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Gold River Messenger

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Business Outlook is Looking Up Again



Above: Speakers and hosts attending the Rancho Cordova Business Outlook and Economic Forecast. From left to right: J. Scott Alexander, Chamber Board Chair; Diann Rogers, Chamber President and CEO; Cyrus Abhar, City Manager; Amanda Norton, Economic Development Manager; Nick Sosa, Associate Planner of City of Rancho Cordova; and Daniel J. Cairns, Senior Vice President of Baird. Right: Rob Lapsley, President of California Business Roundtable, said education enrollment will be losing 500,000 students in the next ten years. Photos by Patrick Larenas

By Patrick Larenas

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - "There is an enormous global reconstruction taking place as the United States steps away from administering the current world order, changing relationships in global trading, security and energy," said Daniel J. Cairns, perceiving with some uncertainty the future development of current events and their world-wide effects on wealth. Cairns, Senior Vice President of Baird, was one of several economic, business and finance analysts featured at this year's Business Outlook and Economic Forecast on Friday, January 31.

The Rancho Cordova Chamber of Commerce hosted the morning's updates, which included city, state and national perspectives, with the City's leadership and economic team providing by far the most certain and positive perspective.

Diann Rogers, Chamber of Commerce President and CEO, informed on the City's 2019 2nd quarter data, comparing it to the previous year. "Five weighed and adjusted indicators demonstrate a very slight overall decrease of .7% in the local economy," she said, "with housing down 5.5%, employment up 2.3%, sales taxes down 5.1% and TOT up 2%, residential and commercial building is the highest index up 66.3%."

Rogers provided an overall historical perspective, considering 2010 the low reference point from the Great Recession. "Rancho Cordova is way beyond full recovery on four out of five indexes at 182.2 out of a maximum of 200 points," said Rogers. "Only

housing is barely 8% below the pre-recession level."

City Manager Cyrus Abhar engaged the business community saying, "We know that for business to thrive, security and safety must be ensured. I am honored to inform that thanks to the implementation of various police department outreach programs and policing tactics, crime went down 21% during the 2014-2018 period, descending from an already previous low level."

Invited guest Rob Lapsley, President of California Business Roundtable, a non-partisan organization, discussed the potential slow-down for California that could come as a result of new state legislation and spending proposed by Governor Gavin Newsom. Lapsley said, "California has a \$36 billion surplus which is unparalleled in the state. The problem with California is the cost of living is continually increasing beyond affordability for many residents, fueling problems such as the housing and homeless crises. California works, California grows jobs, California builds infrastructure... but a lot of the jobs being created are either very low-wage jobs or very high-wage jobs such as those in Silicon Valley."

Lapsley said this really challenges Sacramento politicians who end up creating more social programs and spending more revenue as they attempt to keep up with the affordability crisis. He thanked Assemblyman Ken Cooley for his remarkable work in aiding the

transformation of downtown policy during this phase of California's recovery.

Finally, Daniel J. Cairns, Senior Vice President of Baird, a wealth and finance management company, presented what he thought is the long-range forecast. "The United States has a great and vibrant future in 2030... but the international theater in which this will develop is undergoing the biggest renovation in 75 years."

Cairns said that until very recently, the United States had been administering, paying and providing security for a global order which was constructed "not as an economic deal but as a strategic deal in the conflict against the Soviet Union."

"It wasn't supposed to be an economic deal for us," he said.

Cairns continued saying, "that deal... which was an expensive proposition, was mainly paid by the American middle class and as the U.S. steps away from this role, it will reemerge... stronger than how we entered this reconstruction phase."

"Let me be clear," Cairns said finalizing, "the part that is coming to an end is America providing security and order for other nations—at no cost." ★

**Non Profit
Society For The
Blind Receives
\$30K Grant from
Ability Central**

By Kristin Thébaud,
Kristin Thébaud
Communications

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Ability Central recently awarded Society for the Blind in Sacramento a \$30,000 capacity building grant to create a leadership program for staff. Of the first seven staff members to be trained for management roles, six are visually impaired.

"Cultivating our employees' leadership skills and moving them into managerial positions at Society for the Blind is our mission in action," said Shari Roeseler, executive director, Society for the Blind. "Having leadership and staff that reflect the people we serve will position us even better to be the provider of choice for people with vision loss."

With several long-time employees nearing retirement, the organization is working to cultivate leadership from within. The grant from Ability Central will allow Society for the Blind to conduct an assessment, generate a strategic plan and create an accessible leadership program over the next year.

"Ability Central is excited to support Society for the Blind's leadership and capacity building efforts," said Silke Brendel-Evan, associate program officer, Ability Central. "We are impressed by Society for the Blind's inclusive practices - emphasizing the importance of stakeholder input and empowering individuals with vision impairments to become leaders - and the overall thoughtful planning for sustainable leadership development."

For 66 years, Society for the Blind has created innovative ways to empower individuals living with low vision or blindness to discover, develop and achieve their full potential. Society for the Blind has grown from a dedicated group of volunteers to a nationally recognized agency and the only comprehensive rehabilitative teaching center

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A Book of Hope

Randy Lerch Tells His Story of Addiction and Recovery

Story and photo by Shaunna Boyd

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Local baseball legend Randy Lerch struggled with addiction for decades. When faced with a devastating diagnosis and the prospect of his own death, he fought to live. He shares that story in his new book, *God in the Bullpen: The Randy Lerch Story*.

Lerch began playing baseball at a very young age: "I started from the time I was knee-high to a grasshopper, I guess." His dad was a semi-pro baseball player who loved sports and the outdoors and passed that love on to his firstborn. As a kid he would watch games on TV with his dad, "And that started my dream right there," said Lerch.

"Dad would always teach me the fundamentals, and I was good at it. And then he taught me a great work ethic, so I just wanted to play." Lerch made the Little League All-Stars Team, throwing a no-hitter at 11 years old and a perfect game the following year.

While pitching for the Rancho Cordova High School baseball team, Lerch was undefeated on the mound during his senior year - with a record of 13 - 0. After high school, he signed with the Philadelphia Phillies, hitting the major leagues in 1977.

His favorite memory of that time was pitching in a game against the team's biggest rivals, the Pittsburgh Pirates, during the division championships. Lerch pitched a winning game in addition to hitting two home runs.

