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AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

"Written by the people, for the people"

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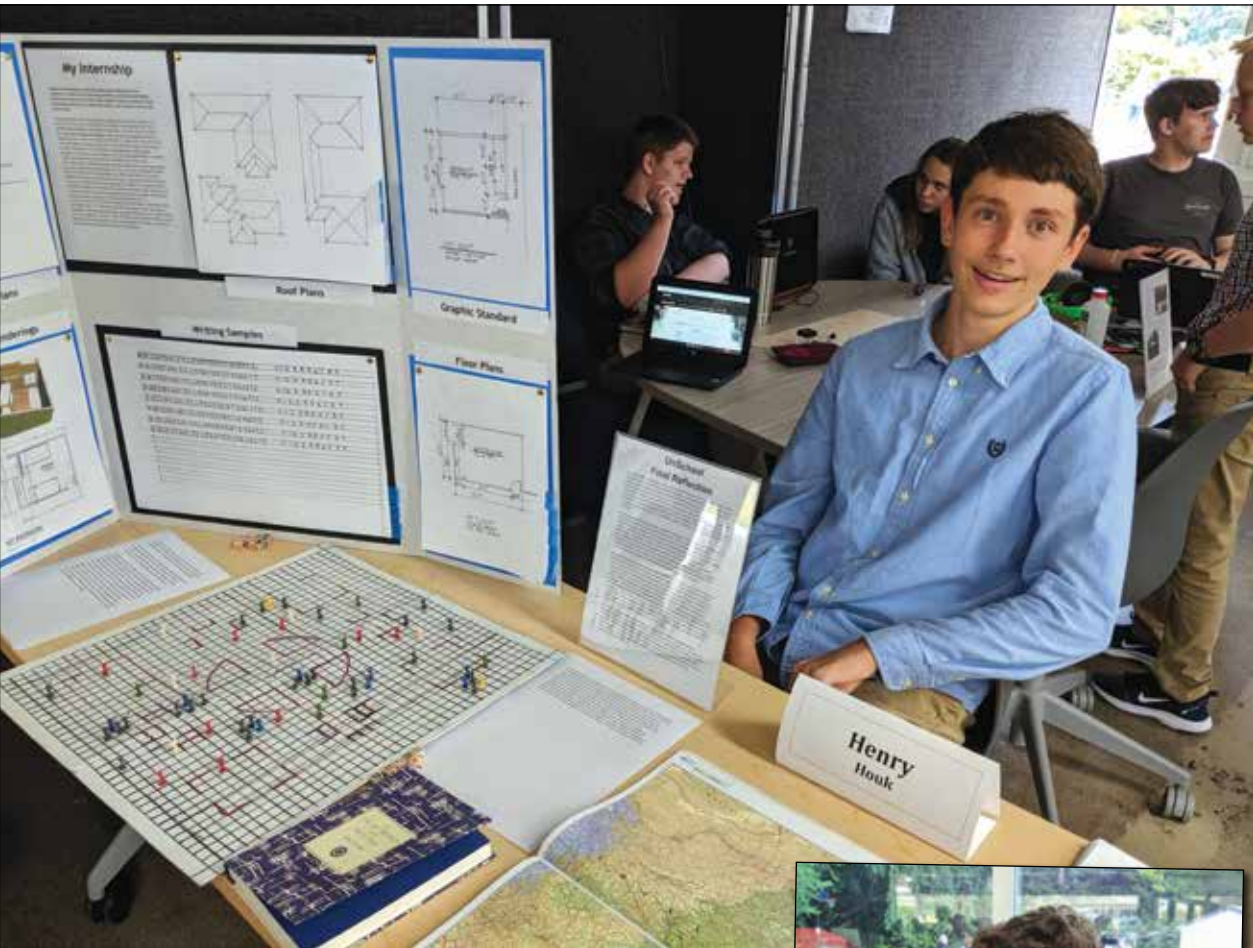
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Following Their Passions

Students Share Exhibit Night at Meraki School



Above: Henry Houk designed an elaborate board game, writing out a comprehensive narrative and rules of play. Right: Elijah Nelson screens a new film, "The Chain," created by Meraki students. Nelson wrote the script and other students directed, performed, filmed, and produced. Photos by Shaunna Boyd

Story by Shaunna Boyd

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - Passion-based learning gives students the ability to forge their own path and direct their own education. That's what they're doing at Meraki High School, formerly known as UnSchool. The Fair Oaks school encourages students to find their passions and use them to create projects incorporating both academic and real-world skills. By writing proposals, figuring out budgets, and researching the topic's history, students can use their projects to demonstrate mastery of core subjects.

The students came up with the new name — Meraki, which is a Greek word for the soul, creativity, or love

put into something. It describes the essence of yourself you put into your work. On May 30, Meraki High School held an Exhibition Night so the students could show the passion and dedication they have put into their work throughout the school year.

