

Crystal Apple Awards Presented to Area High School Teachers

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LADY ANTEBELLUM: A TRAVELING FAMILY

Lady Antebellum will be playing at the Toyota Amphitheatre (2677 Forty Mile Road, Wheatland, CA 95692) on Thursday, June 25th as part of their Wheels Up 2015 Tour. Lady Antebellum will be headlining the show, with Hunter Hayes and Sam Hunt in the lineup.

Right: Lady Antebellum views their upcoming show as an opportunity to have fun and make a memory with everyone in the audience. Don't miss your chance to be part of that memory. Photo by Niño Munoz.

By Shaunna Boyd

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

- Lady Antebellum has been playing together for almost nine years; this August will mark the ninth anniversary of their very first show together. In an interview with Messenger Publishing Group, Hillary Scott described the friendship that anchors the band as "a real summer camp vibe." Scott explained that she and bandmates Charles Kelley and Dave Haywood grew up watching VH1's Behind the Music, so they were very familiar with the all-too-typical story of successful bands breaking up over petty arguments and egotistical posturing. "So we just learned how to talk to each other, to



compromise," said Scott.

When Scott, Kelley, and Haywood began writing songs together, Scott said, "It was like I had met my musical best friends, my brothers."

After nine years of performing together, Scott said, "We've grown up together. ... When we started, none of us were married, we didn't have any kids. ... There have been a lot of life changes. My husband, Chris, is the drummer now, and our little

girl is with us every weekend

crew. With every milestone, everything becomes clear, and it's all sweeter because we built our family together. It makes the really hard, long days not as hard because our families are together. We get to call this our work, our job, which is weird because it doesn't feel that way—it's our dream."

Scott attributes their success to their passion for the work, explaining, "It's all about work

for the shows that we do. We ethic. You must be willing to have a much bigger traveling work hard, harder than everyone else. And you have to put yourself in the right places. ... The center of whatever you're passionate about is where you need to be. And you need to know that there's always more to learn, you can always learn something new from anyone you meet, whether it's what to do or what not to do; you have to push yourself to grow.'

Over all these years together, Continued on page 2

Lake Levels **Could Lead to Half Million Without Water**

Drop in Folsom

FOLSOM, CA (MPG) - At its June 4th meeting, the Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) Board of Directors expressed grave concern over the projected drop in water levels at Folsom Lake. Reacting to an order last week by the State Water Resource Control Board to conserve cold water supplies in the Shasta Reservoir system, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is releasing water from Folsom Reservoir at a rate that could drop lake levels within a few feet of the water supply outlet that serves the City of Roseville, City of Folsom, and San Juan Water District.

"If the current plan remains unchanged and we experience a dry fall, we could see half a million people in the region without water," PCWA General Manager Einar Maisch said. "This could, in effect, destroy the entire region's economy."

By holding cold water supplies at Shasta Reservoir now, it is expected cold water will be available for winter run Salmon in the Sacramento River. Releases at Folsom Lake increased from 1,500 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 2,000 cfs (approximately 4,000 acre-feet per day). Under current modeling, Folsom Lake levels could drop to approximately 118,000 acre-feet by the end of September. By comparison, in January 2014, Folsom reached its recent record low of 162,000 acre-feet, just before near record high February rains. 118,000 acre-feet would be 16 feet lower than the level reached in January 2014.

In other news, PCWA directors also adopted revisions to the Agency's Water Storage Contingency Plan and its Stage 2 Water Warning in order to achieve up to 32% conservation in potable water use, as mandated by the State Water Resources Control Board. Placer County Water Agency customers conserved by 36% in May, but the compliance period for state mandated conservation begins in June, when hotter weather is expected.

"As the summer months approach, we're relying on the continued diligence of our customers," said Einar Maisch. "At this point, we're working on the honor system and hope it can stay that way."

Source: Placer County Water Agency





Seussical the Musical features the award-winning Fair Oaks Theatre Festival ensemble. Photo courtesy of Don Langford

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - Horton hears a noise coming from a speck of dust on a clover and commits himself to protecting it and the Whos who live on it; Jojo, a misfit Who who "doesn't think normal thinks," struggles to find his place in the tiny Who society; and Gertrude McFuzz tries to catch the attention of her love, the kind

and compassionate Horton.

Through mishaps and adventures, these unique characters finally find what they seek: a place in their world. It is the storyline from Seussical the Musical, the opening production for the Fair Oaks Theatre Festival Summer Series. Seussical the Musical is from the Broadway 2000 musical

by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty. It's based on the books of Dr. Seuss, mainly Horton Hears a Who!, Horton Hatches the Egg, and Miss Gertrude McFuzz. Seussical the Musical features the award-winning Fair Oaks Theatre Festival ensemble. The Cat in the Hat, played by Sandra Hill, guides through the book Horton Hears a Who! Horton the Elephant, played by Joe Hart, endeavors to protect the people of Whoville and his newfound friend JoJo, played by Kaden Torres. Analise Langford Clark as Gertrude from The Butter Battle Book show up along with Sour Kangaroo, played by Corey Winfield, and Mayzie, split cast with Brianne Hidden and Anna Russell. You'll also find a whole host of other Seuss book characters.

Seussical the Musical is directed by Bob Irvin, with choreography by Sunny Smith, music

direction by Kirt Shearer, and vocal direction by Tracy Shearer. The story is by David Wechter and Bruce Kimmel with music and lyrics by Bruce Kimmel.

<mark>§§്യ്യ്</mark> the Musical

The production runs every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from June 19th through July 19th. There will not be a performance on July 4th. The Fair Oaks Theatre Festival is located in Old Town Fair Oaks at the Veterans Memorial Amphitheatre.

Ticket prices are \$18 for general admission. Students, seniors, and SARTA members are \$15, while children 12 and under are \$10. There will be beer and wine sales on Friday and Saturday. Every Sunday is "Retro Sunday" where adults cost \$12 and children cost \$6. Purchase tickets online at www.fairoakstheathrefestival.com.

Source: Don Langford



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Crystal Apple Awards Presented to Area High School Teachers



Pictured are the recipients of the 2015 annual Crystal Apple award. These high school teachers, from left to right, are Greg Blankenbehler from John Adams Academy, Chris Horner from Casa Roble Fundamental High School, Donna Marshall from Mesa Verde High School, Sandra DeLay from Bella Vista High School, and Jay Lottes from Del Campo High School. Photo by Naomi Harpe

BY TIM JACKSON

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - Recently, the 13th Annual Crystal Apple Awards were presented to five area high school teachers. Since 2002, these awards have been presented to teachers from Casa Roble Fundamental, Mesa Verde, Bella Vista, San Juan, and Del Campo High Schools of the San Juan Unified School District. The John Adams Academy in Roseville was added last year. The teachers are selected by high school students attending the individual high schools who are members of the church's early morning seminary program.

"We support the public education systems that our children participate in," said Stephen Taylor, president of the Carmichael Stake. "As a Church, we value the education profession and know the impact it has on our children. This is a small way we have to let the teachers know how much we appreciate them."