Lerch played in the major leagues until 1986, playing for the Phillies, the Montreal Expos, the Milwaukee Brewers, and the San Francisco Giants. Although he was a skilled and dedicated athlete, his time in the major leagues also introduced him to drugs and alcohol - leading to a serious and debilitating addiction that he struggled with for most of his life.

"After being a heavy drinker for 40 years, I ended up getting cirrhosis. ... Cirrhosis is a death sentence. Once you get that, your liver is damaged to the point it can't repair itself." Lerch explained that the amount of time left to live depends on the severity of damage. The specialist warned him that



Local baseball legend Randy Lerch shares his story of addiction and recovery in his book, *God in the Bullpen*.

he could go into liver failure at any time: "Basically, you're a walking dead man."

His wife Maria said to him, "Don't leave me," and he promised to do everything he could to stay by her side for as long as possible.

"So, I quit that day," said Lerch. He had been drinking up until the day of the diagnosis in 2016. "After drinking every day for almost 40 years, to be able to quit cold turkey was like a miracle."

In addition to getting sober, he also made significant lifestyle changes - improving his diet and implementing a disciplined exercise program. "We worked hard at it," he said. "I wanted to live."

His doctors wanted to put him on the liver transplant list, but he refused: "I felt I did it to myself. At that time, I was 64 years old, and I felt the liver should go to someone who hadn't done it to themselves."

"After we did everything possible that the doctors had said, I started getting stronger, and I started feeling better." A year and a half later, the doctor said it looked like he'd been given a second chance. "At that point, I just wanted to climb the highest hill and scream that God has blessed me

with another chance."

That's when Lerch decided to write a book about his experience: "I know it was God's spirit that told me, 'You need to share this.'" A writer friend with the same last name, Harold Lerch, helped him write and publish *God in the Bullpen*, which was released in July 2019.

"If I helped save one person from going through what I went through, that whole book would be worth it," said Lerch.

He started promoting his book through Facebook, and he said he now has 2,500 friends and followers: "We have written to every one of them. And we've found, through this, just how many people are struggling with addiction." In addition to joining the main Facebook page, Lerch suggests that people also join Facebook Messenger so they can correspond with him personally. He will spend an entire day writing back and forth with someone, sharing his story, and even sending books to those he thinks need to hear the message.

Hearing the stories and struggles of others has deeply impacted Lerch. He recognizes how significant it is to be trusted with someone else's story, and he knows that what

he says could hopefully save their life. He said, "There isn't one thing I'm telling that person that I haven't already lived. ... When I'm telling someone that I know what they're talking about, I mean it."

One of the hardest things about writing the book was showing it to his children and letting them know the depths of the struggles he experienced: "I was able to hand the book to them and explain to them, 'Be ready.' ... Because they didn't know what I'd gone through."

"What I told in the book, it's bare bones," said Lerch. He shares experiences such as nearly driving off a cliff, almost dying from a brutal dog attack, and hangovers that left him passed out on the bathroom floor.

Detailing his struggles and darkest times was difficult, but Lerch said he did it for one reason: "Love." He teared up as he explained, "Because I love people so much that I don't want to see them ever go through that."

"I call my book a book of hope. Because no matter how bad it can be, there's always hope in God," said Lerch. In the book's title, the bullpen is where the second pitcher warms up during the game so he's ready to step in when needed to save the game. "So, God was in the bullpen to save me," he said.

Lerch was inducted into the Rancho Cordova Sports Hall of Fame in 2015 and was recently inducted into the Sacramento Sports Hall of Fame as well. The Sacramento Sports Hall of Fame nominated 41 athletes from the Sacramento Region and community members voted on the website for their favorites. Lerch was chosen as one of five athletes inducted for 2020 at the celebration at Thunder Valley Casino and Resort on January 25.

"It's my greatest honor," said Lerch. "And the reason it's the greatest honor is because it comes from my community. ... That's what makes it so amazing."

God in the Bullpen is available on Amazon and at Barnes and Noble. Lerch also recently launched his own podcast, *God's miracle with Randy Lerch*, available at www.comfortablyzonedradio.com.

You can contact Randy Lerch through his Facebook page or by email at RandyLerchBooks@gmail.com. ★

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'Fool's Gold'

Headed to an Out-of-Town Graduation? Look Before You Book!

By Gold River Resident David Dickstein

As a freelance travel writer, I'm constantly asked for vacation tips. "What cruise line should I take to the Caribbean?" "Which is your favorite Hawaiian island?" "Is the Motel 6 on Zinfandel really as nice as it looks?" OK, so I stretch the truth. I've never been asked about Hawaii.

The question I get most this time of year is which hotel do I recommend for wherever they need to go to see a loved one graduate from college. Last February I got hit up at least a dozen times at Bel Air and Rite-Aid, so I'm thinking there's lots of you who could use this – dare I write it? – *inn-forma-tion*. The below is based on recent personal experiences at mid-range, mostly chain hotels located near the California universities most asked about. Even if you don't need help for graduation, I'm hoping these tips will come in handy as you plan a spring break getaway or in-state summer vacation.

So, cue Edward Elgar's "March No. 1 in D" as I hand out diplomas to hotels that make the grade for graduation. (Shortened URLs are provided when the real ones are way long):

Chico State – As one of the state's only true college towns, admittedly defined narrowly-mindedly as a city where visitors have no other viable reason to go there (Sierra Nevada brewery tour notwithstanding), Chico innkeepers gouge big-time during graduation week. Three-star hotels are the best you get, and there's only two I'd ever stay at: Courtyard Chico (bit.ly/2N5ywIw) and the neighboring Residence Inn Chico (bit.ly/2uxZwKF).

UC Berkeley – The area around Cal isn't all that clean, but at least the Graduate Berkeley (graduatehotels.com/berkeley) is. The state's first in a chain of hotels catering to families of college students, each decorated in Early Sis Boom Bah to reflect the university just steps away, the one next to Cal is super clean, super friendly and super convenient when needing to freshen

up between day and night graduation festivities.

Stanford – The Graduate Palo Alto might not be open in time for Stanford commencement exercises, so for now, my pick is the Westin Palo Alto (bit.ly/2QuYw2a). Nothing special, kinda dated, doesn't live up to the 4-star Westin brand, but ... it's clean, friendly and an easy walk to Stanford Stadium, where the



Graduation dinner at the LAX Marriott's JW's Steakhouse makes things easier on guests who need to fly in. Photo by David Dickstein

diploma ceremonies are.

