



## Holiday Open House at Citrus Town Center

Page 9

## PLUS: NorCal Stuff Celebrates Christmas with Bargain Prices!

Page 2



# AMERICAN RIVER MESSENGER

Volume 9 • Issue 23

Serving Fair Oaks, Orangevale & Sacramento County

First Edition for December 2014

## Local Residents Help Tanzanian Children



Page 9

## Church Fair Offers a Crafty Christmas



Page 4

## The Power of Gratitude



Page 5



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# Musical Theater Puts Young Actors Front and Center



EDMT features actors of varying levels of talent and experience on the stage, but the show was so well choreographed that every actor got a chance to be seen, and even the youngest performers were highlighted at various times. Photo courtesy of Richard Wilson, CEO, El Dorado Musical Theatre

By Shaunna Boyd

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The El Dorado Musical Theatre (EDMT) Lamp Cast finished its run of the fall show of Disney's Aladdin Jr. with their last performance on Saturday, November 14th at the Harris Center for the Arts at Folsom Lake College. The fall show featured actors between the ages of 6-20, and these young actors worked hard to put on spectacular performances.

The youth who starred in the show have many talents; they act, sing, dance, and captivate the audience. There was also a major time commitment involved with performing. They began rehearsals for the show in late August and rehearsed two to three days per week. Parents are also a key

***“EDMT features actors of varying levels of talent and experience on the stage, but the show was so well choreographed that every actor got a chance to be seen, and even the youngest performers were highlighted at various times.”***

part of the EDTM organization, putting in at least 20 hours per show working at rehearsals, working backstage, loading sets, painting, helping the costumer, etc.

EDMT features actors of varying levels of talent and experience on the stage, but the show was so well choreographed that every actor got a chance to be seen, and even the youngest performers were highlighted at various times. The production value of the performances was extremely professional, with music from

the original animated movie, vibrant costumes, extravagant set designs, elaborately choreographed song-and-dance routines, and actors flying through the air (sometimes on a magic carpet).

The dialogue was both humorous and heartfelt and was updated with modern pop culture references to amuse the audience. Fog and smoke and a sudden explosion of streamers and confetti above the audience completed the enchanted atmosphere in the theater.

Two local kids, a

sister-and-brother duo from Gold River, stole the spotlight as part of the Lamp Cast: Hannah Davis (14) is a freshman at Bella Vista High, and Joshua Davis (10) is in fourth grade at Gold River Discovery.

Hannah has been participating in musical theater since age seven. Her grandfather is an actor with local community theaters and he encouraged her to try out, never knowing it would turn out to be her niche. Her first production was The Wizard of Oz at American River College where she played a Lullaby League Munchkin.

Joshua has been performing since the young age of four. He couldn't wait to join his sister on stage, so his family found a small theater group in Folsom that accepted very young performers. Between the two of

them, they have performed in over 40 shows at various locations.

Hannah and Joshua started at EDTM in the summer of 2011 and fell in love with the program. Aladdin Jr. is Hannah's ninth show with EDTM and Joshua's 11th show with the group. Hannah and Joshua's mother, Jill Davis, said, "It is a fantastic program. When they aren't in a run of the show, they take dance and acting classes provided at the EDTM facility. Joshua is taking jazz and tap. Hannah is taking jazz, tap, and character development. Two of her classes are taught by the



**Hannah and Joshua:** Hannah Davis (14) has been participating in musical theater since age seven. Joshua Davis (10) couldn't wait to join his sister on stage and has been performing since the young age of four. Photo courtesy of Richard Wilson, CEO, El Dorado Musical Theatre

director of the shows, Debbie Wilson. Between classes and rehearsals, we are at EDTM up to five days a week."

In the recent run of performances for Aladdin Jr., Hannah played a spice merchant in the opening scene and a featured dancer throughout the show, wowing the audience with her perfectly executed dance choreography. Joshua played Iago, Jafar's parrot sidekick, and his comedic timing was spot on.

*Continued on page 4*

## Celebrate the Holidays With a Celtic Flair Sacramento Master Singers Present A Celtic Christmas

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento Master Singers present A Celtic Christmas throughout December in two locations: St. Francis of Assisi Church in Midtown Sacramento and the Harris Center in Folsom. Between December 13th and 23rd, Dr. Ralph Hughes will direct the city's most accomplished chamber choir in five concerts, all featuring special guests Men of Worth, the humorous Scottish/Irish folk duo beloved by fans from the U.S. to the U.K.

Choral highlights will range from Michael McGlynn's thrilling Irish-styled ancient chants in candlelight to area premieres by contemporary English composer Cecilia McDowall and Paul Mealor of Wales. The choir will also sing new arrangements of some of the world's most beloved traditional carols, such as world

premieres by Sacramento's own Clifford Shockney, who has lovingly arranged the Welsh carol "All Through the Night" for the Master Singers.

A Celtic Christmas will be performed at Sacramento's St. Francis of Assisi Church (26th & K Streets) on December 13th at 8 p.m., December 18th at 7 p.m., December 21st at 7 p.m., and December 23rd at 7 p.m. Tickets

are \$20 and can be purchased online at [www.mastersingers.org](http://www.mastersingers.org), or by calling (916) 788-7464, or at the door 30 minutes before each concert.

The single performance of A Celtic Christmas at Folsom Lake College's Harris Center for the Arts will occur on December 14th at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$25-\$55 and

*Continued on Page 2*



**The Sacramento Master Singers present A Celtic Christmas throughout December in two locations: St. Francis of Assisi Church in Midtown Sacramento and the Harris Center in Folsom.** Photos by Bruce Patt and courtesy of Sacramento Master Singers

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# Small Businesses Beware: Phone Directory Scam Returns

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - An invoice scam that targets small business owners is cropping up once more in the Sacramento region. Solicited offers are being sent from Open Business Directory Ltd., believed to be located in Boston, MA. They have an “F” rating with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) and 1,636 complaints and 64 negative reviews.

Businesses receive a fax with an offer to list their company name in an online directory. All they have to do is fill out their contact information and return the form. A few days later, the business receives an invoice with an outstanding balance of \$1,238 for a two-year subscription to a website that closely resembles the Yellow Pages. When businesses do not respond to the invoice, they are threatened with being sent to collections.

