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From Planet X”**

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AMERICAN RIVER MESSENGER

Volume 9 • Issue 13

Serving Fair Oaks, Orangevale & Sacramento County

First Edition for July 2014

Worrying 101



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Saluting Our Flag Fourth on the Field!



“The flag of the United States is one of the most recognizable symbols on earth, more so than our monuments or presidents. From its creation, the flag has stood for freedom, liberty, and the prosperity of the United States. It was designed to accommodate the growth of a budding nation. Stars have been added, but it has retained the same significance. When you take your flag out to fly, hold it carefully, as it is a representation of our whole nation!”
— Author Unknown

Commentary by Elise Spleiss

There was a time not so long ago when our flag, I believe, did not have as much meaning as it does today. It was just a part of our lives, and we took it for granted. I know I did.

Growing up in the 50s and 60s, I assumed it would always be around, always representing my country, and always respected by our citizens. But unfortunately this did not happen, and the flag began to be treated badly. Allowed to fly unmanaged, never folded or brought in at night, many became dirty and tattered. Disgruntled groups burned flags in protest. Yes, this is legal, but still sad. And our flag began appearing on inappropriate items.

I never realized it, but we are not supposed to wear a flag in any form, yet so many different items with this precious image are created to be wrapped around us and

worn on our body and feet. We have rugs we walk on, napkins to wipe our faces, and even cloth on which we sit bears this precious image.

This misuse remains, but on Sept. 11, 2001, we found ourselves with a renewed respect and appreciation for our flag.

Following a catastrophic attack on our American values and freedom, our pride suddenly—once again—exploded.

We saw our American flag on homes, on posters in businesses of every kind, and on numerous pieces of clothing—which was still inappropriate. I think we just did not know, but maybe for a moment it was all right.

Of course, many of us remember those mammoth flags fluttering from the windows of cars and trucks. Today I’m beginning to once more see the fluttering flags attached to the windows of vehicles.

It felt good then, but it’s too bad

it had to take a national disaster to bring us a renewed appreciation of our flag.

Remember the photo taken of three firefighters raising the flag above the rubble of the World Trade Center—raising the Flag at Ground Zero? It was reminiscent of the famous 1945 WWII photo of six Marines raising Old Glory over Iwo Jima. Thomas E. Franklin, the photographer of the new photo, said of it, “This was an important shot. It told of more than just death and destruction. It said something to me about the strength of the American people and of these firemen having to battle the unimaginable.”

One of the three firemen in the photo, Dan McWilliams remembered that as the flag was being raised, other fire personnel yelled, “Good job” and “Way to go!” He said, “Every pair of eyes that saw that flag got a little brighter.” I think this pretty much confirms what our flag means to us.

It has been over 10 years since 9-11, so why is this topic becoming important again? I believe it’s because everywhere we look today in this country, we see on TV, hear on the radio, and read in print how our borders, our language, our American culture, and our way of life are being compromised in the name of political correctness. We are being led to believe that when we’re too proud of our own way of life, of our freedom and uniqueness, we are insulting another’s way of life. This is when it gets dangerous.

We still welcome all who desire to come to this country with integrity as they embrace our culture alongside their own. We welcome them as they learn our language, and come to appreciate and love the American way of life that already exists here as much as we do. We learn from each other.

This is what our flag means to me. What does it mean to you? ★

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

- Raley Field will host its second-annual Fourth of July celebration this Independence Day. This family friendly event will feature some of the region’s best local food, live music from the band Nunchuck Taylor, and a fireworks extravaganza to cap off the night.

The event, which is scheduled to take place on Friday, July 4th, from 6-10 p.m. at Raley Field, costs \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. New to 2014 will be an exclusive 21-and-up party in the Solon Club. Tickets for the Solon Club are \$15.

“Fourth on the Field” will be set up similar to Brewfest, with food trucks parked along the warning track in the outfield—some trucks will even make their way on to the concourse. A special kids’ activity area, inflatable structures at the Coca-Cola Kids Corner, and access to Raley Field’s Beer Garden will make this a family-friendly, full-stadium event

Last year’s “Fourth on the Field” event sold out. Tickets are limited, so patrons are encouraged to purchase theirs early. “Fourth on the Field” tickets are available online at www.ticketmaster.com or in person at Raley Field’s Round Table Pizza Ticket Office. For more information, visit www.raleyfield.com/fourthonthefield ★

River Cats Season Tickets, Mini-Plans, and Flex Plans can be purchased for the 2014 season by calling the River Cats Ticket Hotline at (916) 371-HITS (4487). Single-game tickets can now be purchased at Raley Field’s Round Table Pizza Ticket Office or online at rivercats.com or ticketmaster.com. For more information about the River Cats, visit www.rivercats.com. For information on other events at Raley Field, visit www.raleyfield.com.

Source: Raley Field and Our Sports Central

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School is out and You’re Going Crazy!

By: Bill Martin

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - It’s summer, the kids have been home for a few weeks and you’re already going crazy! Many kids have a limited vocabulary during the summer months, relegated to “I’m bored” and “There is nothing to do.” They ultimately end up watching endless television or playing non-stop video games.

Yes, we’ve all been there. What they are really saying is “Please entertain me or I will drive you crazy!” We all love our kids, but we want to see our children engaged in something challenging, social, and fun during the summer months. Depending on the age of the child, one might get away with some home arts and crafts, but that only takes care of a day or two. What about

the older ones? You can’t give them money every day to hang out at the mall!

Kids have become used to having events planned out for them by their parents, friends, and teachers throughout the school year. Come summer, they don’t know what to do, but we have the answer for you!

Your first step is contacting
Continued on Page 10



There are week-long, weekday, themed-camps at Rollingwood Athletic Club, and your child can register for one week or for as many weeks as you like. Photo courtesy of Rollingwood Athletic Club

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Is There Anything to Celebrate on the Fourth?

By John Horvat II

The cloudy day set the mood for the Fourth of July barbeque. It was a family get-together but there was not much family to get together. Several members were too far away to come; others were on cruises. There were a few absent because they were no longer family since some marriages had turned ugly.