The students were first given the opportunity to list the qualities that a Crystal Apple teacher should have. According to Brent Reed, a counselor in the Citrus Heights Stake Presidency, the qualities are being kind, helpful, knowledgeable, prepared, and

caring about their students succeeding. They must be creative and make class interesting. Positivity, enthusiasm, honesty, a sense of humor, and a love of teaching are also highly valued. Using these guidelines, the teachers were voted on by the

"This year was unique in that there were two teachers who were recipients in previous years," said Gary McFadyen, the director of public affairs for the Citrus Heights Stake. Chris Horner, a math teacher from Casa Roble Fundamental High School, was selected in the first Crystal Apple program in 2002, and Jay Lottes from Del Campo High School received a Crystal Apple in 2010.

The keynote speaker from the San Juan School District was assistant superintendent Rick Messer who talked of the important connections between teachers, students, students' families, and schools. Messer stated how these connections often shape the course students take in life and ultimately improve communities

The awards program is sponsored by the Citrus Heights and Carmichael Stakes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Surprise Dad with an **Unexpected Day Together**



This year, surprise Dad by spending a fun-filled day together enjoying his favorite activities. Photo courtesy of Brandpoint Media

SACRAMENTO REGION. CA (BPT)

- This Father's Day, rather than sitting dear ol' Dad down and watching him unwrap a new necktie, try showing your appreciation in an unexpected way. Surprise him by spending a funfilled day together enjoying his favorite activities. After all, doesn't the man who spent hours patiently teaching you to ride a bike deserve something special this year?

When planning out the perfect Father's Day, think carefully about his interests and hobbies. Find a carefree activity that will help you both unwind and catch up. Few bonding moments create lasting memories like a beautiful day of fishing. Consider spending a few hours catching fish and swapping stories to delight Dad with the perfect combination of action and relaxation. Mix in thoughtful gifts throughout the day and wow Dad with a mouthwatering meal as your grand finale and it will be one he won't soon forget.

Set the mood in the morning and get the excitement going by presenting Dad with a new Genuine Thermos Brand 1.2L

Vacuum Insulated Beverage Bottle filled with piping hot gourmet coffee. The perfect accessory to bring along on a fishing adventure, the bottle features a durable stainless steel interior and exterior, which stays cool to the touch, even when holding hot liquids. The insulation will also keep beverages hot or cold for up to 24 hours, ensuring his drink stays fresh wherever he goes. Plus, a quick burst of caffeine will help him stay alert as

he makes his first casts of the day.

As you're loading up the boat to head to Dad's favorite honey hole, be sure to include a cooler packed with energizing munchies made with wholesome and delicious Arla Dofino cheeses. Cut off lengthwise pieces of creamy, buttery Havarti in fun flavors like dill and jalapeño to create a hearty, easy-to-eat cheese snack (so he can keep his other hand on the fishing pole). Bring along buttery, rich, and slightly sweet Gouda cheese to cut into bitesized wedges or cubes that can take trail mix to the next level or pair perfectly with crisp fruit and whole grain crackers. You can also include a couple of wraps to

have on hand for lunchtime: turkey with Havarti slices or roast beef with Gouda slices are two naturally good combinations.

Once on the water, watch Dad's face light up when he opens up his tackle box and finds it stocked with two of the hottest lures to hit the water in years. The new Rapala Shadow Rap Series will have Dad haulin' in hawgs like never before with an action the pros have dubbed "the death quiver." As a minnow is dying, it struggles, lunges in erratic jerking motions, then falls with a slow, quivering fade just like the Shadow Rap. This dynamic, lifelike action keeps the bait in the strike zone longer than conventional jerkbaits, upping Pops' chances of hooking his target game fish.

Promising dramatic strikes with each twitch of the rod, the Shadow Rap swims in the 2-to-4 foot water column, while the Shadow Rap Deep targets fish staging 4-to-8 feet deep. Both models are ready for action with premium VMC hooks and 14 enticing color patterns. Available at sporting goods stores nationwide for less than \$10, it's a small price for a big day of bonding with Dad.

When you get back on the shore after several hours of fishing and soaking up the sun, Dad's stomach is sure to be rumbling again. Feed his wild side by firing up the grill with Jack Link's Wild Side Sausages. Choose from flavors like Original Hardwood Smoked, a traditional sausage with a peppery kick, or Hardwood Smoked with Cheddar, both made with premium cuts of beef and pork. Or vou could give Dad the ultimate wild version of the classic bratwurst by grilling up Brats with Bacon Jerky. Yes, bacon jerky. It'll create the perfect ending to a fun-filled Father's Day that you've spent in the very best way—together.

Source: Brandpoint Media 🖈

Quilt and Clothing Show

FOLSOM, CA (MPG) - "Hot Fads featuring some of the fads in and Cool Trends in Cloth" is this year's theme for the popular summer quilt and clothing show in the Wells Fargo Gallery at Folsom History Museum.

Antique quilts in Hexagon, Log Cabin, Crazy Patchwork, and other patterns will be on display at the 36th annual exhibit. Showcased are Victorianera gowns and other clothing fashion from a bygone era. The exhibit began June 6th and runs through September 6th, 2015.

The museum is located in the heart of historic old town Folsom at 823 Sutter Street. The collection in Folsom Heritage Gallery tells the story of early Folsom inhabitants and the California Gold Rush. Nearby Pioneer Village is an outdoor living

history venue with blacksmith demonstrations and panning for kids. The museums are open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays. Free parking is available on the street and at the nearby city garage. For more information, go to www.folsomhistoricalsociety.org.

Source: Folsom History Museums

LADY ANTEBELLUM: A TRAVELING FAMILY



Continued from page 1

after many albums and a variety of accolades, Scott still likes to look back at the path they have all traveled together: "It's fun to look back; it's like going back and reading an old diary or journal. We pour our own lives into these albums, into these songs, so it's like traveling down memory lane and seeing where we were in our lives. It's good to look back at where you've come from; it gives you the clarity to see where you can go."

Lady Antebellum views their upcoming show as an opportunity to have fun and make a memory with everyone in the audience. Don't miss your chance to be part of that memory. For tickets and more information, please visit www.ladyantebellum.com.