The law is clear: Title 39 of the United States Code, Section 3001 requires that solicitations such as these include a conspicuous disclaimer, in 30-point font, stating, in part, that it is a mere solicitation. BBB reviewed a copy of the solicitation sent to a business in Vacaville, and the legally required disclaimer was present, but not up to size.

How to Avoid the Scam:

Do not respond: If you receive a fax or phone call from a company asking for your business information for an online directory, hang up and do not respond.

The Yellow Pages name and logo: Scammers often use the name and “walking fingers” icon to lend credibility to

their scam. However, they are not affiliated with the popular phone directory in any way.

Don’t trust Caller ID: Scammers have the ability to spoof a phone number, which means it may look like you are receiving a call from a trusted organization or business.

Contact your BBB: If you have questions or think you have been the victim of a scam, contact your local BBB at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org).

For more information, please contact Danielle Spang at [dspang@necal.bbb.org](mailto:dspang@necal.bbb.org). For reports on businesses and for information about BBB services, please visit the website at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org) or call (916) 443-6843.

Source: Better Business Bureau serving Northeast California ★

# NorCal Stuff Celebrates Christmas with Bargain Prices!



Entering NorCal Stuff’s new store in Citrus Heights is an exhilarating experience for the holiday bargain hunter. They’ve stocked up on a wide assortment of toys priced affordably for the holidays. Inventory changes often so there’s something different to view with every visit. Photo courtesy of NorCal Stuff.

By Linda Harper

**CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG)** - NorCal Stuff, a little store with loads of inventory, is celebrating the Christmas season by offering a wide variety of holiday home décor; gifts for everyone on your list; and, of course, toys, toys, and more toys! Their holiday motto is “We offer everything from candy canes to canoes,” and to say they have a lot of stuff is an understatement.

NorCal Stuff opened as a retail outlet several months ago, as an addition to their successful Amazon, Ebay, and Craigslist stores, which have been in operation since 2007. Their storefront is centrally located in Citrus Heights at 5489 “C” Sunrise Blvd. (next to Benihana and Tuesday Morning).

Dan Singleton, owner of NorCal stuff, and his right hand helpers, Dawn Martin and Candice Lynn, work tirelessly to negotiate overstocks and discontinued merchandise with companies who need to sell their items for one reason or another.

Entering NorCal Stuff’s new store in Citrus Heights is an exhilarating experience for the holiday bargain hunter. In one corner, there’s quality camping equipment marked at least 50% off what it would normally sell for in other discount stores. A large brand name BBQ sits in the opposite corner, also priced to sell. A few feet from that, designer shoes and purses are perched on a shelf with office supplies, baby food, and other infant items. Pet food, clothing, hair and beauty products,

bedding, and a new lawnmower are just a sampling of the merchandise NorCal Stuff offers. They’ve stocked up on a wide assortment of toys priced affordably for the holidays. Inventory changes often so there’s something different to view with every visit.

When you shop at NorCal Stuff, mention that you read this story and receive an additional 15% off already discounted prices. Add to your shopping experience by browsing through NorCal Stuff’s online stores. Simply go to Ebay, Amazon, and Craigslist and type NorCal Stuff in the search bar.

For more information about NorCal Stuff and for directions to the Citrus Heights store, visit [www.norcalstuff.com](http://www.norcalstuff.com) or call (916) 536-9672. ★

# The SRWF Holiday Luncheon and Fundraiser

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - You are invited to a Sacramento Republican Women Federated (SRWF) holiday luncheon on Saturday, December 6th at 11 a.m. at North Ridge Country Club, 7600 Madison Avenue, Fair Oaks. Admission is \$35 per person. Guests are welcome.

The reservations are coming in “fast and furious,” reports Kay Burton, Chairman. There is a lot of excitement in the air for this holiday event. John McGinness, former Sheriff of Sacramento County, now a KFBK radio personality, will be the guest speaker. The event will feature tap dancers and singers and include a raffle and an auction. If you are able, please bring an unwrapped toy for the annual “Toys for the Troops

Kids” program. The menu features petite filet mignon with a demi glazed cabernet and grilled honey mustard salmon.

Please send checks with menu selection by Wednesday, November 30th to Margie DeRow, 11612 Gold Country Blvd., Gold River, CA 95670.

Source: Kay Burton ★

## Celebrate the Holidays With a Celtic Flair

Continued from Page 1

can be purchased online at [www.harriscenter.net](http://www.harriscenter.net), by calling (916) 608-6888, or at the door two hours before the concert.

The Sacramento Master Singers and Men of Worth will also present “Jingle All The Way,” the popular annual concert for young children and their families, on

Sunday, December 21st at 3 p.m. at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. Tickets for this short, fun-filled, family-oriented program are \$5 for adults and \$3 for children. For more information, please visit [www.mastersingers.org](http://www.mastersingers.org) or call (916) 788-7464.

Source: Sacramento Master Singers ★

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Subscriptions should be mailed to American River Messenger, 7405 Greenback Lane, #129, Citrus Heights, CA 95610. Subscription rate is \$25 per year; \$30 per year in Sacramento and Sacramento county; \$40 per year outside Sacramento county. American River Messenger is published twice monthly. Call 916-773-1111 for more information. (ISSN # 1948-1918).

To submit your articles, information, announcements or letters to the editor, please email a Microsoft Word file to: [Publisher@AmericanRiverMessenger.com](mailto:Publisher@AmericanRiverMessenger.com). Be sure to place in the subject field “Attention to Publisher”. If you do not have email access, please call us at 916-773-1111.

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# Sacramento Concert Band Holiday Event



This is the 46th season for the Sacramento Concert Band, a community band whose members range in age from 22 to 92. Music director Grant Parker said, “This year’s concert will be a fun evening of upbeat, enjoyable, and recognizable secular and holiday music. We’ll even have a sing-along!”

**CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento Concert Band will present a free Holiday concert at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, December 15th at Christ Community Church, 5025 Manzanita Avenue in Carmichael. The concert by the 50-piece band will include “Florintiner March,” a Richard Rodgers Medley (“There is Nothing Like a Dame,” “I

Whistle a Happy Tune,” and “Climb Every Mountain”), and traditional Christmas and Hanukkah music. This is the 46th season for the Sacramento Concert Band, a community band whose members range in age from 22 to 92. Music director Grant Parker said, “This year’s concert will be a fun evening of upbeat, enjoyable,

and recognizable secular and holiday music. We’ll even have a sing-along!” There is no charge for the concert, but donations will be accepted to feed the hungry. For more information, visit the band’s website at [www.sacramentoconcertband.org](http://www.sacramentoconcertband.org). Come and enjoy the music! *Source: Linda Thomas* ★

# CHP Combats Aggressive Driving

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The California Highway Patrol (CHP) announced that it is implementing a yearlong, federally funded traffic safety campaign to reduce the number of collisions associated with aggressive driving. “Every year, speed and aggressive driving plays a role in the death or injury of thousands of people in California,” said CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow. “Through this enforcement and education campaign, we seek to curb the number of fatal and injury collisions linked to speeding and other dangerous driving.” With the support of a federal traffic safety grant titled “Reduce Aggressive Driving Incidents and Tactically Enforce Speed (RADIATES) III,” the CHP will educate motorists about the dangers of aggressive driving and will take appropriate enforcement action. The primary goal of

*“Speed, coupled with aggressive driving, consistently contributes to the vast majority of serious collisions in California.”*

this grant is to reduce, by 5%, the number of fatal and injury traffic collisions where speed, improper turning, and driving on the wrong side of the road are primary collision factors. To achieve this goal by September 30th, 2015, the CHP will combine enhanced enforcement with an active public awareness campaign, which includes at least 400 radar trailer deployments and a minimum of

300 traffic safety presentations throughout the state. Speed, coupled with aggressive driving, consistently contributes to the vast majority of serious collisions in California. According to data from the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System, in federal fiscal year 2011-2012, speed was a factor in approximately 42% of all fatal and injury collisions in the state. That year, more than 26,000 speed-related collisions resulted in the death of 264 people and the injury of more than 38,000 others. Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *Source: Chad Hertzell, Public Information Officer, California Highway Patrol* ★

# Sacramento Fine Arts Center Annual Holiday Arts and Craft Show



**CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG)** - This year, the Annual Holiday Arts and Craft Show will be a one-day event on Saturday, December 6th from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at 5330 Gibbons Drive, Carmichael, CA 95608.

Sacramento Fine Arts Center (SFAC) will work to bring its members and the public to this fun event and late-in-the-year shopping opportunity. The Arts and Craft Show will be held in conjunction with

the San Juan Unified K-12 Art Exhibit. There will be food, refreshments, and live music in the afternoon. The gift shop will be open all day. *Source: Sacramento Fine Arts Center* ★

# Reduce and Reuse This Holiday Season

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The holidays are the time we Americans create more paper and throw-away material than at any other time of the year. This year, take steps to reduce the amount of materials that get thrown away, and make this holiday a season of recycling. You can recycle gift boxes, Christmas trees, wrapping paper, cards, junk mail, magazines, catalogs, plastic, glass, aluminum beverage containers, and more! **Did You Know?** Americans throw away 25% more trash during the Thanksgiving to New Year’s holiday season than any other time of year. This extra garbage amounts to 25 million tons of trash (Bob Lilienfeld, “The Use Less Stuff Report”). If every family in the U.S. reused

just two feet of holiday ribbon, the 38,000 miles of ribbon saved could tie a bow around the entire planet. The 2.65 billion Christmas cards sold each year in the U.S. could fill a football field 10 stories high. If we each sent one card less, we’d save 50,000 cubic yards of paper. **How to Have a Greener Season:** Use reusable shopping bags. Send your holiday greetings in electronic form. If you use traditional gift wrapping, avoid wrapping gifts in materials that are not recyclable or reusable, such as foil or metallic papers. Always buy recycled-content wrapping paper. If you send holiday cards, buy recycled-content cards and envelopes, or make your own cards or

gift tags out of last year’s cards and the wrapping paper you saved. Remove your name from the mailing list of any catalog you no longer wish to receive. Eliminate unwanted credit offers by calling 1-888-50ptOut (1-888-567-8688) or visiting [www.optoutprescreen.com](http://www.optoutprescreen.com). Reuse foam peanuts or use unbuttered popcorn for packing. Return unwanted Styrofoam packing peanuts to local UPS stores (please call before delivering). Rechargeable batteries and a battery charger are a great way to cut down on the consumption of batteries. Recycle your tree and wreath. *Source: Sacramento County* ★

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# Musical Theater Puts Young Actors Front and Center

Continued from page 1

Jill Davis said, “It has been an amazing opportunity for him to have such a large role.”

Both Hannah and Joshua said their favorite part of performing in musical theater is the opportunity to sing. Hannah’s favorite song from the production was “Prince Ali,” while Joshua’s favorite was “Friend Like Me.” Joshua particularly enjoyed being hoisted into the air and flying above the stage as Iago, and he confided that the experience was “really fun” and not scary at all. Hannah plans to continue pursuing her talents, particularly her singing talent, throughout high school and would one day like to take her talent to New York. She said, “I love performing on stage in front of an audience.”

Jill Davis said, “My kids have both given up soccer for theater. There is nowhere else they would rather be. EDMT is a wonderful group of kids and parents. They have both developed amazing friendships. It is like a second family. The older kids take the younger kids under their wings. It is not unusual to see a younger child in the lap of a teen. It is different than sports where they are broken up into age groups. How often do six year olds work together with 20 year olds? It is a wonderful thing,



Lead Roles: The Lamp Cast featured actors between the ages of 6-20, and these young actors worked hard to put on spectacular performances. Photo courtesy of Richard Wilson, CEO, El Dorado Musical Theatre

and both my kids have older role models as well as younger kids that look up to them.”

To find out more about EDMT and upcoming

performances, visit [www.edmt.info](http://www.edmt.info). Don’t miss the next opportunity to see these talented kids shine on the stage.

Source: Jill Davis



# Church Fair Offers a Crafty Christmas

Story and photos  
by Susan Maxwell Skinner

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - St John the Evangelist School’s annual blowout, A Holiday Show of Hands, will ensure a crafty Christmas to more than 10,000 shoppers.