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo – For Mustang pride, it's hard to top the Embassy Suites San Luis Obispo (embassysuitessanluisobispo.com). Love the banner that welcomes Cal Poly families and that the kitchen uses eggs from the university's farm. Just wish it wasn't so dated and located in an equally aging shopping center. Not the closest decent hotel to Cal Poly's Spanos Stadium, where commencement is held (we drove when our oldest walked), but you're also away from the late-night downtown ruckus. A boutique alternative is the "millennial-chic" Kinney SLO (thekinneyslo.com), opened just over a year ago. Boasts Mustang spirit along

with a complete remodel from its former Holiday Inn Express days. Nice location being just a 25-minute walk to Spanos and next to a delicious country breakfast at touristy Apple Farm. Or save money and enjoy Kinney's free a.m. eats.

UCLA and Loyola Marymount – Westin Los Angeles Airport (bit.ly/2QXLbP5) and LAX Marriott (bit.ly/36xzDZx) are about 15 minutes by car from either campus, plus

the LAX hotels are out because you need to be closer to USC and the lovely area that surrounds it, a solid bet in downtown LA is the Freehand Hotel (freehandhotels.com/los-angeles). Clean, comfortable and cool is this gem housed in the historic Commercial Exchange Building, and an easy uber or Lyft ride to Alumni Memorial Park on the USC campus.

UC Santa Barbara – Courtyard Santa Barbara Goleta (bit.ly/35u7Hel) is closer to the Commencement Green on campus, but likely better rates and complimentary breakfast are found east of campus at the Hampton Inn Santa Barbara/Goleta (bit.ly/2QvuqvB).

San Diego State – Viejas Arena is a terrific venue for Aztec basketball and the university's commencement exercises, but there's no lodging I'd want to stay at within 10 minutes of the place. A slew of midrange hotels are further west, and for my money the nod goes to SpringHill Suites by Marriott San Diego Mission Valley (bit.ly/35CbqzD). It's along I-8, as is the graduation ceremony, and having a mall and good restaurants next door is great for emergency items and family meals.

Hope that helps. Oh, if you need advice on out-of-state lodging, feel free to email me at the address on the bottom. Ask me about Purdue, for example, and I'll direct you to the Union Club Hotel on campus and suggest you steer clear of the Hampton Inn, where I slept on a blood-stained sheet – and it wasn't even my blood! Maybe you're headed to Austin. If asked, I'd say you can trust the Hampton Inn nearest to the University of Texas campus, but not a certain four-star hotel where I woke up in the middle of the night to a trail of ants crawling over my bare chest. Even worse, they were carrying flakes of dead skin. And it wasn't even my skin!

David Dickstein is a Gold River resident, award-winning writer and principal at the PR firm Prose & Comms Inc. He can be reached at daviddickstein1@gmail.com. ★

there's the convenience of staying at a quality hotel with free shuttle service to and from the airport you're likely using. Both hotels offer large-sized standard rooms and service that's friendly and proficient. The Westin has a younger vibe and a superior fitness center while the Marriott scores points with the elegant JW's Steakhouse for your grad's special dinner and Social Market Eatery, a bright and airy eatery serving up a heavenly croissant French toast and an appealing breakfast buffet.

USC – The 1926-built, 2018-renovated Mayfair Hotel is out ever since I heard gunshots outside, but, then again, this is USC we're talking about. Gunfire is heard more often than the Trojan fight song. If

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Nora O'Brien is CEO of Connect Consulting Services, a healthcare emergency management and business continuity planning firm. She is a contributing writer for *Emergency Management Magazine* and has served as an Instructor for FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness. Ms. O'Brien received the Certified Emergency Manager designation from the International Association of Emergency Managers and serves as chair of the IAEM Healthcare Caucus.

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A Singing Valentine Coming Your Way! Serna and Frost Elected Chair and Vice Chair



Quartet members (left to right): Angie Yokay (Sacramento), Bonnie Garlow (Sacramento), Donna Spitzer (Cameron Park) and Cindy Henry (Grass Valley). Photo courtesy SVC

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Valentine's Day is almost here! You can give that special someone an unforgettable gift! Candy, cards and flowers are nice, but adding a Singing Valentine will create a lasting memory! Quartets from the award-winning Sacramento Valley Chorus will deliver Singing Valentines 9 am - 5 pm, on Friday, February 14. Your sweetheart, family member or good friend will be surprised and thrilled when a quartet delivers two songs, a rose, candy and a beautiful card to him or her. The package is only \$40, and can be delivered to the home or business

of your choice in the greater Sacramento area, including Placer, El Dorado, Yolo and Nevada County. Singing Valentines are popular, so call early to ensure availability. Call 916-761-2998, to arrange for delivery.

The award winning Sacramento Valley Chorus, under the direction of Master Director, Dede Nibler, has approximately 80 members.

Ladies from the community are invited to attend rehearsals any Wednesday night at 6:30 pm.

For more information, visit SacramentoValleyChorus.com. ★

By Kim Nava, Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - On Tuesday, Jan. 14, the Board of Supervisors held their annual vote to elect a new Chair and Vice Chair. This year's elected Chair is Supervisor Phil Serna of District 1, and Supervisor Sue Frost of District 4 was elected Vice Chair.

"I am grateful for the trust my colleagues have in me to again serve as Chairman of the Board," said First District Supervisor Phil Serna. "We have much to accomplish this year and I welcome the opportunity to lead several initiatives focused on everything from increasing

accountability in county governance and service delivery, to protecting the most vulnerable among us, to expanding employment opportunities, to preparing for the ever-increasing threat of climate change. We clearly have lots to do and I plan to use the chairman's post as effectively and proactively as possible."

