maybe that it's impossible? And who will come to fill the void that we leave when the light from that shining city upon a hill is extinguished? The autocrats with whom we compete. Who value not freedom and fair elections, but the unending rule of a repressive executive. Autocrats that value, not freedom of the press and open debate, but disinformation, propaganda and state sanctioned lies. Vladimir Putin would like nothing better.

The Russians have little democracy left, thanks to Vladimir

Putin. It's an autocracy. It's a thugocracy. The Russian storyline, the Russian narrative, the Russian propaganda, the Russian view they would people around the world to believe is that every country is just the same — just the same corrupt system. There's no difference. It's not a competition between autocracy and democracy. No, it's just between autocrats and hypocrites. They make no bones about their loss of democracy. They just want the rest of the world to believe you can't find it anywhere. Why take to the streets in Moscow to demand something better if there's nothing better anywhere else? That's the Russian story. That's the Russian story. That's who prospers by the defeat of democracy. That's who wins by the defeat of our democratic ideals. It's not other democracies. It's the autocrats who are on the rise all over the world.

I think all of us in this room have grown up in a generation where each successive generation lived with more freedom than the one that came before. We each had more freedom of speech and association, freedom to practice our faith. This was true at home. This was true all over the world. And I think we came to believe this was some immutable law of nature, only to find it isn't. Only to come to the terrible realization that this year fewer people have freedom than last, and there's no guarantee that people will live with more freedom than today. And the prospect for our children is even more in doubt.

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Green Tips for a Green Planet

February is about Love, Love Thy Mother, The Earth

Tikkun Olam (Repair the World): There are numerous ways to love our Mother, Planet Earth.

Seek out opportunities at your school, college, work place, religious organization or civic group for environmental clubs, education and activist opportunities.

Don't wait for an opportunity to come your way...initiate... take your kids and/or friends and relatives for a walk along one of the area's trails or through city neighborhoods to collect trash from public places, give others reusable grocery and shopping bags, learn about environmental activities and teach Tikkun Olam...be the change you want to see in the world.

Here are a few local suggestions:

Sierra Club Yokuts Chapter: February 21 meeting: Member sharing of nature, birding and expedition videos and pictures. College Avenue United Church of Christ, 1341 College Ave. at Orangeburg- Snacks 6:45 pm, Program 7 pm.

ACTION: Member Ray Nichols accepts magazines and books, household batteries, button batteries, burned out light bulbs, CFLs, eye-glasses, and old cell phones for recycling at monthly programs. (Please tape over the contacts

on 9-volt batteries.)

• Chapter website: <http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokkuts>

• Hikes, outings, expeditions info at: <http://www.meetup.com/S-M-S-SierraClub>

• To submit articles to the Habitat newsletter: contact kaugustine@csustan.edu

Stanislaus County Department of Environmental Resources: Department Mission: to "protect our community by promoting a safe and healthy environment" through an "interface with local, state and federal agencies" of "a comprehensive environmental protection program, which taps into a balance of science, education, partnerships and environmental regulation. The divisions include Environmental Health, Groundwater Resources, Solid Waste Management, Landfill, Hazardous Materials, Milk & Dairy and Code Enforcement.

ACTION: The Department encourages citizens "to become better acquainted with the services" provided throughout Stanislaus County and its nine incorporated cities. Website:

[Contacts / Phone Numbers / Email - Environmental Resources - Stanislaus County](#)

MAPS - Modesto Area Partners in Science: Modesto Junior College's MAPS has fostered science and environmental education since 1990 and provides science education for youth and adults.

ACTION: MAPSs offers many options to learn about and nurture Mother Earth including:

• *Science Colloquiums* - Science presentations at MJC and throughout

New Documentary Tells Story of Troublemaker, Grandmother, Pacifist Dorothy Day

A new documentary by Martin Doblmeier and Journey Films, *REVOLUTION OF THE HEART: The Dorothy Day Story* profiles one of the most extraordinary and courageous women in American history—one who is being considered for sainthood by the Catholic Church, but who famously said, "Don't call me a saint, I don't want to be dismissed that easily." Realist and radical, Day was both a typical grandmother and a self-described anarchist who once made the FBI's watch list as a "dangerous American." *Revolution of the Heart* is the story of one of the

greatest champions of the poor America has ever known. It will begin airing on public television stations in March 2020 for Women's History Month and is available on DVD now from Amazon. Special screening events will take place nationwide in January-March, 2020.

As a journalist, Dorothy Day covered workers' rights and child labor. As an activist, she protested war and nuclear arms. Attracted to Communism as a young woman, she believed it was a way to improve people's lives. She marched in support of women's suffrage and was jailed and beaten.

After the birth of her daughter, she converted to

Catholicism, and found Christianity to be an even more radical path. "If you take the Lord's words, you'll find they are pretty rigorous," Day says in archival footage included in the film. "The Sermon on the Mount may be read with great enjoyment, but when it comes to practicing it, it is really is an examination of conscience to see how far we go."

Day was co-founder (along with Peter Maurin) of the Catholic Worker Movement that began as a newspaper to expose rampant injustices during the Great Depression. It soon expanded to become a network of houses of hospitality to welcome the poor and destitute. Now nearly a century after they began, the number of Catholic Worker houses continues to grow and the newspaper is still speaking truth to power.

Over the years, Dorothy Day developed her understanding of how to follow the biblical challenge to be "peacemakers" by resisting all forms of military intervention. She protested America's involvement in World War II and was severely criticized. Arrested multiple times for protesting America's nuclear buildup, she also led nationwide resistance against the war in Vietnam.

REVOLUTION OF THE HEART includes rare archival photographs and film footage plus interviews with Dorothy Day's granddaughters, writer Kate Hennessey and activist Martha Hennessey, actor/activist Martin Sheen, public theologian Cornel West, bestselling author Joan Chittister, Jim Wallis of Sojourners and many others. Excerpts from Day's autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, are read in the film by Susan Sarandon.

To receive access to view an online screener of *Revolution of the Heart*, or to schedule an interview with filmmaker Martin Doblmeier, please contact Kelly Hughes, 312-280-8126 or kelly@dechanthughes.com



Green Tips

continued

the community free and open to the public.

• *Earth Day* spearheaded by the MJC Civic Engagements Project Green Committee.

• *Science Olympiad* High School and Junior High School Regional Science Olympiad which consists of individual and team events that encourage learning in biology, earth science, chemistry, physics, problem solving and technology.

