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AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

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DECEMBER 17, 2021

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De-Lighted for Christmas



Above: From left to right: Luz Johnson, OV Honorary Mayor; Buddy the Elf; Barry Ross OV Parks; MaryAnne Povey, OV Live; Santa & Julie King, The Last Tangle. Right: Candy, candy canes, candy corn and syrup; That's all elves eat. Photo by MaryAnne Povey

By MaryAnne Povey

ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG) - The Orangevale community kicked off the holidays in a big way – with nearly 1000 attendees coming together for the 16th Annual Tree Lighting ceremony hosted by the Orangevale Parks and Recreation Center.

The annual event began with musical performances by the Green Oaks School Choir, Jr. Rams Cheer and the Casa Roble High School band. The OV Brass Band, formerly known as “Rhythm Club Band”, played Christmas carols as people arrived making their way around to enjoy a host of free activities including train rides, popcorn, hot dogs, crafts, and cookies made with love from the Orangevale Women’s Club. Santa

also made time to visit kids who wanted to get one-on-one time with the big guy before heading out to do the honors of lighting the Community Christmas tree.

While Santa’s sleigh was delayed for repairs at a local shop waiting for parts to come in, Darren Lang from Easy Stumps Tree Service, once again saved the day by assisting Santa to the top of the tree.

Special guests Buddy the Elf, OV Honorary Mayor Luz Johnson and OV Parks Administrator Barry Ross, were on hand to entertain the crowd before leading the official countdown to light the tree in the evening’s grand finale.



OV Parks Administrator Barry Ross, shared how “de-lighted” he was to be part of this annual tree lighting event, “I’d like to thank everyone for coming out on this foggy evening especially Santa and Buddy the Elf who came the furthest from the North Pole.”

Buddy was his chipper self sharing his secret to making the big trip

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CHP Helps Prepare Senior Drivers for Years to Come



The Age Well, Drive Smart class is an education program specifically designed to help seniors tune up their driving skills, refresh their knowledge of the rules of the road. Photo courtesy Dreamstime

California Highway Patrol Press Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The California Highway Patrol (CHP) is determined to help drivers age 65 and older maintain their driving independence through the support of a yearlong federal grant, Keeping Everyone Safe (KEYS) XIII. The CHP will continue to offer this in-person and virtual traffic safety program emphasizing roadway safety and mobility for California’s senior drivers.

The Age Well, Drive Smart class is an education program specifically designed to help seniors tune up their driving skills, refresh their knowledge of the rules of the road, and discuss normal age-related physical changes and how they affect driving ability. Since 2015, the CHP has conducted over 1,800 senior driver traffic safety presentations, reaching more than 100,000 people.

“The CHP is committed to helping seniors drive safer,” said CHP Commissioner Amanda Ray. “This course is designed to assist the state’s most experienced drivers in refreshing their driving skills and ultimately saving lives.”

The CHP invites California’s older drivers to attend a free two-hour Age Well, Drive Smart class that provides senior drivers the tools to driving safer and driving longer. The class is offered at local CHP Area offices as well as many community centers. It is a great way for seniors to educate themselves, evaluate their driving abilities, and improve their driving skills.

To attend a class, either in person or virtually, contact a CHP Area office near you for available dates and times.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The mission of the CHP is to provide the highest level of Safety, Service, and Security. ★

Rotary People of Action!



The Rotary Club of Fair Oaks remains active during the holiday season caroling at local assisted living facilities. Photo provided by Pete Schroeder

By Pete Schroeder, Rotary Club of Fair Oaks

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - Every year, the Rotary Club of Fair Oaks is approached by local charities, organizations and other worthy causes. They all could use assistance in terms of Time, Talent and/or Treasure from our Club in their endeavor to serve their chosen population.

One of the worthiest local causes is the Orangevale-Fair Oaks

Food Bank. Considering the ongoing health issues, it is no wonder that the lines at the Food Bank are longer than ever! Recently, we volunteered to collect cash and food donations at the beautiful Shangri-La restaurant in Fair Oaks. Contributions filled 2 large barrels, and hundreds of dollars were donated. And of course, 100% went to the Food Bank!

Keith Wright is the Food Bank’s Executive Director, and a member of the Rotary

Club of Fair Oaks. Keith has kept the Club abreast of the severely increased needs of the Food Bank, and also their projected needs, as the coronavirus situation lingers. The normal 1200 families per month served by the Food Bank has doubled since the health and economic turmoil began. Projected figures are estimated to be 5x normal! Imagine 6000 families in need of food every month!

The Rotary Club of

Fair Oaks will be aimed at reducing the impact that Covid 19 has on the Sacramento Region. Our club will be working in partnership with Food Bank to increase outreach and provide groceries for more families that are struggling at this difficult time.

Rotary will step up to provide the funding (Treasure) and all the volunteers (Time & Talent) necessary to allow the Food Bank to do the best job they

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Fly to the Slopes with SMF



Several Tahoe ski resorts opened weeks earlier than planned which could be a sign of an incredible ski season to come! Photo courtesy Pixabay

By Scott Johnston, Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento region had its first major rain-storm of 2021 in October, which brought huge amounts of snow to the Sierra. So much in fact, several Tahoe ski resorts opened weeks earlier than planned which could be a sign of an incredible ski season to come! Whether you're heading to Lake Tahoe's spectacular slopes or to the Rocky Mountains and beyond, Sacramento International Airport (SMF) can get you to the snow quickly. SMF offers direct flights and easy connections to many major ski destinations.

Locally, Lake Tahoe is home to 15 ski resorts, 477 miles of slopes, 146 lifts and views you won't find anywhere else in the world. Ski racing began in North Lake Tahoe in the 1860s, when gold miners decided to attach boards to their feet and skim down the slopes, and the first resort was built in 1924. Today, there's a resort for every kind of snow junkie - skiers, snowboarders, beginners and experts. SMF is approximately 100 miles from Tahoe and offers numerous nonstop flights from major U.S. hubs. Making both the north and south shores easily accessible.