When Scott, Kelley, and Haywood began writing songs together, Scott said, "It was like I had met my musical best friends, my brothers." Photo by





Publisher, Paul V. Scholl

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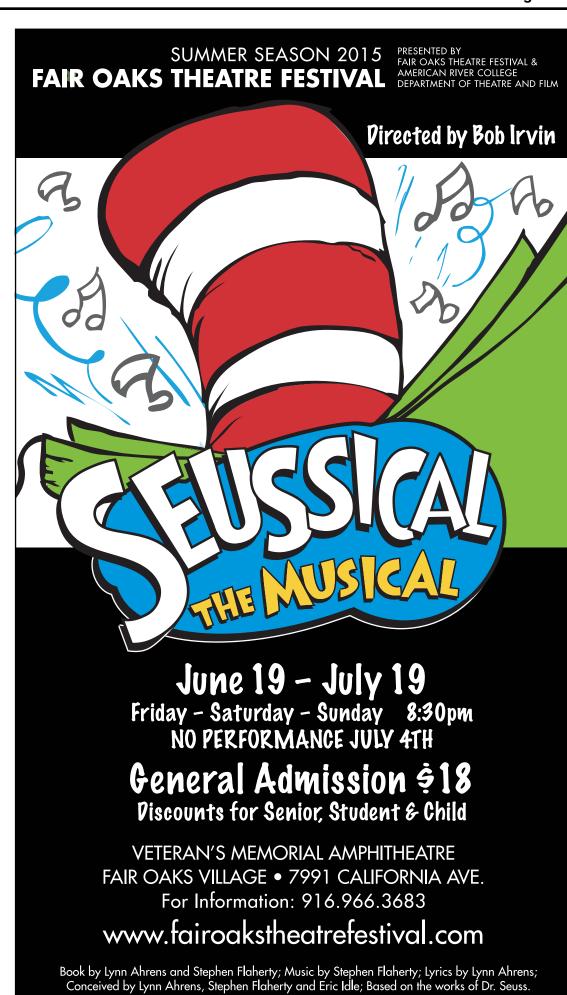
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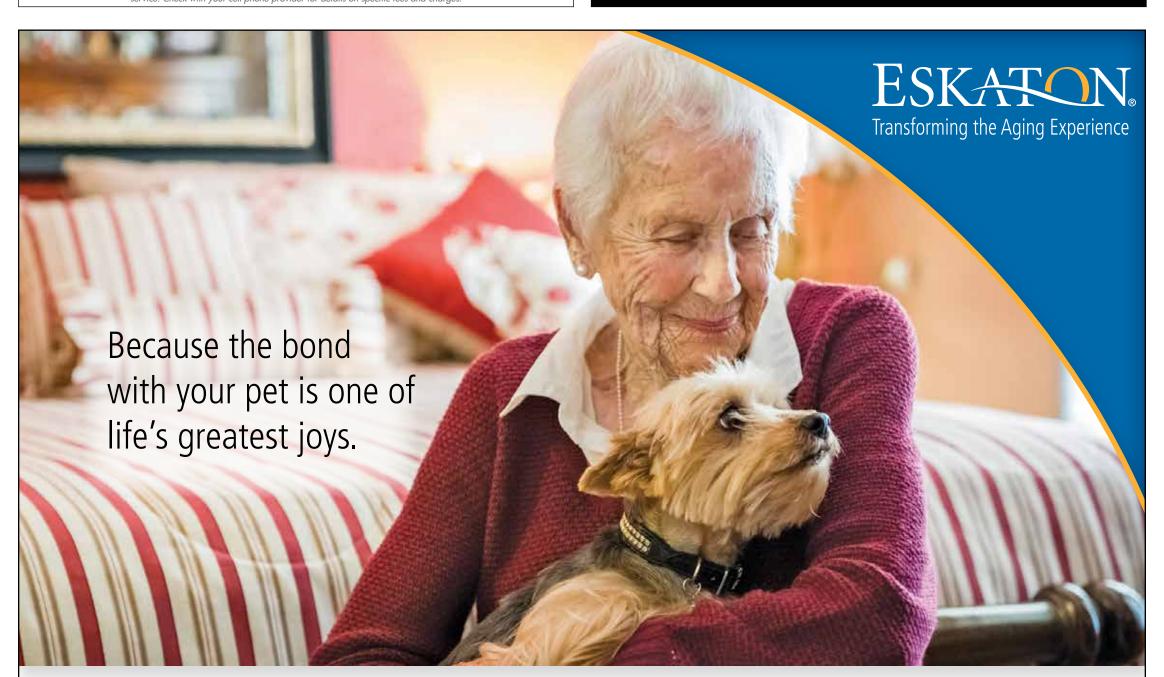
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By Ronnie McBrayer

When I was a child my family lived hand to mouth. We were loved and cared for, but the cupboards were often more bare than full. I often say that we ate a lot of Hamburger Helper in those days, but with only the Helper.

My dad's job was at a textile mill, a job he maintains to this day, though he should have long ago retired. Down at the mill, a couple of my father's co-workers would help us, as such salt-ofthe-earth people do. One of them was an old Baptist preacher named Gene Clark. Gene worked the mill during the week and preached on the weekend to a congregation of less than a hundred people way out in the sticks.

During the hardest years Gene would slip my dad a wad of cash on Friday afternoons and say, "The church has plenty of money. You need this more than they do." And, honestly, we did.

Another man was Bobby Gentry. One Saturday morning Bobby pulled up in the driveway of our home and got out of the car dressed in a way I had never seen him before. Rather than donning his usual coveralls, he was wearing a suit.

Three other men from his church dressed in suits got out of the car with him. Then another car with four more men pulled up. These eight men began heaving brown paper sacks of



For the Least of These

groceries through our front door for what seemed like an hour. It wasn't Christmas. It wasn't Thanksgiving. It was just on time. And while I have long lost track of Mr. Gene and Mr. Bobby, I have neither forgotten them nor their kindness.

Jesus spoke in Matthew 25 with familiar, but inescapable, words: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory he will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me. When you did this for one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it for me!""

Where is Jesus? In heaven, reclining on a cloud? In the sanctuary on Sunday morning, sitting on a pew? Is he locked away in the Vatican or a seminary like a hidden treasure? Is he chained to the pages of the New Testament, a doctrinal pawn in Christianity's arguments?

No, Jesus is sitting in an Emergency Room, an uninsured, undocumented immigrant in need of healing. He is behind bars, so far from his parole date he can't think that far into the future, abandoned by friends and

family. He is sleeping under a highway overpass with newspapers for a blanket.

He is an evictee waiting in line at the shelter for a bed and a cup of soup. He is the poor child living in a slum with lice in his hair, the stripes of abuse on his body, and a growl in his stomach.

He is an old forgotten woman at the nursing home who no one thinks of anymore, other than as a body taking up bed space.

He is a refugee in Sudan, an exile from Syria, a war orphan in Bagdad or Baltimore. He is a humble textile mill worker trying to stay ahead of the bill collectors while keeping food in his children's bellies and a roof over their heads. Jesus is the poor, the downtrodden, the homeless, the sick, the hungry, the thirsty, the jailed, the lonely, and the overlooked.

As we go to these - the least of these – we go to Jesus. Not figuratively, not symbolically, but literally. To serve those in need, with help, love, kindness, or a simple brown paper bag of groceries, is to serve Jesus. And such service will never be forgotten.

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



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Getting Along



You have to deal with many different types of people. In work situations, you have little or no choice with who you interact with. There are bosses, coworkers, subordinates, and customers. Socially, you have much more discretion. There are those you like and get along with easily. There are also people you don't care for and would rather not associate with.

Even strangers fall into one of these categories. Some are pleasant and easy to get along with while others can be rude and nasty. There may even be people who you don't care for but can't really identify a reason as to why.

It's easy to get along with those you like. The challenge lies in getting along with people you don't like or who are difficult. From a practical standpoint, you do have to get along with a wide variety of people. You can't control how others behave, but you can control how you interact with them.

Your actions can make a situation tolerable or turn it from bad to worse. When interacting with others, keep your objective in mind. You don't need to prove that you are right or that the other person is wrong. Focusing on what you are trying to accomplish helps keep things in perspective and prevents you from getting sidetracked.