• *Science Night and free telescope viewing.* features free telescope viewings, a planetarium show (nominal fee), and a variety of science-based shows and hands-on experiences coordinated by the MJC Astronomy Club and MJC Science students. MJC West Campus, Science Community Center, 4th floor and roof. The planetarium is open to the public, and other planetarium shows are available on Saturdays and during special events.

Great Valley Museum: A premier science and nature museum dedicated to exploring the flora, fauna, ecosystems, geology, habitats, astronomy and all natural aspects of California's Great Central Valley. Open Tuesdays through Saturdays 9 am to 4 pm at MJC West Campus.

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Good Samaritan Locates Alan Davis, Gets Help

By ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen

Back in May and June, when he was working near the county courthouse in downtown Modesto, **Tony Montalbo** used to keep tabs on Alan Davis, the disabled homeless man who just recently wandered away from the new shelter in the Salvation Army's Berberian building on 9th and D Streets.

"We're buds, really," said Montalbo Saturday. "I used to check on him and bring him some food just to make sure he was okay."

When Montalbo saw on Facebook that Davis had gone missing, he contacted **Frank Ploof** and said he would watch for Davis downtown. Ploof asked Montalbo to let him know if and when he found Davis.

Saturday November 30, just after 1:00pm, Montalbo found Davis near the corner of 12th and J Streets, not far from his old courthouse haunts. Montalbo immediately contacted Ploof. Ploof drove downtown, verified Davis was okay and willing to return to the shelter, then confirmed there was still a bed available.

Davis himself seemed a bit bewildered about exactly how things would work out at the shelter, but he did agree that it was very cold and windy outside.

"It's going to be bad weather all winter," said Montalbo. "You better get inside where it's warm."

Like many veterans of the streets, Davis seemed reluctant to go inside. But he admitted it was cold, and when he was told it would be raining steadily for at least a week, he gave in.

"Well, maybe I'll go in and give the shelter a try," he said.

Davis was very vague about where he'd spent his nights—he'd been missing since Wednesday—and may even have been confused about how his stay at the shelter had been arranged. Very often his mumbled communication is difficult or impossible to understand. It could be after so many years on the streets he's lost some fundamental cognitive capacities.

Frank Ploof, who's been a volunteer outreach worker for the homeless for over six years and now also helps coordinate services at the Modesto Outdoor Emergency Shelter, has worked with Davis for over two months. There are still lots of unanswered questions about exactly how Davis ended up in Modesto after decades in Sacramento, but Ploof's major concern all along has been getting Davis placed in an appropriate service facility.

Saturday, the most urgent issue was getting Davis inside, and Ploof arranged that within minutes of verifying Davis was willing to go. He also had a change of clothing ready,

knowing from experience Davis would need it.

Whatever reasons Alan Davis ended up in Modesto, he's been fortunate to have so many good Samaritans watching over him. Tony Montalbo is one among several who routinely brought the wheel-chair bound amputee food and drink and checked on his welfare when he was on the street.

The one thing that should be clear to all concerned is that Davis needs help, even in those cases when he tells people he doesn't. And Alan Davis is only one of hundreds like him, most just as needy as he is.



Above: Frank Ploof and Alan Davis; Right: Tony Montalbo and Alan Davis; Below: Downtown Modesto, November 30.



Saturday, the most urgent issue was getting Davis inside, and Ploof arranged that within minutes of verifying Davis was willing to go.

That reality was clearly evident Saturday afternoon, as another homeless man slept huddled against the wind directly across the street from Davis and Montalbo. He perched precariously on a motorized scooter, while his dog curled in a ball at his feet.

His solitary slumber in the heart of downtown Modesto was stark evidence that not even the undeniable power of good Samaritans like Tony Montalbo and Frank Ploof will be enough to hold back the rising tide of homelessness. There are just too many people in need.

Not long after Tony Montalbo found him, Alan Davis arrived at the new Berberian shelter, just as the rain came. Downtown, another man and his dog were not so lucky.



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Reflecting on the Significance of our Peace Essay Contest: Winners Remember

One of the Center's most important projects, initiated by Indira Clark in 1987, has been our annual Peace Essay Contest. Thousands of students from throughout our county, K-5 through K-12, have participated. As we celebrate in 2020 our 50 years of activism and education for peace, justice, and a sustainable future, some of us raised the question: what impact, if any, has this contest had on the students who've responded to our prompts and written essays? We would love to get further responses from students of other schools, but when I asked Jeanne Pollard of Fremont Open Plan (where my children went) if she were in contact with any of her former students, she asked a few of them our question. We thank the four writers below who so thoughtfully and generously responded. – Dan Onorato

Jeanne Pollard: A Teacher's View

Why?" (Eye roll...)

"Oh, not again..." (another eye roll)

"Do I have to?"

Yep. It's happening! We are each entering the Modesto Peace Life Center's Annual Peace Essay Contest.

(Big sigh. Lots of hard work ahead...)

You might ask why a teacher might assign her students to write an essay for the Modesto Peace/Life Center's annual Peace Essay Contest. It's a good question. It deserves a serious response.

For a classroom teacher, this kind of essay has the merits of having students write to a topic with specific directions, having their work read and judged by a panel of adults, and perhaps winning a prize. But for me, a teacher of 5th and 6th graders in Fremont Open Plan, a parent participant school of choice within Modesto City Schools, the answer has another level.

In 1976 when Fremont Open Plan first began, there was input from parents with a wide variety of outlooks. Some were conservative, some liberal. Some preferred a 3R's school and some wanted a very unstructured, Summerhill type school. All of those varied views could be incorporated into an acceptance-based outlook of teaching, except for one thing: religion.

In 1976, elementary schools in Modesto had Christmas pageants. There were Christian songs sung and Christian stories acted out. But our student body in Open Plan had a

wide variety of religious outlooks, so in order to be inclusive, we focused on a universal theme with which everyone could connect: peace. Instead of a Christmas Pageant, we began a Peace Assembly: we sang songs of peace, shared observations and skits, recognized heroes of peace, and looked at ways each of us could make our corner of the world a more peaceful place. I am delighted this tradition continues still, 44 years later.

Many of our parent group and, as the years progressed, our graduated students, have been active in the Modesto Peace/Life Center. When the writing contest began in 1987, it was shared with the Open Plan staff. It was a natural progression for us to be involved. Open Plan has participated every year since.

As an Open Plan classroom teacher, the true gift of the writing assignment for the Peace Essay Contest has been its focus on the values we hold dear. The topics varied with some being more accessible to students than others, but they always have been good for discussion both at school and at home, where parental involvement has been asked, both to talk about it to help the child form ideas, and then to help with the editing.