For Northern Californians who are venturing outside of the state, flights from SMF can get you to some of the country's best ski resorts in no time.

The Rocky Mountains stretch from British Columbia south to New Mexico, with dramatic mountain vistas, breathtaking ski terrain and as much as 33-feet of snow per year. SMF has nonstop flights to Denver (DEN) on United Airlines, Southwest Airlines and Frontier Airlines, allowing you easy access to some of the Rockies' best ski resorts. Echo Mountain and Loveland Ski Area are about an hour away

from DEN, while Breckenridge and Copper Mountain are about a 90-minute drive.

Aspen is a spectacular year-round destination, but it is best known for its winter sports. Not into downhill, but still want to play in the snow? Aspen's four mountains offer cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and winter hiking trails. Off the slopes, Aspen has a vibrant dining with diverse culinary options both off and on the mountain. A bit further south, the old west vibe of downtown Telluride compliments the glamour of Aspen. The rustic town has been called the #1 Ski Resort in North America. Tucked into a canyon surrounded by 14,000-foot peaks, Telluride was designated a National Historic Landmark District in 1964, preserving the feel of Colorado's 1870s silver rush-era. The town is also home to a vibrant arts district, with galleries, performance spaces and architecture.

Salt Lake City (SLC) is also a short hop from SMF on both Delta Airlines and Southwest Airlines. Mother Nature delivers an average of 500 inches of snow to Utah's mountains every year and many of the best resorts are within an hour's drive from SLC. Park City, home of the Sundance Film Festival in January, has fabulous shopping and dining options as well as snow biking, snowshoeing, tubing, ice skating and sleigh rides nearby.

Western Canada's renowned Whistler Blackcomb Resort can be accessed via several nonstop flights to Seattle (SEA) on Alaska Airlines, Southwest and Delta. Once you land, drive into beautiful British Columbia to one of the largest ski resorts in North America with a lift that can take you to an elevation of 7,350 feet.

For more information on flights, visit the SMF website.

Proven to Decrease DUI Crashes, ACCESS Launches Nationwide Program

By Ryan Budmayr, ACCESS

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Honorable Richard A. Vlavianos, in front of the California state capitol and surrounded by other Public Safety and Law Enforcement Officials, announced the launch of a new, nationwide non-profit organization designed to treat high risk and repeat DUI offenders. The new non-profit, ACCESS, launches with a foundation of learnings and track record of saving lives as proven through a pilot that's been active in California since 2008.

"After nearly 15 years and more than 5,000 participants, we've seen firsthand the difference this approach can make in changing behaviors and saving lives," said Chair of ACCESS and California Superior Court Judge Richard A. Vlavianos. "Each day, roughly 28 people die in drunk driving related car crashes and it's only fitting we make this announcement today as we kick off National Impaired Driving Prevention Month."

Current DUI and Drug Courts make an undeniable impact treating a smaller, more targeted population in need of



The new non-profit, ACCESS, launches with a foundation of learnings and track record of saving lives as proven through a pilot that's been active in California since 2008. Photo courtesy Pixabay

more significant support. ACCESS extends a similar approach to the remaining 70% of repeat DUI offenders that don't qualify for traditional DUI court. A recent study of the 5,200 participants indicates the concept is significantly changing behaviors with an 80% completion rate and most encouraging, a 19% decrease in DUI crashes. The six-year longitudinal study also found that participants did not revert to the norm upon completion of the program, indicating signs of long-term behavioral change.

"Existing special courts work with high-risk offenders who have high treatment needs, while ACCESS fills the gap by

focusing on offenders who may be high risk, but don't require the same level of treatment," said Judge Vlavianos. "To make an impact, we needed to ensure the ACCESS program was scalable and affordable. I'm excited that we can provide monitoring, education and training to repeat DUI offenders at a fraction of the cost of typical treatment programs, at about \$10,000 less per participant."

Discussions with multiple state law enforcement and judicial officials interested in launching ACCESS are currently underway. Those with questions or interested in learning more are encouraged to visit choos-access.org.

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NCOIL Elects CA's Cooley President



Ken Cooley

NCOIL Press Release

SCOTTDALE, AZ, (MPG) - The Nation's premier legislator-led insurance public policy organization, the National Council of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL) elected CA Assemblyman Ken Cooley President for the next year. "I am proud of the bipartisan friendships and solutions that NCOIL promotes, and I consider it a great honor to be asked to take on duties as NCOIL President during 2022" stated Cooley.

NCOIL is a national legislative organization with the Nation's 50 states as members, represented

principally by legislators serving on their states' insurance and financial institutions committees. NCOIL writes Model Laws in insurance and financial services, works to preserve the State jurisdiction over insurance as established by the McCarren-Ferguson Act seventy six years ago, and to serve as an educational forum for public policymakers and interested parties. Founded in 1969, NCOIL works to assert the prerogative of legislators in making State policy when it comes to insurance and educate State legislators on current and longstanding insurance issues.

"Ken's unique background has made him nationally respected among his lawmaker peers in the 50 states for his collaborative style and thoughtful insurance public policy insights," said In House Majority Leader Matt Lehman, who concluded his term as

NCOIL's President at the Annual Meeting.

Cooley continued, as a national organization of state legislators, NCOIL focuses on helping legislators solve insurance availability and operation problems back home and this makes its meetings very practical and bipartisan. NCOIL is the only national public policy organization I've been active with as a California Assemblymember since 2013.

"Ken Cooley has proven, at NCOIL, the NAIC and in the CA legislature, to be one of the most insightful and thoughtful insurance minds in the country. He is the perfect leader for NCOIL at this time of unprecedented disruption in insurance public policy," said NCOIL CEO Commissioner Tom Considine.

"I look forward to maintaining NCOIL's strong tradition of collegial problem solving," Cooley concluded. ★

Support Our Brothers and Sisters of America

By Sheila LaPolla, VFW/AL

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - We veterans who so deeply hold in our hearts love of country and have so valiantly fought to preserve the freedom we enjoy today need to band together and support one another by joining the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and/or the American Legion (AL).