But the barbecue was lively as people gathered around the picnic tables eating plenty of ribs, potato salad, corn-on-the-cob and fixings. Not everything was homemade, much less homegrown — there was simply no time for that. As the night progressed, a discussion arose. Almost everyone agreed that Fourth of July was not what it used to be.

It used to be so happy. Everyone could remember the times when they would get together and there would be plenty of food, conversation, outdoor games and fireworks. It was a real celebration. Now everyone seemed to be complaining about everything.

“The problem is big government!” one exclaimed. “We need to just get rid of big government and that will solve everything.”

“It’s taxes! That’s what killing us. We need to cut taxes across the board. I can’t make my new car payments, student loans or pay my mortgage.”

“I can’t make it anymore on my Social



A family of patriots watches a Fourth of July parade. Photo courtesy of Susan Skinner.

Security,” an older baby boomer chimed in. “It’s not right.”

And so each had their own grievances, some complaining about too much government and others claiming not enough benefits.

At the end, someone made the comment that, with this government, there really wasn’t that much to celebrate this Fourth of July.

With that, there was a lull in the conversation that left everyone uneasy. Some took advantage of the awkward interval to check their emails on their iPhones or make small talk. And as the talk died down, the grandfather unexpectedly spoke up.

He was now a frail old man, a World War II veteran who had known hard times and good times; economic depression and happy days. He had difficulty getting around and spent a lot of his days thinking and praying.

Now he stood before them with an air of dignity saying: “Yes, government has changed. But you know something, we’ve changed, too.

“When I was growing up, families looked after their own members. We didn’t need or want handouts. We managed, even if we didn’t have the latest gadgets or the best car. When there were problems, everyone pitched in. Times were hard, but we

were happier.

“Today, it’s all about money. Back then, money didn’t rule everything. People had honor. They were faithful to their spouses and family. People weren’t afraid to be leaders and accept responsibility.

“We knew the difference between our government and our country. Politicians are one thing and America is another. Today, people treat our county like a corporation where they expect only dividends. When the going gets tough, everyone abandons her and sells off their shares. That’s not right.

“No, America should be more like a family. When the family’s in trouble, everyone pitches in.

I pitched in. I served my country because America is my country and I love her. Many of my buddies served too ... and some didn’t return.”

A silence hung over the area as darkness was falling and lightning bugs were starting to appear.

The old man still continued: “I’m sorry for rambling on but I’ve been thinking a lot about this lately. We need to turn to God again. We used to say ‘give us this day our daily bread’ now everyone turns to the government — they don’t even know how to ask God for things — or what to ask for.

“We complain about government but we’ve become just like the government we criticize. We’ve got the government we deserve. We should get our own ships in

shape. We need to return to order.”

The silence was now complete and everyone became pensive. The old man settled down in his lawn chair still apologizing for rambling on. Everyone in their heart knew that he was right.

At that moment, a rocket soared into the night and burst in air and the darkness was lit by a marvelous display of light and a mighty boom. There was something grand about the way the fireworks exploded that stirred the hearts of those who watched and filled them with awe and pride. At least for an instant, they forgot about their own problems, and celebrated that special something called America. ★

John Horvat II is a scholar, researcher, educator, international speaker and author “Return to Order: From a Frenzied Economy to an Organic Christian Society – Where We’ve Been, How We Got Here and Where We Need to Go,” (www.returntoorder.org). His writings have appeared worldwide, including The Wall Street Journal, FOX News, The Christian Post, The Washington Times, ABC News and C-SPAN.

For more than two decades he has been researching and writing about the socio-economic crisis in the United States.

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9249 Folsom Blvd, Sacramento (at Unity of Sacramento Church) on Saturdays 8 am - 1 pm, year round.

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AMERICAN RIVER MESSENGER

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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. 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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Fair Oaks Theatre Festival Presents



The play, presented in partnership with American River College, is about an affectionate and hilarious send-up of bad 50s sci-fi movies. “The Brain” tells the story of an alien invasion circa 1958.

Opening June 20th

A brain and its two alien cohorts, Zubrick and Yoni, arrive on Earth and plan to take over the San Fernando Valley. It’s the first step on the road to their quest to take over the entire planet and to destroy the family unit. This rousing toe-tapping musical features a dancing, singing brain... what more could you want from a musical!

“The Brain From Planet X” will be directed by Bob Irvin and featuring the Fair Oaks Theater Festival award winner cast.

The play is from a book written by David Wechter and Bruce Kimmel, with music and lyrics by Bruce Kimmel.

The play premiered in Los Angeles to rave reviews. The Los Angeles Times call “The Brain From Planet X”, “Wildly funny... wittily staged, sharply cast and graced with some catchy numbers.” The Beverly Hills Outlook called “The Brain, “Fun theatre! Silly, spoofy, and goofy!”

For Further Information:
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POPPOFF!

with Mary Jane Popp

AVOIDING A FATAL HOSPITAL TRIP PART 2

When last we got together on POPPOFF, I quoted some incredible statistics about people dying each year of unintended medical harm like infections, wrong medications, missed diagnoses, etc Would you believe that as many as 440,000 people are in this category? . Unbelievable that it's the third leading cause of death in the United States. So what do we do? Pat Mastors, who has over 20 years as a News and Medical Reporter, advises patients, hospitals, and policy groups on improving the quality of medical care. She gave me some critical tips that spawned from her book "Design to Survive" 9 ways an IKEA Approach Can Fix Health Care and Save Lives. We covered about 6 of them in my last column, so I wanted to get the last three plus a bonus one to you this time.

7) WRITE DOWN DEVELOPMENTS. That includes medications administered, names of procedures, instructions given, and dates and times of the above (your advocate can do this for you too). Ask and record the names of caregivers, and understand the hierarchy so you know who's in charge and whom to speak to if there's a problem. Attitude is important—you're just trying to be a cooperative and collaborative partner.

8) WRITE A LETTER TO THE CEO. In fact, an advocate colleague suggests you keep an open notebook on the bed table and invite any clinician who enters the room to write down their name and title so they can be included in the letter. What do you think that does to their performance level?