So, here is the challenge. How does one teach a 10-year-old to be kind? An 11-year-old to stand up for what is right? A 12-year-old to make the values that correspond with peace an active part of his or her life? It is not easy. As a teacher of the oldest students in Open Plan, I was fortunate to be at the culmination of seven years of the attitude and actions of peace being an important part of our curriculum, and with wonderfully supportive parents and extended families. It was a team outlook, and a team success.

That is why this writing is assigned. To keep the focus on peace.

So, future participants, put on your thinking cap, your kindness cap, your peace-centered cap, and write on!

Satya Onorato

I've been involved in the Peace Essay Contest as a six-time participant, one-time judge, and occasional screener. The lasting impact of the contest for me has been my experience as a screener. Reading the contest entries has introduced me

to the next generation of peacemakers.

Peace Essay Contest entrants demonstrate how peace can be realized where they live: in their homes, neighborhoods, schools, and communities. The hopeful solutions the essays describe are instructive and inspiring, and the investment of young people in a more peaceful world is one of the contest's valuable outcomes.

**If peace is going to begin with you,
consider what it means to begin
peace—to contribute to peace where
there is none. How can you build
your values into your education,
your goals, your livelihood, and your
aging to inspire the next generations
that you'll share this earth with.**

Shelley Agostini

"Write about a living peacemaker whose actions make an impact in creating a more peaceful world. Your essay serves as a nomination for the 2009 Peacemaker of the Year." While I know that wasn't the exact prompt, I remember staring at the blinking cursor on my mom's giant desktop computer as an 11-year-old, thinking about what to write. Now, as a recent college graduate looking back on my 18 years of schooling, I am astounded by how well I remember that prompt for an assignment I had in 6th grade. It was the Peace Essay: the first *actual* essay I ever wrote, the first assignment I typed all by myself, the first assignment that made me think deeply about a complex topic. An impactful assignment both then and now, it has stayed in my memory because it helped shaped my character and the way I think.

Within minutes I knew who to write about. Although I had learned about many Nobel Peace Prize winners and other peacemakers from Fremont Open Plan's annual winter Peace Assemblies, one person in my life stood out: my 3rd and 4th grade teacher, Julie TenBrink. From her serving in



the Peace Corps, protesting in Berkeley during the Vietnam war, to shaping thousands of young and curious minds as a teacher, Julie's story was one I wanted to emulate in my own life. With a focus on Julie as my role model, the Peace Essay encouraged me to examine and evaluate how I could take actions to spread peace, kindness, and open-mindedness to make an impact on the world.

In the years since, I have traced the inspiration for all of my decisions back to my elementary school teachers. I am thankful to have held on to the natural curiosity I had as a child, and I am still an enthusiastic learner of all subjects. At the University of California, Los Angeles, I was inspired to think about my place in the interconnectedness of global and local issues across all subjects. I majored in Psychology with a double minor in Global Health and Geography/Environmental Studies. I got involved in a global health organization and worked on public health projects in Nicaragua and Honduras. In the future, I am considering following in Julie's footsteps by applying for the Peace Corps or working for a global or environmental health organization. At the core of this pivotal broadening of my horizons was the spirit of Fremont Open Plan and the Peace Essay Contest: the belief that one person can make a big difference in the world one action at a time. Through her everyday actions, Julie taught students to live a life of peace, activism, and kindness.

I remember sitting in the car with my mom after the 2009 Peace Essay Awards Ceremony telling her that I wanted to be a 4th grade teacher and thinking about how special it would be to make such a big impact on so many students. I've changed my mind on many things since I was 11, but the desire to teach has remained constant. No matter where I go in the next few years, whether traveling around the world teaching English, serving in the Peace Corps, or pursuing holistic solutions to global socioeconomic health issues from within the US, I am working toward becoming an elementary school teacher. Like my nominee for the 2009 Peacemaker of the Year, I want to inspire thousands of students to live kindly, inquisitively, and inclusively, and to spread a legacy of peace.

Jordan Smith

In preparation for writing these lines, I talked with my mother—who raised three of us siblings in Fremont Open Plan—and she managed to dig out a few of my old notes, including ones for the Modesto Peace/Life Center's Peace Essay Contest. I remember writing them with a glowing heart, with commitment and passion and excitement. I wanted to change the world for the better, believed I could help, with the help of people like the Onorato family and the Open Plan community with our fearless, inspiring teachers.

Some children grow up with idealistic fire, and then tell various tales of how that fire was quenched. Or maybe they don't think it a tale even worth telling. Kids become adults: they adjust to a violent world and learn to accept one's place, with minimal damage to one's own family and friends. It's hard to blame them when we think how much pressure there

can be to put food on the table, to stay healthy and functional and reasonably sane. But that's not my story. I still speak about peace, now in classrooms as a professor. I teach world literature, literary translation, and cultural studies in universities from Rhode Island to Los Angeles, Seoul to Tokyo. I carefully guard another ideal: that literature is a bridge to understanding and caring about others, and that compassion is essential for a peaceful world. If humans tend to compete, clash, fight, and wage war, the only forces that can curb or stop the violence have to be somehow bigger or more powerful, made up of millions of people and their values. Their individually held ethical commitments translate into billions of tiny actions—a vote, an act of kindness, a donation, attending a protest, making a friend.

I've always wanted to contribute—however I could—to multiplying those actions. Over time, I realized my commitment to literature was helping me reaffirm my values. It wasn't *my* doing so much as it was literature working on me. The career I committed to gained a momentum of its own, and that momentum swept me in the direction of valu-

It's about Peace, I think—not the artificial or superficial Peace we often claim to have achieved. I work towards lasting, authentic Peace—one that embraces divergence and knows how to dance with it in service of a greater purpose. I think the Peace Essay Contest was among the experiences that anchored that orientation to the world for me.

ing peace. Maybe that's the secret to maintaining youthful values—choosing career paths that help us walk on in peace.

Lyrics of two songs we sang at yearly Fremont Open Plan peace celebrations come to mind:

“Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me,” and “I ain't gonna study war no more.” Their simple power lies in the call for individual responsibility which ultimately is all we have control over.

I would encourage teachers of children to pick up their guitars, strum out chords, and get kids singing. To kids at the age when singing feels uncomfortable or embarrassing and thinking about careers crowds out simple fun, I would say: keep choosing with your values. If you're *not* going to study war, then take time to consider what you *will* study instead. If peace is going to begin with you, consider what it means to *begin* peace—to contribute to peace where there is none. How can you build your values into your education, your

goals, your livelihood, and your aging to inspire the next generations that you'll share this earth with.

Peace is a practice and a habit to be developed. It has to be cultivated, to be sung again and again. In my life, it means teaching literature, writing poetry, organizing poetry readings, translating literature, curating art exhibitions, bringing people together, and being as kind as possible to everyone I meet.