If you are a Veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces and want to help protect the rights and benefits that you, and all Veterans have earned, then add your voice to the millions of veterans in the VFW and American Legion today. The VFW and the American Legion work with local, state, and federal governments to fight for veteran benefits, strengthen the Veterans Administration and help provide for veteran families in need.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6158 and Auxiliary is located in the center of Phoenix Park in Fair Oaks, at 8990 Kruitof Way, off Hazel and Sunset Avenue.

VFW Post 6158 is open to all veterans with the following qualifications:

You must be a U.S. citizen or U.S. National and: (1) Served in the Armed Forces of the United States with an Honorable Discharge (possess a DD214) or be currently serving;

(2) Service in a war, campaign, or expedition on foreign soil or in hostile waters; (3) The VFW Auxiliary is open to veterans, family members and relatives of veterans who have served in a foreign conflict.

You can contact Gary Burns, Commander VFW 6158 via Post Canteen at (916) 966-1663 for more information. Our meetings are at 7:00 PM on the 2nd Tuesday of every month.

The Fair Oaks American Legion Post 383 and Auxiliary is co-located with VFW Post 6158

American Legion Post 383 is open to all veterans with the following qualifications: (1) Must be a U.S. citizen or U.S. National; (2) Served in the Armed Forces of the United States with an Honorable Discharge (possess a DD214), be currently serving or have at least one day of Active-Duty Service from December 7, 1941, to present; (3) The American Legion Auxiliary is open to veterans, mothers, daughters, granddaughters and spouses of veterans.

You can contact Mark Rice, Commander American Legion Post 383 at (916) 204-8151 for more information.

Our meetings are at 7:00 PM on the 4th Tuesday of every month. ★

De-Lighted for Christmas

Continued from page 1 to Orangevale.

"You know, us elves stick to the four main food groups: candy, candy canes, candy corn and syrup," Buddy replied, "It's what helps us get through this busy, great season!"

Making one of her first appearances as OV Honorary Mayor Luz Johnson shared, "What a great night of everyone coming together! I'm so happy to see so many smiling faces and the outpouring of the holiday spirit!"

The evening capped off with the cheering crowd helping Santa with the countdown, and the giant tree lighting up perfectly on cue for all to see! It was

a great evening of community coming together to celebrate!

Special thanks to all the community partners who helped make the evening a huge success including: Easy Stumps, Casa Interact Club, Orange Vale Water Company, Les Schwab Tire Centers Orangevale, the Orangevale Grange #354, the Orangevale Women's Club, the Orangevale/Fair Oaks Foodbank, the Orangevale Chamber of Commerce, and Orangevale Live for streaming another great production! To watch the program, go to Orangevale Live on Facebook or Orangevale Live on YouTube.

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! ★

Office of District Attorney Jeff Reisig

WOODLAND, CA (MPG) - Dao Xiong, 44, and Shaneel Lal, 38, of Sacramento were convicted of conspiracy to commit a felony and grand theft for stealing catalytic converters in Yolo, Sacramento, Placer, El Dorado, Napa, Butte, Alameda, and Contra Costa Counties.

A catalytic converter is part of a vehicle's exhaust system. They often contain precious metals such as platinum, gold, rhodium, and palladium that have high value in the metal recycling market and make them an item of choice among thieves and crime rings. Replacement costs for catalytic converters range from \$1,000 to \$3,000 and often it can take weeks or months for an automotive repair shop to get the right catalytic converter.

The investigation began in September 2020 after a Davis resident reported to police that his catalytic converter had been stolen from his Toyota Prius. Detectives with the Davis Police Department's Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) Unit launched an investigation and were able to obtain a surveillance video from a nearby car that helped identify the suspect's vehicle. Through surveillance and the assistance of the Folsom

Police Department, detectives were able to identify Xiong and Lal. Detectives monitored their activities as they traveled to multiple counties, with Xiong as the driver and Lal as the passenger. They appeared to be "scouting" neighborhoods. "Scouting" is searching or casing an area to engage in criminal activity. Electronic surveillance revealed that Xiong and Lal scouted neighborhoods during the daytime or early evening hours and then returned to the same locations later in the night or early morning hours. Official theft reports were made to local law enforcement agencies and the surveillance data matched the location and timeframe for catalytic converter thefts.

On October 23, 2020, Xiong and Lal were stopped by Davis Police officers and found with catalytic converters in their possession. Based on surveillance data and theft reports, these catalytic converters were believed to have been stolen out of Napa County. Charges were filed against Xiong and Lal; however, due to the judicial "zero bail" policy at the time, Xiong and Lal were released from custody. While out of custody, they continued to steal catalytic converters until they were arrested again by Davis Police detectives on February 2, 2021, at the Thunder Valley Casino in

Placer County. Between September 17, 2020, and February 2, 2021, Xiong and Lal were believed to have stolen 64 catalytic converters from eight counties. The total loss amount is still being determined; however, it is expected to be approximately \$100,000.

District Attorney Jeff Reisig stated, "Catalytic converter theft is not victimless and is not just another 'property crime.' It impacts the livelihood and financial stability of many individuals. People are unable to drive their cars, get to work, or pick up their kids because of these thieves. These crimes will not be tolerated and this plea sends a message that law enforcement takes these thefts seriously."

Yolo County Deputy District Attorney Matt DeMoura, who prosecuted this case for Yolo and seven other counties stated, "this prosecution would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of the Davis Police Department's Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) Unit and the Folsom Police Department."

Xiong and Lal will be sentenced on January 10, 2022, in front of the Honorable Timothy Fall, who presided over the plea. Each is expected to receive 6 years in jail pursuant to a plea agreement. ★

Rotary People of Action!

Continued from page 1 can. Keith says Rotary's efforts translate into serving an additional 20% or 240 suffering families!