9) BE POLITE BUT ASSERTIVE WHEN NECESSARY. Complaining too often or too aggressively about minor inconveniences can alienate the multi-tasking staff. But you should expect reasonable and timely responses to reasonable requests and questions. If you're being neglected, ask to speak to the hospital's patient advocate

10) BE NICE! Make friends

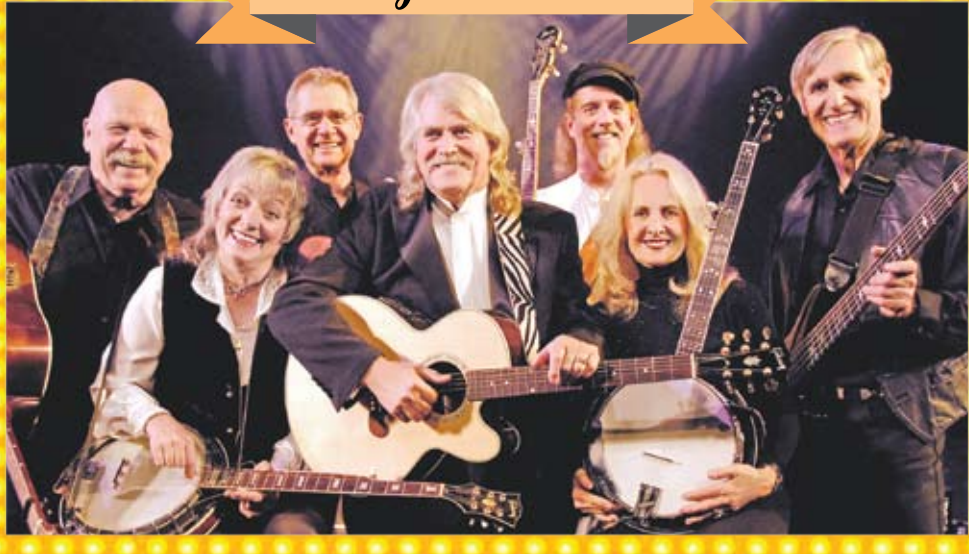
with your nurses, phlebotomists, (people who draw blood) and other hospital personnel. Ask about their job, their day, and their kids. Relationships count!

Pat comes at this from personal experience. Her own father died in the hospital due to a preventable infection.

That's why she has developed this major passion to help save other lives. She has also created the Patient Pod, a unique bedside multi-tool for patients, along with authoring "Design to Survive." She looks at how simplicity, efficiency, and shared responsibility with customers can help us all stay safer and healthier. You can also check out her website at www.design-tosurvive.com. As Pat told me that on her hundredth birthday, she would simply like to collapse while picking tomatoes in her garden. Unfortunately, our parts wear out. About 25 percent of the money Medicare spends every year is for the last year of life, unchanged from twenty years ago. We seem to focus on illness rather than living. But that's a whole new article. That's why we need to know how to take care of ourselves every single day, and knowledge can change lives. It's my POPPOFF motto! ★

The New Christy Minstrels

They're Back!



This Grammy Award-winning American folk music group will perform two live concerts as fundraisers for the Fair Oaks Theatre Festival and the New Christy Minstrels Foundation.



Under the direction of Randy Sparks, the group has sold millions of records and launched the careers of several musicians including Kenny Rogers, Gene Clark, Kim Carnes, and Jerry Yester. Known for hits like "Green, Green," "Saturday Night," and "Today," the group played to a sold-out house last year, so get your tickets early!

**Saturday July 26th
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For Further Information: **916.966.3683**

FairOaksTheatreFestival.com
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By Pastor Ray Dare

What have you doubted lately? Maybe someone said something negative to you or the enemy’s put a thought in your mind and it’s held you back for years and years. Doubts are like seeds in our spirit. You have a choice. You can either listen to them, you can either dwell on them and by doing so, you’ll water them and they’ll grow and you’ll become what they say.

Or you can cast them down and to not listen to them and focus on the things of God.

When Jesus was tempted to doubt in the desert, and Satan came to Him, you remember what Satan said? He said, “**IF** you be the Son of God.” (see Matthew 4) Do you hear that seed of doubt? Jesus, are you even the Son of God? Do you remember how Jesus answered? It’s a powerful principle. He answered with the Word of God.

How to Defeat Your Doubt

Here’s the application: ***Put God’s thoughts on the doubt rather than your thoughts.***

To put God’s thoughts on the doubt; you have to get the promises in the Bible into your heart. The Bible won’t do you any good sitting on a coffee table. It’s not just a book of history or moral lessons. No, the Bible is alive and powerful, and it’s active in the heart. It will only do you good if you get it into your heart. There’s no better way to refute the voice of discouragement than with the Word of God.

You see, the scripture ought to come up out of your heart when somebody says something to you that goes against what you know, goes against your dream, and goes against God’s promise. If somebody says something to you like, “You’re never going to get out of debt.”

That scripture needs to rise up out of you: “*My God’s going to supply all my needs according to His riches in glory!*” (Philippians 4:19)

I’m not at all saying ignore the circumstances. I’m saying ignore the negative talk. People are always going to try to bring you down. Somebody’s going to tell you, “You’re never going

to get out of that situation. It doesn’t look good.” You don’t have to be rude to them, But that scripture can rise up in you. “*My God always causes me to triumph.*” (2 Corinthians 2:14)

All of us at one time or another are going to have doubts come to us. We have a choice. Let’s not be like the children of Israel when they lost their blessing, when they lost their victory because of doubts. They wandered around in the desert for 40 years, never even got to go to the Promise Land, yet they were camped right next door to it.

You must refute the voice of discouragement with the Word of God. Have it so strong in you, when somebody says something negative to you, it’ll go off of you like water off of a duck’s back. Today you may be right next to your greatest victory. But you’ve got a choice: Listen to the other voices that are going to try to tear you down or believe God’s word and see God bring it to pass. ★

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“The Brain From Planet X”



Analise Langford-Clark who plays Joyce Bunson and Dan Sattel who plays Fred Bunson are ready for the attack of “The Brain From Planet X”

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - The Fair Oaks Theater Festival first play of the season “The Brain From Planet X” opened June 20th at the Veterans Memorial Amphitheatre in Fair Oaks Village. The play, presented in partnership with American River College, is about an affectionate and hilarious send-up of bad 50s sci-fi movies.