Kate Trompeter

It's been well over 2 decades since I wrote my first essay for the Peace Essay Contest. Truth be told, I don't remember what I wrote about. I do, however, know that experience was a critical part of a large theme that played out consistently in my childhood: Love.

Whether it was at my synagogue, my home, or my elementary school (Fremont Open Plan), the expectation was that we'd love ourselves, love each other, heal the world. Writing for the Peace Essay Contest translated concretely those messages of love and peace. Such experiences are a gift, one I'm grateful our community and the Peace/Life Center have continued to embrace and give to our young people for over 30 years.

I've often reflected on the parts of my childhood that impacted where I landed in my life. I've spent most of my adult life working in the social sector. Currently, I'm a Leadership Coach. My focus is primarily on those people and organizations trying to change the world through social impact work. I care deeply about supporting people who care about healing the world. And my philosophy on leadership is grounded in a deep commitment to self-awareness and how we behave with one another in times as complex as they are now. Really, it's about Peace I think—not the artificial or superficial Peace we often claim to have achieved. I work towards lasting, authentic Peace—one that embraces divergence and knows how to dance with it in service of a greater purpose. I think the Peace Essay Contest was among the experiences that anchored that orientation to the world for me.

The other thing I would say, as a parent who is trying to raise children in a world as complicated and divided as ours is today, is that I'm exceedingly thankful for gifts like the Peace Essay Contest. Opportunities like these yearly contests that encourage our children to think critically and help them (us all, really) to imagine what might be possible in the world—they help me as a mom feel a little less tired and a lot more hopeful.



Many Californians are Struggling to Live in Our Communities

Five Reasons to Share the State's Prosperity

By ALISSA ANDERSON, SARA KIMBERLIN, KAYLA KITSON, AUREO MESQUITA and SARAH JIMENEZ, California Budget & Policy Center

State policymakers have many opportunities to continue building the state's fiscal health *and* invest in the people of California as they consider policy priorities for 2020-21 and beyond. While California is a wealthy state home to many high-income households and businesses that have been able to greatly leverage resources and expand their wealth in the last several decades, millions more Californians live a different reality every day. Workers in low- and mid-wage jobs are unable to afford the high cost of living – from paying for housing and child care to stretching their paychecks at the end of the month to cover food and medical bills. This is true no matter what region Californians work in across the state and call home. For women, Californians of color, and immigrants the economic challenges and disparities are vast. The state is in danger of allowing millions of Californians to spend their lifetimes in financial distress.

California can do better for its people. The state's policy choices can help more people earn adequate incomes, build

wealth, and afford basic necessities that will allow them to live, learn, work, and age comfortably in their homes and communities. With renewed discussions about the state's available resources, healthy reserves, and the need to plan for the future, this analysis provides five facts that show why state leaders should ensure that all Californians share in the state's vast wealth.

- Economic inequality has worsened for Californians, reinforcing racial and ethnic disparities
- Child poverty remains high, especially for Black and Latinx children
- Workers' wages remain stagnant as housing costs significantly increase
- Economic insecurity has serious consequences – but policy choices can make a difference
- California can increase revenue, support investments, and share the state's prosperity

Read the new report to better understand the economic disparities in California and how the state has the resources to do better for all its people. View a PDF version of this report.

Combatants for Peace lay down weapons in favor of democracy, security, dignity and respect for all

In 2006 Palestinian prisoners and Israeli combat soldiers and officers, former combatants, laid down their weapons and established Combatants for Peace, an egalitarian, bi-national, grassroots movement modeled on the core values of democracy, security, dignity and respect for all.

Founded upon the belief that the cycle of violence can be broken only when Israelis and Palestinians join forces, CFP is the only organization worldwide in which former fighters on both sides of an active conflict have renounced violence, laid down their weapons, and chosen to work together for peace, earning the organization Nobel Peace Prize nominations in 2017 and 2018.

CFP is a nonviolent civil resistance movement working to end the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and all forms of violence between the two sides. Together former adversaries work for equality and human rights with the aim of bringing a just and secure future for both peoples. Activists build bridges of respect, so that the humanity of all may be recognized and honored. Joint action demonstrates an alternative to violence, both acute and systemic, and activism lays the groundwork for a peaceful future by modeling the potential of what can be.

ACTION: Together Palestinian and Israeli Combatants for Peace demand freedom for all. Learn more about how you can participate in this peace movement by attending one of several Combatants for Peace events to be held up to February 12.



California Tour (Jan 26 – Feb 12, 2020)

(Edited. For a complete list, visit <https://afcfp.org/california-2020-tour>)

Speakers: Ismail Assad, Yoni Kallai and Galia Galili Santa Rosa-Shomrei Torah, Jan 26, 3-5pm, 2600 Bennett Valley Rd, Santa Rosa.

Santa Cruz-Center for Spiritual Living, Jan 28, 7pm, 1818 Felt St., Santa Cruz. Sponsored by: Muslim Solidarity Group of Santa Cruz & Temple Beth El.

Sacramento Area-Congregation Bet Haverim, Wednesday, Jan 29, 7-9pm, Congregation Bet Haverim Social Hall, 1715 Anderson Rd., Davis. Sponsored by: Rabbi Greg Wolfe, J Street Davis, and J Street UC Davis.

Berkeley-UC Berkeley, Feb 4, 7pm, Berkeley Hillel, 2736 Bancroft Way.

Contra Costa-Hillcrest Congregational Church, Feb 6, 7-9pm, 404 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. Sponsored by: The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa for World Interfaith Harmony Week. The Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center.

San Francisco-Manny's Café, Feb 9, 4-6pm (doors open 3:45pm), 3092 16th St., San Francisco, corner of Valencia. Sponsored by: Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue Project & J Street.

Palo Alto-First Congregational Church, UUC, Feb 10, 7:30-9:30pm, 1985 Louis Rd, Palo Alto.