Ava Pucilowski, who displayed her photography at the Exhibition Night, said the new name better describes the school's purpose: "UnSchool was cool, but it didn't reflect how much we do here. It really prepares us for real-life situations.... We learn real skills like self-motivation, self-discipline, and time management."

Many students use the freedom at Meraki High School to pursue their passion for art. "I like that I

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Catrayel Wood Runs for Sacramento County Board of Supervisors

**By Emerson Palmer,
Catrayel Wood for
Supervisor 2020**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Catrayel Wood, the 39th Honorary Mayor of Fair Oaks and a Senior Budget Analyst with the Judicial Council of California, announced today that he is running for Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, District 3.

"The time has come for a new generation to step forward, innovate, and lead Sacramento County to a better tomorrow," Catrayel said. "I'm running for Sacramento County Board of Supervisors because the time has come for change and a new vision for our future," Catrayel continued.

An active member of the community, Catrayel has been a member of Habitat Young Professionals (HYP) - Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento, and currently serves as a board member for the Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce, and ACE. Catrayel holds a bachelor's degree in Politics & International Relations from the University of London, London School of Economics, and has studied economics and marketing at the University of Oxford, and Peking University, respectively.

Catrayel brings to the campaign a unique and innovative approach that combines divergent thinking, a natural appreciation



Catrayel Wood, The 39th Honorary Mayor of Fair Oaks.

for collaboration, and the courage to take risks.

"Our county government

Continued on page 3

**Spring
Cleaning?
Schedule Your
Bulky Waste
Pick-Up**

**By Laurie Slothower,
Sacramento County**

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Old couches. Left-over lumber. One-legged chairs. Used laptops and TVs. Broken refrigerators. Beat-up mattresses. Does this sound like your backyard or garage? Did you know the Sacramento County Department of Waste Management and Recycling will come to your home and pick these items up from your curb at no charge?

One Bulky Waste Pick-Up per calendar year is included in your garbage rate. The no-charge pick-up is good for an 8' x 4' x 4' pile, with a maximum material amount of 5 cubic yards — about the size of a pickup bed loaded to the top of the cab. Additional pickups are only \$25!

Bulky Waste Pick-Up services are available by appointment only. To schedule your pick-up, call (916) 875-5555 or complete the Waste Management and Recycling form online.

Acceptable items include: Appliances, E-Waste (TVs and computer monitors), Universal Waste (household batteries, fluorescent light bulbs less than 4 feet, and cell phones), Furniture/Mattresses, Pipes, Lumber, Lawn/Tree/Shrub Trimmings.

Please use your green waste container as much as possible for leaves, grass, weeds and prunings. The more you use your green waste cart, the more space in your Bulk Waste Pick-Up for items that cannot go into a cart.

Place these items to the side of your pile: Tires (no rims; maximum of 5); Junk.

Lumber, pipes and trimmings should be no more than four inches in diameter and five feet long.

Unacceptable items include: Commercial Waste, Dirt, Rocks, and Bricks, Glass Panes, Concrete, Vehicle Batteries, Household Garbage, Hot Ashes, Heavy Materials (like auto bodies, engines, etc.), Hazardous Waste. This includes paint, oil and chemicals. This material may be dropped off at the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility located at the North Area Recovery Station. Call (916) 875-5555 for hours.

Customers are asked to place the materials in front of their property and on the same side of the street 24 hours before scheduled pick-up.

Continued on page 6

Following Their Passions

Students Follow their Passions at Meraki School



Grace Oldham likes to use unique objects to create her paintings. Instead of the traditional paintbrush, she uses Q-tips or old toothbrushes. Photo by Shaunna Boyd

Continued from page 1

have more time to do the art I want to do,” said Grace Oldham, one of the students who has been enrolled in Meraki since it opened as UnSchool in 2017. Oldham likes the new name: “It’s very true to what this school is.”

“I love it here,” said Jacob Bartlett, a junior in his second year at Meraki. Bartlett didn’t feel engaged in the traditional school environment: “I came here because I was on autopilot.... I wanted something different.” Bartlett’s project this year focused on creating music and graffiti art. “I couldn’t have done this at my old school.”

Seth Scobba exhibited some of his artwork at the Exhibition Night, showcasing his talent for detailed line drawing. Scobba is a

freshman at Meraki and is happy to have the freedom to pursue his interests: “I like having the ability to focus more on my artwork, which is what I want to do in the future. You still get the education you need, but it’s more focused on what you actually like.”

Meraki junior Ryan Cox founded the REX Robotics Club, which works on engineering and coding robots. They hope to compete against teams from around the United States in next year’s VEX Robotics Competition. Cox said he appreciates the flexibility of Meraki because he has a busy schedule taking college classes at Folsom Lake College and American River College: “I like to challenge myself.”

Elijah Nelson spent last semester working on a

variety of short stories, but this semester he took on the challenge of writing a screenplay, which other students at the school directed, performed, filmed, and produced. “There’s a lot of freedom here... We’re expected to act like adults and plan out our future. It was a lot to take in at first.” Nelson explained that the personalized attention students receive from faculty advisors helps them understand what they need to do to succeed.