Holiday and entrepreneurial spirits annually soar as crafters install wares for the first December weekend at the Carmichael campus. In its 36th year, the three-day fundraiser jams Locust Avenue and surrounding streets with shoppers’ cars.

Wares are too diverse to list. Suffice to say that whether hand-knitted, jeweled, hammered, or turned from a potter’s wheel, if it is tooled with artistry and love, St John’s is the place to find it. The fundraiser began when organizer Pat Holbus had seven children at St Johns and supported the school’s struggle to keep costs down for working families. That tuition fees are still among the lowest of Sacramento Catholic



Pat Holbus (center) has organized the Holiday Show of hands fair at St John the Evangelist School for 36 years. Her volunteers include (kneeling left and seated far right) daughters Christine Bagley and Amy Swanson, school principal Tosha Tillotson (left) and Carole Czimsky. Bottom photo: Loud sweater alert. From Fair Oaks, knitter extraordinaire Gerry Kaye Ryden (center) will offer distinctive Holiday apparel.

and ceramic items. Sallie Gereg (The Mad Tatter) brings handwork from Fair Oaks. Dawn Trew produces hand-painted glass in her Orangevale studio. Mary Donniss

the Show of Hands in tune with the times is the organizers’ mission. ATMs are available on fair days, and when temperatures dip, sophisticated hot toddies revive the weary. Because hungry customers are not happy customers, volunteer cooks offer homemade lasagnas and tamales as winter warm-ups.

The fair’s own hubble-bubble of industry is heartwarming, too. Knitters’ needles click in tempo with Andy Williams—it’s the most wonderful time of the year for hat and mitten purchases. “Even if it’s cold or raining, customers are determined to enjoy themselves,” says Holbus. “They come from all over Northern California; some even drive from out of state. For many, our Holiday Show of Hands is part of a tradition for friends to shop together. It’s a week-end that says: hey, it really is Christmastime.”

The fair is held at St John the Evangelist School, 5701 Locust Avenue, Carmichael. Hours are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday, December 6th; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is free. Doors open on the evening of Friday December 5th, allowing preview shopping for a \$3 donation. For further information, call (916) 481-8845 x 216.



Loud sweater alert. From Fair Oaks, knitter extraordinaire Gerry Kaye Ryden (center) will offer distinctive Holiday apparel.

schools speaks to the event’s continuing success. The 1976 debut event hosted 20 vendors. Booths now sell out at 150 spaces and prospective crafters are jured so merchandise is not duplicated.

“Every year, we want a good variety of goods and new vendors to keep the show fresh,” explains Holbus. Folsom’s Noelle Lask, for example, tools steam-punk trinkets. Placerville’s Dianne Newman will offer unique scarves and hats. From Roseville, Catherine Davin markets repurposed glass

is a Christmas crafter from Granite Bay, and Diana Boud annually sells out her much sought Maus Haus line of hand-stitched critters. Contributing vendors also journey from Loomis, Lincoln, Eldorado Hills, Elk Grove, and Citrus Heights to make the fair a holiday treasure trove.

Holbus now has 12 grandchildren, most of whom have attended St John’s. Three daughters and friend Carole Czimsky help with year-round fair preparations. Old fashioned goods aside, keeping

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ACROSS

1. Fictional elephant
6. Comprised or embodied
9. Attention grabber
13. Swelling
14. Possess
15. Corner joint
16. Moth-\_\_\_\_\_
17. Mauna \_\_\_, Hawaii
18. Be theatrical
19. \*He arrived with a puff of smoke?
21. “\_\_\_ and \_\_\_,” 1992 Tom Cruise movie
23. \*Former Haiti President, “Baby \_\_\_” Duvalier
24. To clean corn
25. Goon
28. Redecorate, e.g.
30. Vandalizing a car
35. Donkey sound
37. Push for something
39. “\_\_\_ de Lammermoor”
40. Fit of shivering
41. \*He annexed most of Crimea
43. C in COGS
44. Food-grinding tooth
46. Spanish surrealist Joan
47. MCL spot
48. Sung before games
50. Suggestive of supernatural
52. \*Kim Yo Jong to Kim Jong Un
53. Praise or glorify
55. Mercator projection, e.g.
57. \*\*“Wizard of Omaha”
61. \*Head of Her Majesty's Government
65. Tear jerker
66. ET's craft
68. Shade of violet
69. Rosie's connector
70. It's collapsable in NBA
71. Audience's approval
72. Donald and Ivana, e.g.
73. Clinton \_\_\_ Rodham
74. \_\_\_ of film, pl.

DOWN

1. Bone to pick
2. Jewish month
3. \_\_\_-carotene
4. Change, as in U.S. Constitution
5. Resentment
6. Stir fry pans
7. Leave speechless
8. Big mess
9. Extra long stable cotton
10. Stash in the hold
11. \_\_\_ good example
12. Deuce topper
15. \*German Chancellor
20. Freeze over
22. Query
24. With bound limbs
25. \*Leader of the Free World?
26. Ar on Periodic Table

27. “The \_\_\_ in Our Stars”
29. \_\_\_ set, in a band
31. Exclamation for disgust
32. Religious paintings
33. Japanese-American
34. \*One of biggest philanthropists in the world
36. Uh-huh
38. De Valera's land
42. Marilyn Monroe's original given name
45. Give in to pressure
49. Dojo turf
51. Cry like an animal
54. 180 on a road
56. \*Begin and Sadat signed a treaty in '78
57. Drill
58. Type of operating system
59. \*James Monroe: U.S. President number \_\_\_
60. \*Kennedy and Khrushchev, e.g.
61. Dog command
62. \*What monarchs do
63. \* \_\_\_ office
64. New Jersey hoopsters
67. Show disapproval

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

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

For Solutions See Page 7

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May have been stolen from Aramon Drive, Rancho Cordova.  
**Male Grey & White damaged right eye.**  
**Limps, answers to Teddy Bear.**  
**Female Long haired White, answers to Princess.**  
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Please call **916-483-2299**, ask for Lynne, to identify it.