Board Chair responsibilities include the following:

Presides over the Board meetings; the Vice Chairperson assumes the role in the Chairperson's absence or inability to act. If the Chair and Vice Chair are absent or unable to preside, the members present will select a member present to act as temporary

Chairperson; Acts on procedural matters or questions;

Recognizes a member of the board desiring to speak on an item;

Is entitled to vote on all matters before the Board, participate in discussion relating to any matter, make motions without relinquishing the Chair, and second any motion without relinquishing the Chair;

Sits on other boards/commissions as a representative of the County of Sacramento and is the point of contact for questions from the public regarding the meetings (i.e., coordination of resolutions/presentations and general questions not specific to a district, etc.). ★

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SMF's BARC Dogs Help to Calm Travelers' Nerves



All BARC dogs wear blue vests that say "Pet Me," an open invitation for travelers to say hello. Photo courtesy Pixabay

By Scott Johnston, Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Air travel can be stressful for many people – whether it is a fear of flying, delays or just the stress of being away from home, Sacramento International Airport (SMF) is providing a furry and adorable solution.

SMF is one of 58 airports across the country partnering with a therapy dog group in an effort to improve the traveling experience.

SMF's Boarding Area Relaxation Corps (BARC) dogs and their handlers are members of the Sacramento-based nonprofit organization Lend A Heart Animals Assisted Therapy. BARC teams are experienced handlers and their pets who have additional training for this special program.

All BARC dogs wear blue vests that say "Pet Me," an open invitation for travelers to say hello.

For many, hectic travel days are often cured simply by the sight of the friendly-faced, tail-waggers trudging down the concourse.

"Many people either spend a lot of time in airports or are inexperienced or frightened flyers," said Kathy Prendergast, a BARC leader. "These dogs provide such a bright spot for what, in many ways, can be a harried day. You can just feel the strain go away when the dogs are around."

From lowering blood pressure to improving a traveler's moods, recent studies have shown there are many benefits to having a friendly dog to pet at the airport.

Like all BARC teams, Carol Abelson and her dog Woody have seen these benefits up close. "On one visit we were walking through the

terminal and a lady pointed out a teenager who was obviously petrified about flying," said Abelson. "Woody and I walked over to her and she just grabbed him in a big hug for about 10 minutes. By the time she boarded, she was so much more relaxed. We see that all the time."

BARC dogs have been wagging their way around SMF since 2015. There are now more than 30 airport-approved BARC teams spreading their stress-busting affection through each terminal at least two times per week.

"The BARC teams bring so much to our airport," said Cindy Nichol, Director of the Sacramento County Department of Airports. "They alleviate stress and make people feel at home during what can be a hectic experience. They really are changing the dynamic of the airport environment."

Recognizing that not everyone loves dogs, airport therapy dog teams typically remain stationary. They can be found in open areas making it easy to pet the dogs while those not so fond can easily avoid them.

The Lend A Heart organization also has teams that visit hospitals, nursing homes and schools during finals week. The dogs and their handlers go through an evaluation and training process that usually takes a few months to complete. The dogs are matched with assignments based on factors like their age and temperament.

In addition to Lend A Heart's standard training and evaluation, airport-approved dogs have to be assessed as being able to focus while experiencing large crowds, elevators, noise and other working dogs such as security canines.

"It doesn't matter the size or the breed," said Prendergast. "What matters is that they enjoy meeting people. And at the very least they bring a smile to someone's face." ★

Non Profit Society For The Blind Receives \$30K Grant from Ability Central

Continued from page 1
that provides services for a 27-county region of northern California. The nonprofit provides low-vision eye care, life and job skills training, mentorship, and access to tools to maintain independence for more than 5,000 youth, working-age

adults and seniors experiencing vision loss each year. For more information or to make a donation, visit SocietyfortheBlind.org.

Ability Central works to improve communications access for people with disabilities. Formerly known as Disability Communications

Fund, Ability Central awards grants to community-based nonprofit or educational organizations in California that establish projects and programs to benefit the communication needs of Californians of all ages with disabilities. For more information, visit DCFund.us. ★

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Coffee with Cookies
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If you have any questions, call Volunteer staff at 916-640-8446 Monday through Thursday, 0900 to 1500 hrs. See you all on the 10th of Oct.



Publisher, Paul V. Scholl

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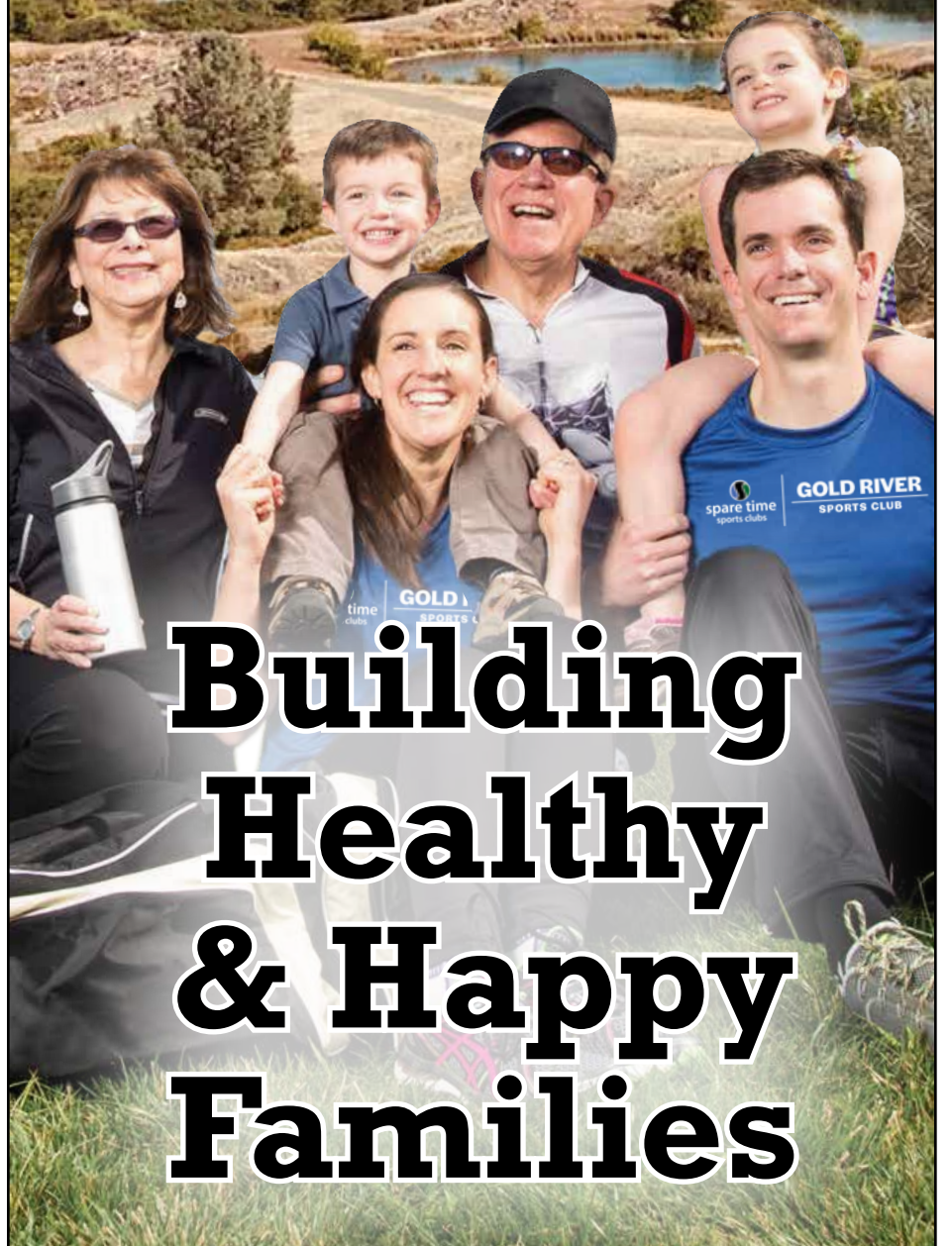
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POPPOFF!