“The Brain” tells the story of an alien invasion circa 1958. Director Bob Irvin as again put together an all star cast. A Brain played by Michael Coleman and its two alien cohorts, Corey Winfield as Zubrick and Christianne Klein as Yoni, arrive on Earth and plan to take over the San Fernando Valley. It’s the first step on the road to their quest to take over the entire planet and to destroy the family unit starting with the Bunson family with Dan Sattel as Fred Bunson, his wife Joyce Bunson played by Analise Langford-Clark and their daughter Donna played by Emily Simpson. This rousing toe-tapping musical features a dancing, singing brain... what more could you want from a musical.

The rest of the cast include Joseph Hart as General Mills, Jacob Tucker as Private Partz. Professor Leder is played by Aaron Bayless and Rod is played by Cody Alexander. Jonathan

Blum pulls it all together as the Narrator.

“The Brain From Planet X” is from a book written by David Wechter and Bruce Kimmel, with music and lyrics by Bruce Kimmel. The play premiered in Los Angeles to rave reviews. The Los Angeles Times call “The Brain From Planet X”, “Wildly funny... wittily staged, sharply cast and graced with some catchy numbers.” The Beverly Hills Outlook called “The Brain, “Fun theatre! Silly, spoofy, and goofy!”

“The Brain From Planet X”

runs every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from June 20th to July 20th. Show Time is 8:30 pm. There will be no performance on Friday July 4th. Friday and Saturday Tickets for Adult are just \$18.00, Seniors and Students \$15.00 and Children 12 and under \$10.00.

On Sunday the tickets for Adults are \$12.00 and Children 12 and under \$6.00 ★

“The Brain From Planet X” is rated PG13

You can purchase ticket on line at www.fairoakstheatrefestival.com



The Cast from “The Brain From Planet X” are ready for the attack of The Brain!!!

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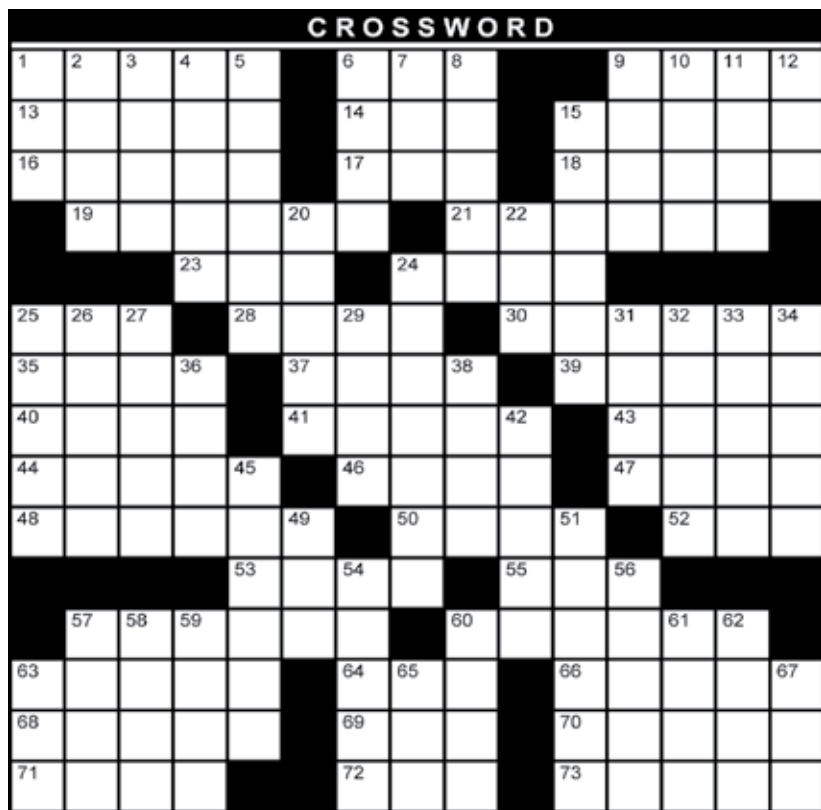
CLUES

ACROSS

1. Cruise, e.g.
6. Is no longer
9. Wet nurse
13. *Caribbean destination
14. *Shrinking cube
15. Geography class prop
16. Deceived or tricked
17. Cubby hole
18. Ritalin, e.g.
19. * lounge
21. *West indicator
23. "Say what?"
24. Make waves
25. "Kapow!"
28. XY
30. Sheets or surfaces
35. Prepare for publication
37. What hoarders do
39. Kentucky Derby sound
40. Blue-ribbon
41. Type of poetic stanza
43. Aquatic plant
44. Words to live by
46. Famous French couturier
47. Part of ROM
48. *Sheltered crab
50. " ____ Jim"
52. Ill temper
53. Miss America's accessory
55. Break bread
57. *Alfredo meal
60. *They are often collected
63. Wood turning device
64. *What participants did at 57 Across
66. Quickly fry
68. It ends with 10 pins
69. Largest back muscle
70. Linoleums, for short
71. Bread or cabbage
72. Double helix
73. Incompetent

DOWN

1. "I see!"
2. Gator's cousin
3. Backside
4. African sorcery
5. The Curies' discovery
6. Broad
7. *Untouched tennis serve
8. Common thing
9. "The Sound of Music" backdrop
10. Brood
11. Aid in crime
12. Oscar-nominated film with Joaquin Phoenix (2013)
15. Chased by police
20. *Frosty treat
22. Coffee holder
24. Petulant
25. *Life is like this?
26. Dig, so to speak
27. Forty-niner, e.g.
29. To give temporarily
31. Distinctively-shaped edible
32. Plural of pileus
33. Daytime moth
34. *Cool place
36. Swarm
38. *Dipping point
42. Like Bono
45. He created his own world
49. ____ chi
51. European breakfast dish
54. Burn with water
56. ____ Jane
57. *Like one never in the sun
58. It will
59. Anthony Bourdain, e.g.
60. " ____ good example"
61. Crescent
62. Red sign
63. Swimmer's distance
65. *One sunny result
67. PST plus three



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Sudoku Puzzle on Page 6

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

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By Ronnie McBrayer

More than a decade ago, former Chief Justice Roy Moore of the Alabama Supreme Court installed a massive granite monument inscribed with the Ten Commandments in the rotunda of the Alabama State Judicial Building. Two years later it was removed by court order as a violation of the separation of church and state. Shortly thereafter, Justice Moore was also removed by court order from the Alabama State Judicial Building.