Recognize that each person's reality is based on their

perceptions. How someone else views the world has no connection to how you do. Someone might be totally wrong and unable to support their position logically and yet to them, they are right. It's usually a waste of time to try to convince them otherwise.

Your goal is to accomplish your objective, not to exacerbate problems. Toward this end, you don't want to make the other person's problem yours. Don't internalize their actions. Allowing yourself to become angry, bitter, or resentful causes you a great deal of harm and won't help the situation.

Here are some techniques you can use to get along with others. First, recognize and accept people for who they are. Don't try to change them. You can't, it's a waste of your time, and it will be annoying to the other person. Work with and around who they

Take an interest in the other person. Let your words and actions demonstrate respect. Each person wants to feel they are important. Treat them appropriately and you will get more accomplished than if you belittle someone.

Be polite. Use "please" and "thank you." Ask rather than demand. Show your appreciation to those that assist you. Unfortunately, too many people are rude or impersonal. When you are courteous, your actions

will make a positive impression and cultivate cooperation.

Strive to understand the other person's position. You don't have to agree with them, but the more you know about their motivation, the easier it is to formulate an effective strategy to deal with them.

Be positive. Seek out solutions rather than placing blame. Becoming defensive is an automatic response to being accused of being responsible for a problem. Once someone is in this mode, they will fight you instead of being cooperative.

Be honest. People resent being misled. Word of your insincerity will spread and you will be avoided. Those people that have to deal with you will distrust you. It will be difficult, if not impossible to get others to cooperate with you.

It's actually easier to get along with others than to continually be in conflict. Apply the techniques listed above and you will experience a noticeable improvement in your interaction with others.

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. © 2011 Bryan Golden. *



By Marlys Johnsen Norris, **Christian Author**

Rejection is truly devastating and the pain from it hurts so much for those who must endure it. This title most likely grabbed at your heart wondering how anyone would ever consider rejection a gift! God often will use anything to get our attention and draw our minds away in order to hear him. He desires a

connection with us.

However, aren't we glad that we have a loving and mighty God who does not reject or discard us even when we are imperfect human beings living in sin and rejecting him? His awesome plan of redemption through the death and shed blood of His only beloved son proves that He

The Gift of Rejection

has the utmost love for us.

So when we experience rejection, we need to remember that He knows all about it. From the beginning of time, God knows knows during those times we will be relying on Him to help us endure the pain and live through it. Rejection's pain often leaves one with a sense of depression and loneliness, and it is hard to understand how some people refuse to trust and rely on the power of God to carry them through it. Could it be because they do not understand or have any idea about the love God has for every one of His creations? God understands the amount of pain that falls on them, and if they have never heard or experienced the power of His great love, they

need to seek Him today! Sometimes God allows such things in our lives to reach and teach us as He demonstrates by showing His intimate powerful love just for us. When we realize this, we see clearly that our

resistant natures needed the gift of rejection to open our eyes and our hearts! Rejection has brought us to the place of learning and submission to God and everything that will happen. He into His divine awesome will for our lives. When this happens, many supernatural changes take place within one's self that we did not realize needed to occur. Then this "gift" causes deliverance and transformation to take place, making us more like Jesus. Yes, His loving hand of mercy brings our faith into fruition and gives us a meaningful life! This makes walking with God a truly glorious adventure and preparation for the true call of God's ministry on our lives to bring Him the honor and glory that He alone deserves.

> Marlys Johnsen Norris is the Christian author of seven books. You may contact her at Marlysjn@gmail.com.

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Auditions for the Sacramento Choral Society



FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra (SCSO) with Music Director Donald Kendrick are currently holding membership auditions for their 2015-2016 concert season. If you are an experienced choral singer with good music reading skills, please call the SCSO at (916) 536-9065 or email direct to scso2005@gmail.com.

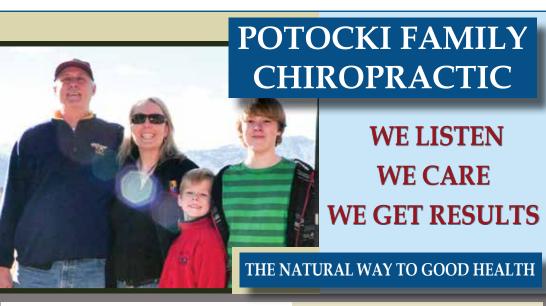
The chorus rehearses September through May on Monday evenings from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. The Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra is celebrating its 20th year of performances in the Capital Region, with concerts in Sacramento's Fremont Presbyterian Church, Memorial Auditorium, and the Sacramento Community Center Theater. Join us for a blockbuster season continuing the tradition of large choral and orchestral masterworks for the Sacramento community.

The SCSO is comprised of 170 singers from six counties in the Sacramento region. They have received the "Arts Excellence Award," the "Outstanding Non-Profit of the Year" award, and the "Arts Executive of the Year" award for their work in the Capital Region. As well as presenting their own concert series, the SCSO has performed with the Boston Pops Orchestra, Sarah Brightman's World Tour, the Kenny Rogers Christmas Show, Barry Manilow, and on national and international concert stages in Carnegie Hall, Disney Hall, Prague, Vienna, Munich, Budapest, Venice, Lucca, Rome, Paris, Normandy, London, Vancouver, Victoria, and China. For further information, visit the Sacramento Choral Society website at sacramentochoral.com or email the SCSO at scso2005@gmail.com.

Source: Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra ★

As well as presenting their own concert series, the Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra has performed with the Boston Pops Orchestra, Sarah Brightman's World Tour, the Kenny Rogers Christmas Show, Barry Manilow, and on national and international concert stages in Carnegie Hall, Disney Hall, Prague, Vienna, Munich, Budapest, Venice, Lucca, Rome, Paris, Normandy, London, Vancouver, Victoria, and China. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra





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- but don't touch" 40. "
- **British**
- 47. Web
- 48. Type of flask
- drama
- 57. *"The Star-Spangled
- 60. *Type of holiday 64. Architectural projection
- 68. Disreputable woman
- 72. Compass reading 73. Unifying idea
- 2. Symphony member
- 4. Looks like

5. Imbue with soul

- 6. Curtis, to friends 7. *July birthday celebrant
- 9. Kind of cola
- 12. Dog command 15. Highly addictive narcotic
- 26. Type A, e.g.

CLUES

- 14. Put into service
- 16. Thorny stems
- 18. "Bravo! Bravo!", e.g.
- tradition
- list
- 30. Nada 34. Building extensions at right angle to main building
- 41 For cruising in style 43. Silly talk or writing,
- 44. *Britain in the Revolutionary War
- 46 *State representative
- 50. Hodgepodge 52 Akira Kurosawa's 1985
- 53. Fly like an eagle 55. Club alternative
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My People Go"

DOWN 1. Ballistic missile, acr.