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12342 Little Dome Way, Rancho Cordova, CA 95742. 3bed/2bath, 1983sf, built 2011. \$330K. Sam Munoz, DRE# 01741693. Delano Real Estate (661)-709-0921. (MPG 10-31-14)

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**Breed: Golden Retriever**  
**Color: Golden, Yellow/Blonde**  
**Age: 1-1/2 years**  
**Sex: M, Weight: 70lbs**  
**IF FOUND PLEASE CONTACT:**  
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(MPG 11-14-14)

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Sudoku Puzzle on Page 6

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

Crossword Puzzle on Page 6

B	A	B	A	R		W	A	S		P	S	S	T
E	D	E	M	A		O	W	N		M	I	T	E
E	A	T	E	N		K	E	A		E	M	O	T
F	R	A	N	C	I	S		F	A	R	A	W	A
						D	O	C		H	U	S	K
O	A	F		R	E	D	O		K	E	Y	I	N
B	R	A	Y		U	R	G	E		L	U	C	I
A	G	U	E		P	U	T	I	N		C	O	S
M	O	L	A	R		M	I	R	O		K	N	E
A	N	T	H	E	M		E	E	R	Y		S	I
						L	A	U	D		M	A	P
B	U	F	F	E	T		C	A	M	E	R	O	N
O	N	I	O	N		U	F	O		M	A	U	V
R	I	V	E	T		R	I	M		E	C	L	A
E	X	E	S			N	E	E		R	E	E	L

MPG





By Ronnie McBrayer

Johnson Oatman, Jr. was a failed singer. Try as he might, he could not reach the success of his baritone-voiced father who was in high demand by churches all over New England. Largely, he was a failed minister too. An ordained Methodist, he hoped to become the next Francis Asbury or Peter Cartwright - a circuit-riding evangelist - who could turn legions of souls from perdition. He never preached in more than a few local pulpits.

But as Oatman approached his fortieth birthday, his sense of divine calling and vocational ability finally crossed paths. He began writing songs, songs to be sung in church and at the frontier revivals of the late nineteenth century. Over the next twenty years he would author some 3,000 hymns and gospel songs.

If you are part of a church that still uses hymnals or sings hymns you know Oatman’s music, even if you are unfamiliar with his name. “Worthy the Lamb;” “No, Not One;” and “Higher Ground” are a few of his tunes that can be found in almost any denominational songbook. His work with which I am most familiar is a song entitled, “Count Your Blessings.”

In the churches of my youth we sang this song at every

## Count Your Blessings

Thanksgiving service. In fact, we seemed to sing it every other week or so. I can still recite the first stanza from memory: “When upon life’s billows you are tempest tossed; when you are discouraged, thinking all is lost; count your many blessings, name them one by one; and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.”

A Sunday school teacher once challenged my Primary Bible Class to do exactly as the song implored: “Count your blessings.” She handed out sheets of wide-ruled notebook paper with the red and blue lines, accompanied by fat, yellow, #2 Ticonderoga pencils. A dozen eight-year-olds went to work listing all of our heavenly assets, and we finished, of course, by singing Oatman’s hymn.

Have you counted your blessings lately, naming them “one by one?” I know all the “big things” would be on the list. Family, nation, shelter, food, children or grandchildren, employment; for all of these we are thankful. But to list all of our blessings, even the little things, would take a considerable amount of time, longer than a brief Sunday school lesson would allow.

Still, it’s worth taking pause to make such a list. You probably have a few days off, or at least a smidgen of down time with Thanksgiving Day coming. Use some of that time to actually catalogue a few of your many practical blessings. Maybe you could start with A and work through the alphabet to Z, concentrating on the little, often assumed, godsend.

I’ll get you started: Air conditioning. Band aids. Coffee. Distilleries (particularly those in

Canada). Electricity. Football. Garrison Keillor. Hamburgers. Ireland. Jackson Hole. Krispy Kreme. Live Oak trees. Music. Newspapers. Online banking. Picnics. Quinoa. Refrigeration. Smoked Almonds. Tennis. Urinals (the ones that flush automatically). Vacations. Willie Nelson. X-Rays. Yogurt. Zyrtec.

On and on it goes, and that’s just the first list that rolled off my mind, a stream of consciousness (and obviously I wrote this while hungry)! This list could be reproduced a thousand times over with little thought, just observation, because blessings constantly rain down upon me. God’s ever-present grace surrounds me. Heaven smiles down, if only because I am fortunate enough to live at a time and in a place like this.

It’s not that complicated, not really. Take the time to look around your life and count your blessings - one by little one - if you dare. Give thanks to God for what you have, what you have experienced, for the grace you have received and for the people you have known.

Try to remember that Thanksgiving is more than a holiday, more than a day off, more than a circled date on a calendar. It is a way of life. Remembering this might change your perspective about things. It might change your attitude. And it just might change your life.

*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](http://www.ronniemcbrayer.me).* ★

## The Early Turkey Gets the Gobble

Dr. James L. Snyder

I awoke a little groggy and made my way to the kitchen only to be confronted by the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. There are times to confront her and then there are times to run the other way. Being in such a groggy state of affairs, I was not really thinking.

“Here is your coffee and breakfast,” she said rather sternly, “go to your study, eat this and stay out of the kitchen.”

As usual, I did what I was told, collected my breakfast and headed for my study. As I sat in my chair and started consuming my breakfast, I suddenly noticed I was surrounded with an overpowering aroma I knew was not my breakfast. Until I have had my first cup of coffee in the morning, I am really not sure that it is morning.

As the little grey cells begin to wake up after a half a cup of coffee, it dawned on me that the aroma was a familiar aroma but I just could not place it. Then it hit me. It was Thanksgiving and my wife was preparing the family Thanksgiving dinner. If this Thanksgiving preparation time was like all the times before, I needed to avoid the kitchen area as much as possible.

Just saying. When she is in her family Thanksgiving turkey-roasting mode, I need to stay out of her way. This is an important history lesson for me unless I want to be history.

Then she poked her head through the doorway and said, “I have to go for several hours, I do not want you to go to the kitchen.”

“What if I need another cup of coffee?”

“OK, but that’s it. Don’t get anywhere near the turkey. Understand?”

I understood, at least I thought I understood. I have been married long enough to know not to

take anything for granted when instructions are coming from your celebrated spouse. I was going to stand up and salute, but she disappeared before I could get into action.

Everything went well for the first half hour. Then I noticed my coffee cup was empty and I needed to refill it. I am at the stage of life where I cannot do anything without my coffee. I am not addicted to it, but I think it just might be addicted to me. I cannot afford a psychiatrist to straighten me out on that one.