“It’s more of a life experience than a school experience,” said Gabriel Cooper, Meraki Principal. “It’s here for kids who want something very different. If you’re seeking something that’s actual learning versus scripted curriculum at a traditional school, that’s why we’re here.” ★

Catrayel Wood Runs for Sacramento County Board of Supervisors

Continued from page 1

is hamstringing by inaction and slow responses to the challenges at hand. We all know what these challenges are: a lack of affordable housing, rising rents, families living paycheck to paycheck despite working full-time, and continued spikes in homelessness. We can do better. What has stopped our current elected officials from meeting these challenges is an absence of sound policies, plans, and a clear vision for our future,” Catrayel said.


Catrayel was born

and raised in a blue-collar region of the Central Valley and though his parents didn’t graduate from college, they instilled in him the importance of hard work, service to one’s community, and, most importantly, that if you want to make a change, you don’t wait—you act. So he is.

“This is going to be a process of sharing my thoughts with voters, and listening, on how we can effectively collaborate and move our county forward. We need to move beyond a time in which

home affordability has hit a 10-year low; where residents can no longer afford the median home price; and where poverty rose faster in Arden Arcade than anywhere else in California. We need to move beyond a 30 percent rise in homelessness between 2015 and 2017; and we need to move beyond a time in which a homeless person dies every 3 days in Sacramento County,” Catrayel said.


“Now is the time to move beyond our past and look forward to a better tomorrow,” Catrayel continued. ★



**Publisher,
Paul V. Scholl**

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Honoring the American Legion



Mark Rice, Senior Master Sergeant, USAF, Retired (middle) meets with other veterans and attendees after the event. (At right) County Supervisor Don Nottoli gets a warm welcome from Warren McWilliams. Photos by Paul Scholl

Story by Paul Scholl

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - The 100th Anniversary of the American Legion was honored by the Fair Oaks Cemetery District at its annual Memorial Day Ceremonies on Saturday, May 25.

The American Legion originated through a group of officers who served in France during World War I. Lt. Colonel Theodore Roosevelt Jr. proposed an organization of veterans to help troop morale, which then formed a committee selecting other officers to help create the organization. In May of 1919 the plans were made for a permanent organization, which continues to this day.

Mark Rice, Senior Master Sergeant, USAF, Retired, was the keynote speaker. Master of Ceremonies was Bob Clouse. Many of the local political representatives attended and offered their thoughts of the importance of the organization and gratitude for all those who have served our nation.



Thank you to all those at the Cemetery District who put together another wonderful program to honor our veterans. ★

Exchange Program Promotes Global Engagement

Story and photo by Shaunna Boyd

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - Local Rotary District 5180 participates in the Rotary Youth Exchange through Rotary International. According to District 5180, the goal of the program is to “[bring] peace to the world one young person at a time through exchange.” In addition to learning a new language and experiencing a new culture, exchange students develop leadership skills and a strong sense of independence.

The Rotary Club of Fair Oaks is currently hosting Charlotte “Charly” Ahrens from Bremen, a city in northern Germany. She came to Fair Oaks in August 2018, and will be completing her exchange and returning home at the end of June 2019. During her time here, she has been attending Del Campo High School. Ahrens tried to find a way to distill the exchange experience into a single sentence: “You have this entire new life!”

Ever since she was a kid, Ahrens always hoped to participate in the exchange program. “My grandpa is one of the founding members of the Rotary Club of Syke, District 1850. He’s just always been very involved with Rotary, so I’ve always known about the program.... I never knew I’d go to America, but knew I’d go somewhere.”

Ahrens said that Germany and the United States have many similar values and are both modernized western countries, so she didn’t have to adjust to significant cultural differences. Schools in Germany teach English as one of the main subjects, so she already spoke the language fluently without much of an accent.

The major difference she noted is that many Americans live quite wastefully, and it took her some time to get used to the amount of plastics that are so casually thrown away. Her favorite part of the exchange has been building new friendships: “I’ve had really awesome host families.... I’ve just been really blessed



Charlie Bingaman (left) and Charly Ahrens (right) are both members of the Rotary Youth Exchange. Ahrens is completing her exchange and will be returning home to Germany at the end of June. Bingaman will start his exchange to Bolivia this August.

with the people I’ve met during this experience.”

“The program gives you a lot — all those experiences, all the new things you learn, and the new people you meet. You learn a lot about the country, but you also learn a lot about yourself.... You just grow a lot... and you find out a lot of things about yourself that you probably wouldn’t have... if you had just stayed at home. So it definitely broadens your horizons.”

The Bingaman family was Ahrens’ second host family. She became friends with their son Charlie Bingaman, who will soon be embarking on his own exchange. After his upcoming graduation from Sacramento Waldorf School, Bingaman will be traveling to Tarija, a small city in the southern part of Bolivia. Bingaman said that Bolivia is the second poorest country in South America: “It’s very beautiful, but it’s also very, very different in every way.” Bingaman doesn’t currently speak much Spanish, so he expects significant challenges while adjusting to the culture and the language: “It will be a really cool change. I’m excited.”