Not long after these events played themselves out across our cable television news shows, Roy Moore’s Ten Commandments monument went on tour. Loaded onto the flatbed of a heavy-duty truck, it went town to town so onlookers could see for themselves this controversial work of stonemasonry.

I watched the monument make its first stop in Dayton, Tennessee. This was a calculated move for the organizers of the tour. Dayton was home of the 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial, where many feel Christian America was first besieged.

An atheist was there in Dayton (or “Monkey Town” as it’s called) at that first stop, protesting the monument being placed on display. This man barely escaped with his life. Moore’s supporters, about a hundred I guess, were screaming out for the death of this single protestor.

“Shoot him...hang him... put him before a firing squad!”

A Garden in the Wilderness

These were all yelled from the crowd. One man speaking of the “godless” protestor said, “I’m glad I didn’t bring my gun. I’d be in jail right now.”

The shady and twisted irony was not lost on me. Here were ardent supporters of the Ten Commandments – they had come out on a rainy day to see a stone rendering of them – wishing to violate those commandments as they called for the killing their enemy.

In spite of the threats like those made in Dayton, Tennessee that day, there has actually been less, not more, religiously motivated violence in United States history than in some other places. This has been due precisely because of court rulings like the one that evicted Moore’s rock pillar from the Alabama State Judicial Building.

Because a commitment which requires government to remain as neutral as possible toward religion and not endorse any particular religious belief – even Christian belief – is the only environment where true faith can grow and flourish.

Roger Williams, theologian, founder of Rhode Island, America’s first Baptist, and champion of religious and civil liberty a hundred years before the United States Constitution was penned, said communities of faith were like vulnerable, flowering gardens. Governments, on the other hand, were what he called the wilderness.

Williams believed that those churches and faith groups that choose to mingle their religion with political power were permitting the wilderness to intrude upon their gardens. As such,

they would be manipulated by politicians, policies, and the government, thus compromising on issues of love, justice, and mercy.

Or those same churches would become the manipulators themselves, using political power to force their beliefs on others. Either way, when church and state drank from the same cup, it would be the church that would be poisoned.

Roger Williams’ counsel to the Christian church in his day is lasting: Learn to live in the world, but don’t be a part of it. Or he might say, “You can plant a garden in a wilderness without having the wilderness in the garden.”

As Christians, we have the right, privilege, and freedom to live out, practice, and share our faith in this country we love. But we do not have the right to force our faith on others or demand that society at large, endorse our particular religious view.

When we as Christians do make these kinds of demands, we violate the spirit of Christ. We lay down the instrument of love for the devices of manipulation, coercion, and force. We let the weeds and vines of the wilderness overtake the garden of faith.

I hope we can continue to tolerate a variety of fruits and nuts in our religious garden; even those we have little taste for. It’s the only way we can maintain a garden at all. ★

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.

Swallowing Pride Or Eating Crow Are Both Bitter Pills To Swallow

Dr. James L. Snyder

I have noticed lately that I have been getting in trouble with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, at least more than normal. I am at the stage of life where this kind of thing needs to be brought to a bare minimum.

At the end of each month my wife will quiz me as to if I have paid all of the bills. In my rhetorical answer is always, “I sure did, my lady.” Then I will bow before her. For some reason she does not get the humor of that.

My job is to pay the bills and her job is to make sure the end of the month I have paid the bills. This has been our relationship for longer than I can recall.

Every once in a while I get in a little tickle mode and dramatically declare that I forgot to pay the bills for the month. “Oh my, what will we do?”

The first time I did that, she threw a smile in my direction. I dramatically would catch it and put it in my pocket.

I notice she has not been throwing smiles at me lately. Honestly, who can blame her?

It was towards the middle of the month when the cable went dead. We had no telephone, TV or Internet service. The first thing my wife said was, “You did pay the Comcast bill, didn’t you?”

I put on my regular show and assured her that I did.

We had to call the Comcast Company, but as it stood, we had no telephone service. Fortunately, my wife had her cell phone and called the Comcast Company to see what the problem was, maybe the service had gone out in our neighborhood.

One thing about my wife getting on the telephone for such a thing as finding out why we had no service is that she does not have patience. She hates being put on hold. I hate her being put on hold because she usually

takes out her frustration on me.

Now, what do I have to do with that? After all, I did pay the bill. In fact, I went to the check-book and showed her the number of the check and the amount of the check. “There,” I said most adamantly, “I paid the bill.”

After about 45 minutes of waiting rather impatiently, my wife finally connected with the service representative who was able to help her. I did not hear the conversation, but I knew it must have been quite serious because I could see in her face that she was getting angrier by the minute.

“We paid our bill on time,” she protested in a very stern manner. “My husband has the check number to prove that he wrote the check out.”

I was sitting in my easy chair going through my briefcase enjoying the drama that was unfolding before me. I love it when somebody is in trouble and that somebody is not me. I must confess it does not happen that often, but when it does happen, I take full advantage of it. I was gloating just a little bit and feeling pretty good about myself.

I had my briefcase and was sorting out some papers and getting ready for the next day when I ran across a bunch of envelopes. I looked at them, then looked over at my wife, and then looked back at the pile of envelopes and all of the color drained from my face. I could not believe what I found in my briefcase.

There in a neat bundle where all of the bills I had written out for the previous month. The checks had been written, signed and placed in the proper envelope with a postage stamp on it. All of the bills for the month were there staring at me with such vicious eyes as I have never seen before.

What will I do now?

I knew I had to face the music

and it was not a song I enjoyed. I picked up the envelope with the Comcast bill address on the front, took it over to my wife as she was on the phone to the Comcast representatives, laid it on her lap and then walked away.

“I know my husband paid the bill because he pays this bill every month.”

Then she noticed the envelope I had placed in her lap, she turned around and stared at me a stare I have not had from her in a very long time.

“Just a minute,” I heard her say to the other person on the phone, and then she looked at me. Then it came. “Is this the bill you were supposed to send out last month?”

Lying at this moment would not have been productive in any fashion.

She opened the envelope and there was the check dutifully written out to the Comcast Company. She was able to pay the bill over the phone and then it would be my turn to pay.