8. Pace of music

64. Exclamation of surprise 66. *Number of amendments in The

51. One tritely familiar 54. Copious 56. *Washington had wooden ones? 59. Reason to cram 60. Fatalist's future 61. ____ of interest 62. Sandler or Arkin 63. Greek muse's strings

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4 0 5 7 0 0 0 0 4

	4	2	5	7	8	9	6	3	1	
	6	8	7	1	2	3	9	5	4	
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	7	1	3	5	6	4	8	2	9	
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	8	7	9	4	5	6	3	1	2	
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Crossword Puzzle on Page 6

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Love of Books



Book Review by Amy Shane amy-shane@att.net

The Heir

by Keira Cass

- ♦ Publisher: Harper Teen
- ♦ Release date: May 5, 2015 ♦ Hardcover, 352 pages
- ♦ Intended audience: Young Adult ♦ Rating: ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

On the Book Jacket: Princess Eadlyn has grown up hearing endless stories about how her mother and father met. Twenty years ago, America Singer entered the Selection and won the heart of Prince Maxon—and they lived happily ever after. Eadlyn has always found their fairy-tale story romantic, but she has no interest in trying to repeat it. If it were up to her, she'd put off marriage for

But a princess's life is never entirely her own, and Eadlyn can't escape her very own Selection—no matter how fervently she protests.

Eadlyn doesn't expect her story to end in romance. But as the competition begins, one entry may just capture Eadlyn's heart, showing her all the possibilities that lie in front of her \dots and proving that finding her own happily ever after isn't as impossible as she's always thought.

Amy's Review: There's a new Selection ready to happen, but for the first time in the history, it isn't being held for a Prince, it's for a Princess.

Princess Eadlyn grew up knowing that seven minutes was all that separated her and her twin brother Price Ahren from who would be the heir to the throne. What she didn't know is that with the title of Queen comes many unpleasant obligations. Growing up hearing about the perfect love story of her royal parents America and King Maxon, Princess Eadlyn knows for certain that participating in the Selection and marrying a suitor are not in her plans until events force her to make her first real sacrifice for the crown.

Now, Princess Eadlyn finds herself surrounded by 35 potential suitors all living in the palace and vying for her hand. With the world watching and waiting to see if history can repeat itself with another fairytale romance, it is up to Princess Eadlyn to restore faith in the royal family.

With a firm plan in mind, she goes about

the Selection with grace, poise, and a fiery disposition, hoping to shield everyone from seeing the insecurities that she feels when she gets too close to anyone. She knows that the only control she has left is how she will go about the competition and its outcome. Ending the competition by giving away her heart or becoming engaged is not her intention.

However, her plans are quickly overturned when her austere countenance affects more than the competition, causing Princess Eadlyn to once again secede control and leaving her to question if she truly has power over her heart.

Kiera Cass captivates her reading audience with an alluring new storyline to the Selection legacy, The Heir. Cass once again shocks and surprises readers with authentic characters that are realistic and delightfully unique. Readers will embrace this story that will make them fall head over heels with the possibility that there might be another happily ever after.





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This week's titles: The Ring and the Crown by Melissa De La Cruz; Sea Hearts by Margo Lanagan

Jim Miller Answers Your Senior Questions



Helping Seniors Learn New Technology

Dear Savvy Senior,

What teaching resources can you recommend to help seniors learn how to use computers, tablets and smartphone devices? At age 72, I am interested in joining the technology revolution so I can keep up with my kids and grandkids a little better, but I need help. Technology Novice

Dear Novice,

There are lots of different technology teaching tools available to boomers and seniors today, but what's available to you will depend on where you live. Here are some different places and to look for help.

Local Classes and Workshops

There are many communities that offer beginning computer and personal technology classes for older adults that are new to technology. To find out what's available in your area, contact your local public library, senior center, college or university, or local stores that sell computers. Your Area Agency on Aging may also be able to help you – call the Eldercare Locator at 800-677-1116 to get your local number. If you can't find any local programs that meet your needs, here are some national resources that offer technology training in select locations.

SeniorNet: This organization offers a variety of basic online computer courses as well as instructor-led workshops at 36 learning centers throughout the United States. A first year membership fee of \$43 is required.

See SeniorNet.org or call 239-275-2202 for more information.

Oasis Connections: Provides primarily free computer, Internet and mobile technology classes in 30 U.S. cities. They partner with local libraries, job help centers, senior centers and faith-based organizations where these classes are offered. OasisNet.org/connections, 314-862-2933 ext. 272.

Lifelong Learning Institutes (LLIs): Usually affiliated with colleges and universities, LLIs offer a wide array of noncredit courses to retirees, and some may offer technology courses. To find an LLI that offers computer/technology classes, contact your closest colleges or search the websites of the two organizations that support and facilitate them - Osher (osher.net) and Elderhostel (roadscholar.org/ ein/intro.asp). Together they support around 500 LLI programs nationwide.

AARP TEK Workshops: Available to everyone, TEK workshops are free technology learning events on tablets or smartphones and are offered in various cities throughout the U.S. AARPTEK.org, 202-434-3021.

Older Adults Technology **Services (OATS):** If you live in New York City, OATS provides free tech training to seniors in 70 locations throughout the city. OATS.org, 718-360-1707.

How-To Books There are also a wide variety of books you can purchase that can help you learn how to use different types of technologies. Visual Steps (visualsteps.com), for example, offers a number of practical and accessible computer handbooks, software user guides and other instructional materials that are tailored specifically for seniors, as does the "For Dummies" books (dummies.com), which you can buy in book stores nationwide or

Online Instructional Services

online at sites like Amazon.com

and BarnesandNoble.com.

If you already have a computer and some computer and/ or Internet skills, but would like to expand your knowledge, there are a number of online services you can turn to that offer a wide variety of selfpaced technology lessons and instructional videos.

Some good ones to checkout include GCFLearnFree. org, which is supported by the Goodwill Community Foundation and is completely free to use. And MyPCSchool. com, which is privately owned and offers nearly 700 lessons for \$39 for three months or \$79 for one year.

Also c h e c k TechBoomers.com, a free educational website that teaches seniors with basic computer skills about frequently used websites, and Geekatoo.com, which offers tech support house calls in all 50 states, and offers two-hour tutorial instruction for

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit www.savvysenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

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Kids K9

Kids K9 Fun Run for kids 15 and under is \$18. The fee includes a run tee shirt, kids breakfast and medal for each participant. Fee increases to \$25 after 6/20/15

K9 Officers from the Sacramento PD K9 Unit and other agencies will be on site to pass out trading cards and there will be a demonstration by the K9 Officers after the run. Also, you can have your photo taken with a K9

All proceeds from this event will benefit three area Police K9 Associations which provide retirement benefits for the K9 Officers. More info on our Website.

Start The run begins at 7:30 a.m. at the Garden of Valor at Sierra Hills Pet Cemetery where 48 retired K9 Officers are memorialized.