“Bolivia is about as opposite as you can be, which is really what I’m looking for,” said Bingaman. “The language will obviously come from the immersion; I don’t expect people to speak English.... I will be forced to learn the language really quickly, which I’m really thankful about.” During his exchange, Bingaman plans to participate in several excursions: a journey through the

Amazon, a Patagonia trip through Argentina and Chile, and an expedition to visit the ancient ruins in Machu Picchu. “We get so many benefits because of the generosity of the local clubs,” he said.

Bingaman described the Rotary world as “vast,” with clubs all over the world. Many districts send hundreds of students to a variety of countries each year, while just a handful of local students participate in the exchange program here in the Sacramento Region. Bingaman said, “That’s the cultural difference: Americans don’t have it ingrained to travel or to experience the world and have a diverse viewpoint... which really affects the way we work with the rest of the world.”

Both Ahrens and Bingaman see the value of the international Rotary Youth Exchange and hope more students take advantage of this amazing resource to become true global citizens. Students are eligible to participate in the exchange program between the ages of 15 – 18½, and they do not have to be from Rotarian families. The exchange usually takes place during the academic year; students attend local schools in their host countries and live with approved host families.

Students’ families pay travel costs, host families cover students’ room and board, and the hosting Rotary clubs provide students with monthly stipends. For more information about Rotary Youth Exchange, visit www.ryc5180.org. ★

SMUD and CDFW Stock Thousands of Trout in Reservoirs

SMUD Press Release

EL DORADO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - SMUD and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) are again stocking three Sierra reservoirs with rainbow trout. The fish planting will run into August with SMUD stocking 25,000 pounds of fish into Union Valley, Ice House and Loon Lake reservoirs in El Dorado County. This is the fifth consecutive summer SMUD and CDFW have combined efforts to stock the reservoirs.

The trout plants are intended to enhance angling opportunities for the public. Surveys say fishing tops the reasons folks visit the Crystal Basin Recreation Area. On average, the stocked trout weigh one to two pounds each, including some trophy fish. SMUD, along with the owners of the Ice House Resort, have installed the “Crystal Basin Bragging Board” where anglers can post pictures of their catch from Crystal Basin reservoirs. There is also a scale available if anglers wish to weigh their catch and claim biggest-fish bragging rights. Anglers are also encouraged to tag SMUD on social media and show off their catch.

SMUD proactively works to improve the quality of life in El Dorado County, where many SMUD employees call home and work, and where the electric utility owns and operates the Upper American

River Project (UARP), a system of hydro-electric generation facilities.

SMUD was awarded a new 50-year license by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in 2014 to continue operating the UARP, which provides nearly 700 megawatts of low-cost, clean, non-carbon-emitting hydro power, enough to provide about 15 to 20 percent of SMUD’s energy capacity during an average water year.

The fish-stocking effort helps SMUD meet conditions of operating its FERC license for the UARP.

SMUD will coordinate six separate trout plantings starting in early June and continuing into early August. Union Valley, the largest of the three reservoirs, will get 9,600 pounds; Loon Lake, 7,750 pounds; and Ice House, 7,650. The fish provided by SMUD will come from Mount Lassen Trout Farms of Payne’s Creek. The company also stocks SMUD’s Rancho Seco Lake, which annually hosts the very popular Trout Derby.

Fishing licenses are available for purchase from more than 1,400 license agents throughout the state and can also be obtained online at wildlife.ca.gov/licensing.

For more information about UARP and associated projects, as well as current reservoir and stream release conditions, please visit smud.org and the Community and Recreational Areas Web pages. ★



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Blue Star Museums’ Free to Military Personnel and Families

A U.S. Air Force F-4 McDonnell Douglas Phantom II at the Aerospace Museum of California. Photo courtesy of the Aerospace Museum of California.

By Traci Rockefeller Cusack, T-Rock Communications

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Seven Sacramento area museums are participating in Blue Star Museums, a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense and more than 2,000 museums across America by offering free admission to all active duty military personnel and their families now through Labor Day (September 2), 2019.

The seven local museums participating in Blue Star Museums include the following: Aerospace Museum of California, California Automobile Museum, California Museum, Crocker Art Museum, Fairytale Town, Powerhouse Science Center and the

Sacramento History Museum.

First Lady of the United States Melania Trump and Second Lady of the United States Karen Pence are honorary co-chairs of Blue Star Museums 2019. This year’s participating organizations include fine art, science, history, and children’s museums, as well as zoos, aquariums, gardens, and more.

The free admission program is available for those currently serving in the United States Military –

Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard as well as members of the Reserves, National Guard, U.S. Public Health Commissioned Corps, NOAA Commissioned Corps, and up to five family members.

Qualified members must show a Geneva Convention common access card (CAC),

DD Form 1173 ID card (dependent ID), or a DD Form 1173-1 ID card for entrance into a participating Blue Star Museum.

