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Human Trafficking Hits Region Hard



Like drugs and arms trafficking, human trafficking is a market-driven criminal industry that is based on the principles of supply and demand. Many factors make children and adults vulnerable to human trafficking.

By Jan Dalske

PLACER COUNTY REGION, CA (MPG) - Human trafficking has been identified as the largest human rights violation in the history of mankind. It is the fastest growing criminal enterprise in the 21st Century. It is a 9 billion dollar industry. Human trafficking is the second largest criminal enterprise in the world, after drug smuggling and arms dealing. Victims of human trafficking are exploited for the purpose of commercial sex and forced labor. Human trafficking is a form of modern day slavery. It flourishes from the lack of community awareness. Victims are in plain sight. Those who are being trafficked include young children, teenagers, men and women. They can be domestic citizens or foreign nationals. Foreign-born victims can be either documented or undocumented in the United

States. The United States is one of the top three destination points for trafficked victims. California, New York, Texas and Nevada are the top destination states within our country. Los Angeles is one of the top three points of entry into this country for victims of slavery and trafficking. This trafficking occurs in a triangle from Los Angeles, California to Las Vegas, Nevada, and back to Sacramento, California. The diverse communities of these sprawling cities make it easier to hide and move victims from place to place. This makes it very difficult for law enforcement to locate potential survivors. Sacramento is among the top 5 cities in the United States which is experiencing an epidemic of child trafficking. Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery where people profit from the control and exploitation of others. As defined under

U.S. federal law, victims of human trafficking include children involved in the sex trade, adults age 18 or over who are coerced or deceived into commercial sex acts, and anyone forced into different forms of "labor or services," such as domestic workers held in a home, or farm-workers forced to labor against their will. The factors that each of these situations have in common are elements of force, fraud, or coercion that are used to control people. Then, that control is tied to inducing someone into commercial sex acts, or labor or services. Numerous people in the field have summed up the concept of human trafficking as "compelled service." Every year, human traffickers generate billions of dollars in profits by victimizing millions of people around the world, and here in the United States.

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Area Gas Prices Start Rising Again

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Average retail gasoline prices in Sacramento have risen 4.4 cents per gallon in the past week, averaging \$3.46/g yesterday, according to GasBuddy's daily survey of 720 gas outlets in Sacramento. This compares with the national average that has increased 5.0 cents per gallon in the last week to \$3.34/g, according to gasoline price website GasBuddy.com. Including the change in gas prices in Sacramento during the past week, prices yesterday were 48.4 cents per gallon lower than the same day one year ago and are 2.9 cents per gallon higher than a month ago. The national average has increased 6.1 cents per gallon during the last month and stands 34.3 cents per gallon lower than this day one year ago.

"After weeks of relative stability with little change in gas price nationally, we've seen a new trend develop that has sent the national average to its highest level since mid-October," said GasBuddy.com Senior Petroleum Analyst Patrick DeHaan. "Oil prices have recently surpassed \$100/bbl, a \$6/bbl jump since we began 2014, and unfortunately this new trend may signal the beginning of "March Madness", the time of year that brings large spikes in gas prices. Very few stations have gasoline under \$3/gal, and I expect those few stations will all but dry up over the next couple weeks. The national average will likely rise 35-50 cents per gallon by the time gasoline prices peak in April or May, ahead of the start of the summer driving season that brings the switch to more expensive, cleaner burning summer gasoline," DeHaan said.

GasBuddy operates SactoGasPrices.com and over 250 similar websites that track gasoline prices at over 140,000 gasoline stations in the United States and Canada. In addition, GasBuddy offers a free smartphone app which has been downloaded over 25 million times to help motorists find the lowest gasoline prices in their area. ★

New Study Details Depth of California's Affordable Home Crisis

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The California Housing Partnership Corporation released a report February 11th that shows California's private housing market is not providing an adequate number of homes affordable to low- and moderate-income households and calls on California's legislators to take immediate action to meet the housing needs of California's lowest-income residents. Contrary to common belief, the study "How California's Housing Market Is Failing to Meet the Needs of Low-Income Families," finds that the housing bubble burst and the ensuing foreclosure crisis have not made housing more affordable to lower-income households. In fact, rents were higher in 2012

than they were at the height of the housing boom in 2006 in nearly all metro areas. One million low-income households in California do not have access to an affordable home, and not one county or legislative district in the state has an adequate supply of homes affordable to extremely low-income households, those earning 30 percent or less of their metro area's median household income. More than fifty percent of extremely low-income households are elderly or disabled and living on a fixed income. In the past five years, 79 percent of state and federal investment in affordable homes has disappeared. The elimination of Redevelopment funding in 2012 and the exhaustion of state housing bonds funded by

Propositions 46 and 1C, has meant the loss of more than \$1 billion per year in state investment that is critical to spur the production and preservation of affordable homes. Combined with reductions in federal funds, investment in affordable homes in California has been reduced by more than \$1.5 billion annually. The California Housing Partnership Corporation calls on state leaders to implement policies in three key areas. Area 1: **Replace exhausted state housing bonds** by passing the Homes and Jobs Act (SB 391) and by making an immediate general fund investment to the state's existing rental housing production program. Area 2: **Strengthen local jurisdictions' tools for building and preserving**

affordable homes by taking three important steps: **Lower the threshold** for voter approval of local infrastructure measures, including affordable homes, to 55 percent, as it is with education bonds; **create a new tax increment** financing mechanism that gives local governments the ability to fund the development of basic infrastructure including transportation, housing and parks; and **allow local jurisdictions** to require the inclusion of a percentage of affordable homes in new developments. Area 3: **Invest a significant portion of Cap-and-Trade revenues in affordable transit-oriented homes and energy efficiency retrofits to existing multifamily affordable housing.** The California Homes and

Jobs Act (SB 391) is a particularly important piece of the solution to our state's affordable-home crisis. SB 391 will dedicate investment to public-private partnerships that will build 10,000 safe and affordable single-family homes and apartments each year for Californians in need, including families, seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities; reduce homelessness; and result in significant savings to taxpayers. ★ *Source: The California Housing Partnership Corporation is a private nonprofit organization dedicated to helping government and nonprofit housing agencies preserve and expand the supply of affordable homes for lower-income households throughout California.*

Bass Pro Shops to Open New Outdoor World Store in Rocklin

Store will serve 2 million area sportsmen and feature Uncle Buck's Fishbowl and Grill



Artist's rendering of Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World store in Rocklin, Calif.

ROCKLIN, CA (MPG) - Bass Pro Shops, an outdoor retailer specializing in hunting, fishing, camping and other related outdoor gear, is proud to announce plans for a new store in Rocklin, Calif. The 120,000 -square-foot store, which will feature an Uncle Buck's Fishbowl and Grill, will be located at the intersection of Interstate 80 and Sierra College Boulevard. The store will be a primary anchor for the 500,000-square-foot, mixed-use Rocklin Crossings development. The store is scheduled to open in 2015.

This will be the company's fourth store in California. Currently, Bass Pro Shops operates stores in Rancho Cucamonga and Manteca, Calif. They recently announced a new store locating in San Jose.

"We are honored to be one of the anchors for the new Rocklin Crossings—one of the largest, and most exciting retail developments in this area. Placing

our store at this highly visible location on I-80 will allow us to bring Bass Pro Shops low prices and famous friendly, expert service to better serve the many sportsmen, women, as well as the visitors to this area each year," said Johnny Morris, founder of Bass Pro Shops.

Rocklin, which is located in Placer County, is part of the Sacramento metropolitan area. It's situated between the western base of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range and the Sacramento Valley. The history of the area can be traced back to California's gold rush days. The Bass Pro Shops at the Rocklin Crossings site will draw from an extended region along the I-80 corridor to accommodate the outlying suburban and rural customers in addition to those en route to the area's many outdoor opportunities.

"We are very excited that Bass Pro Shops has selected our Rocklin Crossings development

to be one of their first Northern California locations. We can't wait for them to open," said Dave Mossman, Executive Vice President-Chief Investment Officer of Donahue Schriber, developer of Rocklin Crossings.

