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AMERICAN RIVER MESSENGER

Volume 9 • Issue 1

Serving Fair Oaks, Orangevale & Sacramento County

First Edition for January 2014

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Functionally Fit



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New Motor Laws Take Effect



New motor laws will affect all California drivers. It's up to you to know which laws have changed.

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - With 2014 just around the corner, the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is reminding motorists of some of the new laws that will become effective in the new year. The following laws go into effect on January 1, 2014, unless otherwise noted.

Bicycles: Passing Distance. AB 1371 (Bradford), known as the Three Feet for Safety Act, will require a motor vehicle driver passing a bicycle that is proceeding in the same direction to pass with no less than 3 feet between any part of the vehicle and any

part of the bicycle or driver. When three feet is not possible, the motor vehicle must slow to a reasonable and prudent speed and only pass when no danger is present to the bicyclist. Failing to do so can incur a fine, regardless of a collision or not. This law will take effect September 16, 2014.

Clean Air Vehicle Decals / "HOV Stickers." AB 266 (Yee) and SB 286 (Blumefield), together extend sunset dates for low emission, zero emission vehicles to operate in high occupancy vehicle lanes (HOV) without meeting occupancy

requirements to January 1, 2019.

Commercial Driver's License. AB 1047 (Linder) will allow the DMV to conduct the commercial drive test for the holder of an out-of-state commercial learner's permit. The department would electronically transfer the information to the motor vehicle department in the applicant's state of residence. AB 1047 also modifies the license class definitions to require a driver operating a bus weighing more than 26,000 pounds to hold a commercial Class B license and a driver operating a bus weighing 26,000 pounds or

less to hold a commercial Class C license.

DMV Vehicle Registration Pilot Program. SB 806 (Hueso) authorizes DMV to establish a pilot program to evaluate the use of alternatives to stickers, tabs, license plates, and registration cards, subject to certain requirements. It will also enable the DMV to experiment with electronic license plates, as well as facilitate DMV's ability to explore cost-effective alternatives to California's traditional metal license plate, plastic-coated registration stickers, and paper registration cards.

Registration and Vehicle Transfers Between Family Members. AB 443 (Lowenthal) prohibits the transfer of ownership of a vehicle to a relative or a revocable living trust until all parking or toll-violation fines and penalties reported to the DMV are paid by the transferee.

Teen Drivers. SB 194 (Galgiani) will prohibit a person who is under 18 years of age from using an electronic wireless communications device to write, send, or read a text-based communication while driving, even if it is equipped with a hands-free device.

Veterans License Plates. AB 244 (Bonilla) Requires the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) to sponsor a veterans' special interest license plate and requires the DMV to issue the veterans' plate if CalVet meets the current statutory requirements. This law creates, in addition to the current Honoring Veterans design of the Veteran's Organization Plate, a new program to reissue the Veteran design that was issued prior to January 1, 2010. These plates are available to all vehicle owners. The Department of Veterans Affairs must secure 7,500 pre-paid applications in order for the department to implement this plate program.

Additionally, the Department of Motor Vehicles will begin the process of implementing AB 60 (Alejo)—the new law requiring DMV to issue a driver license to an applicant who is unable to submit satisfactory proof that he/she is legally present in the United States.

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Hiring Pace and Economic Expectations Rising

Pacific Staffing Special Report

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Three quarters of Sacramento's top employers are optimistic about the economy in the New Year and those expectations will keep them busy hiring through Quarter 1. When asked directly seventy-six percent (76%) of human resource contacts were optimistic about economic growth and job markets in the Sacramento region for 2014.

Polled directly by telephone, that optimism is reflected in hiring activity as sixty percent (60%) of top companies say they are planning to hire in January, February and March.

This is a slightly more rapid pace of hiring than last year's first quarter when fifty-seven percent (57%) were hiring with thirty-six percent (36%) motivated to hire for growth, or workforce expansion in 2013.

Quarter 1 of 2014 finds forty-two percent (42%) hiring for growth, with thirty-eight percent (38%) hiring for attrition, or replacements among existing



workers in the first three months.

These are significant improvements in the market from regional employment and economic conditions just four years ago. As Pacific Staffing discovered then, the first three months of 2009 sent the market crashing with hiring freezes, workforce reductions, furloughs and

shortened workweeks, massive layoffs and companies going out of business as the national recession hit the area. That's history as seventy-four percent (74%) of those surveyed also say they expect their companies to grow in 2014.

While the majority of HR contacts were positive about Q1 2014, thirteen

percent (13%) remain pessimistic the economy would improve in the New Year. Two companies are expecting to reduce their workforce numbers due to seasonal change in the first three months of the year.

As the economy improves employers are beginning to share concerns about retention of essential skills, the need for specific technical backgrounds and some entry-level positions. Drivers who can pass DMV, drug and other background checks are in demand among distributors, bottling plants, construction supply and materials firms. Customer service, sales, manufacturing, warehouse and shipping lead hiring demand.