Before planning a visit, guests are encouraged to contact the individual museums for hours of operation and note some are normally closed on Mondays and in observance of holidays such as Memorial Day and Labor Day.

For more information or a complete list of participating Blue Star museums, please visit <https://www.arts.gov/national/blue-star-museums>. For more information about upcoming activities offered by Sacramento area museums, “like” them on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/SacMuseums, follow them on Instagram and Twitter @SacMuseums or visit the user-friendly website at www.SacMuseums.org. ★

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By Marlys Johnsen
Norris, Christian Author

Though out our lifetime, every one of us experience many different kinds of *longings*. The day we were born our first longing was the nourishment for our bodies. We did not know what it was until the love of our mother placed our mouths on her breast and we automatically sucked and milk came out to satisfy our longing. There is also a *longing* we experience in the beginning of life and that is LOVE. The love of a mother, father and other members of our family meet that deepest need we have as a child.

Once we are old enough to attend school another *longing* we don't understand creeps into our senses. It is having other classmates care about us and we fit into the circle of play. It gives us a sense of self-worth and acceptance we really do not fully understand. Then, there is the classroom experience

Longings!

with a teacher. When the teacher gives us acknowledgement for a correct answer we have a sense of worthiness. We feel like we are learning and advancing in the class.

Later as teenagers, being accepted by our peers becomes extremely important to make us fit in. The *longing* in our heart is primary for us to be accepted. We look forward to parties, a date for a school dance and other school activities for teenagers and receiving an invitation possibly from a person of the opposite sex.

It is in our teen years that *longings* for the opposite sex and enjoying their company and a hug and a kiss can advance to other *longings* we have never experienced before. Again, we want to be "accepted" and some who have not had education about it at home possibly yield to them. We feel the *longing* in our body but really don't understand the power it has over to sexual urges in their lives not really realizing the bondage God's enemy places on sinful acts.

There is another important deep inner "*longing*" within that comes from the heaven and it is a spiritual longing God places within us for Him self. If a person has attended Sunday school or Church

they may have learned about our Creator/God/Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son Jesus Christ. There comes a time when every one needs to establish heavenly convictions so they can face unbelievable temptations. It is forming a solid, immovable biblical principle that shapes the truth one believes and shows them how to live an abundant life God promises. Originally within them there might have created a special little *longing* that has increased over the years. Yet, there are so many who have never had this opportunity to learn anything about a God who loves them more than anyone could ever love.

Plus, God's love is so powerful He will give them many many opportunities to hear about His personal love just for them. He will wait patiently for that special day they are ready to fill that deep inner *longing* within and invite His Blessed Son, Jesus into their Heart and Life. Now, "born-again" they begin a brand new love journey with God through life and He will never leave or forsake them.

Marlys Johnsen Norris
Christian Author,
Stephens Minister
"God Moves Mountains,
It was a Miracle"
Marlysjn@gmail.com ★



By Pastor Ray Dare

God's power is unlimited. God can do anything He wants to. His power is amazing! But let me tell you something more amazing – the Bible says God wants to make His power available to YOU. That's good news because there are so many people in our society who are powerless. Powerless to change their lives. Powerless to become the person they want to be. Powerless to rise above their present situation or circumstance.

So many people live all their life beneath their God given potential. And they go all through life with the feelings of inferiority, feeling defeated, hopeless, with no dreams, no goals, no purpose, no ambition and that's sad.

You may feel this way, you think, "I'll never be the person that I want to be... I'll never be what I could have been... My circumstances will never

Pastor Ray's Encouraging Words

Tap into God's Power

change." If you've ever felt that way, I have good news for you. God says "I want to help you get there... I'm going to help you be the person I created you to be... I'm going to help you rise above your present self-imposed limitations." So, how do you get God's power in your life?

Admit that you need His power. You stop acting like superman or superwoman. You stop relying on your own strength and power and admit that you need His help. Paul said in 2 Cor. 2, "I have cheerfully made up my mind to be proud of my weaknesses, because they mean a deeper experience of Christ's power. . . For my very weakness makes me strong in Him!"

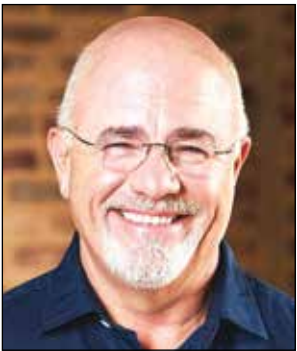
Believe He will help you. Faith is the key that unlocks the door to God's power in your life. "Everything is possible for him who believes." Mark 9:23. One of my favorite verses is Matthew 9:29 "According to your faith it will be done unto you." God says, you get to choose what I do in your life. You get to choose how much power God pours

into your life.

Start acting in faith. You put feet to your faith. You start acting as though it's already so. You thank God for the answer in advance. If you wait until you receive the answer to thank God is that faith? No. That's gratitude. Faith thanks God in advance and acts as if it's already so.