with Mary Jane Popp

Loving Yourself

It's just around the corner. It's called Valentine's Day and everyone thinks a card, candy, dinner, wine, soft music and you can take it from there. Got to make it perfect for her or him. Are you into all of that and more? I got some good advice from Dr. Michael McGee who has helped hundreds of patients make a difference in their own lives in so many ways including loving yourself. He is author of "The Joy of Recovery" which has garnered many awards for its advice. He told me that love is not a feeling. Love is an attitude of reverence that inspires us to act to nurture life--our lives, the lives of others and all of life. Love is ATTITUDE + ACTION. So you can become a loving person and Dr. McGee says it's a three-part process.

HEAL

Heal your wounds. If you have suffered from trauma or neglect, get therapy. Our woundness poisons our capacity for reverence.

AWAKEN

Develop your "radical reverence" for yourself and others through spiritual practices of appreciative attending. These include loving kindness meditation, silent prayer, and other stillness practices. Awaken to your sacred nature and the sacredness of all things.

LOVE

A) Love Yourself. Be your own ideal parent. Treat yourself as your own cherished child. Abstain from addictions and harmful relationships. Take very good care of yourself. Eat healthy, exercise, get adequate sleep, minimize stress, rest, have fun and play.

B) Let Others Love You. Open your heart to safe, healthy, loving people. Have the courage to connect. Let others love you. Learn to love from being with loving others. Let others teach you how to love.

C.) Love Others. Every day, set an intention to love. When you love others, you feel more lovable.

Then he gave me a full list of the love practices: Acceptance, Accountability, Affirmation, Assertiveness, Authenticity, Caution, Collaborations, Compassion, Connection, Consideration, Contentment, Courage,

Devotion, Discipline, Empathy, Endurance, Forgiveness, Generosity, Gratitude, Helpfulness, Hope, Humility, Integrity, Kindness, Nurturing, Patience, Protection, Repair, Respect and Trust. Lots to take in, but Dr. McGee said that, of all these love practices, connection and humility are foundational. The idea is that you can act your way into feeling good by doing good. These practices create a feeling of good doing good ... a virtuous cycle.

Dr. McGee will join me on Friday Feb 14 (Valentine's Day) on POPPOFF to talk about true love and how it is different from bring "in love." He tells me we can become masters at the art of loving. You can check out his website and his books at www.michaelmcgee.com. And remember LOVE IS NOT A FEELING! LOVE IS AN ATTITUDE!

Here's a final thought from yours truly. How can you expect someone to love you if you don't love yourself? That should give you something to think about before all that other stuff... cards, candy, dinner etc. But got to admit, some flowers WOULD be nice!

Happy Valentine's Day!!! ★



By Marlys Johnsen Norris, Christian Author

A Humble And Contrite Heart

about things to do and not to do. Then, unfortunately they chose to disobey the rule and partake of the tree of good and evil. Disobedience to the rules requires consequences! Thus, their sin nature fell on every single future generation born after them. You and I! No one escapes it!

From that moment in time their sin fell on everyone born after them. We cannot be good enough or do enough good things to pay the price to eliminate it from our lives.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

Because God's loving plan was for His creation to have a personal relationship with Him, He created a plan for forgiveness to fall on mankind. In the magnificent way God does things, His plan involved Joseph and Mary, blood descendent of David. His Beloved Son, Jesus was born as a perfect tiny baby in Virgin Mary. Jesus was born to become the perfect sacrificial Lamb of God.

When Jesus was old enough to carry out the Heavenly Father/Gods plan of redemption and forgiveness all things worked together. In Old Testament times we know that a perfect

lamb had to shed all of its blood to wash away their sins and grant forgiveness to a Jewish person once a year. There is no forgiveness without the shedding of "blood."

God is the same yesterday, today, tomorrow and forever and His methods never change. Please understand: This same scenario applies to New Testament believers as well; The crucifixion of Jesus Christ, His death and shedding every ounce of His blood purchased the love and forgiveness from every sin (past, present and future) ever committed to anyone who accepts His death and resurrection inviting Jesus into their heart and life.

Until that special birthday arrives in someone's life, they are NOT on the divine path of God's love He wants them to be traveling.

Till then, much is a mystery and they will have many questions about the ways of God. And that is o.k. God understands!

Marlys Johnsen Norris
Christian Author
of 6 Books
Coming: Freedom From Satan's Influence
Marlysjn@gmail.com ★

What Did We Know before Facebook?

Dr. James L. Snyder

To paraphrase one of my favorite humorist, Will Rogers, "All I know is what I read on Facebook."

I never thought much about this until one day a young person asked me, "How did you know anything before Facebook?"

Looking at this young person, I said very simply, "Before Facebook, we had grandmas."

He did not understand, so I had to try to explain the Grandma-Factor.

My grandmother was a very sweet and wonderful woman. I only knew her when she was older because after all, she was my grandmother.

Unbeknownst to me, she was known in the entire community as the Queen of Gossipers.

According to some conversations I had with her friends, my grandmother knew what was happening two days before it actually happened. For the life of me, I don't know what that means. Nothing happened in the community that escaped my grandmother's attention.