San Francisco- Interfaith Panel at the Center for World Affairs, Feb 12, 6:30-8:30pm, 312 Sutter St., San Francisco. RSVP Required – register [HERE](https://www.worldaffairs.org/events/event/2028). Sponsored by: Grace Cathedral, Qalbu Maryam Women's Mosque, The Kitchen, Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue Project & J Street. <https://www.worldaffairs.org/events/event/2028>

New State Laws Impacting LGBTQ Californians in 2020

By JOHN AGUIRRE

Several new pieces of legislation will take effect in California in 2020, including:

- Assembly Bill (AB) 2119: requires that transgender foster youth receive health care services consistent with their gender identity
- AB 711: ensures transgender students can obtain school records and diplomas with their preferred name and gender pronoun
- AB 493: calls on public schools to provide training in LGBT cultural competency and bullying
- AB 785: assists LGBT couples who use gamete banks to have children
- Senate Bill (SB) 495: makes it state law that a person's sexual orientation or gender identity can't be used to disqualify them as an adoptive parent or legal guardian
- AB 962: requires CA hospitals to publicly disclose how much they are contracting with businesses owned by LGBT persons, women, minorities, and other groups such as veterans.
- SB 534 creates a similar requirement for the insurance industry
- SB 159 allows pharmacies to provide 60 days of PrEP without a prescription

Reach John at Stanislaus LGBTQ+Collaborative; Coordinator, Peer/Consumer Advocate. Cell/ Text: 559-280-3864, jpamodesto@gmail.com

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POET: Zaid Shlah



Born in Canada and of Iraqi heritage, Zaid Shlah resides in Northern California with his family. His poetry has appeared in literary magazines, journals and anthologies in both Canada and the US. In May of 2005, he was awarded the American Academy of Poets Award. He is the author of *Taqsim*, a book of poetry. His most recent book is a collection of poetry and essays en-

titled *ClockWork* (Frontenac House, 2015). He teaches composition and English literature at Modesto Junior College.

The Lit Road

Could we have come away from it all right—turned away from that dark day?

But oh the stars last night. Early morning.
One small room, four walls—the coffee, bananas,
a bagel with cream cheese awaiting their arrival.

Three sleeping lights in bed, tucked away,
their dreams, their sorrows—quiver of
apprehension.

It's okay I say. Look at
the sleeping angel—their mother,
exhales a smile inside you.

Did we miss the tree,
the pink awning at dusk, dirt on their feet;
their cheeks, their hair, the earth runs into their dreams,
the joys tucked up inside their small bones—

initiators of their own breath, soil, loam—the
sun-bronzed beautiful skin, and we were with each
other in breath, in this small room;

what hubris then—who dares
to rip apart our roots from this safe house?

Should we turn here, or run from a freshly
skinned knee—for more, and for more
and for all of this, from the wreckage of storm:
a dream ripped clean from its mast.

I cannot turn away, my sons, the boat
our dreams—I cannot get the thing
straight.

I hear it in a crashing hand, on journeys
I wish we could have left behind.

For we falsely learn from shadow what we think
we can avoid, the sleepy murmurs in the hallways
of our nights—needling burrs and doubts that keep
us from our sleep.

I cannot judge the stars—unfathomable light.
No father can hide his sons from what's to come, nor
futilely evade—it comes the same.

So breathes my sleeping wife beside me.
a circling feint before the darker chords, though
we return to roads already given up so many
times before: we speak, cajole,

scream down tunnels after
fallen children just the same.

No passing ships
to bear us past death's resolve. Neither
the sun nor my dream: we two standing
beside a silent oak tree. Not the moon.

Whatever grey nights might come,
a rough hewn hand across a young boy's cheek,
careless roars: a child's dream of black bears
in the night.

But say we had the wherewithal
to trample past all roads, the sum would've
come to less than where we had begun—

what sentence hasn't already been writ
a tired and gravely road? But in that distant light
it leads to.

My sons I have no rhyme. I only
know these days will fade, and I have loved
you more.

The San Joaquin River

I'm as dumb as I ever was,
sitting and watching—trying
to rethink the river's flow.
What's been, well remains,
long after my inability
to rethink it—indifferently
absolved by the river:
my brooding on Aeschylus,
or hearing Triton's final bleat
gurgling up from the dark
river's edge.

I see the white egret,
who knows not the tree
and its perch, as I've tried
to know it, who pulls up
from the river's depths
its silvery stock of fish,
the torrent of rain off its back;
who knows not the Coast Guard's
pursuit of what it thinks it owns,
but can never quite possess;
who tends to the quiet
preening of its feathers,
the still quiet of the shadow
I'd wished to know.

Emerging or disappearing
into the river's cool laughter,
and stands perfectly contented.

A Fortress

I think that if I had left for all of my old answers in you,
that if I had kept myself taught along the eaves of a
wracked November
that if in the quietest hour of souls where the devil
leaps to and fro—

That if we two lovers lying naked and empty on the
hallway floor
spent with the salt and ravages two minds possessed and
devoured all at once,
betraying and defying the hall of ancients—where only
ungodly rivers dare flow—

That if in the darkest recesses, a fortress in the meadow,
paying no heed to the stars or the moon, or the impressions
of every other lesser cause; nor for multiplicity of life's
banal effects,
but ate them whole—

That if in a picture through a window of my childhood
an aged winter poplar haunts what is real and what has
gone away from us all;
embittered, grown apart, two children colliding and
crashing—an antimatter
the universe refused to hold—

Not for fate or for will, nor for any other state or its abuses,
but for the reason of the thing: this love our art has no
business in the world
but as tired metaphor. Now if the rivers cease, and the
oceans crack
under its man and god

Then I would have good cause to leave this place,
and spend the rest of days searching for the answers in
your face.

Enigma of the Arrival¹

Perhaps I had gone
wrong, I remember the sail,
and a view of the port,
a lighted entrance
only, when I arrived,
seeing the young man
with a face much like my own—
and taking hold of the rail
apprehension of horror
when I found this age-old hand
was mine, the ship
no longer there.

Based on Giorgio De Chirico's *The Arrival* in V.S.
Naipaul's *The Enigma of the Arrival*

Based on Giorgio De Chirico's *The Arrival* in V.S.
Naipaul's *The Enigma of the Arrival*

¹ Based on Giorgio De Chirico's *The Arrival* in V.S. Naipaul's *The Enigma of the Arrival*

Listen to Local Programming at KCBP 95.5 FM

Arts of the San Joaquin Valley: Mondays, 8:00pm; Tuesdays 9:00 am & Wednesdays 8:00 pm

Women of the Valley: 8:00pm Tuesdays & Thursdays & Wednesdays 9:00am

The Peril and the Promise: Wednesdays 9:30 pm; Saturdays 2:30 pm

Modesto Sound: California Audio Roots Project (CARP) Season 1 - Wednesdays 11:30am, & Sundays 11:00am & 5:30pm

Modesto Area Music Show: Mondays 5:00pm Fridays 9:00pm & Saturdays 6:00pm

Where We Were: Hear the fascinating history of Newman with Felton Daniels 1/23, 1/27 & 1/30 at 9am, 1/24 & 1/31 at 8:30pm, and 1/26 & 2/2 at 11am on 95.5FM and streaming at kcbpradio.org.