The Bible tells us that power is wrapped up in a person, the person of Jesus Christ. You don't get the power without getting the person. So, the key to having God's power in your life is to have God's Son in your life, Jesus Christ. When you say, "Jesus Christ, put Your Spirit in me, the Spirit of power, love, hope and peace," you have God's power. If you've never invited Christ into your life, open yourself up and say, "Christ come into my life, give me your power. I want to live your way." That's how you do it! Plug in to God's power today.

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Dave Ramsey Says

see is that he's making no money. He needs to get a better job. He can't pay his bills, and in the process, he's sucking you dry. I'm sure your fiancé is a good, hard-working man, but he needs to make a serious career shift soon – like now!

In the meantime, this guy needs to take on a part-time job or two until he gets that career shifted. It's not really a budgeting problem you're looking at. It's an income issue. – Dave

Diversify Advisors?

Dear Dave,

We're wondering if we should diversify our investments by hiring multiple advisors with different companies, so we won't have all our eggs in one basket. Your thoughts would be appreciated. – Marya

Dear Marya,

I would get *one* advisor, and I wouldn't invest all my *mutual funds* in one fund. Virtually all mutual fund advisors can sell pretty much any mutual fund, and you can buy an array of different mutual funds from different companies through one advisor. *That* gives you diversification. So, there's really no advantage in having multiple advisors, unless

you don't trust someone's advice. And if you don't trust someone's advice, why are you working with them in the first place?

I personally have one financial advisor, and I trust that person. Still, I ask lots of questions and make sure I understand everything that's going on with my money and the investment before making a decision. Why are you recommending this? What is it about them you like? Show me the fund and how it compares to the S&P *and* other funds in the same category. If you approach it this way, and again, you have one advisor, it's a learning process and you become a more educated investor. Plus, after a while you can create your own diversification.

Never put money into something you don't fully understand! – Dave

Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including *The Total Money Makeover*. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 14 million listeners each week on 600 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey. ★

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By Noah Howard

Every video game enthusiast has their own selection of small details or aspects of games that they appreciate. The small joys of mastering a new skill, painting a set of armor, completing a small task, or the oft-requested ability to pet in-game dogs should not be underestimated when it comes to measuring overall enjoyment of a game. But arguably the most important and popular small detail that has frequently echoed throughout the gaming community has been the ability to customize a home.

Though online games like *Second Life* had featured home-building as a central feature for some time, home-building was first thrust into the gaming mainstream with *Minecraft*, the survival game/digital set of Lego bricks that remains one of the best selling video games of all time. In *Minecraft*'s survival mode, building a home was essential as a fortress against the hostile creatures of the night. And in the monster-less creative mode, players created masterpieces of architecture that took the internet by storm.

Other major games got on board with the trend at a micro-level. The *Mass*

Game Plots

A Place to Call Digital-Home

Effect series allowed you to retreat from the perils of intergalactic war to your private quarters, where you could listen to music, feed pet fish, and collect model spaceships. *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* similarly allowed you to purchase and cultivate a house, allowing you to find a spouse and to decorate your home with spoils from your adventures.

More recently, homes in games have skyrocketed in popularity. Major releases like *The Division* and *Wolfenstein II: The New Colossus* feature homes prominently as both mechanical and narrative devices. Some indie games have similarly embraced the trend; *FTL: Faster than Light*, *Sunless Sea*, and *Subnautica* create emotional attachments to your vessels/bases, making it all the more devastating if they're destroyed. *Far: Lone Sails* makes this craft-attachment its primary mechanic, as you peacefully pilot your steampunk mobile home across a desolate landscape.

The trend makes sense: even though it may seem small, having a personalizable space in an otherwise daunting environment can allow players to place their personal stamp on a massive world, creating a feeling of ownership and control over a small corner of a huge game. Collecting

mementos and decorations to personalize a home can be a pleasant distraction for the player, a side activity that differs significantly from the thrills and violence that characterize many games.

But the in-game home can also compliment the more exciting aspects of a game. Though the best video games are consistently entertaining, they are not always "fun"; players may be placed into desperate or frantic situations, or might have to contend with tough moral choices. Having a safe place to retreat to can alleviate the emotional intensity that the best games are able to convey (or, in particularly sadistic twists, games can increase that intensity by destroying or modifying spaces the player considers "safe.")

In-game homes are a versatile choice for designers, offering a bevy of options to shift the emotional flow of gameplay. But games should be willing to include this feature even if it isn't essential to their creative vision. Because for players, even if it isn't central to a game,

having a cozy, personal place to call home can be as comforting and refreshing in the digital world as it is in the real one. To Respond To Noah's Articles Email Him At Digitalartsnoah@Yahoo.com ★



Dads and Daughters

It's fascinating when you think about dads and daughters. Either they are the little princess or the daughter that my mother would always accuse me of being... "just like your father"...especially when I got one of my stubborn streaks going. Of course it didn't help when I would thank her for saying that. Don't know why she always got angry when I thanked her. Like...right! My dad has been gone a very long time, and I do miss him still.