Nationally, Bass Pro Shops will host more than 116 million people visiting their 84 stores and marine centers across America and Canada this year. The average customer stays 2 1/2 hours and drives an average distance of 50+ miles. Bass Pro Shops was named by Advertising Age magazine as one of the Top 10 Hottest Brands in America along with name brands such as Old Spice, M&M's, iPad and Droid. Also, Bass Pro Shops has been recognized numerous times for their conservation and outdoor education efforts, as well as being recognized by J.D. Powers & Associates for their customer service excellence.

"We are thrilled that Bass Pro Shops will be coming to

Rocklin," said Rocklin Mayor Scott Yuill. "Once opened, Bass Pro Shops will attract visitors and outdoor enthusiasts throughout Northern California and beyond. We look forward to working with the team through design and construction and having Bass Pro Shops as part of the Rocklin community for years to come."

Bass Pro Shops unique, award-winning, mega-sized outdoor stores are known for combining retail with entertainment, conservation and outdoor education. More than just a fishing and hunting store, the Bass Pro Shops store will also offer equipment and clothing for hiking, backpacking, wildlife viewing, camping, and other related outdoor gear. A gift and nature center features a wide variety of outdoor-related items from lamps and dishes to bird feeders and furniture. Expansive boat showrooms offer Tracker, Nitro, SunTracker, Tahoe, Grizzly and

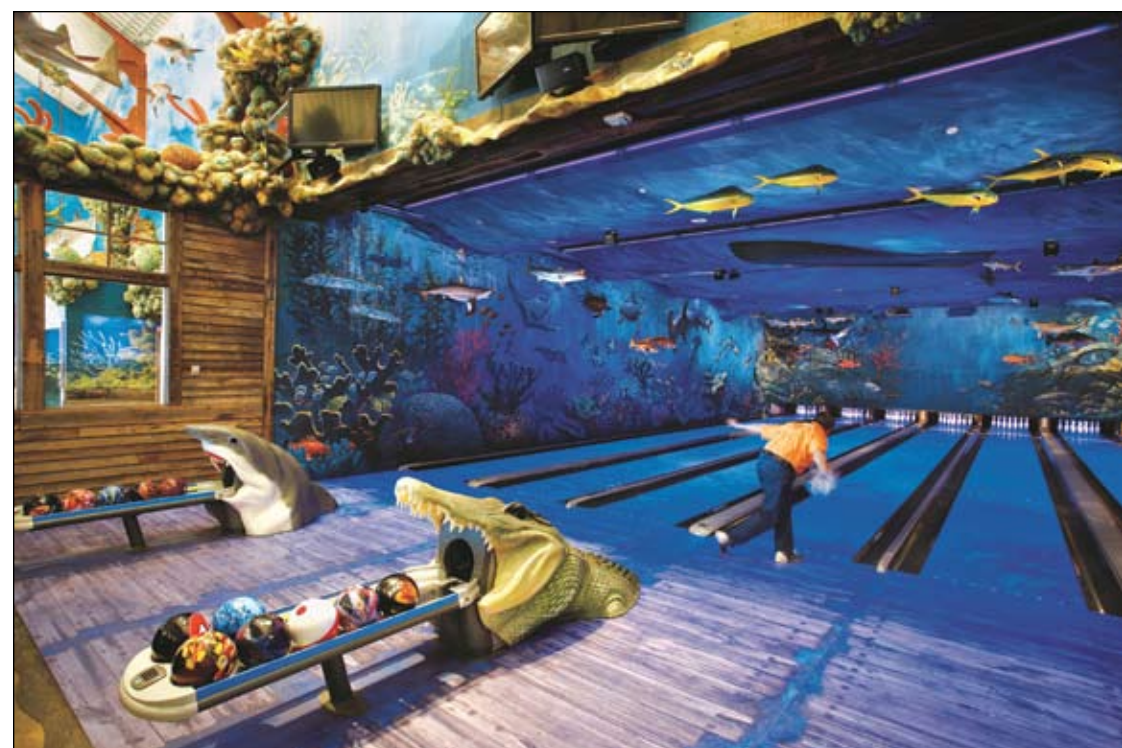
Mako boats built by Tracker Marine Group, the world's largest manufacturer of fishing boats.

The new Rocklin Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World will feature the popular Uncle Buck's Fishbowl and Grill. This nautical-themed center is located within the store and features a unique design geared for family fun and dining. There will be 12 lanes, offering customers the chance to feel like they are bowling under the ocean. Casual family dining will be available in the Grill where customers can dine on a variety of appetizers, sandwiches, salads and burgers.

Bass Pro Shops lodge-like exteriors and outdoor-themed interiors make them popular with customers. The outdoors feel is brought indoors through massive log and rock work, large indoor aquariums and water features stocked with native fish species as well as an extensive collection

of museum quality fish and wildlife mounts. Historic photos and exhibits will pay tribute to the region's great outdoor heritage.

Since the beginning, Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris has been dedicated to inspiring people, especially youth and families, to love, enjoy and conserve the great outdoors. That commitment, demonstrated over the course of several decades, is a big reason why Bass Pro Shops is known as the outdoor industry's corporate conservation leader. Bass Pro Shops' has partnered with and supports the efforts of many organizations that work to conserve and manage the nation's natural resources. The company's key conservation initiatives include fish and wildlife habitat improvements, conservation and outdoor skills education, improving water quality and quality of our lakes and springs, and conservation advocacy. ★



Uncle Buck's Fishbowl and Grill allows visitors to feel like they're bowling under the ocean.

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Publisher Paul V. Scholl

CDPH Issues Warning About Consuming Certain Cactus Imported From Mexico Due to Health Risk

Special CDPH Report

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

- California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director and state health officer Dr. Ron Chapman has recently warned people not to eat cactus imported from Mexico that were sold at specific retail and wholesale locations around the state due to the presence of unapproved pesticides.

A recent routine surveillance sample collected by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR) isolated as much as 5.8 parts per million of Monocrotophos, an organophosphate based pesticide that has been barred from use in the United States since 1989. CDPR immediately took action to remove all of the product it could locate from store shelves and distribution centers. It has been quarantined and/or destroyed so that it doesn't pose a threat to consumers.

The contaminated cactus was sold and offered for sale to

consumers and wholesale customers locally at La Superior SuperMercados in Sacramento, Stockton, Woodland and Pittsburg between 2/6/2014 and 2/12/2014

Whole cases of the cactus purchased from the wholesale produce companies were likely labeled with a supplier sticker that stated "Comercializadora De Chiles, Selectos Nieto S. De R.L. De C.V." Product sold in the retail stores was sold in bulk bins without any specific branding or labeling.

Washing or peeling the cactus prior to preparation as well as some cooking methods (boiling) can remove some of the pesticide, however, since consumers are unable to measure the effectiveness of these procedures, it is not recommended that consumers try to salvage any of this contaminated product. If consumers have any of this product remaining in their possession, they should return it to the place of purchase or dispose of it in the garbage.

No illnesses have been reported to date, but symptoms of acute poisoning may include sweating, headache, weakness, nausea, vomiting, hypersalivation, abdominal cramps, and diarrhea. Consumption of Monocrotophos can lead to neurotoxicity and permanent nerve damage.

CDPH and CDPR are working with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to identify the growers and importers responsible for shipping pesticide contaminated cactus into the United States, so that future shipments can be examined and verified that they are in compliance before making their way into the marketplace.

CDPH recommends consumers experiencing any ill effects after consuming cactus products consult their health care provider. Consumers that observe the product being offered for sale are encouraged to report the activity to the CDPH toll free complaint line at (800) 495-3232. For more information see www.cdph.ca.gov

Antique Western Memorabilia Show and Sale

PLACER COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Nevada City Elks Lodge #518 is presenting an Antique Western Memorabilia Show & Sale to raise funds for its Scholarship Program.

It will be held at its Lodge at 518 Rt. 49N, Nevada City, CA, on March 15 & 16, 2014. Tables will be rented to dealers

and collectors for the weekend event.