If you wanted a rumor started, just visit my grandmother and whisper a confidential secret. Usually, by the time they got home, that secret was all over the community.

For her 90th birthday, some people in the community

wanted to give her a surprise birthday party. They knew, however, it would be very difficult to surprise my grandmother.

Several of them met at a restaurant in the next town to work out some details. They came up with many different scenarios, but none seemed to be workable.

Then, one of the older women in the group came up with a plan that would out-gossip the Queen of Gossipers.

The plan was simply this. On a certain night, a group would meet at the church to develop a plan to fire their pastor. Everybody knew that grandmother loved her pastor to pieces. Anything like this would have gotten her dander up, and you do not want to do that.

The success of the plan depended upon the right person whispering this gossip to my grandmother. Otherwise, she would not really believe it.

The woman who came up with this was my grandmother's closest friend, and so she was chosen. If Grandmother would believe anybody it would be this woman.

At the right time, this woman went to my grandmother and confidentially whispered the plan to fire her beloved pastor. "Now, don't let this get out to anybody; this is top secret."

Before the night ended, everybody in the community

knew of the plan to "fire the pastor."

On that night, people came early because it was supposed to be a surprise. It was a wonderful surprise.

At the right time, my grandmother marched into that church, slammed open the door, and said as angrily as she had ever been, "How dare you fire my pastor?"

At that moment, everybody, including the pastor, burst into singing, "Happy Birthday to You."

It took a few moments for my grandmother to understand what was really happening. When she finally realized what the meeting was really about, she laughed and said, "How did I miss this?"

As I listen to the woman telling me, the story I thought of what David said. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant" (Psalm 25:14).

Some secrets, like God's love for me, should be spread far and wide and not kept a secret.

Dr. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, PO Box 831313, Ocala, FL 34483. He lives with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 1-866-552-2543 or e-mail jamesnyder2@att.net. His web site is www.jamesnyderministries.com. ★



Dare to Live Without Limits

by Bryan Golden

What Will You Do Today?



Do you want to make positive changes in your life? Are there situations you are not happy with? Are you pursuing one or more goals? Is there a problem you want to fix? Can you identify at least one objective you would like to accomplish?

If your answer to any of these questions is yes, the next question you must answer is, "what will you do today to make it happen?" The answer identifies the positive action you will be taking in order to actually accomplish something. Action is the only way to transform your desires into reality. Without action, nothing happens. Without action, all of your desires remain only wishes.

In spite of the importance of taking action, too many people don't have a definitive plan for exactly what they want to accomplish each day. Instead each day is spent dealing with emergencies as they arise. There is little or no focus on specific objectives. Basically, these people drift through each day. At the end of a day, an often heard comment is, "I really didn't get that much done today." There are various impediments to taking effective action each day. Lack of planning is a major one. Without a definite plan, you won't get much done. Accomplishments are hit or miss. Time is wasted through inefficiency.

Create a detailed plan, with specific steps, for

what you want to accomplish today. Set priorities. Use your plan to guide your action. Stay focused. Adjust your plan as needed to accommodate emergencies or changes in priorities. Your goal is getting things done.

Procrastination is the black hole of time. Putting tasks off into the future creates stress, exacerbates problems, puts you behind schedule, and causes missed opportunities. Procrastination is an awful habit which is easily broken.

Fear feeds procrastination. Not knowing where to begin, being apprehensive about making mistakes, or doubting your ability to be successful, are all factors contributing to procrastination. Putting off what you need to do, for whatever reason, is not a formula for success. You begin getting something done by taking small steps.

The log jam of procrastination can be broken by devoting just 15 minutes to a task you have been putting off. This effective technique gets you into action. Once you have some momentum, you are much more likely to complete important tasks.

As you become adept at ending your procrastination, your willingness to plan ahead will grow. You'll start looking forward to each days plan knowing how much you can now accomplish. As a result, you will get more done in less time.

Your upward spiral builds confidence in your ability to be productive.

In addition to knowing what you will do today, you must also set priorities. Working on low priority tasks first isn't a prudent strategy. People do this because low priority tasks are often easier to accomplish. However, when your high priority tasks have not been completed, your stress increases and negative consequences arise.

Each day you must identify your highest priority task. This item should receive the most attention. Ensuring that your most important task is completed significantly boosts your productivity, while reducing your stress level.

Your highest priority may be difficult, requiring substantial effort. Shifting to something easier instead neglects your highest priority, which often causes a crisis situation to develop. Anything worthwhile takes effort. Taking the path of least resistance will not lead to your dreams.

Start each day with a plan for what you want to accomplish. Spend the day taking the necessary action to complete your plan. Following this strategy is how goals are reached and changes are made.

NOW AVAILABLE:
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Faith as a Foundation

Higher Power Offers Faith-Based Recovery Program

Story by Shaunna Boyd

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Every Friday evening Higher Power Ministry holds faith-based recovery celebrations where Christian bands from a variety of genres perform. Music such as blues, country, and rock and roll are an essential component of the ministry. Lead Director of Recovery John Heath said, "The bands are central to Higher Power. We want to reach people where they are. ... The music feeds their spirits."

"God did something amazing," said Heath. "He opened the doors to some amazing top bands to play at Higher Power in the Sacramento area" — The Frank Aldrich Band, Sons of the Golden State, Salvation Army Band, Skuirrel, Machaira Band, Rhythm and Praise, Crimson Blues, The Lost and The Found, John Voelz Band, Reid Bartlett Band, Son House Band, Lisa Daggs, Marc Cooper, Andrew Marshall, Aaron Gayden, and Tom Schrader.

The bands don't sound like the typical Christian music one might expect, but the spiritual message emerges through the lyrics. James Croci of Rhythm and Praise said, "People need support — a place that gives them hope, help, and healing." Croci believes that the "Spirit of God gives them the strength to overcome."

On Friday, January 17, Crimson Blues performed at Higher Power's celebration. After the concert, Heath welcomed everyone and explained that the purpose of the Higher Power Ministry is to be "a refuge from the storm" and "a place we can take off our masks." He said, "We're here to walk alongside you."