In addition to that, thanks to Rotary, the Food Bank has built a "Barn" to facilitate the distribution of food in inclement weather. It's a

metal, drive-thru structure, allowing folks to receive food under a roof, out of the weather.

Rotary International's motto is Service Above Self, which best explains the philosophy of unselfish volunteer service.

(Of course, anyone

reading this - that means YOU! - who is so moved as to want to contribute, please contact the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank at <https://orangevale-foodbank.org/> or the Rotary Club of Fair Oaks at <https://www.rotaryfairoaks.org/page/contact-us>) ★

Sacramento County Grand Jury Recruiting for 2022-23

Sacramento County Superior Court Press Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County's Superior Court announced today that it has officially opened its application process seeking new jurors to serve on the 2022-23 Sacramento County Grand Jury. Nineteen Sacramento County residents, and 11 alternates, will be selected from among the qualified applicants to volunteer for the term which runs from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023.

The Grand Jury is the independent watchdog over the county's government agencies and services. Jurors investigate the performance of county, city, and local governing entities ranging from school districts to the criminal justice system to health and welfare agencies. Additionally, the Sacramento County Grand Jury is authorized to hear criminal indictments, and jurors have the rare opportunity to visit detention facilities throughout the region.

"The Grand Jury is entrusted by the public to investigate and report on local government operations and to ensure responsibilities are

being fulfilled honestly and with integrity," explains Grand Jury Foreperson Deanna Hanson. "It is also our duty to make certain the public understands our work and has the opportunity to be involved."

The current Grand Jury recently issued a report on COVID-19 vaccine mandates for K-12 public schools. It also received significant news media coverage earlier this month on its report regarding the serious safety concerns facing the Del Paso Manor Water District. Anyone may file a complaint against a county government entity with the Grand Jury for review and investigative consideration. All Grand Jury activities are conducted in secrecy.

Jurors act as volunteers and receive a small stipend for their work. To be considered as a Grand Juror, applications must be received by January 28, 2022. Anyone applying must be a Sacramento

County resident over the age of 18. Further qualification requirements are available on the Grand Jury website. Those who initially qualify will be interviewed, with the final Grand Jury empanelment taking place on June 3, 2022. To apply, visit the Grand Jury website at: www.sacgrandjury.org. ★

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Festive Fun for Fair Oaks

Story by Shaunna Boyd

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - The Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District (FORPD) always offers a variety of fun activities and events each holiday season, but this year they packed the calendar with experiences to enjoy each and every day of December. FORPD Recreation Coordinator Mary Cattolica explained that the District “had a strong desire to partner with the Chamber of Commerce and several other groups in Fair Oaks

in order to celebrate the holiday season and embrace the incredible community that we have here. Having something to look forward to every day was important for us to give access to fun, festive activities to as many people as possible!”

The annual Tree Lighting is “a time-honored tradition in the Fair Oaks community,” said Cattolica. This year it was held on December 4 in Fair Oaks Park near the library, a temporary location due to Measure-J-funded improvement

projects underway in Fair Oaks Village where it is usually held. Despite the change in venue, the community came out to enjoy the festivities, say hello to Santa and Mrs. Claus, and watch the tree lighting at one of Fair Oak’s most beloved annual events.

Santa has been busy this year, stopping at Phoenix Park on December 7 to visit some of Fair Oak’s furriest residents for Pet Photos with Santa, as well as visiting local children for festive greetings on December 15 and 16.

The Bright Lights, Garden Delights event is going on each Monday from 5:00-8:00 PM at the Fair Oaks Horticultural Center, so there is still time to bring the family to stroll through the holiday light displays while learning about water-efficient landscaping.

And there are a few days left to vote in the Light Up! Fair Oaks holiday house decorating contest, which ends on December 20. Visit www.forpd.org/lightupfair Oaks for the map of participating houses

and to cast your vote. The winning house will be announced December 21 and will receive a \$50 gift certificate.

The Elf Scavenger Hunt starts this weekend, running from December 19 through Christmas Day. Check the website for clues to where the elves are hiding and bring the kids to the parks to find Santa’s little helpers.

There are many more activities to help you enjoy the holiday season, so visit the issuu.com/forpd/docs/fair_oaks_holiday_guide for more details. ★



Santa and Mrs. Clause made their annual appearance at the Fair Oaks Christmas Tree Lighting event. Photo provided by Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District



Local Girl Scout Troop 1043 had a booth at the annual Christmas Tree Lighting event on December 4, held this year at Fair Oaks Park. Photo provided by Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District



Students from Bella Vista High School provided musical entertainment at the annual Christmas Tree Lighting. Photo provided by Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District



Santa visited Phoenix Park to visit with Fair Oaks’ furriest residents on December 7. Photo provided by Fair Oaks Rec and Park District

The 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution is coming!

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By Marlys Johnsen Norris, Christian Author

Rejection And Persecution

A Believer in Jesus Christ that is effective in "proclaiming the message of the Cross" will experience rejection and even persecution during their lifetime.

Why? Because this message of the Cross has brought God's message of truth into someone's life! They are rejecting the loving message God is sending directly to them. They feel the snares of personal conviction about the life they have been living! They refuse to accept the fact that God's Beloved Son went to the Cross to purchase forgiveness for them. Why and How, could anyone refuse to accept God's personal love is hard to understand. Every one of us were born with

a deep inner desire in our souls to enjoy blessings of being loved in our lives and especially from God?

Satan, God told us, was the father of lies from the beginning in John 8:44. He alone "creates unbelief and hatred" in man's minds and directs the works thereof. Satan wanted to be worshipped as a god from the very beginning and when he can get someone to take on his hateful ways he believes he has won their soul and they are on his side.

The result of listening to the wrong ideas, God's enemy pursues these people who have listened to his voice. He has birthed hateful rejection in them and causes them to persecute people who proclaim the Gospel and the sacrifice of God's Son. They attack, proclaim falsehoods and also lie. The words the enemy of God has placed them in their minds. They refuse and do not

believe God who loves them and the enemy uses them to destroy a Christian anyway they can.