General admission will be \$5.00 and children under 12 free when with an adult. Antique Western Genre, Native American Jewelry, Art, Mining, Gambling and Train collectables will be the type of items sold.

Chris Enss, who has written

several books on women in the West and David Comstock, Gold Country historian and author will be present for book signings on Saturday. Call 530 272- 5371 for additional information.

All net proceeds will go to the Elks Lodge Scholarship Program. ★

Crossroads Doll & Teddy Bear Show & Sale

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Crossroads Doll & Teddy Bear Show & Sale

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Placer County Fairgrounds
800 All American City Blvd., Roseville, CA 95678
Adults \$7.00 • Children under 12 \$4.00
info@crossroadsshow.com
<http://www.crossroadsshow.com>
775-348-7713



City of Auburn Offers Unique Online Dance Classes

AUBURN, CA (MPG) - Judy Gamet, Owner of Motion Dynamics has teamed up with the City of Auburn Rec Department to bring you new online dance classes starting in March. The Direct to You classes were created by Miss Gamet in an attempt to include busy families, shift workers, citizens without transportation, and shut ins, the ability to learn and grow while enjoying the Motion Dynamics dance classes.

Classes offered:

Dogs Really Can Dance! Train obedience and handling skills set to music. Perfect for dogs who need to get in shape as well as dogs who need "something to do". 10 thru Seniors.

Tap in Motion: 101 the Basics! Learn to tap dance at home. Go from beginning to intermediate level in just 6 lessons. Ages 10 through senior citizens.

Each Tuesday for six weeks, a

new video lesson arrives in your email inbox along with written lesson notes. An internet connection is required to view the lessons. Study the lesson on your own time and schedule without leaving home!

Price for the six week session: \$40 - \$45 Classes begin Feb 25. Contact the Auburn Rec District or view the activity guide at www.auburnrec.com/winter-2013-14/family-activities/ ★

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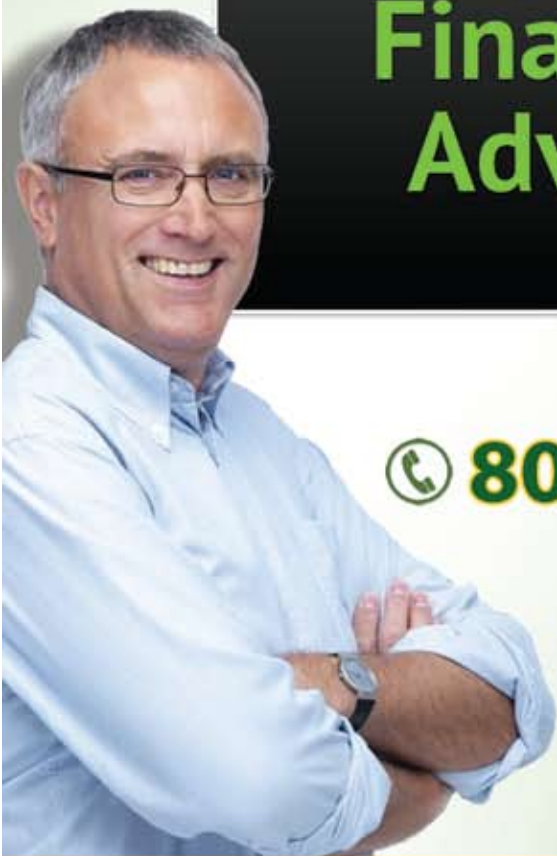
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- CONTACT:** 660-2059
- TICKETS:** \$15 pp - \$25 dbl
- LOCATION:** Loomis Veterans Memorial Hall
5925 Horseshoe Bar Rd, Loomis

American soldier Bowe Bergdahl, held captive by the Taliban since 2009, will be honored at a community dance 7 to 10 p.m., March 14, 2014 at the Loomis Veterans Memorial Hall. All proceeds to Gold Country Chaplaincy and Boots to Books at Sierra College.

Tickets available online at www.goldcountrychaplaincy.com or at the door of the Loomis Veterans Memorial Hall on the evening of the event



Placer County Sheriff Special Report

Home Invasion in Loomis; Three Suspects Apprehended

PLACER COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Two Loomis residents were bound and held at gunpoint during a home invasion robbery at their Creekside Lane residence this morning. Within minutes of freeing themselves and calling the Placer County Sheriff's Office, all three suspects were arrested as they drove on Interstate 80 in the victims' stolen cars.

At 12:18 p.m. today, the male and female who live in the home called 911. Details are still sketchy, but they said they had been duct-taped to chairs for several hours. The victims reported that the suspects, two men and one woman, aimed an AK-47 at the victims' heads during their captivity. The suspects took personal property, weapons and the victims' two cars.

Deputies swarmed the area, including Interstate 80, to watch for the cars. A few

minutes later, they spotted the two victim cars on westbound 80, just east of Douglas Blvd. Freeway traffic was halted for several minutes while a male and a female suspect were taken into custody. With the assistance of the Roseville Police Department, the third suspect was arrested minutes later at a carwash near Riverside and Cirby Way. Weapons were found in the cars.

The victims did not require medical attention. The investigation is ongoing. The mug shots are not available as the suspects are still being interviewed and haven't yet been booked into the Placer County Jail. Suspects: Juan Jose Guerrero, 33, Lenny Enrique Saldana, 20, and Anna Rita Velasquez, 26, all from Willits, CA.

Updates:

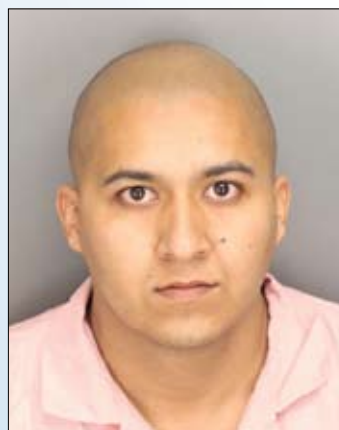
Suspects: Juan Jose Guerrero, 33, Lenny Enrique Saldana, 20, and Anna Rita Velasquez, 26, all from Willits, CA.

Charges to be filed against the three will include robbery, burglary, conspiracy, vehicle theft, grand theft, assault, possession of stolen property, making criminal threats, etc.

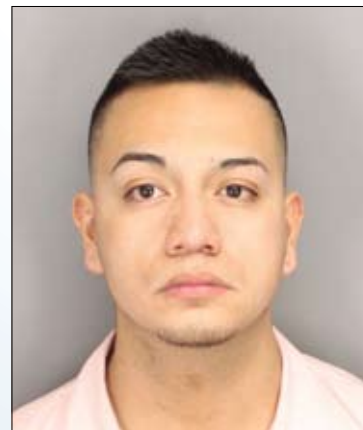
Victims: Male, 28, female, 27. They were held captive in their home for approximately 5 hours. One of the suspects used to work for the male victim.

Bail: Guerrero and Saldana: \$200,000. Velasquez: No bail - she had a warrant out of Sonoma County. She was additionally charged with possession of a controlled substance and bringing a controlled substance into the jail.

Source: Dena Erwin
Public Information Officer
Placer County Sheriff's Office
(530) 889-6901



Juan Jose Guerrero



Lenny Enrique Saldana



Anna Rita Velasquez

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Senator Nielsen Introduces Drought Relief Legislation for HOA Residents



Congressman Tom McClintock

to comply with their Covenants, Conditions & Restrictions (CCR) to keep their lawns green or pay their HOA potentially hefty fines.

To relieve homeowners of this dilemma, State Senator Jim Nielsen (R-Gerber) introduced Senate Bill 992 to prohibit HOAs from assessing fines for brown lawns during a governor-declared drought.

"Californians truly want to do their part in conserving water during this drought from taking shorter showers to not watering our lawns," said Senator Nielsen. "Unfortunately, the folks residing in some HOA communities are required to water their lawns or be subject to steep fines for unmaintained yards."