David who got in a lot of trouble understood this when he wrote, “I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah” (Psalms 32:5).

Swallowing pride or eating crow is not my idea of a delightful repast but it can be the beginning of something good. ★

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 jamesnsnyder2@att.net. His website is www.jamesnsnyderministries.com.



By Marlys Johnsen Norris, Christian Author

Have you strayed away from your early teaching of the gospel? Possibly when you were young your parents took you to church but when you became of age, friends and the adventure of being on your own caused you to omit this spiritual aspect of your life.

We were all created with a mind – body and soul. Each requires attention! If we fail to realize this the area we neglected will become sick. Could it be that you even come under conviction and feel uneasy when

Connect Again!

overhearing people talk about their faith in God? The loving hand of God has been trying to reach you!

There is a story in the Bible about Jesus leaving the huge flock of lambs and going after the one precious lamb that was lost and strayed away. Think about that for a minute!

Jesus loved that one little lamb and was concerned about her.. That is exactly how much He is concerned about you too. God loves you. He knows all about you and why you have slipped away. There are no secrets from Almighty God and He still loves us to the uttermost and desires each one of us to return and be close to Him again.

This is not about pointing out any sin or even causing guilt. It is about helping to see how much God loves you and wants you back as part of His family. His grace is sufficient to cover everything! He loves and forgives all who come to Him with a sincere child-like heart.

When we fall away, we actually miss so many blessings and the divine plan He has for our life. We can only experience that plan when we are walking in obedience to His precepts, praying and seeking His perfect will for our lives. We need to hear His message because God’s Spirit points the way through the Holy Scriptures and blessings are the result.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:1-2) ★

Marlys Johnsen Norris Christian Author of 7 books Read my story in “God Moves Mountains” Marlysjn@gmail.com



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For Further Information:
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FairOaksTheatreFestival.com

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Veterans Memorial Amphitheatre,
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Kevin Kitrell Ross

Senior Minister/CEO
Unity of Sacramento

Host, Design Your Life
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Get the Most Bang for Your Buck

Don't Let Your Fireworks Budget Go Up in Smoke

By David Dickstein

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

Fireworks come in various shapes, sizes and colors, just like we Americans who will celebrate our country's 238th birthday with them. This rings true whether you're reveling among the masses at a public fireworks display – Rancho Cordova's Hagan Park, Carmichael's La Sierra Community Center and the All American Speedway in Roseville will host three of the region's largest – or if you take to the streets of Woodland and other areas of Yolo County where consumer fireworks are allowed this time of year.

What's new? What's loud? What's colorful? Is that \$50 fountain really worth the money and how long is it? The patriotic, pyrotechnic perplexity starts June 28.

With such a wide variety of product out there, how can you ensure that your display will be a Yankee doodle dandy that doesn't have your money literally going up in smoke? Once again the Messenger Publishing Group put each of the new state-approved items to the test, along with other items likely to catch your eye from behind the chicken wire at stands that bear the names TNT and Phantom.

Fireworks are listed by price and rated on a 5-star scale for performance, duration, distinctiveness and overall comparative value. Judges included firefighters of Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District, Station 65 in Rancho Cordova, where the test was conducted.

Let the sparks fly!


New for 2014



• **Apache Firedance Premier (Phantom), \$49.99** – Phantom gets “Best New Firework” honors for supersizing one of its classic fountains. Scores for seven effects, including some of the best crackles and strobes on the safe and sane market, and height and width that push the 10-foot legal limit. *140 seconds. 5 Stars*



• **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. 4 Stars.*



• **Sparkling Nights (TNT), \$24.99** – TNT's best new fountain is a solid, multi-effect performer with decent burn time for the price. A good mid-show pick. *91 seconds. 3 Stars.*



Firework stands run by non-profit groups will be open for business starting June 28 throughout Sacramento County and much of Placer County. Photo: David Dickstein.



• **Fiery Frogs (Phantom), \$24.99** – These fused green-foiled, grapefruit-sized amphibians took five years to migrate to California – they've been sold by Phantom in other states since 2009. Price – you're paying for the novelty – but glimmering eyes and mouth make it a fun item. *50 seconds. 3 Stars.*



• **Vibrant Voltage (Phantom), \$21.99** – Crazy height and some of the prettiest green and orange ever in a fountain. *98 seconds. 3 Stars.*



• **Zombie Zapper (TNT), \$19.99** – Love the intense crackles and the whistle and smokeless color blobs that kick things off, but too fleeting for the money. *45 seconds. 2 Stars.*

Don't be a Statistic this Fourth of July!
Here are some safety tips:

- Observe local laws.
- Always store fireworks in a cool, dry place.
- Always read and follow directions on each firework.
- Use only state-approved "safe and sane" fireworks.
- Only use fireworks outdoors, away from homes, dry grass or trees.
- Have a responsible adult present.
- Have a hose ready.
- Light at a safe distance.
- Never attempt to re-light or fix a "dud."
- Never carry fireworks in your pocket.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Soak used fireworks overnight before disposing.



• **Exploding Pinatas (TNT), \$17.99** – Has the ingredients for a winner, with whistle, fish and crackles, but for the same price a wiser buy is TNT's combo deal on the far-superior Mad Dog Fountain. *60 seconds. 2 1/2 Stars.*




• **Luminescence (Phantom), \$14.99** – Starts out as just your run-of-the-mill multi-effect fountain, but then surprises with an eruption of wide-spreading sparks. *73 seconds. 4 Stars.*



• **Loco Lobo (TNT), \$12.99** – Crackles and chrysanthemums are fine, but at this price point, and even lower, TNT has returning items that blow this not-so-crazy wolf away. *46 seconds. 2 Stars.*



• **Wild Blue (TNT), \$7.99** – The most wild thing about Wild Blue is there's no blue. For the money, go with TNT's better, cheaper and longer-burning Rainbow Rays and Little Miss. *33 seconds. 2 Stars.*



• **Confetti Lights (Phantom), \$4.99 for two** – Mundane stuff, but good value as a buy-one-get-one. Think of it as a Fourth of July stocking stuffer. *34 seconds. 3 Stars.*

Best of the Rest (4-5 Stars)