I want everybody to know, my intentions were good. I was going to go into the kitchen and get a refill on my coffee and then come back to my study and resume the project I was working on. Anyway, that was the plan.

Something happened as I poured my coffee. I smelled the most wonderful aroma in the world. I should have stopped myself when I had the strength, but I did not. I looked in the direction the aroma was coming and there it was.

One of the most scrumptious looking roast turkeys I have seen in my life. There it was on the counter waiting for the family to assemble and then dig in.

I can identify with that person who said that the only thing they cannot resist is temptation. I guess it all determines on your definition of temptation.

There it was in all of its glory. The smell was just overwhelming. I thought that it would not harm anything if I just went over and had a closer look at that magnificent delicacy. It just looked so good.

I then began thinking to myself, I always get in trouble when I think to myself, what harm would it be if I just tasted a wee bit of that turkey? After all, there was plenty of turkey for everyone.

I pulled off a little sliver of the turkey and examine it rather

carefully and then popped it in my mouth. Oh, did my taste buds dance for joy. I was about ready to turn around, get my coffee and resume my project in my office when the taste buds clamored for just one more taste.

After all, what would it harm to have just one more little sliver?

I am not sure how many little slivers I had, I lost count, but I thought I had better stop and go back to my office before I went too far.

About an hour later I heard someone coming into the house, I knew it must be my wife. I went back to my work and busied myself.

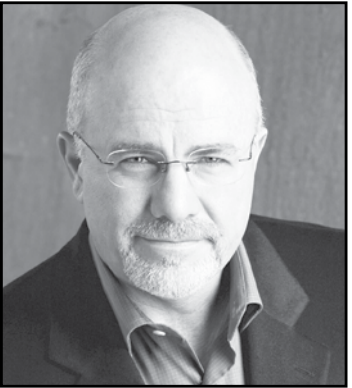
“Honey,” a familiar voice yelled from the kitchen, “did you get into that turkey?”

It was then that I had one of those “uk-oh” moments. At first, I did not comprehend what she was talking about, and then it came to me that I had devoured several slivers of the roast turkey. From the tone of her voice I knew I was in deep “uk-oh” trouble, the kind of trouble you cannot talk your way out. The evidence was sorely against me.

After her formidable lecture, she left me to my solitude to, as she said, “think about what you just did.” As I reflected upon the situation, I thought of a verse in the Bible. “But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23).

Good intentions have never taken away the sting of doing something wrong, especially when you are caught.

*Rev. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, P.O. Box 831313, Ocala, FL 34483. He lives with his wife, Martha, in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 866-552-2543 or e-mail [jamessnyder2@att.net](mailto:jamessnyder2@att.net). His website is [www.jamessnyderministries.com](http://www.jamessnyderministries.com).* ★



### The Wrong Half of the Month!

Dear Dave,

My husband and I are following your plan, and we’re trying to reconcile our on-paper budget with what’s going on in our bank account. Most of our bills are due the first half of the month, but we receive most of our income during the second half of the month. Can you help us figure out what to do?

- Kathy

Dear Kathy,

If you’re actually making a budget and sticking to it, what you’re describing is a cash flow bind. You are in charge of your budget until it’s on paper. Once it’s on paper, it has to accurately represent reality. In your reality, that means a cash flow strain on the first checks and extra money on the second checks.

You won’t be able to fix this in just one month, but there is a long-term solution. Move some of the money from your second checks into the first half of the next month. By doing this, you’ll start running from the fifteenth to the fifteenth instead of from the first to

## Dave Says

the first. It will help you stay ahead and avoid getting pinched.

The second part of this equation is that you are in charge of your budget. The budget does not become the boss of you until you get it done. When everything is written and agreed on by you and your husband, that’s when the budget becomes the boss. You can’t come home with a new shirt or a new purse and hope it fits into the plan. The budget has to be the plumb line by which you build your finances straight and true!

- Dave

### School Cost Versus Salary

Dear Dave,

My husband and I both work two jobs. Together we make about \$53,000 a year, and we’re trying to get out of debt. We have \$35,000 in debt, and most of that is on our truck. I’d like to go back to school and become an ultrasound technician, so we’ll have more money. Do you think this is a good idea?

- Sarah

Dear Sarah,

Getting more education is always a good idea. For starters, I’d begin doing some research to find out what ultrasound technicians in your area are earning. Then, look into the cost of training at a nearby school.

But I would only recommend

starting school *after* you guys have done some work and cleaned up your finances. You’ve got a bunch of debt hanging over your heads, and the truck you mentioned is a big part of the problem.

Sell the truck and move down to something very inexpensive to drive for a little while. Then tear into the remainder of the debt and get it paid off as fast as you can. After that, save up a bunch of money so you can go to school debt-free.

I know that may seem like a long time before you can start school, but chances are you can get this done in less than two years. And trust me, going to school debt-free will feel a whole lot better than having another bunch of payments buzzing around your heads for years to come!

- Dave

*\* Dave Ramsey is America’s trusted voice on money and business. He has authored five New York Times best-selling books: Financial Peace, More Than Enough, The Total Money Makeover, EntreLeadership and Smart Money Smart Kids. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 8 million listeners each week on more than 500 radio stations. Follow Dave on Twitter at @DaveRamsey and on the web at [daveramsey.com](http://daveramsey.com).* ★

## Parents Night Out

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - Parents! Come drop off your kids, K–6th grade, for an evening of fun games, singing, crafts, and watching a Christmas skit at Northminster Presbyterian Church, 3235 Pope Avenue, Sacramento, December 13th,

5–9 p.m. We will even feed them dinner! The programs will be run by youth and college age students and supervised by adult mentors. And, while they are having fun, you can perhaps be doing some Christmas shopping or just enjoying an

evening out. The cost is \$8.00 a child. To ensure a spot for your child, please RSVP no later than December 8th at (916) 487-5192 or visit [www.northminsteronline.org](http://www.northminsteronline.org).