Weekdays (Monday - Friday)

Letters to Washington - 1:00am

Sojourner Truth - 4:00pm

Democracy Now! - 7:00pm

Flashpoint Magazine - 10:00pm

Children's Programming

Confetti Park - Saturday's 8:00am; & Sunday's 12:30pm

The Children's Hour - Sunday's 3:00pm

Find a complete programming schedule on our website, www.kcbpradio.org

What programming do you like or would like to hear? Contact us at programming@kcbpradio.org or call (209) 353-3066. Help put community into community radio! Interested in being part of our Community Advisory Board? Contact operations@kcbpradio.org or call (209) 353-3066.



How you can help support the Modesto Peace/Life Center



Visit our websites and click the **Donate** button:

Modesto Peace/Life Center: <http://peacelifecenter.org/>

KCBP Community Radio 95.5 FM: <http://kcbpradio.org/listen.html>

Stanislaus Connections: <http://stanislausconnections.org/>

Send a check to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, PO Box 134, Modesto CA 95353.

HELP THE PEACE/LIFE CENTER WITH YOUR IRA

The federal government requires that everyone over 70 1/2 who has money in an IRA account withdraw a minimum sum each year. This distribution from your account is then taxed. But if you are in the fortunate position of not needing your distribution for living expenses and are charitably inclined, **you can donate part or all of your annual required minimum distribution (RMD) withdrawal to one**

or more non-profit organizations without paying taxes on the amount donated. The part you don't donate goes to you and is taxed.

The Modesto Peace/Life Center qualifies as an eligible 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Let's say you want to donate to the Center. Here's what you do. Contact the Trustee of your account (the company that holds your investment) and follow their directions on how to make your donation(s). The process is straight forward. You indicate how much you want to donate to the Center, then provide information about the Center, mainly its address, phone number, and Tax ID Number which is 94-2800825. You can donate the whole amount of your RMD to the Center and to one or more other eligible non-profit organizations, or you can donate a portion (non-taxable) and receive the remainder which is taxable. For more information, see a helpful explanation at <https://money.usnews.com/money/retirement/iras/articles/2017-12-04/how-to-donate-your-required-minimum-distribution-to-charity>. "How to Donate Your IRA Required Minimum Distribution to Charity" by Emily Brandon, *U.S. News and World Report*, 2/12/19.

Advocating for Kids in Foster Care

from page 1

about 120 kids. Right now I have 31 cases. All my kids have differing needs and differing personalities. I'm pretty close to a lot of them. Once they exit the system, our relationship is determined by them. I still hear from a lot of the kids I advocated for years ago. They'll call and ask me how I'm doing. The commonality is that I fight for what I think is in their best interest. All of our advocates try to hold everybody accountable. The reward is in the effort. If you're looking to be an advocate to get something out of it, like recognition for yourself, you're in it for the wrong reasons. If you want to become an advocate because you want to help children, to be their voice because they can't find theirs, or sometimes it's been taken away, then we are a great program to be involved with. Regardless of the circumstance, most kids want to live with their families. They love their families. The system is very imperfect.

My personal belief is if you are going to take a child out of a particular situation, say one that is dangerous, you need to find them someplace better. And that doesn't always happen."

CASA provides outstanding support to the dedicated cadre of community volunteers who serve as advocates. "We hold monthly advocate meetings," stated Mr. Ashman. "Sometimes we have a topic that advocates have expressed an interest in learning more about - such as trafficking and children - but at every monthly meeting the advocates have the opportunity to discuss their case with other advocates, although they do not get into specifics. They share information and get support. A lot of times when you are doing this work, it's easy to feel isolated, so it's important for advocates to understand

that there are others out there doing the same work. We have the highest retention rate for advocates of any program in California because we have a really attentive staff. We do a good job. About 90% of the time, the judge will go along with the recommendations the advocates make on behalf of their clients, because the judge knows that we know the children."

Mr. Ashman pointed out that CASA collaborates with a variety of other community agencies and professionals. "We work with child welfare, schools and school districts, SCOES, and mental health organizations, as well as attorneys and counselors."

"Every human being, regardless of their circumstance, finds joy in some aspect of their lives," concluded Mr. Ashman. "There's value in relationships, and when we can provide a stable, positive supportive relationship for a child, whether it's a social worker, or a CASA advocate, or a teacher, there's nothing but good that will derive from that relationship. Sometimes that person doesn't know that he or she has made a difference in a child's life. But so often they do make a difference. Adults have to learn to meet kids where kids are, and then work from there. I think that working with children is incredibly rewarding, and these children will teach me far more than I will ever teach them."

CALL TO ACTION: For those interested in learning more about CASA of Stanislaus County or are interested in becoming a Special Advocate for children, please contact the CASA office, located at 800 11th St # 4, Modesto, CA 95354, phone number (209) 548-6320, or visit their website at <http://www.casaofstanco.org/>.



2020 Annual Student Poetry Contest

1st prize: \$40 | 2nd prize: \$30 | 3rd prize: \$20

NO ENTRY FEE

Submit entries to:

Raven Sisco

2020 CFCP, Inc. Student Contest Chair
California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc.

**P.O. Box 24979, San Jose, CA 95154 or
ms.ravensisco@gmail.com**

Postmarked Deadline: February 14, 2020

Newsom faces facts: Time to set up the tents

By ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen

Within a few short weeks of establishment of Modesto's new low-barrier shelter in the Salvation Army Berberian building, tents began appearing along the street opposite the building, mostly occupied by former residents of MOES, the Modesto Outdoor Emergency Shelter. At first there were only a few. Now, the number of tents is growing almost daily, but not as fast as the number of homeless people in our parks, along our rivers, and on our sidewalks.

Governor Gavin Newsom has faced facts and realized there won't be enough housing or services to stem the rising tide of homelessness for years. He's authorized use of public lands for temporary housing and offered state money both for transitional temporary living space and more permanent housing and services.

To date, with few exceptions, no one in the state had been willing to admit the obvious truth: We don't have enough infrastructure and services to address homelessness and it will be years before we do have enough. The failure to face these facts has resulted in wasted time, money, and opportunity.

Most everyone charged with addressing rising homelessness has been operating on the obsolete assumption that shelters—barracks-like buildings featuring heavy rations of rules and religion—can fill the dual needs of rehab and relocation.

According to this traditional model, homeless people just need to, “get back on their feet and get back to work.” It was once a workable approach, but today it ignores just about every current reality that applies to homelessness, most especially the fact we don't have enough housing for disabled and low-income people, including people with fixed incomes—no matter how long they're in the shelter, they still have nowhere to go.