Date: Saturday, June 27, 2015

Where: Sierra Hills Memorial Park & Sierra Hills Pet Cemetery, 5757 Greenback Way, Sacramento, CA (off I-80 @ Greenback)

Time: Gates open at 6:30 a.m. (arrive early for best parking)

How: Register online at www.KidsK9FunRun.org

What: 7:30 a.m. Kids K9 Fun Run Starts (Rain or Shine!) 8:15 a.m. Participants breakfast served 9:00 a.m. Police K9 demonstration



Special Note: If you would like to have a booth at this event or have any questions, please call Lisa West at (916) 732-2000 or email lisaw@eastlawn.com

www.KidsK9FunRun.org





BEATING STRESS 2

Last time on POPPOFF we talked about how stress can really cause major problems in your life and mine. We all tend to ignore stress because it is in our lives daily, so we don't feel like we have the time to deal with it. But even small amounts of stress can put your body on high alert and it is dealing with physical and emotional responses to perceived dangers that aren't always real. We covered breathing, smiling, worrying, maintaining blood sugar levels, and making plans. Now we'll get to the last five to fight that pesky thing called

EXERCISE: True, just exercising won't magically make your stress disappear, but it will definitely reduce some of the emotional intensity that you're feeling; clear your thoughts and also enable you to manage your problems more calmly. Exercise naturally reduces levels of your body's stress hormones (such as adrenaline and

POPPOFF!

with Mary Jane Popp

cortisol) and while it simultaneously stimulates the production of endorphins (which are your body's natural painkillers and mood enhancers.)

VISUALIZE SOMETHING **POSITIVE**: When confronted with stressful situations or with anxious thoughts, take a moment to simply visualize yourself handling the situation with calm, ease, and clarity. True you must first try not to pay attention to your current frenzied mental state, but focus instead on the feelings of making it through with smooth-sailing through the storm with solutions and ideas coming to you effortlessly.

BE SILENT: Plan ahead for a small amount of time when you can completely disconnect. Begin this with increments of time that seem sustainable and doable for you, even if it's just five minutes. That means no phone, no texting, no emails, no TV—nothing! Put the word out to others that they won't be able to reach you so you can veg-out

POSITIVE SELF-TALK: This will require a bit of a shift in perspective for those who are more naturally pessimistic. Recognize that your problems are often a question of perspective. When you allow yourself the opportunity to change your angle, you may see your situation from a more positive point

of view. With conscious and consistent effort you can actually train yourself to be more positive about life. Let's start. You don't have to create formal affirmation, but try several times throughout your day (and especially during times of stress) some positive, self-affirming messages to yourself like, when you're a bit anxious try "I always find a way, just breathe and relax," "it can be done" or "all will be well." Studies have shown that simply expressing gratitude will help reduce anxiety.

SMELL SOMETHING WONDERFUL AND **RELAXING**: The nose is a powerful tool. Sniff some calming essential oils—Vanilla, Orange, Basil, Anise, and Chamomile are great choices. Research shows that these scents can reduce tension in the body and help increase mental clarity.

Of course, this is just a smattering of all the information you will find in The Biology of Beating Stress. But it'll give you a start. Jeanne Ricks is a Holistic Health Coach and Clinical Hypnotist who provides personal diet, wellness, and nutrition coaching combined with Hypnosis to help achieve your personal BEST! Check out www. NuDay.org and always remember, POPPOFF will always help you to be the best you can be! ★

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What Memories May Come

Story and photos by Paul V. Scholl Publisher Messenger Publishing Group

n a matter of minutes, everything changes. In a matter of hours, we lose, then regain our focus. In a matter of days, we recover. In a matter of years, we forget. In solitude, we best remember those precious

So much happens for us in the time between Memorial Day weekend and the waves of a long hot summer. Graduations that culminate years of learning and parenting children through schools, May and June weddings, Father's Day, and of course, our nation's birthday. Blink and you will miss it all. Luckily, this year I didn't blink.

Graduation Day

This trip followed an overnight stay and day in San Francisco to attend my son Gabriel's college graduation from the University of San Francisco. He accomplished the feat in just three years of hard study. "Proud" cannot contain the feelings as I watched the ceremony. Wasn't it just yesterday that he was playing outside in the rain, chasing the ice cream truck down the street in his bare feet, making the Little League All-Star team and playing in the high school jazz band? Moments in time that will last a lifetime..

Why the Trip?

The airport shuttle arrived right on time. The driver, courteous and talkative, provided enough entertainment to replace an in-flight movie. Subject matters aside, I could only imagine what the two last female travelers picked up for their airport trip thought about the driver's comments at the end of our conversation about his wife and the wonders of married life. It was ample proof of why one should not determine someone's intent by hearing only the end of a long conversation.

My wife had planned the long weekend away to celebrate her mother's 75th birthday with family and friends. As mother-in-laws go, she's the best, so I wasn't going to miss it. My wife had flown out a day earlier to help with the celebration. We all had a special time together this visit sharing stories, teasing and joking, and playing games that made you laugh so hard you were really hoping it was iced tea someone had spilled on the floor.

Frankly Charlotte

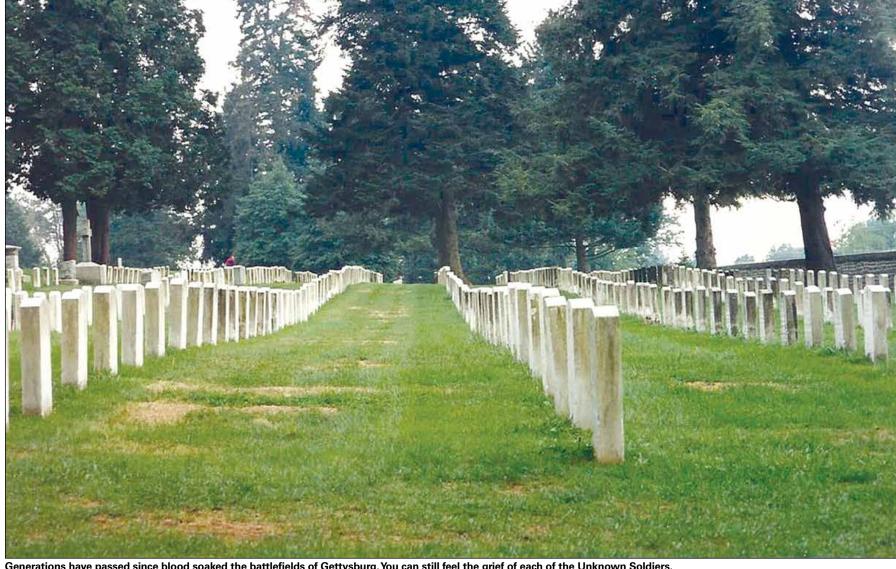
On the first flight from Sacramento to Charlotte, three guys were sick, hacking most of the flight. Not that I was going to sleep much anyway, but the kickkick-kick from the little kid behind me was a reminder of how long the flight was going to be. A notepad, a calculator, and a complimentary 5.8 oz. soft drink in a 6 oz. plastic cup kept me focused and appreciating so much more. We landed in Charlotte. Landing at

Gate A, leaving by Gate E—If I had known it was close to four miles I would have just walked to Harrisburg. It reminded me of that famous Rhett Butler quote.

Did you know that there are actually five different Starbucks between Gate A and Gate E in the Charlotte airport? I'm just sayin'.

The plane out of Charlotte was so small I was looking for a remote control antennae. Bob the luggage guy looked like he was just going to strap down the extra bags on top of the plane.