Will the enemy succeed? *Most likely "he will not" because God is a miracle worker! Almighty God is our Heavenly Father and He loves them with "Sacrificial Given Blood Power and Mercy" and will bring them back into His loving Family again. If this is what you have observed in someone, love them as God calls a believer to do and then = TRUST GOD... DEAR FRIEND, HE LOVES EVERY ONE OF HIS CREATION TO THE FULLEST DEGREE !!! TRUST AND BELIEVE !!!*

Marlys Johnsen Norris Christian Author of 7 Books ARM Columnist since 2006 Stephen's Minister Marlysjn@gmail.com PO Box 114, Orangevale, CA 95662 ★

Village Improvements Go to Bid Next Month

Story by Shauna Boyd

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - The Measure J Bond Oversight Committee (BOC) met on December 7 to hear updates about planned improvement projects in the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District (FORPD).

In addition to the \$29.5 million in Measure J funds, FORPD has applied for various county, state, and federal grants to supplement the amount of funding available for District improvement projects. In total, over \$1 million in additional grant funding has been approved, with \$10.1 million in requests still pending.

FORPD is eligible to apply for California's Prop. 68 Grant Program (California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018) to increase park space. The District's \$5.9 million application in Round 3 was rejected, but they have reapplied for the same amount for Round 4 funding, and that application is still pending. And the District was approved for \$250,000 in Prop. 68 Recreational Infrastructure Revenue Enhancement (RIRE) funding and \$172,952 in Prop. 68 Per Capita funding. Another \$560,929 was approved through the federal House Community Project Funding. Still pending is another application for \$4.2 million in Congressionally Directed Spending.

A recent local application for funding through Sacramento County's Electric Vehicle Incentive Project was approved, and the District will be awarded \$85,000 as reimbursement for the cost of installing charging stations for electric vehicles in seven parking spaces in the Village. Those charging stations are required by the County, and the parking spaces will be exclusively for use by electric vehicles. The District is still determining the guidelines for those spaces, but Aho said it is likely that the District will decide to put a time limit on the spaces, and that additional time will incur a fee paid to the District.

BOC member Barbara Sestito pointed out that there are limited parking spaces available in the Village and asked how the time limits would impact theatre attendees, because shows would likely run beyond the free parking limit. FORPD Administrative Assistant Paula Lucas explained that the District can impose whatever guidelines they choose, so they could pause the fee collection on show dates.

The BOC also heard an overview of the permit fees paid to Sacramento County during the design review process for the Village improvement projects, with an approximate total of almost \$95,000 in fees. "Those keep piling up," said Aho, "and they just keep coming and keep coming and keep coming."

Aho said that they have reached out to District 3 County Supervisor Rich Desmond about how costly these fees are, but Aho explained that the County Board of Supervisors votes to approve these fee schedules, so it's not possible to get any special treatment for the District. "We can share our frustrations with this, which we have, and they may or may not address it over time," said Aho. "We're keeping a fair record of things, and we'll eventually go compile all this back and give it to Rich and say, 'Hey this is a substantial amount of money that we've paid for fees.'"

But he explained that in a way, the

review process and associated fees can save the District some money in the long run, because the process can uncover errors that cost them more to fix later. For example, in the fire district plan review, they found that the planned water pressure for overhead sprinklers on the amphitheatre stage was lower than required for that location. "If plan review had not caught that, then we wouldn't have gotten an occupancy permit, and the cost to re-do that after we'd put it in would have been much higher," said Aho. "So, did we get anything out of it? Yes and no."

When issues are discovered, the District's architects have to make adjustments to the plan, which is an additional cost to the District, and then the plan has to be resubmitted to the County for another review, which incurs another fee. To plan for these costs, 33% is added for soft costs on top of the total project cost, but Aho said they are currently a little above that percentage.

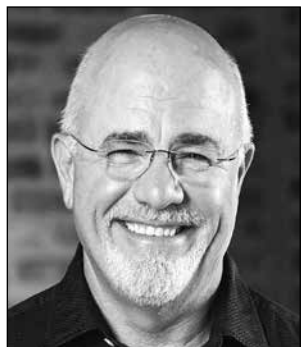
BOC Member Keith Walter said, "Obviously surprises occur, unexpected discoveries occur, but we hired a set of professionals who have done these kinds of projects before, built in a certain amount of contingency - if we're running above those, is it because there's something unique about Sacramento County, something unique about the project? Where did the process break down?"

Aho said, "It really comes down to our project." He gave examples of a retaining wall and a sink hole above the Community Clubhouse and an unknown septic tank under the salon building. "We have a park that was built without plans, without design, that was built by volunteers and just kind of a hodge-podge type of group for the last 75 years. It has never gone through this kind of renovation before, so you're finding all kinds of things in there," said Aho. "When you've got a park like that, I don't know what to do. We're not done yet." They are increasing the contingency for contractors from 15% to 20%, because Aho believes many more issues will be discovered once they start digging.

The project may end up taking longer than expected, but 18 months from the start of construction is still the approximate timeline right now. Aho said he can't offer a better answer until the construction crews actually get in there and start the work, because who knows what they will find. With the scale of the project and the age of the buildings, Aho said, "Honestly, this is one of the most frustrating projects in my career. ... I think it's just that sheer volume, to me, is what makes it harder than anything else. It's not a small project, it's an \$18 million dollar project" and there are a lot of unknowns.

Construction bids for the Village improvements will be requested in January, and the District plans to offer an extended deadline of 45 days to allow more contractors time to submit. Aho estimates the contract will be awarded sometime in March.

During this last meeting of 2021, BOC members submitted their expenditure reviews, fulfilling that annual requirement to oversee the Measure J funds spent in the last year. And they closed the meeting with a vote to continue holding virtual meetings through the winter. They plan to revisit the question of in-person meetings in the spring. The next meeting is scheduled for January 4, 2022. ★



Dave Ramsey Says

that means the most to you and write it down. You're more likely to succeed if you can focus on a single goal, and you have a greater chance of achieving it if you write it down - on paper, on purpose. And make sure the resolution you choose is very important to you. Writing down a goal just because it's what someone else is doing, or because it sounds like a good idea, isn't good enough. If your goal isn't yours, it won't happen.

