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# AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

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Serving Fair Oaks, Orangevale & Sacramento County

FEBRUARY 7, 2020

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## Celebrating Pioneers

*Mt. Vernon Offers Annual History Lesson*



Colonial history reenactors will be part of pageantry during Mt Vernon Memorial Park's annual celebration of American heritage.

**Story and photo  
by Susan Maxwell Skinner**

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Two beloved US presidents and their first ladies will be joined by frontiersmen, Buffalo Soldiers, colonial infantry and a huge sampling of Americana at Mt Vernon Memorial Park in Fair Oaks on February 17. The facility's annual American Heritage Day falls on the national Presidents Day holiday.

Liberty Bell replica chime will begin hours of reenactments and educational displays at 10 am. While prospectors pan for gold, nimble-fingered ladies will demonstrate

spinning and the genteel art of lace-making. Abraham Lincoln will introduce "my wife, Mary" and George Washington will present a sedate Martha to visitors. A steam locomotive will provide insight into the transport revolution that won the West. Pony Express recruiters will also be on hand, seeking "Young, skinny, wiry fellows... willing to risk death daily." The Well Fargo Bank will roll out its iconic stage coach for up-close viewing. Activities will be loudly punctuated by the periodic firing of an antique Howitzer cannon, provided Sierra Nevada Mormon Pioneer volunteers.

For a warmer and more fuzzy experience, children are encouraged to pet goats that represented milk and meat to early pioneers farmers. Hotdog lunches are available for purchase and families, teachers and school groups are welcome to the free event. "We plan to bring history to life," says event coordinator Ruthie Demakas. "American Heritage Day is a wonderful educational opportunity for all ages."

Mt Vernon Memorial Park is located at 8201 Greenback Lane. Events run from 10 am till 2 pm. For information, call (916) 969-1251. ★

## Court Grants Preliminary Injunction for CTA and Independent Truckers

**By Bernice Creager, California Trucking Association**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The U.S. Southern District Court granted a preliminary injunction to enjoin enforcement of California's new employment classification test against motor carriers. This classification test was first set forth in the *Dynamex Operations West, Inc. v. Superior Court* (Dynamex) decision and was subsequently codified by the California Legislature in the form of Assembly Bill 5 (AB 5). The bill was set to take effect on January 1, 2020.

"This ruling is a significant win for California's more than 70,000 independent owner-operators and CTA members who have worked as independent truckers for decades, and who have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars to own their own vehicle and comply with California's strict

environmental guidelines and regulations over the years," said Shawn Yadon, chief executive officer for the California Trucking Association (CTA).

The CTA filed the motion for a preliminary injunction as part of its November 2019 lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of AB 5, which would prohibit independent drivers from contracting and performing trucking services for licensed motor carriers in California. In the lawsuit, which seeks declaratory and injunctive relief, plaintiffs argue that the Dynamex ruling should not be enforced because it is preempted under the supremacy clause of the U.S. Constitution, which sets the decision in direct conflict with a federal law passed by Congress in 1994 to prevent states from enacting punitive laws that affect a motor carrier's prices, routes and services of the trucking industry. ★

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

**By Kristin Thébaud,  
Kristin Thébaud  
Communications**

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

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

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

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

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

*Continued on page 9*



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# A Book of Hope

## Randy Lerch Tells His Story of Addiction and Recovery

Story and photo by Shaunna Boyd

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

with another chance."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

You can contact Randy Lerch through his Facebook page or by email at [RandyLerchBooks@gmail.com](mailto:RandyLerchBooks@gmail.com). ★

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# Congratulations to Best of Fair Oaks Award Winners!



Congratulations to all the Best of Fair Oaks award winners at the January 23rd gala! Photo credit Ryan Griffith



The FOYO - FO Youth Outreach (left to right): Jake Wright, Noah Wright, Delanie Kendall, Cassie Kendall, Angelina Giorgi, Miss Fair Oaks Sophie Bolinger, Emma Ford, and Jr. Honorary Mayor Jimmy Larkin. Photo credit Ryan Griffith

Directors. Chamber membership voted for all other categories. For 2019, the award recipients are:

Citizen of the Year: Roselyn Barbray, Optavia

Special Recognition: Dot Boyd, Senior Safety Specialist

Business Person of the Year: Rich Keith, Del's Pizza; nominees were Mike Maddox, Lyon Real Estate and Erik Hokum, UPS Store Gold River.