Specifically, SB 992 responds to news reports that some HOA residents are facing fines of between \$100 to \$1,000 for yards that are not "well-maintained."

In California, HOAs are governed by the state's corporation codes and the Davis-Stirling Act which provides a guideline

allowing individual associations to establish how the association will be run by their own conditions and restrictions. Nielsen's proposed measure temporarily exempts homeowners from complying with these codes.

"While I respect the autonomy of HOAs to self-govern and maintain standards of appearance within their developments, I am more concerned about the non-essential water-use during the current drought. Californians, especially those on wells, are deeply concerned that they will not be able to wash their dishes and flush their toilets," Nielsen said. ★

Senator Jim Nielsen represents the Fourth Senate District, which includes the counties of Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity and Yuba. To contact Senator Nielsen, please call him at 916-651-4004, or via email at senator.nielsen@senate.ca.gov.

"Yosemite Valley belongs to the American people for the express purpose of 'public use, resort and recreation.'"



Congressman Tom McClintock

PLACER COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Congressman Tom McClintock issued the following statement regarding the Merced Wild and Scenic Final Comprehensive Management Plan released by the National Park Service:

"The National Park Service has come a long way toward meeting the concerns expressed by park visitors, recreational groups, and local business and community leaders. I am particularly gratified that the final report has rejected radical proposals to close many traditional tourist amenities at the park, including swimming pools, raft and bike rentals, horseback riding stables, and ice skating and lodging facilities. The plan retains the historic Sugar Pine Bridge, maintains retail services to accommodate park visitors and minimizes the loss of campsites and parking - all significant improvements from the draft report.

"Although I remain concerned about some aspects of

the plan, my first reaction is one of relief. Yosemite Valley belongs to the American people for the express purpose of 'public use, resort and recreation.' The final draft appears to go as far as it can within current law to continue that tradition. It is a victory over those who would replace the park's mission with an exclusionary policy of 'look, but don't touch.'

"I appreciate the NPS leadership for responding to the strong desire of so many Yosemite visitors to retain these facilities and services. I look forward to working with them and the gateway communities to expand and protect opportunities for all Americans to enjoy our beautiful Yosemite National Park." ★

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Despite the recent rainfall in Northern California, California continues to face unprecedented low water levels in its reservoirs. Water districts across the state have either implemented mandatory conservation plans or are in the process of implementing one. For residents living in communities governed by homeowners associations (HOA), this means that they are caught between breaking the water reduction mandate

There's an Alternative to the Imperial Presidency



Commentary By Lee H. Hamilton

gives Congress a primary role in making policy.

The problem with this debate is that it's missing a key part of the equation. Yes, our system needs a strong presidency. But it also needs a strong Congress. We are best off as a nation when the two consult, interact, and work together as powerful branches.

In truth, every president in recent memory has expanded the power of his office and been accused of a power grab. They've had plenty of motivation to do so. The modern world demands quick, decisive action. Americans tend to support presidents who act forcefully. Congress is complex, convoluted, and hard to work with; it is far easier for an administration to act on its own. Even members of Congress often defer to the President, counting on him to address issues they don't want to tackle or can't agree upon.

And presidents have wielded executive orders to great effect. Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, FDR's Works Progress Administration, John Kennedy's Peace Corps, affirmative action under Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan's enshrining of cost-benefit analysis as the key to regulatory review - all came about through executive orders.

Yet there are limits to this approach, because in the end there is no substitute for legislation. Presidents cannot write a budget, raise the minimum wage, or reform entitlements by themselves. Because executive orders lack the permanence and force of law, they can be hard to implement and can be summarily cancelled by a later president. They are more subject to legal challenge than legislation. And most important, executive orders are a

unilateral exercise of power and do not benefit from a process of consensus-building and consultation with voices independent of the President's.

Consensus-building can't happen in a vacuum, however. Without a strong Congress able to find its way effectively through the thickets of law-making, this President and his successors will surely continue to address the nation's challenges on their own. The question is, how far down that road can we go before Congress becomes irrelevant, with too much power - and too much potential for the abuse of power - in presidential hands? Like our founding fathers, we should be skeptical of the concentration of power.

Politico recently detailed a spate of executive orders planned by this administration, which would affect everything from how power plants operate to how we commute to how the environment will be regulated. Taken together, they will "push deeply into everyday life" for Americans, the article noted.

Whether a president oversteps his authority with these and other executive orders is inevitably colored by whether you agree with the proposed order. But my point is different. It is that the march toward presidential unilateralism, whether the president is a Democrat or a Republican, dangerously undercuts our constitutional system. Before we give up on the separation of powers, let's try strengthening Congress. This may not be the easy route, but if we don't take it, representative democracy itself is in doubt. ★

Lee Hamilton is Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.



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CHILD'S PLAY

How Imaginative Play Benefits Your Child

FAMILY FEATURES

Between the everyday obligations of school, sports and other extracurricular activities, many children equate playtime with sitting in front of the television, computer or other electronic device.

This dependence on electronic devices can be linked to a list of issues, including childhood obesity, as well as reduced cognitive and muscle development. Children who instead engage in imaginative or pretend play are offered a stress-free environment where their dreams have no boundary. This type of activity just comes naturally for kids because it's just plain fun.

Create a pretend play paradise

A make-believe-friendly setting begins with the parents. Here are a few ideas to create an environment that fosters creative, imaginative play for your little ones:

- **Focus on fun:** A truly free setting for imaginative play is one without structure or rules. Let your child know there are no expectations or wrong outcomes while they are pretending. There may be moments where you have to intervene, but the atmosphere should be relaxed and free from rules.
- **Give toys that encourage pretend play:** Make sure your kids have toys that allow them to express themselves. The Calico Critters toy line is the ideal choice for parents seeking timeless, classic toys that delight children and promote wholesome values through pretend play. Children will love these adorable, high-quality miniature animal figures, which include families of rabbits, dogs, cats, bears and more. For more information, visit www.calicocritters.com.
- **Read to your children:** The benefits of children who are regularly read to are immense, from enhanced bonding between parent and child to better test scores. So, begin the reading ritual as early as you can. You will find your child will love and look forward to sharing this healthy activity with you.
- **Play along:** Young children mimic everything their parents do, so be a model of imaginative play for them. Go ahead and act silly — dress up with them, act out puppet shows or build forts with bed sheets. Calico Critters, with its imaginative collection of families, homes and accessories is perfect for "Mommy & Me" playtime. You may be surprised by how much enjoyment you get out of it.
- **Create a fantasy prop box:** Fill a box with various trinkets found throughout your home for kids to create their own forts, homes, businesses or simply a rousing game of dress-up. Just make sure to pick items that are safe and you won't miss if they are lost or damaged from heavy play.
- **Plan open-ended activities:** Instead of starting an art project with a finished model for them to create, plan free painting or crafting sessions with your kids. This will allow your children to fully express themselves any way they desire. Just make sure you have plenty of fun supplies on hand, such as glitter, paper, glue, markers, boxes, feathers, sequins or any other trinkets you have on hand.



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

- **Use the great outdoors as a playground:** Encourage your kids to use the great outdoors as their canvas for unbridled creativity. A simple trip outside opens a whole world of play options for a child. Plus, it allows your children to be more active, which is always a bonus.

The many benefits of imaginative play

Research shows parents who encourage this sort of imaginative play offer a healthy, supportive environment for their children. Here are a few of the ways in which the power of imagination benefits your child's development and overall well-being:

- **Emotional and social development:** When a child is involved in pretend play, he naturally creates scenarios and acts out different roles. This often involves looking outside of their individual desires and learning the essential skills of empathy and understanding.
- **Language aptitude:** When alone at play, children will often mimic the vocabulary they've picked up from their parents, family members and educators. This association of vocabulary and word meaning is reinforced more when acted out in front of peers during pretend play.
- **Enhanced mathematic skills:** Parents who use fake food or money to act out a grocery store trip help their children associate the challenging concepts of addition and subtraction to real life.
- **Problem solving skills:** From deciding who gets to be the princess to taking turns hosting the tea party, pretend play allows children to tap into cognitive thinking skills they'll use in different scenarios throughout life.
- **Enhanced relationships and bonding:** New worlds are opened when children and adults interact together through imaginary play. Adults can offer wisdom, life lessons and vocabulary the child will absorb.
- **Good, clean fun:** Pretend play is the best way for children to escape from the stresses of daily life. By creating their own make-believe world, kids have complete control of their destiny within that environment. With so many play dates and after-school activities, such a release is a positive for many youngsters.