The entertainment on this flight was the stewardess. She was great, funny,



Generations have passed since blood soaked the battlefields of Gettysburg. You can still feel the grief of each of the Unknown Soldiers.

and determined. She was the best "one-man crew" you are ever going to find. All I can say is "Pay her more. Whatever she is making, pay her more."

Traveling Companions

Having flown much more in years past, I was amused at the people with headsets this trip. Zero conversation. No getting to know anyone that you will be sitting next to for the next six hours. How boring. I thought of all the great people I had met over the years by getting to know them through air



One of the many monuments to the casualties of war.

travel. The minister, the lawyer (yes, he was very interesting), the young entrepreneur, the business guy buried in acquisitions, the young woman traveling to take care of her father's estate after he had passed away just after her last visit two weeks earlier. They have all been traded for an iPod.

When you fly over the USA, you get

a perspective lost in a daily world of iTunes and reality TV, traffic jams and taxes, PTA meetings and mowing the yard. You see all the space. You see the cities, the communities, the homes, all filled with people with their own individual lives full of loves, attitudes and latitudes, daily problems and worries, desires and dreams, and wants for a better tomorrow. Every one of them different, and just like you.

Gettysburg on Memorial Day Most years I attend local ceremonies

for Memorial Day, but this year it would be different. My one request this trip back to Pennsylvania was to have time to visit Gettysburg again.

It was 1991 the last time I had been on the hallowed grounds of Gettysburg. It was an off day for tourists then, thankfully. Overcast weather, midweek, humid and un-inviting. Perfect for a singular roamer on an unfamiliar quest. There was opportunity to walk through battlegrounds where you weren't supposed to go. It was a day that changed my life.

Grief was in the mist. It was in the trees. It lined the rocks. You could feel it finding its way through the stilled grass. Six generations and it was as real as the days all those men fell in battle.

Alone, aware, quiet, and still. The lingering cries of casualties, cries for their mothers and wives and children, were imminent and obvious as the ripples of water on a disturbed pond. It was all so overwhelming I was grateful to be alone. The awe of the desperate sacrifices of so many was deafening. It was coupled with the knowledge of the ignorance of most who have never even studied what happened in this small island of glory, and such waste, in the history of our nation.

Compelled to move, but slowly and with reverence, I walked the cemeteries. Reading every monument tribute to the fallen, taking it in as the numbers began to have faces and families, taking in the moments that the lives changed

When you fly over the USA, you get a perspective lost in a daily world of iTunes and reality TV, traffic jams and taxes, PTA meetings and mowing the yard. You see all the space."

forever. I couldn't help but think every high school class should take this trip as a requirement to graduate into adulthood. It would change a society.

And then I found Spangler's Spring. It was as if I were behind the eyes of another, yet so familiar, man. It is impossible to describe the sensations of déjà vu, the waves of memory files opening up from a time when you know you died here in a surprise skirmish, one minute joking with other gray uniformed men, the next your face and body hitting the ground with a permanent thud so certain as the pain of torn flesh screamed to the heavens. It was then, and it was now. My body reacted with such trembling and fear that I looked around again as if another attack were looming.

It lasted for about three minutes. And then a peace came over me like the heavens had opened up to assure me all was well. All was well.

This year, 24 years later, a return was necessary. My wife and I toured the new tourist center, watched the new films, enjoyed the exhibits, had a quick lunch, and began our own driving tour.

As we found our way to the cemetery, the Memorial Day parade was just ending. Hundreds had come to visit and pav respects. We walked the grounds and took in the monuments, the history, and the importance.

Unknown, unknown, unknown after unknown. Number after number. Finding "1" on a small headstone at the end of a long-circled row near the road had me stop, and pray for "1." It has been a long-practiced personal ritual upon visiting cemeteries to speak aloud the names of the souls displayed on headstones. It gives them a brief and temporary vibratory resonant life again. Somehow, in spirit, it acknowledges their life among us just one more time.

My wife and I found our way around a number of the monuments, then took to the car to drive the battlefields. At one point, we came upon a small group that had taken a small guided tour. The tour guide explained to them exactly how the battle had been planned, and then executed. He explained how this one battle on this one day in history General Lee was driven back and defeated, changing the history of the Civil War and our nation. Aware, you could still hear the canons firing.

We then looked up Spangler's Spring. She did not know about my previous visit and experience. I just had to know by returning. When we arrived, I was absolutely certain it was not a one-time phenomenon. The reaction this time was not violent, overwhelming, fearful, or regretful. It was a completion, a completion of a cycle that now drives me every day to do more and be more to preserve our nation.

As a nation, we have to get this right. We have to get this right. Are we at another crossroads due to years of poor leadership? We are a nation built upon all those who have come before us. We are built upon a belief in God, family, and country. We used to stand for something. And now we sit in dull ignorance in front of televisions and watch ourselves be misled by those who do not care about the will of the people.

We Forget

We forget too often the sacrifices of all those who have come before us to build our country. We forget all those who have fought in battles to preserve our way of life. We have not heard the buzzing of bullets around our heads. We have not heard the canons fire upon us. We have not lost limbs or loved ones.



Every monument gave the numbers. Every

We do not know all that our fathers, grandfathers, or forefathers have done to try to give us a better life. We certainly do not know all that our neighbor's father, grandfathers, or forefathers have sacrificed. We just know that our neighbor's stereo is too loud and they park too close to our driveway for our liking.

Memorial Day is on our calendars for a reason. Father's Day is on our calendars for a reason. Our nation's Independence Day is coming up, and it is on our calendars for a reason.

Take the time on Father's Day to appreciate all that your father and the fathers of your family and your neighbor's family have done to give us this great community and nation.

Take the time this Independence Day to show your appreciation to the people who hold this nation together, those around you. Take the time to appreciate all those military and military families who have sacrificed more than we know to provide us the safety in which we live.

This Independence Day show up, remember the many sacrifices for freedom, give thanks with great gratitude, and love this nation more.



Wasn't it just yesterday? Sons grow so fast. We owe them a better world. Scholl family photo

www.AmericanRiverMessenger.com

June 19, **2015**



2015 FIREWORKS BUYERS GUIDE

Get the Most Bang for Your Buck

By David Dickstein

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - To those flexing independence on Independence Day by not leaving fireworks to the professionals, have fun and, above all, be safe; we don't want anyone or anything to go up in smoke.

That includes your hard-earned money. When firework stands, run by fundraising non-profits, open for business starting June 28th, consumers will be faced with the usual pricey and patriotic puzzlement. What's new? What's loud? What's colorful? How long does it last? What gives me the most bang for my buck?

Messenger Publishing Group has the answers,

having put every new state-approved firework from TNT and Phantom to the test. Our annual fireworks buyers guide also includes returning favorites that scored at least 4 of 5 stars on a scale that factors performance, value, duration, and distinctiveness. Every firework sold individually in California has been rated for the guide since 2003, so whatever isn't listed wasn't forgotten—it just didn't make the grade. Judges this year included firefighters of Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District, Station 65

in Rancho Cordova, where the test was conducted. Fireworks are listed by price, highest to lowest.

Let the sparks fly!