Business of the Year: House to Home Moving, Jacob Giorgi; nominees were Averik, Ryan Griffith, Bob's Cycle Center, and Fair Oaks Cemetery Dist.

Volunteer of the Year was awarded to two recipients: Ryan Griffith and Matthew Mason; nominees were John Oldham and Jill Stevens. Congratulations! ★

Join the Fair Oaks Chamber at [fairoakschamber.com](http://fairoakschamber.com)

**Submitted by Dot Boyd**

**FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG)** - The 4th Annual Best of Fair Oaks Gala Awards Night celebrated on Thursday, January 23rd was a great evening for all the participants. We want to congratulate all of the nominees and winners in the 47 featured categories! The FOYO - FO Youth Outreach, our future leaders, are to be commended for helping to host and adding fun to the evening at North Ridge Country Club! We want to extend a special thanks to Ryan Griffith of

Averik for the [bestoffairoaks.com](http://bestoffairoaks.com) website and his photographic talent! Thanks also to American River Messenger for being a partner in this project and to everyone who went out of their way in kindness to donate raffle prizes and desserts, as well! You're the BEST, Fair Oaks!! Chamber-specific awards were presented at Best of Fair Oaks Gala Awards Night. Citizen of the Year and Special Recognition recipients were chosen by the Chamber of Commerce Board of

## Mardi Gras Crab Feed

**WHO**  
The Rotary Club of Fair Oaks and the Fair Oaks Rotary Foundation

**WHAT**  
The 30th Annual Mardi Gras Crab Feed

**WHERE**  
At the Divine Savior Parish Hall at 9079 Greenback Lane in Orangevale

**WHEN**  
It will be held on Saturday, February 15, 2020  
Doors will open at 5:30 pm

**HOW TO BUY TICKETS**  
Tickets are \$65 each and they may be purchased by

- Contacting Victoria Porter at [VicPorter65@gmail.com](mailto:VicPorter65@gmail.com)
- Going to Eventbrite on your phone with our QR code
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SCAN WITH YOUR PHONE CAMERA



The Mardi Gras Crab Feed is very popular and it sells out every year. Those planning on going should buy their tickets early.

**MONTHLY MEETING OF MILITARY RETIREES/SPOUSES:**

Our next monthly meeting  
**February 13th, 2020**  
at  
**North Highlands Park and Recreation**  
District, 6040 Watt Ave, North Highlands 95660.  
Starting time is 1030 hours. Guest Speaker is Jerrod Sieberg, Senior Driver Ombudsman.  
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If you have any questions, call Volunteer staff at 916-640-8446  
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## VOTE EARLY! AVOID LINES



**March 3, 2020 Presidential Primary Election**

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- **You can return your ballot starting February 3<sup>rd</sup>**
  - By mail
  - At a Ballot Drop Box
  - At a Vote Center
- **Vote Centers have replaced traditional polling places**
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  - Change your political party
  - Change your signature

You can find a full list of Ballot Drop Box and Vote Center locations in your County Voter Information Guide, in your mail ballot packet, on the SacVote App, or at [www.elections.saccounty.net](http://www.elections.saccounty.net)

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



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

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

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

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

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

For more information, visit SacramentoValleyChorus.com. ★

By Kim Nava,  
Sacramento County

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

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

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

Board Chair responsibilities include the following:

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

Chairperson; Acts on procedural matters or questions;

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

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

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

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*Ask Toni*

## Turning 65... Medicare Marketing Is Overwhelming!



America, it has finally happened because I, Toni King, who has been writing the Toni Says® Medicare column is turning 65 in May. I am now experiencing, the excessive marketing and confusion regarding finding a Medicare plan due to the amount of junk mail which is hitting my mailbox whether it is a Medicare Supplement or Medicare Advantage Plan.

This week a rather troubling letter came that showed different Medicare Supplement plans and quoted a low rate for Medicare Supplement plan K. I remembered a reader's question from 2017 who changed from Medicare Plan G with low out of pocket to Plan K that has a higher out of pocket, but could not change to any plan whether Medicare Supplement or Medicare Advantage plans because he was receiving kidney dialysis due to end stage renal disease. ESRD is a kick out question for Medicare Supplement or Medicare Advantage plans.