The shelter model also bypasses entirely the lack of housing and services for homeless people who are mentally ill, estimated at between thirty and forty percent of the total homeless population. At least thirty-three percent are considered seriously mentally ill.

Traditional shelters separate men from women, require people to exit during the day, force residents to listen to sermons before they eat, and deny entry to anyone who's intoxicated or on drugs. They also don't allow pets.

The newest concept in shelters—low barrier—allows couples to stay together, permits pets, does not check for drug or alcohol use, and imposes no religious requirements. But even low-barrier shelters, when in the form of a barracks, repel as many homeless people as they attract.

The barracks configuration itself is a barrier to people who fear crowded quarters. It's also a contagion facilitator, helping spread flu, gastroenteritis, and strep throat, all more common among homeless people than in the greater population.

Nonetheless, shelters in the form of barracks can still serve certain segments of the homeless population until more permanent facilities are built, especially the disabled, elderly, and those needing only temporary assistance. The shelter remains one option for addressing homelessness but shouldn't be the only one.

When given a choice, homeless people prefer a tent or tarp to anything else. That's why we see tent encampments along our rivers, sidewalks, and freeways. The manifold problems of homeless tent camps have been well-documented—they accumulate trash and garbage, attract rats, roaches and bedbugs,



Most everyone charged with addressing rising homelessness has been operating on the obsolete assumption that shelters—barracks-like buildings featuring heavy rations of rules and religion—can fill the dual needs of rehab and relocation.

and degrade and devalue property values and quality of life.

Inevitably offered as reasons to eradicate homeless camps, few people will acknowledge that poorly managed trailer parks, slums, cheap motels and deteriorated apartment buildings feature the same problems, yet are almost never demonized, mostly because they are less publicized.

When the City of Modesto and Stanislaus County experimented with tent camps at Beard Brook Park and under Modesto's 9th Street bridge, the results were for the most part positive. The Modesto Outdoor Emergency Shelter (MOES), which was set up early last year, was studied by groups around the state as an effective approach to homelessness.

At its peak, MOES sheltered around 450 people. Quality of life crimes decreased dramatically throughout Modesto, the concentration of people in need made it easier for volunteers to donate food and clothing, and also made it easier for service providers to locate, assess, and serve people in need.

MOES closed when a new shelter became available. Unfortunately, the new shelter could only offer 182 beds and crates for 50 dogs. It couldn't serve even half the needs of people who had been at MOES.

Since the closure, Modesto's streets, parks, and sidewalks have seen a surge of homeless people. Authorities are once again caught up in the “move ‘em along” cycle of, “warn ‘em, sweep ‘em, and bust ‘em,” that preceded MOES. And once again, to no one's surprise, the move ‘em along tactic isn't working.

Given their experience with Beard Brook Park and MOES, Modesto and Stanislaus County are well-positioned to offer a state model for managed homeless camps. They've got a huge reservoir of experience to tap, and most of the personnel who were part of the success of MOES are still available. Authorities should seize the moment and get state funding now for a model approach to homelessness.

MAKE A Difference.

Dr. Edwards

from page 1

training in the discipline of sociology led Harry to propose that by the late 1960's America had become very complacent about the issue of race in sports. He ultimately called for a Black athlete boycott of the United States 1968 Olympic team in large part to dramatize the racial inequities and barriers confronting Blacks in sport and society. The movement resulted in demonstrations by Black athletes across the nation and ultimately at the Mexico City games – a movement commemorated by a 24-foot high statue on the campus at San Jose State University.

Years later, Dr. Edwards was to become a consultant on issues of diversity for all three major sports. He was hired by the Commissioner of Major League Baseball in 1987 to help with efforts to increase front office representation of minorities and women in baseball. He also was with the Golden State Warriors of the NBA from 1987 through 1995, specializing in player personnel recruitment and counseling. In 1986, he began work with the San Francisco 49ers in the area of player personnel counseling and programs. The programs and methods that he developed for handling player personnel issues were adopted by the entire NFL in 1992, as was the Minority Coaches' Internship Program developed by he and Coach Bill Walsh to increase opportunities for minority coaches in the NFL.

Over his career, Harry Edwards has persisted in efforts to compel the sports establishment to confront and to effectively address issues pertaining to diversity and equal opportunity within its rank. Edwards, a scholar-activist who became spokesperson for what amounted to a revolution in sports, is now considered a leading authority on developments at the interface of race, sport, and society and was a pioneering scholar in the founding of the sociology of sport as an academic discipline.

Dr. Edwards has been a consultant with producers of sports related programs for numerous television and film productions in the United States and abroad over the last 40 years. He has received dozens of awards and honors, including several honorary doctorate degrees and has been honored by the University of Texas which has established the “Dr. Harry Edwards Lectures”, a permanent series of invited lectures on themes related to sport and society. He has written many articles and four books: *The Struggle That Must Be*, *Sociology of Sports*, *Black Students*, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*.

ORGANIZATIONAL SPONSORS at press time: Modesto Peace/Life Center; City of Modesto Parks, Recreation & Neighborhoods Dept.; Modesto Junior College; California State University, Stanislaus; Ed Fitzpatrick, Valley Lexus; Rockwell, Kelly, Duarte & Urstoege, LLC; Central Valley Democratic Club; Associated Students of Modesto Junior College; Modesto Teachers Assoc.; Turlock Teachers Assoc., California Teachers Assoc.; College Avenue United Church of Christ; The Men's Group; NAACP.



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

FEBRUARY 2020

Science Colloquium, Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m., Science Community Center, Rm. 115, MJC West Campus. Free; \$2 parking fee. **Jan.29:** Christine Grimaldi Clarkson, M.A., R.P.A., Executive Director, California Rock Art Foundation, The Influences of Ancient Astronomy on Local Rock Art. **Feb 5:** Dr. Julia Sankey, Professor of Paleobiology and Geology, CSU Stanislaus. Society and the Global Climate Crisis: How Is This Affecting California and What Can We Do? The Climate Crisis is serious, affecting California. It is urgent that we all engage in this topic. **Feb. 12:** Dr. Dan (Danielle) L. Edwards, Assistant Professor, School of Natural Sciences, UC Merced. Evolutionary Lizard Games on Different Environmental Courts (a Darwin Day talk). **Feb. 19:** Vicki Jones, MPA, REHS - Merced County Environmental Health Division Director, Food Safety: Where is it safe to eat? Learn how to protect yourself from foodborne illness. **Feb. 26:** Kimberly Lindsey, Epidemiologist, MPH, Stanislaus County Public Health. How healthy is Stanislaus County? Highlights from the 2019 Community Health Assessment.