• **Opening Show (TNT), \$59.99** – Budget permitting, last year's "Best New Finale" is a 500-gram must-have. The climax at the 2-minute mark is intense. Like, crazy intense. Be no closer than 20 feet away for this one. *130 seconds.*

• **Delirium (TNT), \$49.99** – Fan-shaped 500-gram fountain is pricy, but its intensity and beauty are bona fide stunning. Best fan on the California market. *133 seconds.*

• **Game Time (TNT), \$39.99** – Scores with intense crackle and wide-spreading sparks in the late innings, but not powerful enough to hit it out of the park. Still a gamer. *93 seconds.*

• **Peacock Tail Fan (Phantom), \$34.99** – 2013's "Best New Firework" builds excitement with each dazzling stage. Works out to 65 cents per second, but still a must-have. *54 seconds.*

• **Serenity (Phantom), \$15.99**

• **Alpha Wolf (Phantom), \$26.99** – Green and purple droplets, gold shower and crackling stars finale are awesome. No howling whistles despite its name. *83 seconds.*

• **American Spirit (TNT), \$22.99 plus bonus** – This 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** – This lord of the ring-shaped fountains emits multi-colored chrysanthemums with pine and impressive titanium crackles. *125 seconds.*

• **Pyropalooza (TNT), \$19.99** – Excellent height, crackle and vivid hues – a vivacious visual. *115 seconds.*

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

• **Phantom Phlash Phinish (Phantom), \$18.99** – Phantastic Phountain. Second-runner-up for "Best New Fountain" last year has strong duration, altitude, spread, titanium crackle and whistle. *108 seconds.*

• **King of Bling (Phantom), \$18.99 for two** – The crackles heard during the final third sound just like popping popcorn. Majestic chrysanthemums and whistle. Great value as a two-for-one. *90 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 the list. *80 seconds.*

– Noiseless fountain opens with lovely lava lamp-like lumps (thank you, nitrocellulose!) and peacefully pleases with seven colors and white chrysanthemums. *59 seconds.*

• **Phantom Night Owl (Phantom), \$14.99** – Phantom's best internally glowing fountain (eyes and mouth light up) has four loud screeches and an exciting overall performance. *65 seconds.*

• **Surfs Up (TNT), \$10.99** – Last season's "Best New Fountain" runner-up. Gorgeous globs lead to a wave of multiple effects. Punctuation issues in its name aside, this surfer dude has some of the best and widest-spreading titanium rain and crackles for the price. *58 seconds.*

• **Twilight Magic (Phantom), \$12.99 for two** – Last season's "Best New Fountain" is even better now as a two-for-one deal (was \$9.99 for one last year). Sophomore fountain has three exciting rotations of crackle-and-whistle and wide-spreading sparks. *57 seconds.*

• **Luck of the Irish (TNT), \$9.99** – This 13-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 a remarkable crackling barrage alongside multi-colored pearls. *76 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. This combo deal times five, lit side-by-side together, makes for a great finale. *35 seconds.*

• **Phantom Dragon Slayer (Phantom), \$9.99 for two** – Got some white, blue and lemon chrysanthemums, rowdy crackles and red stars going on. *66 seconds.*

• **Rainbow Rays (TNT), \$5.99** – Solid value-priced freshman delivers on height and crackle. Duration is one of the longest in the state at this price point. *56 seconds.*

• **Little Miss (TNT), \$4.99** – This value-priced opening act packs plenty of color plus silver rain and crackles. *40 seconds.*

• **Moondance (Phantom), \$2.99, and Purple Rain (TNT), \$5.99 for two** – These identical cousins are little dynamos that emit loud crackles, purple pearls and glittering gold and white sparks. *45 seconds.*

For stand locations and additional product information, visit the retailers' websites: TNT, www.tntfireworks.com; and Phantom, www.fireworks.com.



State-approved fireworks in all shapes, sizes and price points are a big fund-raiser for area non-profits from June 28 through the Fourth of July. Photo: David Dickstein.



By Mark J. Cimino, CEO CiminoCare

One way to cope with the stress of being a family caregiver is to simply express your feelings by FIGHTING BACK!

Whether it be Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, Cancer, or some other affliction of the loved one you care for, there are causes—or WAR if you will—led by innumerable organizations.

One such larger organization is the American Cancer Society (ACS). As a sponsor, I have been in awe year after year of ACS’s signature event, Relay for Life, where family caregivers come out in force and to raise funds for cancer research and awareness in the community.

In May 1985, Dr. Gordy Klatt walked and ran for 24 hours around a track in Tacoma, Washington, ultimately raising \$27,000 to help ACS fight cancer. A year later, 340 supporters joined the overnight event. The Relay For Life has kept growing into the worldwide phenomenon it is today, raising nearly \$5 billion to fight cancer in more than 5,200

Caregivers Cope by Fighting Back

communities and 20 countries. Each Relay For Life event is special to its local community, but the movement’s true “war power” lies in the combined commitment of thousands of participants, volunteers, and supporters to help the organization save lives from cancer.

Each Relay is made up of teams of 10-15 participants who take turns running or walking around the track to raise funds. The teams not only are there to honor survivors and remember those who have been taken, but also to have a fun time camping out overnight. It’s a great bonding experience for families and a great team building experience for organizations.

For dates and locations in your town, please check out the main website and enter your town: www.relayforlife.org. Fair Oaks and Orangevale have already had their Relays this year, but other communities are still to come.

Our CiminoCare Angels team will be participating in the Citrus Heights Relay July 19-20th at San Juan High School track. If you are interested in this event, feel free to contact me at mark.cimino@ciminocare.com or Courtney. Tyler@cancer.org

One of my favorite times throughout the event is the Luminaria Ceremony. As the sun sets on the first day, luminaria lining the track light up the night. The mood of the event

becomes more reflective. Relay For Life participants, survivors, and caregivers then gather to remember loved ones lost to cancer and to honor those whose fight continues. Many thousands of “luminaria bags” are sponsored by individuals and their families for \$10, and the names of those who are honored for their continued fight or remembered are written on those bags. For many who cannot make the whole event, but can make it to this event, or even sponsor a luminaria bag for a loved one, we would love to have you join us.