More make-believe play means enhanced skills

Research shows an environment where imaginative play is fostered is healthy for a child's development. Here is a snapshot of the many benefits this type of activity can provide to a child:

- Increased sense of safety, calmness and protection.
- Higher rates of self-esteem.
- Ability to cooperate, control impulses and deal with disappointment.
- Increased levels of fitness and coordination.
- Developed sense of individuality.
- Ability to negotiate with peers.
- Increased sense of accomplishment and pride.
- Ability to apply learned information.
- Highly developed motor skills.



Playtime starts with fun toys, such as Calico Critters, that foster the imagination of your child.



By Ronnie McBryer

All That Once Was Good

I can't swing that kind of cash. What makes all of this so difficult to take is the fact that some of my fondest memories center on professional baseball.

I'm not old, but old enough to remember sitting in the now demolished Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium trying to snag foul balls off the bats of Brett Butler, Dale Murphy and Bob Horner - all for a few turnstile dollars. But I can count on one hand how many times I've been back to a stadium since.

Some of my fondest memories were also made at church; in the little "church in the wildwood" of my formative years. The pew bottoms were made of old wooden slats that creaked and groaned during the service, pinching this little boy's behind and picking holes in my mother's pantyhose.

The church's water fountain was a natural spring found down a path behind the sanctuary, and a trip to the toilet was a similar trek. On hot August nights I can recall the fiery summer revivals in that old house of worship - fiery in preaching and temperature - as I struggled to understand all that was going on (between explorations for spearmint gum in my grandmother's purse, of course).

Was this church "better" than what I have experienced as an adult? Probably not. Was it simpler, more sincere? Probably so. Major League Baseball and much of the church in America have arrived at the same place. Both are more driven by market and commercial forces than by a true sense of what they are. They have

largely been taken captive by the consumer, by self-indulgence, and vanity. We are all the worse for it.

My children used to thrill me on the baseball diamond every spring, even when they were picking flowers in the outfield or putting their mitts on the wrong hand. There was an enjoyment, a purity in their play, that while unprofessional, was much more real than anything happening at the ball parks of big business. This is my same longing for the church. For I still love it and pray that it become truer to its roots and more authentic.

Terence Mann, James Earl Jones' character in "Field of Dreams," may have captured the sentiment best. Standing in that enchanted cornfield turned baseball diamond, he says, "They'll walk out to the bleachers; sit in shirtsleeves on a perfect afternoon. They'll find they have reserved seats somewhere along one of the baselines, where they sat when they were children and cheered their heroes.

"They'll watch the game and it'll be as if they dipped themselves in magic waters. The memories will be so thick they'll have to brush them away from their faces. This field, this game: it's a part of our past. It reminds us of all that once was good; and it could be again." May it be so.

Ronnie McBryer is a syndicated columnist, pastor, and author. His newest book is "The Gospel According to Waffle House." You can read more at www.ronniemcbrayer.me.

What Comes After That Kiss?

Dr. James L. Snyder

I grew up in a generation that never kissed on the first date. Sad to say, that idea went out with Noah and his ark and you can kiss that idea goodbye.

Nothing wrong with a kiss, if it is with the right person. It seems we are living in a culture where all anybody thinks about is kiss, kiss, kiss. So much so, that the average kiss is just that, average. Whatever happened to the romance factor behind the kiss?

A kiss should be something special and not thrown around like some dirty old rag. It should mean something to the people involved.

I still remember my first kiss.

I was in Bible school studying for the ministry where I met this girl. We had been dating two months before I realized we were dating. On many things, especially in the romantic arena, I am rather slow. At the end of our first "date," she surprised me by hugging me. I had never been hugged before. I did not know what to do with my arms. I did not know if I should stand there or if I should say something. At the time nothing really came to mind so I just stood there saying nothing.

The frightening thing about

this first hug was I could not sleep all night long. I had no idea what it meant and I did not know what I was supposed to do. What would I say to this young lady when I met her the next day? How could I look her in the eyes?

I am not sure if I have ever gotten over that first hug after all these years. The thing I did not realize at the time was, every kiss begins with a hug.

Then, the inevitable happened.

We had concluded our "date," and I took her over to the doorway of the dormitory where she lived. All of a sudden, at least from my perspective, she rose up on her tippy toes and kissed me right on the lips. Then she turned around and went away into the dorm, leaving me standing on the porch not knowing what happened or what to do next.

It was February and just a week away from Valentine's Day. I had my Valentine's Day present and my dilemma was, what do I now give her in return? What in the world could ever top a kiss?

Being a naïve young gentleman, I did not possess the resources to process this sort of problem. I had never bought anybody a Valentine's Day present

in my life. What did they really look like?

After some soul-searching and wallet rumbling, I bought her a heart-shaped box of candy. When I presented it to her, she was thrilled and kissed me again. What do I have to do now? Do I buy her another box of candy?

The next few hours were rather foggy to me and even the next couple of days. By the end of Valentine's Day, I discovered I was engaged to be married and it all started with a hug.

The apostle Paul put it best when he wrote, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity[love], these three; but the greatest of these is charity[love]" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

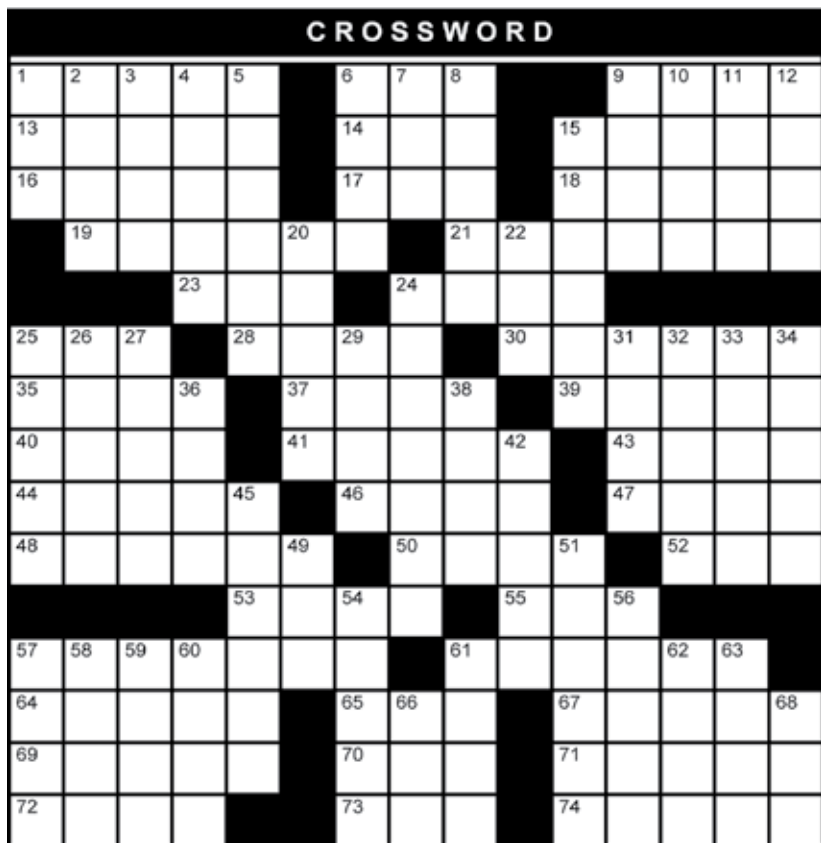
A kiss is an expression of love. It is not so much the kiss as what comes after that kiss; a relationship that gets better and better every year. ★

Rev. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, P.O. Box 831313, Ocala, FL 34483. He lives with his wife, Martha, in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 866-552-2543 or e-mail jamesnsnyder2@att.net. His website is www.jamesnsnyderministries.com.