Second, set benchmarks. Let's say you want to pay off your credit cards before July. You need to make that goal measurable throughout the year by setting benchmarks. If you owe \$5,000 on your credit cards and want to pay them off in six months, you need to pay about \$833 towards them every month. Write your benchmark down beneath your goal, and make a plan for how you're going to get it done.

Three, find an accountability partner. A great accountability partner isn't afraid to ask how your goals are coming along, and they'll call you on it when you're slacking. If you set a financial goal, a good accountability partner isn't going to be the friend who always asks you to go shopping. Studies have shown that having

a strong accountability partner increases the likelihood of achieving a goal dramatically.

And finally, make sure you reward yourself along the way. It's tough to stay motivated when hitting your goal takes a while. Lots of folks start out at full speed, only to see the momentum disappear over time. You might treat yourself to a night at the movies when you've paid off the first \$1,000 on your credit cards, or maybe a nice, new shirt when you've paid off half the card.

Sometimes life doesn't work out the way we think it will, Isaac. Our priorities can change, and our goals may change, too. If that's why you didn't make your resolutions happen this year, that's fine. Just don't make the mistake of thinking it's too late to change and improve your life!

- Dave

Dave Ramsey is a seven-time #1 national best-selling author, personal finance expert, and host of The Ramsey Show, heard by more than 18 million listeners each week. Since 1992, Dave has helped people regain control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for Ramsey Solutions. ★

Help your New Year's Resolutions Stick

Dear Dave,


I thought I was going to get control of my money and make a lot of other positive changes in my life this year, but very few of the things I wanted to accomplish happened. I started strong, and began with serious intentions, but somewhere along the way I lost focus. Can you give me some advice for making and sticking to my resolutions in 2022?

- Isaac

Dear Isaac,

Lots of people make big promises with the best intentions on December 31st. It seems everyone comes up with a laundry list of New Year's resolutions, but research shows very few people actually achieve their goals. If you're ready - and I mean really ready - to reset your life and succeed with your New Year's resolutions, here are a few simple, proven steps that'll help.

First, write down your top goal. Pick the resolution



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Crossword Puzzle Solutions on Page 6

CLUES

ACROSS

- Coalition of countries
- King trump-er, sometimes
- Cuckoo bird
- weevil
- Smelting waste
- Kitchen-wear
- Coke or Pepsi
- Check-in via text, email, etc.
- Settler transport
- *2021 Super Bowl winner, two words
- Before long, to Shakespeare
- Jeopardy
- Auction action
- Puts down
- Coroner's performance
- Band booking
- Snicket of "A Series of Unfortunate Events"
- Stravinsky's "The _____ of Spring"
- Mine passages
- *Build Back Better _____
- Eucharist plate
- Table hill
- Good review
- "Tit for _____"
- Buck feature, pl.
- *First female VP
- Evergreen creeper
- It goes with gin, according to Snoop Dogg
- Mongolian desert
- *COVID-19, e.g.
- Poison ivy or Poison oak
- International Civil Aviation Org.
- Distinctive smell
- House coat
- Asian cuisine food thickener
- Pelvic parts
- Gallery display
- Self-proclaimed greatest boxer
- Count on

DOWN

- "Monty Python" broadcaster
- Rioter's take
- Cantina pot
- Fasteners or holders
- Cover story
- *Suez _____ too tight for Ever Given
- Like custard
- Mythological ship
- "High" time
- Wayside stop
- Thinly spread
- Look forward to
- * _____ Papers, leaked offshore account information
- Banana refuse, pl.
- Exchange for money
- Old World lizard
- * January 20th honoree
- Anti-elderly one
- Those not in favor
- Pita, alt. sp.
- Take without asking
- Gossiper, Yiddish
- *Perseverance landing spot
- Edible tuber
- *Kabul's organization in power
- *The Nobel _____ Prize was awarded to Ressa and Muratov
- Snoop around
- Snowmobile brand
- Give the boot
- *"Stronger" by Cindy McCain, e.g.
- Southwestern hut
- Sushi restaurant staple
- _____ gum, food additive
- Leave out
- Home to the Leaning Tower
- Not in use
- One in mattress
- Spot for a facial
- *Actor Liotta, star in "The Many Saints of Newark"

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Solutions on Page 6

Find Puzzles on Page 6

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Sudoku Puzzle on Page 6

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

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Bera Votes to Strengthen U.S. National Security

Office of Representative Ami Bera, M.D.

WASHINGTON, DC (MPG) - Representative Ami Bera, M.D. (CA-07) voted for the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The NDAA, which passed the House of Representatives with strong bipartisan support and provides the annual budget for the Department of Defense, includes three key amendments authored by Bera.

"Our service members are among the most hard-working and dedicated people our country has to offer, and they deserve our full and unwavering support," said Representative Bera, who serves as Chair of the House of Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, and Nonproliferation. "That's why I proudly voted to provide a much needed pay raise for our brave men and women in uniform, while equipping

them with all the necessary tools to do their jobs safely and effectively. This defense authorization bill also strengthens U.S. national security and our abilities to confront growing threats facing our country at home and abroad, including by addressing strategic challenges posed by China, combating climate change, improving deterrence against cyberattacks, and reinvigorating our global alliances and partnerships."

The Bera-supported legislation includes several critical provisions, including:

Providing a 2.7 percent pay increase for U.S. service members; and, making historic changes to the Uniform Code of Military Justice to better combat sexual assault in the military.

The bipartisan defense bill includes multiple Bera-led amendments, including:

Authorizing U.S. participation in the Coalition

for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), a public-private partnership developing vaccines for COVID-19 and other highly infectious pathogens (The House passed in July Rep. Bera's Securing America's From Epidemics Act, authorizing U.S. participation in CEPI);

Supporting Taiwan's ability to defend against PRC military provocations by further assisting Taiwan's defensive asymmetric capabilities; and

Requiring the Department of State and Department of Defense to report on the utilization of the Synchronized Predeployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) data base to help expedite Special Immigrant Visa processing for our Afghan partners and allies.