Had I not known the difference in what Medicare plans offer, I would call for that insurance company's information because the insurance premiums are so low.

Below is information regarding the difference in

Medicare Supplement Plan G and K:

• **Medicare Supplement Plan G:** Pays Medicare Part A(In-Hospital) coinsurance and hospital coverage(up to an additional 365 days after Medicare benefits are used up), Pays Medicare Part B(Medical) coinsurance or copayment, Blood (first 3 pints), Part A hospice care, Skilled nursing facility coinsurance, Part A deductible, Part B excess charge, Foreign Travel emergency (up to plan limits) Part B deductible Not Covered...\$198 out of pocket which is 2020's Medicare Part B deductible.

• **Medicare Supplement Plan K:** Pays Medicare Part A(In-Hospital) coinsurance and hospital coverage(up to an additional 365 days after Medicare benefits are used up), 50% Medicare Part B(Medical) coinsurance or copayment, 50% Blood (first 3 pints), 50%Part A hospice care, 50% Skilled nursing facility coinsurance,50% Part A deductible, Part B deductible Not Covered, Not Covered Part B excess charge which will be an extra of out of pocket without a maximum amount that you will be responsible for, Not Covered Foreign Travel emergency (up to plan limits), Maximum out of pocket \$5,880 of what Medicare covers and does not include the Medicare Part B excess charge or foreign travel expense that other Medicare Supplement plans cover. You will be responsible for these charges which can be rather expensive.

As you can see by the Medicare plan information above that Medicare Plan G has a maximum

out of pocket of \$198 where Medicare Plan K has a maximum out of pocket of \$5880 not including additional charges if your provider's costs exceed Medicare-approved amounts.

Let's discuss what can happen when one is turning 65 like me and receiving Medicare Part B for the first time. This special time discussed in the Medicare & You handbook is called "Medigap Open Enrollment Period" which states, "The best time to buy a Medigap policy is during your Medigap Open Enrollment Period. This 6-month period begins on the first day of the month in which you're 65 or older and enrolled in Part B." (Some states have additional Open Enrollment Periods.) During this period an insurance company can't use medical underwriting because of your health problems. After this enrollment period, you may not be able pass underwriting questions for a new Medigap policy because of your health issues such as the reader who had kidney issues and was not able to make a change.

**Toni Says®:** Take your time when enrolling in Medicare. Know your Medicare options. For questions regarding the maze of Medicare, call the Toni Says Medicare hotline at 832-519-8664.

Toni King, author of the Medicare Survival Guide® is giving a \$5 discount on the Medicare Survival Guide® Advanced book to the Toni Says Medicare column readers at [www.tonisays.com](http://www.tonisays.com). ★

# AMERICAN PICKERS to Film in California



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

By Maggie Kissinger, Cineflix Productions

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

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

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

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

Mike and Frank have seen a lot of rusty gold over the years and are always looking to discover something they've never seen before. They are ready to find extraordinary items and hear fascinating tales about them. AMERICAN PICKERS is looking for leads and would love to explore your hidden treasure. If you or someone you know has a large, private collection or accumulation of antiques that the Pickers can spend the better part of the day looking through, send us your name, phone number, location and description of the collection with photos to [americanpickers@cineflix.com](mailto:americanpickers@cineflix.com) or call 855-OLD-RUST. ★

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# POPOFF!

with Mary Jane Popp

## Loving Yourself

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

### HEAL

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

### AWAKEN

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

### LOVE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Happy Valentine's Day!!! ★



By Marlys Johnsen Norris, Christian Author

## A Humble And Contrite Heart

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## What Did We Know before Facebook?

Dr. James L. Snyder

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For her 90th birthday, some people in the community

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Before the night ended, everybody in the community

knew of the plan to "fire the pastor."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Dare to Live Without Limits

by Bryan Golden

### What Will You Do Today?



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

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

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

Create a detailed plan, with specific steps, for

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**NOW AVAILABLE:**  
*Dare to Live Without Limits, the book. Visit www.BryanGolden.com or your bookstore. Bryan is a management consultant, motivational speaker, author, and adjunct professor. E-mail Bryan at bryan@columnist.com or write him c/o this paper. © 2017 Bryan Golden ★*

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# Faith as a Foundation

## Higher Power Offers Faith-Based Recovery Program

Story by Shaunna Boyd

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

people get what they need to survive."

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

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

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