MAPS (Modesto Area Partners in Science). Free, engaging community science programs. Fridays, 7:30 pm, MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132. **Feb.28:** Colin Milburn, UCD, Gary Snyder Chair in Science and the Humanities. "The History of Our Science." <https://sts.ucdavis.edu/people/milburn>

1 SAT: 8th Annual Poetry Festival, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, facilitated by two outstanding poets – former Fresno Poet Laureate Lee Herrick, and Camille Norton. Flyer, registration forms available at www.mostpoetry.org. info@mostpoetry.org.

5 WED: VIGIL: Justice at the Border, McHenry & J St., 4:00-5:00 pm.

13 THURS: Expose Yourself (to Art)! with photographer Adrian Mendoza. Mistlin Gallery, 1015 J St., Modesto, 6:30 pm to 9 pm. Free.

16 SUN: The Modesto Film Society presents *Casablanca*. The State Theatre, 1307 J. St., Modesto. 2:00 pm. <https://thestate.org/movies/casablanca/>. Join the State Theatre and get perks! Visit <http://www.thestate.org/Membership>

22 SAT: 26th Annual MLK Commemoration. Keynote speaker, Dr. Harry Edwards. MJC auditorium, 7 pm. See article this issue.

LOOKING AHEAD

Saturday March 28: The Golden State Road Warriors Wheelchair Basketball Team returns to Modesto for a fun-filled event to support KCBP 95.5 FM. Modesto Junior College Gym, East Campus. Details to follow.

April 3: Peace Essay Contest Awards Ceremony. Roger's Student Center, Modesto Junior College, West Campus. 7 pm.

June 26-28 Peace Camp at Camp Peaceful Pines on the Sierra. For all. Leng Power will be a presenter. Details 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.

IMCV weekly Insight Meditation and dharma talk, 8:45 am - 10:15 am, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC east parking lot). Offered freely, donations welcome. Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: info@imcv.org

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

MONDAYS

Suicide Loss Support Group: Friends for Survival meets every third Monday at 7 pm. Details: Norm Andrews 209-345-0601, nandrews6863@charter.net.

Monday Morning Funstrummers Beginner Ukulele Lessons. Modesto Senior Center. 10:45am to Noon. Free Scenic and Bodem.

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 for our senior LGBT communities' unique concerns and experiences. Come to a group that will understand and accept you where you are. For LGBT folks over 50 yrs. old. Every Monday at 3 pm to 4 pm at the various locations in Modesto. Information: Steven Cullen/Facilitator. Cell/text - (559) 799-0464. Email: stevencullen@sbcglobal.net

TUESDAYS

Teen Tuesdays every week from June-August, 2-5 pm., Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St. Peer Support, Games & movies. Safe space for teens to socialize, work together on projects, and learn about LGBTQ history. Each week will be a little different as we want YOU (youths) to guide the direction this group will go!" Info: Maggie Strong, Political Activist Director/ GSA Liaison, mstrong@mapride.org, 209-284-0999.

Attention Veterans: Join us for Free Coffee & Donuts Meet & Greet at the Stanislaus Veterans Center, 3500 Coffee Rd., Modesto, Suite 15, 7 am – 11 am

NAACP Meeting. King-Kennedy Center, 601 S. Martin Luther King Dr., Modesto, 3rd Tuesday @ 6:30 pm. 209-645-1909; email: naacp.branch1048@gmail.com

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/>

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.

Tuesday Evening Funstrummers Ukulele Jam. Songbooks provided. 6pm to 8pm, 1600 Carver Rd., Donation. 209-505-3216, www.funstrummers.com.

IMCV weekly Insight Meditation and dharma talk, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC east parking lot). Offered freely, donations welcome. Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: info@imcv.org

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

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

MEDIA: Listen to **KCBP 95.5 FM** Community Radio, the "Voice of the Valley" also streaming at <http://www.KCBPradio.org>

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

MEDIA COMMITTEE of Peace/Life Center. Meetings TBA.

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

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

CA10 Progressive Coalition Monthly Meeting, third Thursdays. Inclusive group of progressive activists to share resources, ideas, and information in order to support all the great organizing work happening in the Valley! Feel free to invite trusted allies. Meet-up and social hour: 5:30 pm-6:30 pm. Meeting: 6:30 pm-8:00 pm. Follow group on Facebook. Info: Tim Robertson, tim@nvlf.org

Laughter Yoga, Every other Thursday at The Bird's Nest, 422 15th St., Modesto. The dates are February & March 7th & 21st, April 4th & 18th, May 2nd & 16th. 5:30pm-6:30pm. \$15.00 per class. To register, call or text Nicole, 209-765-8006 or visit www.nicoleottman.com

Attention Veterans: Join us for Free Coffee & Donuts Meet & Greet at the Stanislaus Veterans Center, 3500 Coffee Rd., Modesto, Suite 15, 7 am – 11 am

IMCV Grupo de Meditación en Español, cada semana 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (edificio trasero al final del estacionamiento este de UUFSC). Ofrecido libremente, las donaciones son bienvenidas. Info: Contacto Vanessa, 209-408-6172.

LGBTQ+ Collaborative Meetings are on the 2nd Thursday of the month, unless noted. Evening meeting, 1pm to 2 pm, Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St., Suite 2, Modesto, CA. Information: John Aguirre at cell/text - (559) 280-3864/ e-mail: jpmamodesto@gmail.com

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 art galleries open – take a walk and check out the local art scene. 5-9 pm every third Thursday. <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>

The Book Group, First & third Thursdays. College Ave UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 – 5:00 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;

jpmamodesto@gmail.com

Friday Morning Funstrummers Band Rehearsal. Donation 9:15am to Noon. College Avenue United Church of Christ, 1341 College Ave., Modesto. 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, 3rd Fridays at noon, 1314 H St., Modesto 95354. Questions? Yamilet Valladolid, yamiletv@hotmail.com

SATURDAY

12-Step/Buddhist Meeting starts with a 30-minute meditation and then open discussion. Held monthly every second Saturday, 4:30 to 6:00 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto at the UUFC in Sarana (small building, rear of the east parking lot). Freely-offered donations welcome. Information: 209 606 7214.

Free Community Drum Circle every third Saturday, 3 pm, Deva Café, 1202 J. St., Modesto. No experience or drums necessary to participate. All levels welcome. <https://drum-love.com/>

Refuge Recovery: A Buddhist Approach to Recovery from Addiction. @Friends Coming of Age., 1203 Tully Rd., Ste. B., Modesto. Saturdays 8-9 am. FREE (donations accepted). Info: RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com

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

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

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.