Since arriving in Congress, Representative Bera has been a strong advocate for our military, service members, and veterans.

Suspect Arrested for Serial Sexual Assaults

By Sergeant Rod Grassmann, Sacramento County Sheriff's Department

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County District Attorney's Office and the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office announce the arrest of JD Wallace Simien (40) of Sacramento County for a series of violent sexual assaults. The assaults occurred between 2013 and 2014 in northern Sacramento County.

Despite investigative efforts at the time of the sexual assaults, no suspects were ever identified and the cases went cold. The suspect was referred to as the "Cloverleaf Rapist" over the years due to the proximity of the crime scenes to freeway entrances and exits, which resemble a cloverleaf pattern.

The cases remained unsolved until recently. Investigators from the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office and detectives from the Sacramento County Sheriff's

Office used Investigative Genetic Genealogy (IGG) to develop fact-finding leads which led them to JD Wallace Simien. This is the same investigative tool used to identify Joseph James DeAngelo (Golden State Killer and East Area Rapist) and Roy Waller (Nor Cal Rapist), who were both prosecuted for their crimes in Sacramento County. The arrest of Simien marks the sixth IGG case prosecuted in Sacramento County.

JD Wallace Simien is currently being held in the Sacramento County Main Jail without bail. He will be arraigned on Monday, November 8, 2021, in Sacramento County Superior Court. No further arrests are anticipated in this case. No additional information or booking photo is available at this time.

This is an active and ongoing criminal investigation. Any community members with information regarding this investigation are urged to contact Sacramento County Sheriff's Sexual Assaults Office at (916) 874-3918 or email: SEAB@sacsheriff.com



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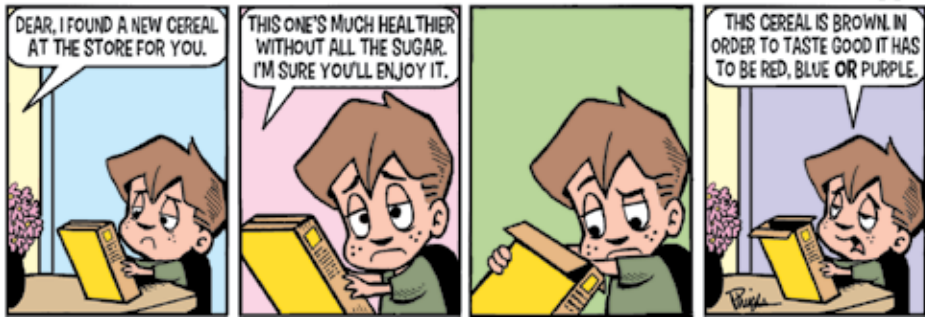
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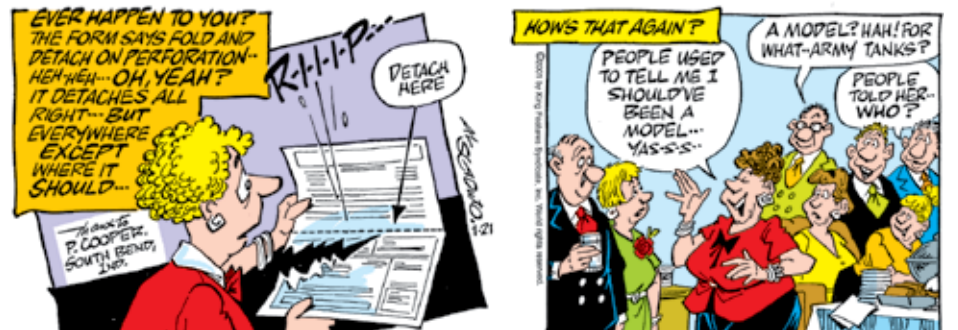
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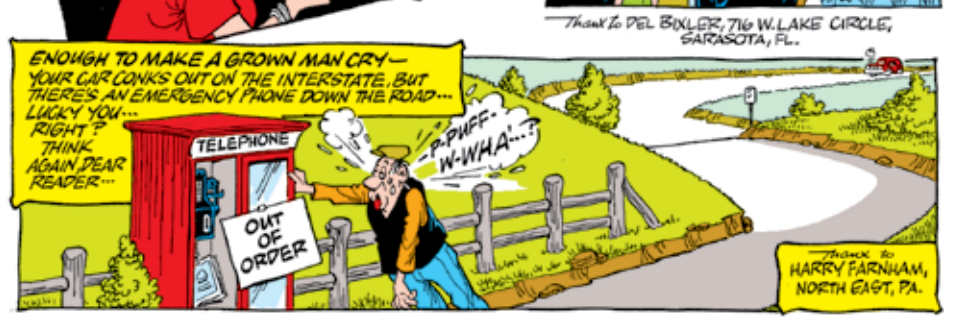


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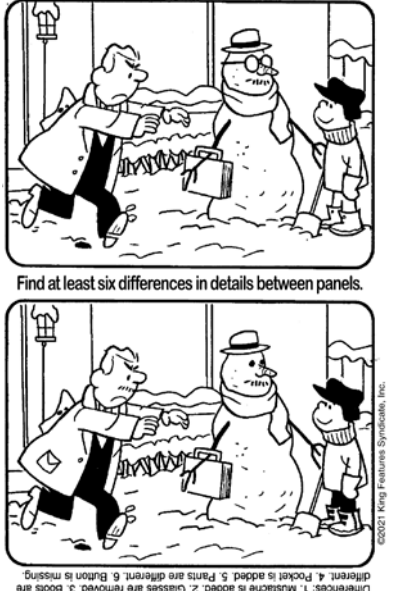


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Wonders of Christmas

As I sit and look at the wondrous Christmas tree Rick and I decorated last evening, my mind took a detour down memory lane looking back over the last two years when the pandemic became a frightening reality. Who would have thought we would still be wearing masks, sticking out our arms for the next booster, and not allowing ourselves the warmth of hugs and handshakes? I guess the most depressing of all is whether we will ever be out of it totally. Husband Rick has been a rock through it all as he struggles with some major health issues that began right before the pandemic really took hold. My admiration for him cannot be expressed in words.