*Source: Northminster Presbyterian Church* ★



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**6724 Palm Avenue, Fair Oaks, CA 95628**  
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**Pastor Charles Carter (916) 967-3915**

*Call for more information*



**Kevin Kitrell Ross**  
*Senior Minister/CEO*  
**Unity of Sacramento**

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# Holiday Open House at Citrus Town Center



The Holiday Open House at Citrus Town Center is fun and free event. Come see the Sunrise MarketPlace Christmas Characters who love to meet, shake hands, and take pictures with the whole family. Photo courtesy of Hall Market Media

By Connie Hall

**CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG)** - Shopping during the holidays can be stressful and crazy—or it can be fun and joyous with all the special sights and sounds of the season. Make your holiday

shopping fun by taking advantage of one-stop shopping for everyone on your shopping list this year while enjoying the special holiday festivities happening at Citrus Town Center in Citrus Heights. Citrus Town Center,

conveniently located at the corner of Sunrise Blvd. and Greenback Lane with plenty of free parking, will be hosting a Holiday Open House on Saturday, December 13th from 1-3 p.m. Come on out to enjoy this very special free event for the entire family, especially the kids. A strolling Santa will be on hand to hear about those special Christmas wishes, along with Ellie the Elf who will be handing out special treats. Take a photo with Santa and Ellie and then enjoy a free ride on the Christmas Train!

Other photograph opportunities will be available with the Sunrise MarketPlace Christmas Characters who love to meet, shake hands, and take pictures with the whole family. Former Disney artist John Denton will also be providing free holiday caricatures to memorialize the event, and Magic Wand Entertainment will be all set up

with free holiday arts and crafts for the kids to make, along with face painting, games, and more. Another special treat will be the Encore Carolers strolling around the Center during the festive two-hour event, entertaining shoppers with a variety of holiday carols. With fabulous stores like

Marshalls, Dress Barn, Carter’s Children Store, Staples, PetSmart, Sprouts Farmers Market, BevMo, GameStop, Skechers, and more, there is something for everyone on your holiday list. Take a shopping break to enjoy a bite to eat at La Fiesta Taqueria, Panera Bread, Round Table Pizza, Wing Stop,

Wendy’s, and many more great eateries. Mark your calendar now for Saturday, December 13th from 1-3 p.m. to enjoy the holidays at the Citrus Town Center Holiday Open House. For more information, please visit Citrus Town Center on Facebook. ★

## Local Residents Help Tanzanian Children



By Beverly Purcell

**FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG)** - Fair Oaks residents Mary Jo and Mark Verke, Lay Salvatorians at Divine Savior Catholic Church in Orangevale, recently returned from their 14th trip to Tanzania. The three-week trip centered on rural villages in the Morogoro region of central Tanzania, an area characterized by abject poverty, blistering heat, infectious diseases, and minimal medical care.

Most of the children do not own shoes and must walk everywhere on dirt roads. Mary Jo and Mark distributed 1,600 pairs of children’s shoes in 15 different schools and villages throughout the region. They were able to carry 100 pairs of shoes as baggage; the rest were purchased locally with generous monetary donations contributed by Divine Savior parishioners.

Children in the area are required to wear school uniforms that are inexpensive by our standards but very expensive for poor families. The Verkes were able to purchase 300 locally made simple, white cotton shirts, which outfitted an entire school.

Mary Jo said, “We always receive so much more than we give on these trips. It’s so gratifying to help the children in such a simple way. Purchasing shoes and shirts made in Tanzania supports the local economy. We hope to be able to continue this mission.” ★

**Group (top photo):** Fair Oaks residents Mary Jo and Mark Verke bring an early Christmas to Tanzanian children. **New Shoes (below):** Mary Jo and Mark Verke distributed 1,600 pairs of children’s shoes in 15 different schools and villages throughout the region. **New Uniforms (at right):** The Verkes were able to purchase 300 locally made simple, white cotton shirts, which outfitted an entire school. Photos courtesy of Mary Jo Verke



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## Basic Home Modifications Allow “Ageing In Place”

By Mark J. Cimino, CEO CiminoCare

The stroke abruptly turned Anna’s world upside down. Here in the twilight of her life, you’d think she should be set comfortable. In an instant, however she was faced with the stark reality of having to move from her home of so many years, so many memories, so many happy times. Why? Well, despite recovering well through receiving Occupational and Physical Therapy, she now needed a walker for balance, stability and distance. Suddenly, what she had taken for granted all these years became obstacles: the five steps to her front porch; the narrow door to her bathroom which her walker could not fit through; the sliding doors into her tub shower with no grab bars for support; her raised bed that she now could not climb into.

Depressed, Anna was faced with moving. However, some-

one had referred her to my good friend James, a Certified Aging-in-Place Consultant and Occupational Therapist. James was able to visit Anna at her home and doing what he loves to do, he gave Anna some real hope of staying at home by conducting a Home Safety Assessment. Looking at all the obstacles mentioned above, he came up with several in-expensive recommendations and ideas that made it practical to live at home longer, comfortably and safely.

Her family had a ramp built so she could get into her house safely. She could not afford to remodel her entire bathroom, but was able to remove the shower doors in order to access the tub easier and put up a shower curtain. Anna had grab bars installed and James helped her get a customized tub transfer bench so she could slide into the tub. Anna also widened the bathroom door so she could fit her walker through. James recommended an inexpensive way to lower her bed and added a small handle so she could get into her bed safely. Anna can now stay in her home and live a full life without moving.

We love the work James does so much we wanted to give him an opportunity to help some of you family caregivers

out there this holiday season. The first three readers who can use a free Home Safety Assessment (generally a few hundred dollars) for their home or the home of a friend or loved one in the greater Sacramento area, email me, first come first served, at mark@ciminocare.com and I will arrange to have James come visit you. There is no cost or obligation, just friendly help for the needs of family caregivers.

*As I mentioned, my good friend James Stacey has been in the Occupational Therapy line of work for over 20 years, including serving in the role of a Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS). If anyone can figure out how someone can make simple modifications to their homes so they age in place better, it would be James.*

Mark J. Cimino, is the Chief Executive Caregiver of CiminoCare, a Sacramento-based assisted living provider. Mark started in his caregiving profession at agesixwhen he and his siblings would tag along as their mother visited her in home care clients. In addition to his job, Mark is actively involved in Rotary International. His interests include hiking and doing fun things with his three boys. Mark can be reached at mark@ciminocare.com



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## Sock Drive

### Fair Oaks Teen Advisory Board

November 21-December 19

Please bring NEW socks in all sizes (children-adult) to the Fair Oaks Library to donate to kids & teens. The Teen Advisory Board will be donating these items to the Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento.