We don’t face cancer alone and neither should you. Family caregivers come together every year to get involved in their local Relay, get to know others who are facing the same challenges, and provide opportunities and an outlet for support, learning, sharing, and friendship.

Mark J. Cimino, is the Chief Executive Caregiver of CiminoCare, a Sacramento-based assisted living provider. Mark started in his caregiving profession at age six when 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

School is out and You’re Going Crazy!



Just imagine, instead of hearing, “I’m bored” all next week, you can hear your child can say, “I had a ball at RAC Camp today!” Photo courtesy of Rollingwood Athletic Club

Continued from Page 1

Karen Newton, the Administrative Manager at Rollingwood Athletic Club at 9373 Winding Oaks Drive in Fair Oaks, and finding out about their kids Summer Camp programs for children ages 5 to 13. Karen can provide you with the details of the Camp, what’s included, and related fees. Camp starts up again after the 4th of July weekend, and there are non-stop activities (including swimming every day) for kids in this age group, so you may only have to fill the role of chauffeur!

Each Camp week has a special theme, including: “Around the Word in Five Days,” “Rock Star Music Fun,” “Super Hero Adventure,” “Journey to Outer Space,” “Wackiest Week Ever,”

and “Summer Olympics Fun.” The Camps started June 9th, so be sure to call soon to get your child a slot for all the remaining weeks.

These are week-long, weekday, themed-camps at Rollingwood Athletic Club, so your child can register for one week only, or for as many weeks as you like, leaving time for any family vacation that might be planned for this summer. The Club also offers incredible summer Tennis Camps under the direction of Tennis Pro, Brad Harris, and is also the proud home of the Sacramento Swim League Champion, Rollingwood Rockets, lead by Kim Berrios!

New owner of Rollingwood Athletic Club, Darla Flanagan, along with General Manager,

Mark Hansen, and their Camp Directors have planned a Summer Camp program designed to “provide a fun, active experience for children to play, learn, and explore!”

For information about the Summer Camp program at the Rollingwood Athletic Club, call Karen at (916) 988-1727, email Camp@RollingWoodClub.com, visit their website at www.RollingWoodClub.com, or you can drop by in person to check out the new beautifully-renovated facilities and see for yourself.

Just imagine, instead of hearing, “I’m bored” all next week, you can hear your child can say, “I had a ball at RAC Camp today!” ★



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By Gold River Resident
Jodie Barringer Myers

I bet my DNA contains more Worry cells than yours does. I worry. We all worry. Even you worry, I bet, whether you admit it or not. In my case, perhaps it's a genetic/ Barringer thing. Or maybe it's an environmental, learned trait. After all, I learned from a true pro, my mom, who still to this day insists I call upon touchdown when I take a flight, who implores me to "drive like everyone else on the road is drunk" every time I get behind the wheel.

I am an admitted, full-functioning worrier.

Is that white bump on my eyelid a moisturizer globule, the beginning of a Staph infection, or Stage IV eyelid cancer?

My car made a strange noise yesterday morning. Is that sound just the beginning symptomatology of what will ultimately morph into a \$328.00 bill at Gold River Lube 'n' Tune?

If and when I get Botox, will I be the 1 in 12, 632 whose eyelid will permanently droop?

And will that half-round of Brie I ate last night go right to my thighs – never mind. I "worry" that a celery stick will go to my thighs...

And ohmigosh, what if Chuck's business dries up... and I never take another deposition again? Will we be forced to live out of a downtown dumpster?

I mean, that is the kind of stuff that chews and gnaws at

Worrying 101

me – not only in the dark of the night, in the wee hours of the morning, but also as I sit here right now at Starbucks.

And Mom Worry is ten times more potent and painful than Regular Worry. Mom Worry started for me when our firstborn was seven hours old. (First of all, I had never held an infant before, as my parents didn't allow me to babysit, because they worried I'd cause great bodily injury to the child entrusted to my care, and the the family would of course then sue our family, etc., etc., etc....)

So there I was in the calm of the hospital room, proudly and lovingly holding my daughter. As brand-new mother and newborn infant made our first-ever eye contact, her sweet, little, baby blue left eye strayed inward. I hit the bedside panic button. The nurse came running in. "My baby is cross-eyed! She's cross-eyed! Call 9-1-1!" (We were *in* the hospital, mind you.) Even after the nurse assured me that that is normal for all newborns, as their eye muscles are still developing, I still worried. I mean, what if they *never* strengthen? Then what?

And of course the teen years bring an angst and anxiety and worry like none other. I cannot begin to tell you the number of times I've pictured my kids in a heap, or a puddle, or worse, on the side of the road on a dark night, past curfew. "Sorry, Mom. I forgot to call." And recalling the times I've thrown myself into a near-anorexic state worrying about my daughters' extremely hurt feelings and long-term mental health because of all the "Mean Girls" ugliness that ensued in junior high and high school still cuts me like a knife.

Negative Nellie? Debbie Downer? Fun Sucker? Is that

what you think I am?

I maintain I'm none of those things.

I've given a lot of thought to this Worry Thing. First of all, I think in a way it's all semantics. Call it fretting; call it overthinking; call it stressing. Call it what you will. To me, it's called caring. I worry because I care. And I think as a self-protective mechanism, I let my mind go to the ugliest, worst-case scenario I can envision. And then -- yay and alas! -- it was just a moisturizer globule; the noise my car made *wasn't* anything at all; and Cassidy and Julia always came home safe and sound and in one happy, healthy little package. Thank you, God.

Speaking of... I'm growing weary of some people out there (are you reading this, Chuck?) insinuating that one who worries doesn't really trust in God. "Let go. Let God." "Worrying is negative energy." "Worry doesn't empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength." I've heard them all. And I actually believe there's validity in all of those quotes. Whatever label we put on this emotion, I think it's normal, it's healthy, and that there's nothing wrong with it.

So it's now 8:45 p.m. This article is due to Paul, the publisher of this newspaper, by midnight tonite. I worry that if I don't get it to him in time, he'll be upset with me for procrastinating, and then he won't run this column this month, and then he won't want me to write for The Messenger anymore, and then I'll be fired. And then my mom will be all worried about me because she'll know I'll be all worried and upset.

See? I worry. Because I care. ★

Jodie Barringer Myers's email address is jbthinmint@hotmail.com.

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