He was a strong man with a short fuse, but got over it just as quickly. Sounds like yours truly. Dad passed on so many lessons without even realizing he was doing it. He never gave up was the best. He was born in Ilasco, Missouri, but his mom took him back to Romania when he was just two years old. His father was a brilliant man who spoke some 11 languages with little education. He just had the knack for it. But he did not have the knack for being a responsible father. He did not return to Romania with his family. He became an interpreter

POPPOFF!

with Mary Jane Popp

for the Ford Motor Company in Detroit, Michigan when it was a real powerhouse. When my dad was fourteen, he had to declare whether he would stay in Romania or return to the USA. Here's where I can say my dad was a strong person. He literally said he was born in the USA and wanted to return. But no one gave him a hand...not even his own father. His own father told him... "I gave you wings, now fly." BUT HE NEVER GAVE UP!

He worked long and hard, lying about his age to get whatever job he could get. I don't have enough time to share the whole story, but he became a Furrier and made it to Metro Golden Mayer studios in Hollywood to design fur coats for the stars including Betty Davis. When ulcers took their toll on his health, he worked his way up to making airplane wings in a plant and then turned to, of all things, taking on the arduous task of becoming an Ironworker. Yup, walking on those two inch girders several stories up in the sky, including the Sears Tower in Chicago. And I can tell you, he succeeded in every job he took on...right to the end when cancer took over and his heart gave out.

So why do I tell you this abbreviated version of my life with dad? I think it's important to realize that dads

do have a significant influence on their daughter's life. My dad taught me to never give up, no matter what the situation. I would like to think he would be proud of my accomplishments today. He got to see the beginning of my work in Television and Radio, but not my writing a



Happy Father's Day DAD!!

book and my sharing stories with you in this column. But I do think about dad often, and his words still ring in my ears. NEVER GIVE UP! I won't dad. Happy Father's Day. Love, Mary Jane. ★



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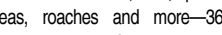
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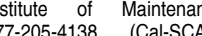
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COMPUTER INSIGHTS

By Rich Martinson

Using a Good Router

Last week we provided 10 Safety Best Practices to keep your MAC or PC free from outside threats. Number 1 on that list was to put your computer behind a good router.

What is the Router anyway?

Part 1. A modem that converts the signals coming from your ISP into an ethernet format that the router will use to provide signal to your local area network (LAN).

Part 2. The actual router with (at least) one Wide Area Network (WAN) port that takes the ethernet signal from the ISP and splits it up into 4 or more ports on the LAN. These LAN ports are used to attach the “wired” computers, printers, and other devices in your home or business. If more wired devices need to be added, then connect a “switch” to one of the LAN ports and more devices can connect to the switch.

Part 3. A WiFi section that allows you to connect even more devices wirelessly to your LAN.

Remember that all the wired and WiFi traffic has only the WAN port(s) to get to the internet. So the higher the speed that your ISP has provided, the more devices you can add and the faster they will be.

To picture how it works, imagine

a funnel where all of the wired and wirelessly connected devices on your LAN have their signals combined into a stream of data that goes out the WAN port(s) to your ISP who sends it to the internet.

Inside the Router

The secret sauce in the router that provides more internet safety to you is Network Address Translation (NAT). That is the programming that makes sure that the data coming and going to the internet through your router’s WAN port(s) finds its way to the correct LAN port that made the original request. You wouldn’t want the website content from another workstation to show up on your computer by accident would you? NAT programming ensures that that won’t happen.

It does it by giving each port on the LAN its own address. Because the address your ISP assigns to you is not the address your router uses to manage your devices, the result is that you are much safer behind your router than if the computer was just sitting on the internet without it in between.

It’s not perfect protection, but it cuts back attack threats significantly. And thanks to your ISP, you’re most likely getting it automatically.

Happy Computing!

Rich Martinson is an IT Consultant and can be reached at insights@rrmartinson.com or at 916-222-2735 for any inquiries.



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Connecting Kids to Dental Care

Andrea Sandoval,
Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Did you know that tooth decay is preventable and when kids have healthy teeth, they feel and do better in school? Sacramento County Public Health is working with community organizations to increase access to dental care and to educate parents about how to prevent dental disease so the whole family can live healthier lives without dental pain.

Sacramento County Public Health Officer, Olivia Kasirye, said, “Tooth decay in children results in dental pain, missed school days and hinders student success. Cavities do not heal on their own, and therefore, need intervention by a dentist. Together, we can work to prevent tooth decay, tooth loss, and help our children be successful in school.”

First – let’s increase dental access; If you have Medi-Cal, you have dental benefits. In Sacramento County, approximately 58% of children who have Medi-Cal do not regularly visit the dentist even though dental care is a covered benefit. Studies show that children are more likely to visit the dentist if their parents do, too. Be the oral health role model your children need.