Mary Jane, with Ice and Trekker. Photo courtesy Mary Jane Popp

But as I looked at the tree, I began to hear a song in my head and I started humming it. Remember the movie White Christmas when Bing Crosby sang these words "When I'm weary and I can't sleep, I count my blessings instead of sheep, and I fall asleep counting my blessings." Well, I wasn't in bed, but I began to look back over these two years and realized I had many blessings.

First of all, even with major health issues, I still had my Rick as we celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary in January. That's 50 years of ups and downs from seeing him off to Vietnam just a few months after we married to illness and disappointments, but still holding on to one another through thick and thin. We may be moving a little slower, but you can't keep us down. We're animal lovers, so I am thankful we have had wonderful dogs that gave us so much joy. That includes the

two we have now, and the fun we had at the "Woofstock" Dog show in Vallejo. Rick and I, along with Ice and Trekker, dressed up in tie-dye to celebrate the 60's. Trekker, the big boy, was in the show and did well, but it was just a fun day! By the way, I took needle in hand and made the costumes for our four-legged babies. We still enjoy the beautiful California sunsets and the friends we love. We miss the many events, but Rick is still making his world famous fudge we share with those fiends. I'm still grateful for being able to do my POPPOFF Radio Show on FM-104.5 & AM-950 KAH1 Monday through Friday and to write this column so I can share my heart with you.

So, as the wonder of Christmas approaches and this year comes to an end, I will count my blessings and leave you with this thought from Alfred Lord Tennyson... "HOPE SMILES FROM THE THRESHOLD OF THE YEAR TO COME WHISPERING IT WILL BE HAPPIER." ★





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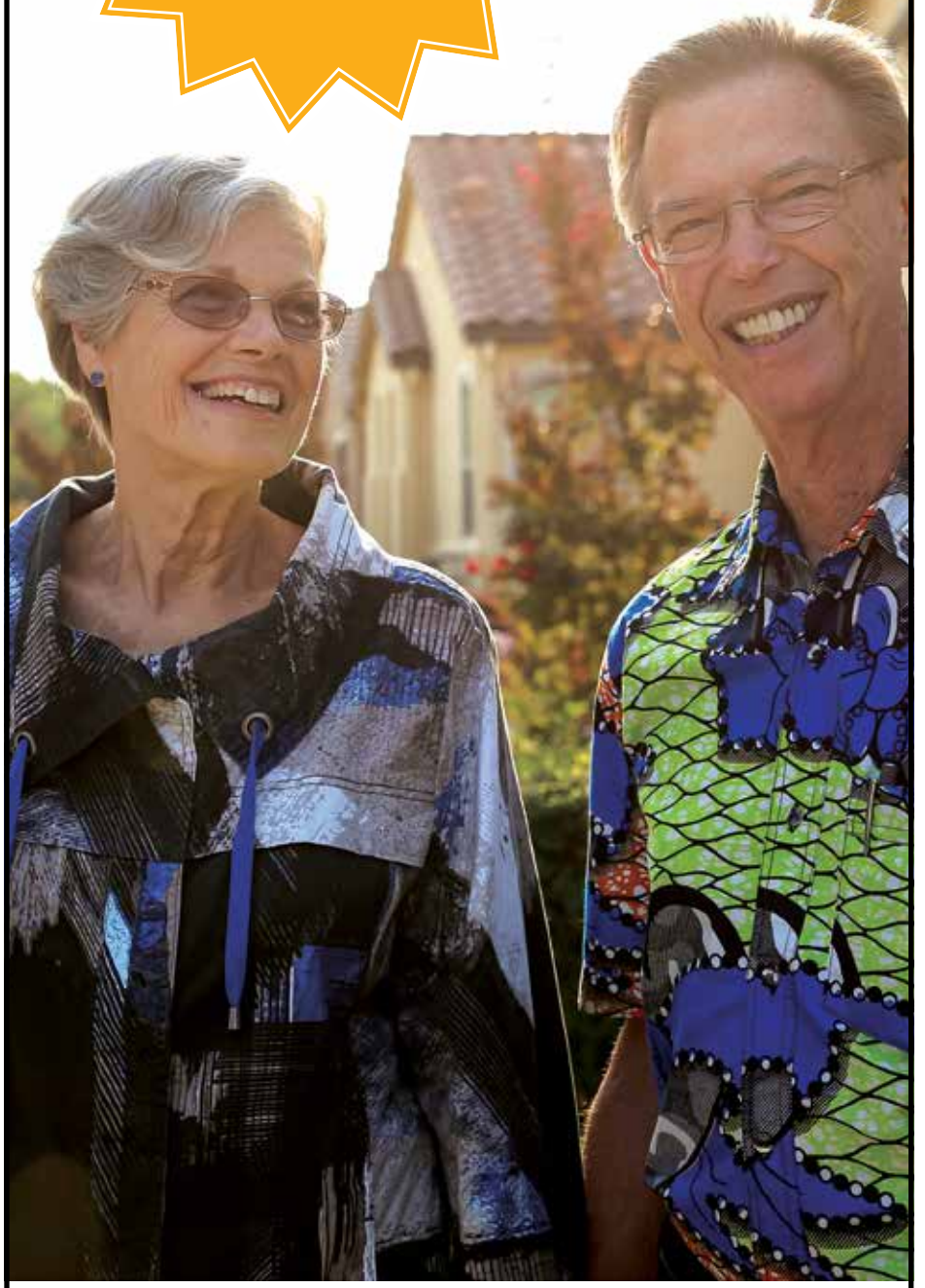
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