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CLUES

- ACROSS**
- "Nebraska" leading man
 - Phelomena's quest
 - Immanuel ___ of "Critique of Pure Reason"
 - B on Mendeleev's table
 - WSW opposite
 - "None the ___"
 - Lawyers' loads
 - Hula welcome
 - Right-hand page
 - Kind of tire
 - Bullock's force of attraction
 - Canny
 - "Enterprise of "Star Trek Into Darkness"
 - 20s dispenser
 - Apièce
 - Part of India
 - "Wanted!" state
 - LeBron's goal
 - Deen or Abdul
 - Against
 - Slow sipper's equipment
 - Smiley face
 - Heat-conducting solid
 - ___-a-Sketch
 - Makes a great puppet
 - ___ Adler's students won many Oscars
 - Folio page
 - Between do and mi, pl.
 - Oscar of sports world?
 - "Before" prefix
 - Punk hairdo, pl.
 - Chemical cousin
 - Accord
 - Credit card acr.
 - Some sorority girls
 - Popular synthetic fabric
 - *2013 "wolf" portrayal
 - Bert's sidekick
 - ___sack
 - Adult male
 - African antelope
- DOWN**
- British broadcaster
 - Women's lib cry?
 - Celestial bear
 - Campus girls
 - Store as fodder
 - Auction off
 - The loneliest number?
 - Sound like Secretariat
 - Capital on the Dnieper
 - Fungal spore sacs
 - Post-deductions amount
 - Site of Trojan War
 - Get through
 - Nursemaid in India, pl.
 - Mourner's wish
 - Soon enough
 - *Nominated "Hustler"
 - Article of faith
 - Opposite of glossy
 - Pigeon's home
 - Old scolds
 - One of "12 Angry Men," e.g.
 - Rabbit hole wonderer
 - *"Saving Mr. ___"
 - Obsoloescent phone feature
 - Tempo
 - Wallops
 - *Folk singer "___ Davis"
 - Pose a question
 - *Nominated animated feature
 - Church song
 - Manicurist's board
 - *Previous Supporting Actor nominees Wahlberg or Ruffalo
 - Arab League member
 - "Hey!"
 - Above
 - *"___ Man 3," nominated for Visual Effects
 - European eruptr
 - Commuter line
 - Princess tormentor
 - Yellow ___



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	8				5		4
2				8		6	
	4			6			
3			1				8
		4				7	
	2	8					5
6		8				2	
	5	7	1				9

Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

For Solutions See Page 7

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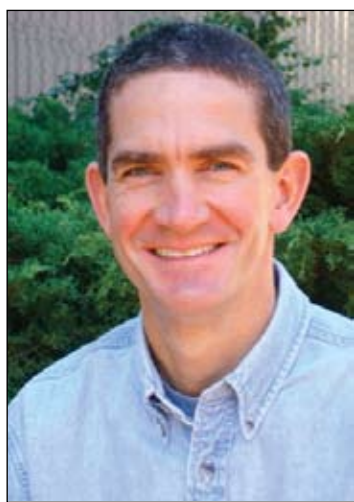
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Can You Heal Your Body With Your Mind?



By Eric Nelson

After years of suffering from a debilitating disease, not to mention multiple surgeries and countless doctor's appointments, author Danae Horn made a commitment to herself: "You will heal yourself with your mind." Unfortunately things didn't work out as planned, as she found herself consumed with such an overwhelming sense of guilt for not seeing any improvement that she ended up changing course and relying on a more conventional if still inspired approach.

Ironically, Horn's conclusion that the mind is not something that can or should be relied on to cure the body is not too far off from what Mary Baker Eddy - the 19th century religious reformer she largely credits with coming up with such an idea - thought herself.

Referring to the human mind

as opposed to what she refers to as the divine Mind or God, Eddy insisted, "This mind is not a factor [in healing the body]."

This is not to say she completely dismissed the role of an individual's consciousness in healing. Eddy did see a big difference, however, between a mind fixated on - even intimidated by - a predominantly matter-based view of existence and the thought that is willing to see things from a more divinely inspired perspective.

"Discard all notions about lungs, tubercles, inherited consumption, or disease arising from any circumstance," suggests Eddy in *Science and Health*, "and you will find that mortal mind, when instructed by Truth, yields to divine power, which steers the body into health."

In remarks made a few weeks ago at The Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, Horn pointed to the "deep seeded need for control" that makes the idea of using our minds to heal our bodies all the more alluring. But it is the relinquishment of just such a mental power grab that Eddy saw as essential to healing. In other words, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

The downside to such a notion is that we may assume it absolves us of any responsibility, putting the blame on God for all outcomes, good or bad. For Eddy, though, handing things off to the Divine wasn't so much of a "Here, you

do it" kind of proposition as it was a conscious recognition of His will operating in one and all, giving us the ability to see whatever situation we are confronted with in a life-affirming, health-inducing light.

The good news for Horn is that she is doing much better and has written a book designed to help other women cope with the stress of illness. Interestingly, of the 10 strategies she outlines, her encouragement to "find gratitude" echoes something St. Paul suggested a good two thousand years ago that links this particular frame of mind with better health:

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things... and the God of peace shall be with you." ★

Eric Nelson's columns on the link between consciousness and health appear weekly in a number of local and national online publications. He also serves as the media and legislative spokesperson for Christian Science in Northern California (norcalcs.org). This article originally appeared on Communities @ WashingtonTimes.com and is used with permission.



WHAT MAKES OLGA RUN?

She holds more than twenty-six world records in track and field. You probably say ain't it great to be young, right? Wrong! Olga Kotelko took up track and field at 77 years old. That's right! Today, she is 94 years old and going strong. As a matter of fact, of those twenty-six records, twenty were reached in her current ninety to ninety-five categories. And she is convinced that she'll be competing when she's one hundred! And according to Bruce, her positive attitude may have scientific merit. A 2010 study in superstition in sports, published in *Psychology Science*, found "Magical thinking improves confidence, and confidence improves performance." If you age-grade Olga's scores, her 23.95 100 meter dash is exactly equivalent to American Olympian Florence Griffith Joyner's world record of 10.49 seconds. How does that grab you? So how does she do it? Bruce Grierson asked the same question and hit all the details

POPPOFF!

with Mary Jane Popp

in "What Makes Olga Run?" Bruce is an award-winning freelance writer for the New York Times Magazine and *Psychology Today*.

Olga answers those who ask her about her secret to looking and feeling so young to "Enjoy Life." But here are some additions to add up to a great life besides genetics!

1) KEEP MOVING: Move continually, even when you are not exercising. "When we move, our bodies and brains both work better. We think faster, process information more accurately, and remember more."

2) CREATE ROUTINES: (But sometimes break them) Committing the more mundane parts of our life to habit and routine frees up RAM for the things that matter to us.

3) BE OPPORTUNISTIC: "Spend your precious energy wisely." Conserve energy when you can, but when you need to go for it, really go for it!

4) BE A MENSCH: "Doing good doesn't just feel good, it works. It's healthy for the tribe and it's healthy for us."

5) BELIEVE IN SOMETHING: "Belief is a trait of temperament." People who embrace life's puzzles as opportunities for problem-solving because of larger beliefs tend to thrive.

6) LIGHTEN UP: "Managing stress is staggeringly important in terms of flipping genetic switches."

7) CULTIVATE A SENSE OF PROGRESS: According to studies of life satisfaction and human motivation, we all need to feel like we're improving. Identify your expectations, adjust them to allow for "small wins," then improve upon them.

8) DON'T DO IT IF YOU DON'T LOVE IT: If it's not fun, don't do it. That's easy—because you won't if it isn't. People can't be guilted into lasting healthy behavior change. "Should" doesn't work.

9) BEGIN NOW: "Not only is midlife not too late to embark on this, providing we rev back up slowly. In some ways, it's the best time for it. We're rested, we're restless, we're ready."