Each week, a speaker talks to the group about their recovery from addiction such as drugs, alcohol, gambling, food addictions, sexual addictions, workaholics, co-dependency, and self-harm. Higher Power Theresa Nored was the featured speaker, and she has been clean for 24 years. She shared her story and her struggles with the group. "The details of the story don't matter," she said. "God brought redemption into my life." She said, "You have to get through the mess to reach the message."

She explained that the program is for "people who want a better way of life." She also spoke about the importance of removing the stigma surrounding addiction so that people aren't afraid to seek the help they need.

Tony T. is a member of Higher Power, and he has been sober for 34 years. He said, "A lot of people have addictions. They're dying in their homes. ... This is something really needed in this community."



(Left to right) Lead Director of Recovery John Heath and Elder Board members Pastor Dale Marsh and Pastor Gary Freitas welcome everyone to attend Higher Power recovery celebrations.



Christian rock band Crimson Blues performs at the Higher Power recovery celebration on January 17.

Richard Mireles was released from prison 10 months ago after serving for 21 years. He brought his drug and alcohol addiction with him to prison: "I thought I would die in there." While serving his time in prison, Mireles got sober and turned his life around — even earning a degree in social and behavioral science and pursuing an MBA. He attributes his recovery to God, with "Him as my rock, my foundation."

Mireles said some of the hardest moments of his recovery were after his release from prison while transitioning back into society. He said that God "gave me a will to not go backwards." He now does a lot of advocacy work and encourages others to work toward recovery: "This is a source of staying sober — giving back. The true way to freedom is giving yourself up to service."

Higher Power has a strong spiritual support system: An Elder Board comprised of two recovery pastors — each with 30 years of sobriety — who give spiritual advice and guidance. Heath said that Pastor Gary Freitas from Manteca and Pastor Dale Marsh from Oroville provide "spiritual direction, protection, and correction in the ministry."

Pastor Freitas said, "There's a real need for this, so we support him 100 percent." He said that people are "searching for a higher power. They're searching for a relationship that means something — to fill that void, that emptiness."

Higher Power also helped start the Sacramento 12 Step Christian Recovery Network. Heath explained that the mission is to create "a community of believers under one banner whose primary purpose is to help other Christ-centered recovery ministries through support and fellowship." The network of recovery programs throughout the region are creating a website to collect all the recovery resources in one place. Anyone who is suffering can find services to help, such as addiction recovery programs, homeless shelters, food banks, safe houses for women, help for trafficking victims, etc. Heath said, "We're doing something that's never been done — to put all the faith-based meetings in one place to help

people get what they need to survive."

Pastor Marsh said, "For Higher Power and for us, it's really important to be part of the local recovery community. There's a huge value participating in the network."

Higher Power recovery celebrations are held each Friday at 7:00 PM at 755 Oak Avenue Parkway in Folsom where they serve free dinner, dessert, coffee, and other refreshments. Higher Power is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization; donation checks can be written to Higher Power Ministry and then mailed to Lakeside Church, 745 Oak Avenue Parkway, Folsom, CA 95630. ★

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AMERICAN PICKERS to Film in California

By Maggie Kissinger,
Cineflix Productions

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Mike Wolfe, Frank Fritz, and their team are excited to return to California! They plan to film episodes of the hit series American Pickers throughout your area in March 2020.

AMERICAN PICKERS is a documentary series that explores the fascinating world of antique "picking" on History. The hit show follows Mike and Frank, two of the most skilled pickers in the business, as they hunt for America's most valuable antiques. They are always excited to find sizeable, unique collections and learn the interesting stories behind them.

As they hit the back roads from coast to coast, Mike and Frank are on a mission to recycle and



Mike Wolfe (right) and Frank Fritz will be returning to California to film AMERICAN PICKERS. Photo courtesy Cineflix

rescue forgotten relics. Along the way, the Pickers want to meet characters with remarkable and exceptional items. The pair hopes to give historically significant objects a new lease on life, while learning a thing or two about America's past along the way.

Mike and Frank have seen a lot of rusty gold over the years and are always looking to discover something they've never seen before. They are ready to find extraordinary items

and hear fascinating tales about them. AMERICAN PICKERS is looking for leads and would love to explore your hidden treasure. If you or someone you know has a large, private collection or accumulation of antiques that the Pickers can spend the better part of the day looking through, send us your name, phone number, location and description of the collection with photos to americanpickers@cineflix.com or call 855-OLD-RUST. ★



By County Supervisor
Sue Frost

Through the generosity of the *Gold River Messenger*, this column serves to provide an update about matters affecting the unincorporated community of Gold River.

Our roads are crumbling. That is not hyperbole, they are literally crumbling. And we don't have the money or a realistic plan to fix them.

Recent reports show California roads are the 3rd worst in the entire country. NHTSA data notes that Highway 99 is now the 7th most dangerous freeway in America. And a study by national non-profit transportation research group TRIP estimates that 70% of Sacramento County's roads and highways are in poor shape - 41% dangerously so.

The public is well aware of the problem - I hear about it from my constituents almost every day.

We need to get something done.

But instead of focusing on the immediate and urgent problem - fixing our roads - the Sacramento Transportation Authority (STA) is putting together a multi-Billion dollar shopping list of projects in the form of a countywide sales tax increase.

Sacramento County residents drive more than 965,955 cars on 5,200 miles of roads, which comprises about 85% of all travel. Compare that to just 97 buses and 42 miles of Light Rail tracks, which comprises about 1% of all travel. An overwhelming majority of people in Sacramento County use roads to get to work, take kids to school, shop for food; and go movies, restaurants, and basketball games. Even public transit relies on those roads - buses travel on roads and many RT users drive to stations to board light-rail.

Yet, surprisingly, the \$3 Billion tax increase

GOLD RIVER COMMUNITY UPDATE

Common Sense Needed to Fix Our Roads

currently under consideration will devote only 28% to road repairs and 10% for freeway improvements, while dedicating as much as 50% to buses and public transit. Asking voters to raise taxes on themselves to pay for transportation projects that impact the fewest people isn't a recipe for success.

It just doesn't make sense. Worse yet, it could derail any chance of real action to fix our roads.

The majority of voters live outside the City of Sacramento in suburban cities like Folsom, Rancho Cordova, Elk Grove, Gold River, and Citrus Heights; or in unincorporated communities like Arden-Arcade, Fair Oaks and Orangevale. Residents in these communities are the most impacted by the poor condition of our roads, and they would be paying the biggest share of the proposed increase.