Best of the Rest (4-5 Stars)

Opening Show (TNT), \$59.99 – Budget permitting, the "Best New Finale" winner of 2012 is a 500-gram must-have. You'll forget the steep price at the 1:40 mark when all fiery heck breaks loose, sure to startle anyone closer than 15 feet away. 130 seconds.



Apache Firedance Premier (Phantom), \$49.99 – Last season's "Best New Firework" scores with seven effects, including some of the best crackles, strobes, and height on the safe and sane market. 140 seconds.

Delirium (TNT), \$49.99

- Fan-shaped 500-gram fountain boasts crowd-pleasing intensity and stunning beauty. Granddaddy of all state-approved fan fountains, and the best-selling finale for 10 years running. No wonder Phantom has come out with Coral Reef. 105 seconds.

Peacock Tail Fan (Phantom), \$34.99 – "Best New Firework" of 2012 builds excitement with each dazzling stage. Works out to 65 cents per second, but the audience's "oohs" and "ahhs" are priceless. 54 seconds.

Moondance Premier (Phantom), \$29.99 – It's Phantom's value-priced Moondance Fountain on steroids. Terrific height, lots of purple—a real crowd pleaser. 100 seconds.

Alpha Wolf (Phantom), \$26.99 – Newly discontinued, so get it while you can. Green and purple droplets, gold shower, and crackling stars finale are awesome. No howling whistles despite its name. 83 seconds.

Funky Monkey (Phantom), \$24.99 – Pyrotechnic primate features red pearls and a solid overall performance. 90 seconds.

American Spirit (TNT), \$22.99 plus bonus

– Fountain of red, white, and bluish stars; gold showers; and decent whistles and crackles makes the cut because it comes with the pleasing 90-second Sizzler Fountain. 80 seconds.

O-Blivion (TNT), \$19.99 – Lord of the ring-shaped fountains emits multi-colored chrysanthemums with pine and impressive titanium crackles. Sweet burn time. *125 seconds*.

Phantom Phlash Phinish (Phantom), \$18.99 – Phantastic phountain with strong duration, altitude, spread, titanium crackle, and whistle. 108 seconds.

Mad Dog (TNT), \$17.99 for two – Emits amazing crackles, whistles, and multi-color sparks, but it's the combo deal that keeps this old dog on our list. 80 seconds.

Serenity (Phantom), \$15.99 – Noiseless fountain opens with lovely lava lamp-like lumps and peacefully pleases with seven colors and white chrysanthemums. *59 seconds*.

King of Bling (Phantom), \$14.99 – Crackles heard during the final third sound just like popping popcorn. Chrysanthemums, whistle, and burn time are majestic for the price. *90 seconds*.

Luminescence (Phantom), \$14.99 – Starts out as a run-of-the-mill multi-effect fountain, but then surprises with an eruption of wide-spreading sparks. One of the best performers of last year's freshman class. 73 seconds.

Phantom Night Owl (Phantom), \$14.99 – Sadly, Phantom's best internally glowing fountain (eyes and mouth light up) is newly discontinued. Say goodbye (soon) to four loud screeches and an exciting overall performance. 65 seconds.

Twilight Magic (Phantom), \$12.99 for two – "Best New Fountain" of 2013, now a 2-for-1 item, has three exciting rotations of crackle-and-whistle and wide-spreading sparks. 57 seconds.

Surfs Up (TNT), \$10.99 – Gorgeous globs lead to

a wave of multiple effects and some of the best and widest-spreading titanium rain and crackles for the price. 58 seconds.

Luck of the Irish (TNT), \$9.99 – Fourteen-year-

old classic features gold and silver spray, red and green balls, crackles, and four super-loud whistles. 75 seconds.

Firecracker Fountain

(Phantom), \$9.99

— Lives up to its name with an awesome crackling barrage alongside multi-colored pearls. 76 seconds.

Phantom Dragon Slayer (Phantom), \$9.99 for two – Solid buy with pretty white, blue, and lemon chrysanthemums; rowdy crackles; and red stars.

66 seconds.

Lil Red Devil (TNT), \$9.99 for two – Packs plenty of heat for the size and price. Ends strong with wide-spreading titanium crackling sparks. 35

Rainbow Rays (TNT), \$5.99 – Terrific valuepriced item, delivering on burn time, height, and crackle. 56 seconds.

Purple Rain (TNT), \$5.99 for two; and Moondance (Phantom), \$2.99 – Identical little dynamos emit loud crackles, purple pearls, and glittering gold and white sparks. 45 seconds.

New for 2015

Coral Reef (Phantom), \$49.99 – Phantom's longest-lasting fan fountain. Debuting last season outside California, this 500-gram humdinger wows with radiant colors and clamorous whistles and crackles. Tested nearly identically to TNT's Delirium (see review). 105 seconds.

Fiery Scorpion (TNT), \$24.99 – Pleasing red, white, and bluish sparks mixed with snow pine, lemon, and titanium crackles. Duration should be longer at this price point. 64 seconds. ★ ★

Neon Galaxy (TNT), \$21.99 – A crackle bassline plays as four tubes, one after the other, emit sparks of green, gold, white, red, yellow, etc. Pretty, but pretty ordinary, even with the decent burn time. 90 seconds. *

Zombie Apocalypse (TNT), \$21.99 – Sensational mediumpriced fan fountain has large-sized intensity. Promises to have a strong rookie season. 62 seconds. *

Phantom Pixie Dust (Phantom), \$19.99 – Possibly the largest and heaviest fountain that burns for just over a minute. Stars and chrysanthemums of purple, lemon, red, silver, gold, and green, and titanium crackles make this good, not great. 66 seconds.★ ★ ★

Phantom Uproar (Phantom), \$12.99 (for two) – Unless buying the newest fireworks is important to you, a better two-for-one deal at the same price is Phantom's performance-comparable Twilight Magic fountains, which are prettier, louder, and longer lasting. 33 seconds. ★ ★

Crystal Skies (TNT), \$9.99 – This year's "Best New Fountain" winner has great height, striking gold glitters and white pines, and loud crackles. Better than many fountains sold at double the price. 68 seconds.

Phantom Treasure (**Phantom**), \$6.99 – Chrysanthemums of green and gold. Meh. 35 seconds. ★ ★



Sir Dumps a Lot (TNT), \$6.99 (bag of two) – TNT's all-business response to Phantom's Poopy Pooch (\$5.99 for two), which is being discontinued next year. Both naughty novelties feature an ash "log" that comes out the rear end of a cardboard dog. Scatological joke only works once, so not sure why we need two. One at half the price would merit another star. 20 seconds. ★ ★

Mano a Mano (TNT), \$5 for four – Sold under different names in 2003 and 2004 (Bandito and Pyro Pete, respectively), this set of four crackle-happy, three-inch fountains isn't really new to the California market. They also clock in 5 seconds less than before. For the same price, consider two Fire Krackle boxes. 13 seconds. ★ ★

Fireblast Assortment (Phantom), \$199.99 – Phantom has the only new fireworks assortment for



Fireworks represent the largest fundraiser of the year for hundreds of non-profit groups throughout the Sacramento Valley. Sales begin June 28th. Photo by David Dickstein







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