And yes, she does all the usual things too like eating well. She likes fermented foods from sour kraut to yogurt,

and she gets plenty of sleep. She does stay away from processed foods, and she depends on good nutrition and not so much supplements. She is all about natural. She is a natural wonder with great advice for any age. Check out "What Makes Olga Run." I want some of that DNA, but it looks like life begins with me and what I do with it!!! ★

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- 10am - 7pm: Sinatra & Friends Music
- 7 - 8pm: A Way With Words
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- 9 - 9:30am: The Crossroads Radio Show
- 10 - 11am: The Dew Sweepers Golf Show
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Human Trafficking Hits Sacramento Region Hard

Continued from Page 1

Human trafficking is considered to be one of the fastest growing criminal industries in the world.

Labor trafficking occurs in diverse contexts that encompass all forms of labor or services. Common places where forced labor has been found in the United States include domestic servitude and small-scale “mom and pop” labor operations, to more large-scale operations such as farms and factories. Certain labor brokers that supply labor to multinational corporations have also been identified as an emerging type of labor traffickers. Sex trafficking includes commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), as well as every instance where an adult is in the sex trade as the result of force, fraud, or coercion. Sex trafficking occurs within numerous venues in the broader sex industry, commonly found in street prostitution, online escort services, residential brothels, and brothels disguised as massage businesses. Under U.S. and international law, commercially sexually exploited children found in the sex trade are considered to be victims of trafficking, even if no force or coercion is present.

Because human trafficking is considered to be one of the fastest growing criminal industries, the U.S. government and academic researchers are currently working on an up-to-date estimate of the total number of trafficked persons in the United States annually. With 100,000 children estimated to be in the sex trade in the United States each year, it is clear that the total number of human trafficking victims in the U.S. reaches into the hundreds of thousands when estimates of both adults and minors and sex trafficking and labor trafficking are aggregated.

Like drugs and arms trafficking, human trafficking is a market-driven criminal industry that is based on the principles of supply and demand. Many factors make children and adults vulnerable to human trafficking. However, human trafficking does not exist solely because many people who are vulnerable to exploitation. Instead, human trafficking is fueled by a demand for cheap labor or services, or for commercial sex acts. Human traffickers are those who victimize others in their desire to profit from the existing demand. To ultimately solve the problem of human trafficking, it is essential to address these demand-driven factors, as well as to alter the overall market incentives of high-profit and low-risk that traffickers currently exploit. Why does demand thrive? Labor trafficking and sex trafficking of U.S. citizens and foreign nationals persist and thrive for a number of reasons, including: 1. Low Risk: When the community is unaware of this issue, when government and community institutions are not trained to respond, when there are ineffective or dormant laws to address the crime, when safety nets for victims do not exist, and when law enforcement does not investigate and prosecute the crime, human traffickers perceive little risk or deterrence to affect their criminal operations. 2. High Profits: When individuals are willing to buy commercial sex, they create a market and make it profitable for traffickers to sexually exploit children and adults. When consumers are willing to buy goods and services from industries that rely on forced labor, they create a profit incentive for labor traffickers to maximize revenue with minimal production costs. Left unchecked, human trafficking will continue to flourish in environments where traffickers can reap substantial monetary gains with relatively low risk of getting caught.

Human trafficking victims make an alarmingly high number of consumer goods and food products that are both imported to the United States and produced domestically. More often than we realize, somewhere in



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the supply chain of the products we buy, elements of exploitative child labor or forced labor may be present. As economies around the world integrate, it has become faster and easier for goods produced with forced labor to enter the global market. In the U.S., labor traffickers exploit and enslave both foreign nationals (some of whom enter the U.S. legally) and U.S. citizens. In many cases of labor trafficking, consumers provide the demand, and thus the profit incentive, to the traffickers. These consumers can include companies that sub-

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contract certain types of services, end-consumers who buy cheap goods produced by trafficking victims, or individuals who use the services of trafficking victims. By changing purchasing choices and asking questions about how our products were made, consumers have the power to reduce these types of demand and help stop human trafficking.

Traffickers often threaten foreign national workers with arrest and deportation, even workers who have the legal right to work in the United States. Labor traffickers use violence, threats, lies, and other forms of coercion to force people to work against their will in many different industries. Common types of labor trafficking include people forced to work in homes as domestic servants, farmworkers coerced through violence as they harvest crops, or factory workers held in inhumane conditions with little to no pay. In the United States, these forms of forced labor are more prevalent than many people realize. However, Polaris Project and others working in the human trafficking field are learning more on a daily basis about the different types of labor trafficking that exist amongst us. In the United States, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) defines labor trafficking as: “The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery.”

Individuals who buy commercial sex acts create the demand for sex trafficking. Many sex buyers may be unaware, ill-informed, or in direct denial of the abusive realities of sex trafficking situations as they exist within the broader sex trade. When sex trafficking is present, victims are often subjected to violence, threats, controlling behaviors, false promises, lies, and manipulation perpetrated by the traffickers/pimps. Popular media, including certain books, movies, television shows, and music, sometimes glamorize

and romanticize the commercial sex industry without properly acknowledging the presence of sex trafficking. This glamorization then fuels the demand for paying someone else to have sex with them. Additionally, it is common that victims of trafficking will not discuss their situation with customers or ask for help because they are trained by their traffickers to lie and keep up the act. As a result, “johns” may not fully realize the truth behind the facade, or the pain behind the smile. In communities and places where there is a demand to buy sex, sex traffickers directly respond to the demand by seeking to offer a “product” to be sold for profit. To sex traffickers, the “product” they sell are the women and children they control.

How can you recognize the victims of human trafficking in your city? Victims of human trafficking may look like many of the people you see every day. They can be young children, teens, men or women. By looking beneath the surface and asked yourself some questions you may be able to help identify potential victims. Is the person often accompanied by another person who seems controlling? Is the person rarely allowed in public except for work? Can you detect any physical or psychological abuse? Does the person seem submissive or fearful? Does the person lack identification or documentation? Is someone else collected the person’s pay or holding their money for “safe keeping”? If you get the opportunity to speak to the person alone, asking these questions can help you determine if you may be dealing with a victim: Can you leave your job or situation if you want? Can you come and go as you please? Have you been threatened if you try to leave? Has anyone threatened your family? What are your working or living conditions like? Where do you sleep and eat? Do you have permission to eat, sleep, or go to the bathroom? Is there a lock on your door so you cannot get out? Does someone prohibit you from socializing or attending church?

If you suspect that someone is a victim or Human Trafficking call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-3737-888. This hotline can help victims safely and securely begin to rebuild their lives by connecting them to basic services which include: Housing, Healthcare, Immigration Assistance, Food, and Employment as well as Legal Assistance. Victims of human trafficking who are not U.S. Citizens are eligible to receive benefits through the TVPRA to the same extent as refugees. Victims who are U.S. citizens may already be eligible to receive many of these benefits. Gaining the trust of a victim of human trafficking is an important first step for providing assistance. Confidentiality is vital for victims of human trafficking.

The Sacramento Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking Regional Program, which is administered by the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA), offers training and outreach on human trafficking, services to victims and referrals to resources. My Sister’s House 916-428-3271 (24 hour Multilingual Help Line), Opening Doors, Inc .916-492-2591, SETA 916-263-3800, The Grace Network 916-850-0846, and WEAVE 916-920-2952. ★

DR. COY F. CROSS

Author Coy Cross II, Ph.D

“The Dhance”

A Caregiver’s Search for Meaning

STRENGTH IN UNITY

For a moment life seemed surreal. It’s Friday afternoon, my friend Greg and I are having coffee in Peet’s coffee-shop on 19th Street in Sacramento. Yesterday, my wife was diagnosed with Stage III, Level C, ovarian cancer. Her surgery is scheduled for Tuesday. As Greg and I are talking, I share with him: (1) I know there are profound spiritual lessons in this for both my wife and me; (2) I have to do it differently this time; (3) I have to accept this and “let everything be as it is.” The only thing I can do is be “consciously present with her.”