If you don’t have Medi-Cal, call Sacramento Covered at (916) 414-8333 to help determine if you qualify and/or to sign up for free or low-cost health coverage. If you don’t qualify, Sacramento Covered will provide other options to help you get the dental care you need. The Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance also helps determine eligibility for

Medi-Cal, CalFresh and more – call (916)874-3100.

Second – let’s brush up on dental facts:

Cavities are not something that everyone gets - you can prevent cavities and dental disease by brushing twice a day, making healthy food/drink choices, and visiting a dentist regularly;

If you are pregnant or planning to get pregnant, see your dentist for a checkup;

From day one, protect baby’s dental health by the following: Wipe baby’s gums after feeding with a soft cloth or finger toothbrush; Only put water in a baby’s bottle at bedtime (if a bottle is needed); Make baby’s first dental appointment when their first tooth comes in or by their first birthday;

Baby teeth matter for the development of healthy permanent teeth, speech and proper eating;

2x2x2 - Brush with fluoridated toothpaste twice a day for two minutes and visit your dentist twice a year;

Dental sealants and fluoride varnish greatly reduce the risk for cavities;

Make healthy food choices and limit sugary snacks and drinks.

Third – let’s learn about the Sacramento County Public Health’s Oral Health Program. Sacramento County Public Health offers oral health education; dental provider resources; referral assistance for parents, school staff, and public health professionals; and works to improve access to dental care services.

Dental Transformation Initiative – To increase access to dental care for Medi-Cal eligible children aged 0-20 years old, the Every Smile Counts! pilot projects use

innovative strategies to reach families including the Virtual Dental Home, Medical/ Dental Partnerships, and Community Outreach and Parent Education;

Rethink Your Drink – A campaign to teach children and parents about the amount of sugar and calories found in commonly consumed beverages, and the impact it has on physical, as well as oral health;

Tobacco Cessation - Developing and delivering evidence-based training and resource materials for oral health professionals to assist clients in making healthy choices;

Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment – To help connect children to needed dental services, the County works with community partners to increase the number of students that receive a dental assessment and the number of schools and school districts that report the data.

Call the Sacramento County Oral Health Program to learn more about oral health education and resources at (916) 875-5947, and be sure to check out the First 5 Sacramento Dental website for dental information specific to 0-5-year-olds.

The Sacramento County Dental Health Program receives funding from the California State Department of Public Health through Proposition 56, the California Healthcare, Research and Prevention Tobacco Tax Act. As part of this grant, the Oral Health Program undertook a countywide oral health needs assessment to develop projects to support the California Oral Health Plan and to meet the unique needs of county residents. ★

Renaissance Singing Group Serenades Seniors



Singing for Fun’s ukulele ensemble: the Uk-u-Ladies. Photo courtesy of the Renaissance Society

By Muffy Francke,
Renaissance Society

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - On Tuesday, May 7, the Renaissance Society’s Singing for Fun chorus serenaded the residents of Oakmont of Fair Oaks retirement community. The residents were treated to songs that many not only remembered, but enjoyed as a sing-along with the encouragement of Chorus Director Sara Zeigler.

The singers performed such tunes as “When You’re Smiling”, “It’s a Wonderful World”, “Up a Lazy River”, “Jeepers Creepers”, and “We’ll Meet Again”. The Uk-u-Ladies, the group’s ukulele ensemble, provided toe tapping beats to tunes like “Ain’t She Sweet” and “Yes, Sir, That’s My Baby”. There were train whistles for “Chattanooga Choo Choo,” rhythmic maracas for “Lemon Tree,” and chorus member Maryann Frantz entertained with a rousing tap dance during “On the Sunny Side of the Street.”

Narrator Bette Carr introduced each song with interesting and fun facts.

Singing for Fun is a class offered by the Renaissance Society, an organization in partnership with the California State University, Sacramento (CSUS), that provides opportunities for lifelong learning and community engagement for older adults. Society members choose to study topics proposed by peers who lead the seminars. There is a veritable smorgasbord of subjects which evolve from semester to semester depending on members’ interests.

Classes are held on the CSUS campus on Fridays and Saturdays during both Fall and Spring semesters. The Society also offers seminars, “birds of a feather” gatherings, book clubs and other activities such as Singing for Fun on other days and other locations.

The Society also hosts a Summer series of presentations where non-members are welcome. The schedule can be found at <https://www.csus.edu/org/rensoc/>

[calendar.html](#).

The Singing for Fun group chooses a new slate of songs each semester, rehearses for approximately eight weeks, and then performs for up to five different senior communities. This Spring in addition to the Oakmont show, they also entertained residents at Summerset Senior Living facility in Rancho Cordova, Sunrise of Fair Oaks, Aegis of Carmichael, and the Hart Senior Center in Sacramento.

The chorus has been part of the Renaissance experience for almost thirty years. Each semester, there are about forty participants, many of whom have been singing with the chorus for years. The only requirement besides Renaissance Society membership is to enjoy singing and sharing the joy with others. Director Zeigler emphasized that the group has “fun” in its name so there are no tryouts and no requirement to read music. ★

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