Other acceptable items include: NEW underwear (all sizes), NEW white undershirts/T-shirts (all sizes-men's XL), flannel pajama bottoms (all sizes)

Fair Oaks Library | 11601 Fair Oaks Blvd, Fair Oaks, 95628

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## Sheriff's Santa Claus Project

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - Since 1995, Deputy Michael Wright has spent the holiday season as "Santa Mike" for the Sheriff's Santa Claus Project.

Santa Mike visits the homes of families with children diagnosed with a terminal illness and families with special needs, as determined by the staff of Kaiser Hospital and the Sheriff's Department's Child Abuse Bureau. Kaiser recognized that Santa's hospital visits had such a positive impact on the children that it was important for Santa to visit these terminally ill children in their homes. Santa Mike graciously took on this task with the support of the Sheriff's Department

and Kaiser Hospitals, relying on his own resources and donations from the Sheriff's Department, County employees, local businesses, and the Sacramento community.

The Sheriff's Santa Claus Project operates on a year-round basis. However, the project does something extra special for local families with children receiving oncology treatments during the Christmas season. Santa and his elves personally visit with every child they encounter at Kaiser Hospital. They deliver stockings stuffed full of goodies during the week of Christmas, and Santa visits emergency rooms and other areas of the hospital where children are admitted. They will also visit children housed in local domestic violence shelters.

Sheriff's Deputies use donated funds to purchase gifts from local stores and gather toys donated by the Sheriff's Toy Project. All gifts are wrapped

and then placed into hand-made Christmas stockings by the Sheriff's Toy Project.

During the holiday season, Santa Mike delivers toys, clothing, and Christmas stockings to these local families. He is accompanied by Mrs. Claus, several elves, and many Sheriff's Deputies as they deliver special wish list items (at times, household goods). In each home, they take photographs of the family with Santa and his elves.

Santa and his elves will begin delivering gifts on December 1st and will finish on December 31st.

For more information about the Sheriff's Santa Claus Project (a non-profit) or to make a donation, please contact project coordinator Deputy Michael Wright by email at [mwright@sacsheriff.com](mailto:mwright@sacsheriff.com).

Source: Sacramento County Sheriff's Department

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# Donate Toys for the Troops' Kids

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - Toys for the Troops' Kids is seeking toys, gifts, and monetary donations for holiday gifts to be distributed to children of military personnel deployed overseas during this holiday season. The collection drive will run from Saturday, December 6th through Sunday, December 21st from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily in the parking lot at Citrus Town Center at the corner of Sunrise Boulevard and Greenback Lane in Citrus Heights. The location site will be located between Sprouts Farmers Market and

Panera Bread. In November of 2003, a group of veterans in Sacramento acknowledged the dedication and service of our troops serving in uniform overseas and those killed since 9/11. Many of these military personnel sacrifice everything while being separated from their families during the holidays. In succeeding years, the toy drive has expanded to cover Southern California and Nevada. As many as 25,000 toys have been distributed in a single year, and over 150,000

toys have been distributed since the beginning of this worthwhile effort. Citrus Town Center is proud to partner each year with Toys for the Troops' Kids and encourages all those who can, to stop by with a new, unopened toy, gift, or monetary donation. For more information about Toys for the Troops' Kids, contact President Bret Daniels at (916) 870-7199 or bret\_d99@yahoo.com. You can also contact Jay Evans at (916) 944-3925 or jaytaxman@aol.com. Source: Hall Market Media ★

# Deck the Halls and Enjoy Some Music

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - "Deck the hall with boughs of holly ..." Here's an opportunity during the holiday season to enjoy some beautiful traditional holiday music while helping others at the same time. The Bel Tempo Handbell Choir, sponsored by Northminster Presbyterian Church and directed by Mary Balkow, will present A Hollyday Celebration on December 21st, 4 p.m., at 3235 Pope Avenue. This year's concert is

a benefit for Senior Safe House. Senior Safe House provides safe sanctuary for senior citizens who have been abused, neglected, exploited or, for whatever reason, are not safe in their current situation. These individuals are guests in the Senior Safe House and the staff tries to create a homelike environment that makes them feel safe until their situation can be rectified. The concert is a holiday tradition for music lovers of all ages. In addition to handbell music,

Bel Tempo will be joined by soloists on violin and French horn. Audience members will have a chance to try their skills with hand chimes and join in carol sing-a-longs. Guests are encouraged to bring a can of food, toiletry items, or paper towels. A freewill offering will be taken to benefit Senior Safe House. For more information, call (916) 487-5192 or visit northminsteronline.org. Source: Northminster Presbyterian Church ★

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**SATURDAY**

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**Unity of Sacramento Farmers Market**  
9249 Folsom Blvd, Sacramento (in front of the Unity of Sacramento Church).  
Every Saturday 8 am – 1 pm. Seasonal, closes 11/29.

**Sunrise Mall Farmers Market**  
6190 Sunrise Blvd, Citrus Heights (behind Sears in the SE parking lot).  
Every Saturday 8 am – 1 pm. Open year round.

**Sacramento Midtown Farmers Market**  
20th St. between J and K, Sacramento.  
Every Saturday 8 am – 1 pm. Open year round.

**Historic Folsom Farmers Market**  
915 Sutter St, Folsom (Historic Folsom Public Plaza).  
Every Saturday 8 am – 1 pm. Open year round.

**Carmichael Park Farmers Market**  
5750 Grant Ave, Carmichael (corner of Grant and Fair Oaks Blvd).  
Every Sunday 9 am – 2 pm. Open year round.

**VA Mather Farmers Market**  
10535 Hospital Wy, Mather (VA Hospital).  
Every Wednesday 9 am – 1 pm. Seasonal, closes 11/26.

**Fair Oaks Sunset Farmers Market**  
8101 Sunset Ave, Fair Oaks (New Life Church parking lot).  
Every Wednesday 3 pm – 7 pm. Seasonal, closes 11/26.

**UC Davis Health System Farmers Market**  
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