After walking away from a fundamentalist church as a teenager, by age 40 I felt something missing from my life and started looking for answers. I started going to a small Unity church in Modesto and later Carol Ruth Knox, a guest speaker, delivered the Sunday talk. For the first time in my life, I heard a message that resonated to the core of my being. I knew this was Truth, capitalized, emboldened and underlined.

A few months after that first meeting, I bought a small busi-

ness in Walnut Creek, near her church. Over the next few years, her teachings on “Non-duality,” “Progressing Spiritually from Victim to Victor to Vehicle,” and “The Dark Night of the Soul” changed my life and the way I see God. This helped me see that my wife’s cancer would have a profound spiritual impact on us both.

I had been a caregiver about 30 years before and it didn’t go well. I tried to do everything myself and avoid the pain by “stuffing” my feelings and numbing out with alcohol. Part of “doing things differently” was to recognize I couldn’t fix my wife. I could take care of many of her physical needs: cooking, driving her to doctor’s appointments, buying groceries, cleaning house, etc. I realized this time I needed to take care of myself, if I was to remain strong enough to take care of her. I would ask for help or hire someone to do the routine chores.

The greatest gift I could give to her and to me was to remain conscious throughout the experience. I said to God, “Okay, I am going to

be present for all of this. I am going to feel it all.” My promise to my wife was, “I will be consciously present with you and hold your hand throughout.” As we move forward in time each of us will face a ‘dark night of the soul,’ a moment when we can feel alone in the Universe. How to find mental, physical and spiritual strength to cope, survive and assist those in need as a caregiver is just the beginning of finding strength in Unity.

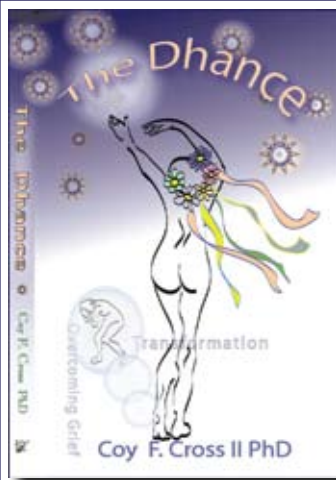
Share with us each month here and visit Facebook to learn more at *The Dhance*. See author Cross as he discusses discoveries, lessons and shares insights on YouTube.

You also can learn to cope in delving into the mind, life and acceptance of life and death that is the heart of Coy Cross’s experience related for all to learn from in “*The Dhance*” (Available from KohoPono Press, ISBN 978-0-9845424-2-0, visit kohopono.com or call 503-723-7392).

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Meet The Author: Coy Cross

When They Need You Will You Be There? A Caregiver’s Search For Meaning
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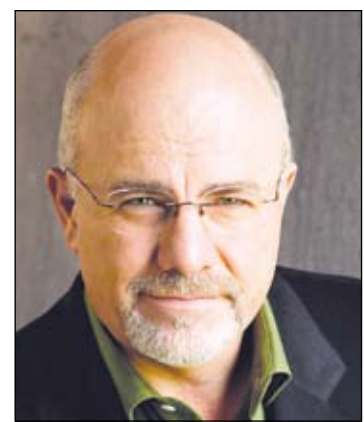
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Dave Says

use credit cards for 20 years and, believe it or not, even I get offers in the mail. The more mailing lists you get on, the more your mailbox will fill up with junk mail. If you have magazine subscriptions and things like that, your contact information is circulating all over the place.

The next thing I'm going to say may sound cruel, but I really don't mean it that way. You don't have a junk mail problem, Dan. You have a relationship problem. You two are not on the same page about money. Either she doesn't feel like you two have enough money, and she's resorting to credit cards for this reason, or she does this because she's a spoiled brat who thinks she should always have what she wants when she wants it. Her behavior is destroying your financial lives and driving a wedge between you.

My advice would be to sit down and have a gentle, loving talk with her about all this. Try to find out why she feels the need to have all these credit cards, and explain that you're worried about what it's doing to your marriage and your finances. That may mean having to spend some time with a marriage counselor, but that's okay, too. There's no reason to be ashamed of something like that. The truth is, most of us who have been married more than 20 minutes could use a little help in that area of our lives!

- Dave

Balance Transfers Don't Do Much

Dear Dave,

I'm trying to pay off my credit card and get out of debt. Do you think I should transfer the balance to one with a lower interest rate while I do this?

- Kelsey

Dear Kelsey,

I'm not against this idea, as long as you understand that you're not really accomplishing much. All you're doing is moving money around, and maybe saving a tiny bit on interest. If you were planning on keeping the debt around for 30 years it would become a big deal. But if you're talking about a few months, just until you get it paid off, it's not that much money.

The problem with balance transfers is that you feel like you took a big step forward when you really didn't. Lots of times this causes people to lose focus on other things they can do to get out of debt, like picking up an extra job or selling a bunch of crap they don't want or need. That kind of stuff, along with living on rice and beans and a strict written budget, is 98 percent of the battle when it comes to getting out of debt!

- Dave

*For more financial help, please visit daveramsey.com. ★

Getting Them to Stop

Dear Dave,

How can I get credit card companies to stop sending us preapproved offers? My wife continues to sign up for these, and now we have \$40,000 in credit card debt.

- Dan

Dear Dan,

Chances are you'll never get credit card companies to stop sending stuff, but there are a few things you can do that might help slow things down. Access your credit bureau report, and opt out of marketing offers. You can also freeze your credit report, and send direct requests to the credit card companies to take you off their mailing lists.

I've been telling people not to



Riley Reviews

NOT SO COLOSSAL WARTIME HEIST CAPER FOR "MONUMENTS MEN"

THE MONUMENTS MEN (Rated PG-13)

A Film Review by Tim Riley

Fighting the Nazis to save Western civilization? How can you miss with such easy targets as Adolf Hitler and his uncivilized henchmen embarked on a mission to destroy art treasures that define the very essence of European culture?

Assembling a hardy band of soldiers to go behind enemy lines during World War II should be something like "The Dirty Dozen." The result would have been plenty of high stakes action.

On the other hand, "The Monuments Men," directed by and starring George Clooney, is more like "Ocean's Eleven," yet mostly absent the tension and excitement of a Vegas casino heist caper fraught with peril and fear of failure.

Of course, another slight problem for creating daring wartime exploits is that the experts of the art world are older guys who have the professional background and necessary grounding in cultural affairs that would elude the typical draft-age Army recruit.

Based on Robert M. Edsel's bestselling nonfiction book "The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History," the film is intended to be a true account even though the names of the principal figures are pseudonyms.

Sanctioned by the American

Damon several opportunities to engage in playful bantering, even though they remain earnestly serious about the mission.

Damon's Granger gets extra comic mileage with his mangling of the French language, which he apparently learned in Montreal, to the point that no French person wishes to engage him in their native tongue.

The Monuments Men find a valuable, if somewhat wary and skeptical, ally in occupied France with Cate Blanchett's Claire Simone, a curator at the Jeu de Paume museum in Paris, which the Nazis had converted to a warehouse of stolen art works.

Risking her life to secretly catalog the locations of pilfered art, Simone wants to be sure the Allies won't simply keep the recovered masterpieces for their own collections of art.

In the late stages of the war, fearing his own demise and Germany's loss, Hitler issued the so-called Nero Decree that everything the Nazis had amassed was going to be destroyed, so that nothing would fall into the hands of the victors, including the art treasures.

Understanding the implications to civilization, Granger and Simone forge an unusual bond, not a romantic love one, but rather a mutual love of art and culture, along with a passion to save masterpieces for a noble reason.

Not satisfied with being the catalyst behind the Monuments Men mission, Clooney's Stokes also gets the benefit of uttering the most exalted dialogue, sermonizing about the great value in a civilized world of saving art treasures.

"The Monuments Men" arguably could have used more action and excitement, but then this is not a war epic. A sense of urgency to saving the priceless works of art is the film's saving grace. ★

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