They are also the voters needed to pass a tax increase. Four years ago, these same voters opposed Measure B because it included too much spending on transit and trolleys. Yet some STA members have convinced themselves these voters would support a new measure that nearly doubles spending on those projects.

Sacramento residents are currently paying a 1/2 Sales Tax passed in 2004 with the promise to fix our roads. We will continue paying that tax for two more decades. We are also a paying billions more at the gas pump as a result of the gas tax increase the Legislature imposed with SB1. Each time, voters were promised that the new revenue would fix our roads and highways. Some projects have been done - but the condition of most of our roads hasn't improved. And some of the money has been siphoned off for other purposes - something that is sure to be on voters' minds.

STA's own polling shows that while the public may be willing to support another tax for

road repair and improvement, support from every community (including Sacramento City) falls off when it comes to RT or other projects. Measure B failed in 2016 because proponents cobbled together a wish list from interest groups instead of focusing on the issue voters cared about most. We cannot afford to repeat the same mistake.

I recognize that more revenue is required to make the improvements we need and tackle the volume of repairs we face. I believe voters are willing to pony-up more tax-dollars to get the job done. But clearly they are not willing to pay to fund more under-performing and money-losing public transit. And they are justifiably wary of more broken promises.

Fixing and improving our roads is imperative. It's the most effective way we can reduce daily commutes, cut traffic snarls, and improve safety.

That is why I want STA to consider a stand-alone proposal that focuses primarily on fixing and improving our roads and highways - and include real public oversight to give voters confidence that the money will go where it is supposed to go.

I do not love the idea of raising taxes, but we have to fix our roads - and we have to do it now. I think the current proposal will make that harder, if not impossible.

Let's focus first on fixing our roads. It's the right thing to do. It's also the smart thing to do.

Thank you for reading - and as always, if you want to contact me call me at 916-874-5491, or e-mail me at SupervisorFrost@sac-county.net.

Sue Frost represents the 4th District, which includes all or part of the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, Rio Linda, Elverta, Gold River, Rancho Murietta, North Highlands, Carmichael, Foothill Farms and Fair Oaks. ★

Gold Mountain at CA Museum

By Brenna Hamilton,
California Museum

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The California Museum began exhibiting the long-term installation "Gold Mountain: Chinese Californian Stories" on Sunday, Jan. 26, 2020. The new exhibit details the history of Chinese Americans in California from the 1840s to the present through a display of historic artifacts and photographs, accompanied by interactive video stations, games and activities. Underscoring Chinese Californians' often overlooked but significant role in history, the exhibit reveals parallels to immigration, race and civil rights issues impacting the state and nation.

"We're thrilled to present the new exhibit 'Gold Mountain,'" said Executive Director Amanda Meeker. "Although the role of Chinese Californians in building the transcontinental railroad is well-known, their other contributions to shaping our state over the last 175 years are often overlooked. This exhibit highlights their unsung

role in the state's past and present while revealing connections to current issues of race, nationalism and civil rights."

"Gold Mountain: Chinese Californian Stories" explores the Chinese American experience in California from the Gold Rush to the present in six themed sections. Highlights of Chinese immigrants' early achievements include their critical contributions to the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 as well as to building other infrastructure and contributing to the state's agriculture, fishing and manufacturing. Later in the 19th century, the exhibit explores how Chinese Californians fought racist laws including the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, a federal law pushed by California that prohibited immigration by Chinese laborers, and its enforcement through the incarceration of Chinese immigrants at the Angel Island Immigration Station from 1910 to 1940.

The exhibit also showcases achievements by Chinese Californians who

have broken barriers in a wide array of pursuits. Among featured stories are those of Wong Kim Ark (circa 1873-1946), a native San Franciscan whose triumph in the landmark Supreme Court case *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* established birthright citizenship in 1898; and Anna May Wong (1905-1961), a Los Angeles native who became the first Chinese American movie star in the 1922 film *The Toll of the Sea*. The exhibit also presents the successes of local Chinese Americans. Examples include Frank Fat (1904-1997), an immigrant who started the popular restaurant Frank Fat's in 1939, and Lisa Ling, a Sacramento native who is the only female Chinese American journalist on national news today.

The California Museum educates visitors on California's diverse history, arts, culture and unique influence on the world. Through interactive exhibits and engaging programs, the Museum inspires visitors to make their mark on history. Learn more at <https://www.californiamuseum.org>. ★



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SPRING 2020

The 5th Annual Wildlife Care Association Fall Photo Contest Winner!



Winning Photo by Chamong Xiong of a Leucistic Black Phoebe at Merced Wildlife Refuge. Photo courtesy 2019 WCA

By Rick Reed,
Annual Wildlife Care Association

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - As the non-profit provider of rehab, recovery and release of injured, orphaned and displaced birds and small animals, Wildlife Care Association (WCA) challenged the community to send their best bird photos and you did! Congratulations to all our photo entry participants!

Our 2019 honors go to Chamong Xiong of Fresno, CA for his rare and unique photo of a Leucistic Black Phoebe. A hardy native bird normally colored black, this genetic anomaly is a rare sight making this picture a unique view very few would ever see.

A rare sight for bird watchers, this Black Phoebe exhibits a rare, genetic trait, similar to albinism, changing the bird's color to a light yellow/white. This type of anomaly often makes the bird more vulnerable to predators and very rare.

Xiong captured this excellent picture at the Merced Wildlife Refuge featuring a

crisp crystal-clear image and a depth of field providing a deeper almost natural view.

Prizes included a wildlife library with a table top copy of "Birds of North America" by Noel Groves, "Encyclopedia of Birds" by Per Christiansen, David Attenborough's "The Life of Birds" and a copy of "Getting Your Shots" by National Geographic, a WCA T-shirt, a glass owl cup and a personal tour of the WCA Rehabilitation facility at McClellan Park. And...of course our appreciation for his caring for nature and supporting volunteers giving wildlife a second chance to live at Wildlife Care Association!

The Wildlife Care Association Fall Photo Contest took place from Oct thru Dec 31 with entries submitted on the WCA Facebook page. See all the photos entered on the 2019 Fall Photo Contest Album page.

For more information or for help with injured, orphan or wildlife displaced by human activity call the non-profit Wildlife Care Association of Sacramento at 916-965-WILD. ★



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