The Inspiration of Youth  
By Kent Mitchell

Recently a Modesto High freshman, Rana Banankah, wrote an article in our local paper, the Modesto Bee, on Climate Change (“Modesto’s rising generation pushes for climate change solutions” Page 9A, May 17). It is wonderful to see the energy and talent of youth directed toward such a worthy endeavor. In her piece, Rana asks of the older generations, “What have you done with our planet?” and “Politicians, why isn’t this problem solved already?”

In his book, “The Uninhabitable Earth”, author David Wallace-Wells writes that the vast majority of damage done to our planet resulting in climate change has been done since the 1980s when we already knew about the problem. This is both sobering and shameful. The author also points out that what is crucial, however, is what we do in the next thirty years. Rana is right when she states, “Instead of simply dreading our future we must actively work together to prevent disaster.”

The trend of nationalistic politics worldwide is not what is needed at this time. The people of the Earth need to work to together to solve this dilemma. The first step for our country should be to rejoin the Paris Climate Accord.

We learned in kindergarten that if we make a mess we need to clean it up. Well, this is a big one, folks. The younger generation knows this, and we who are older need to stop being comfortably numb and take actions to address their concerns. How will we want to be remembered by our children and grandchildren?

A fifteen year-old girl, Greta Thunberg, captured the world’s attention with her advocacy to combat climate change and inspired others to do the same. Rana is doing the same thing locally. The Sierra Club is graying, and like a lot of organizations is finding it difficult attracting younger members. This is an opportunity for the club to widen our message of climate change advocacy, and align ourselves as responsible elders with the younger generation in working together to help save our planet. This can also recharge the Sierra Club with new, vibrant energy.