Of the top 100 Sacramento Regional Companies, 35% are Service, 36% are Manufacturers, 18% are Construction and 11% are Retail.

How does this Quarter compare to last Quarter, or last year? Find out for yourself.

For more information, employment blogs & market surveys go to www.pacificstaffing.com. ★



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An Educational Feast

CLINCHED! As capture A.I., West title for second year anniversary

Kaepernick struggles, Luck shines in Colts' 27-7 rout of Niners

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Orangevale Grange Announces New Officers



The Orangevale Grange new officers. Bottom row from left, Musician: Marilyn Dupray, Flora: Tanna Symons, Ceres: Leslie Parker, Secretary: Colleen Esola. Second Row, Gate Keeper: Greg Jones, Joe Stefanoni, Past National Grange officer, Treasurer: Shirley Baker, Lecturer: Rosemary Mathews, Lady Asst. Steward: Lynda Amore, Overseer: Cindsue Jones, Grange Master: Jerry Macklem, Asst. Steward: Bob Clouse, National Grange Master Ed Luttrell, Exec. Committee: Jim Happs. Top row: Steward: Paul Amore, Exec. Committee, Dale Baker, Exec Committee: Ed Parker.

By CindySue Jones

ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG) - On Wednesday December 17th 2013 The Orangevale Grange #354 annual session with the new elected officers were honored with the presents of their National Grange Master, Ed Luttrell. For the first time ever the Orangevale Grange new officers were sworn in by their National Grange Master Ed Luttrell. Nowhere in their history has this happened. It was such a privilege and a historic time for the Orangevale Grange.

The Orangevale Grange is focused on educating and

teaching our members how to make their life and the community they call home a better place. The community which is you, is invited to join us on Sunday January 12th 8:00 to 10:30 for our Orangevale Grange breakfast and discover more about us and how we help serve our community. We are located at 5807 Walnut Ave, Orangevale. All you can eat pancakes for \$5.00. We are well known for our biscuits and gravy. Check out our website



National Grange Master Ed Luttrell, Grange Master: Jerry Macklem.

OrangevaleGrange.org for our upcoming events or you can call #988-0806. See you there! ★

Sacramento County Sheriff's Community Meeting Schedule

This is your opportunity to hear what is occurring in your community and to ask questions, and have your neighbor concerns addressed.

ARDEN, ARDEN-ARCADE
1st Tuesday, 6:00pm
North Service Center,
2500 Marconi Ave., Sacramento
Jan 7, March 4

ORANGEVALE
2nd Tuesday, 6:00pm
Orangevale Recreation and Park
District

6826 Hazel Ave., Orangevale
Jan 14, March 11

FAIR OAKS
4th Tuesday, 6:00pm
La Vista High School
4501 Bannister Rd, F.O.(North
of Winding Wy) Jan 28,
March 25

OLD FOOTHILL FARMS
2nd Wednesday, 6:30pm
Pioneer Elementary School
5816 Pioneer Wy., Sacramento
Jan 8, March 12

**NORTH HIGHLANDS/NEW
FOOTHILL FARMS**
1st Thursday, 5:30pm
North Highlands Community
Center
6040 Watt Ave, North Highlands
Feb 6, March 6

CARMICHAEL
3rd Tuesday, 6:00pm
Del Campo High School,
Library
4925 Dewey Drive, Carmichael
Jan 21, March 18 ★

New Credit Card Scam

Ted Patterson, Carmichael
Neighborhood Watch
via Sherrie Carhart,
Sac County Sheriff

Just when you think you've heard it all. Here comes another scam. This scam is very clever. Be very careful out there! One could easily fall for this - beware of people bearing gifts!

There is a new and clever credit card scam. Please circulate this. Someone it happened to says it works like this:

Wednesday a week ago, I had a phone call from someone who said that he was from some outfit called: "Express Couriers" asking if I was going to be home because there was a package for me, and the caller said that the delivery would arrive at my home in roughly an hour. And sure enough, about an hour later, a uniformed delivery man turned up with a beautiful basket of flowers and wine. I was very surprised since it did not involve any special occasion or holiday, and I certainly didn't expect anything like it. Intrigued about who would send me such a gift, I inquired as to who the sender is. The delivery man's reply was, he was only delivering the gift package, but allegedly a card was

being sent separately; (the card has never arrived!). There was also a consignment note with the gift.

He then went on to explain that because the gift contained alcohol, there was a \$3.50 "delivery charge" as proof that he had actually delivered the package to an adult, and not just left it on the doorstep where it could be stolen or taken by anyone.

This sounded logical and I offered to pay him cash. He then said that the company required the payment to be by credit or debit card only so that everything is properly accounted for.

My husband, who by this time was standing beside me, pulled his wallet out of his pocket with the credit/debit card, and 'John', the "delivery man", asked my husband to swipe the card on the small mobile card machine which had a small screen and keypad where Frank was also asked to enter the card's PIN and security number. A receipt was printed out and given to us.

To our horrible surprise, between Thursday and the following Monday, \$4,000 had been charged/withdrawn from our credit/debit account at various ATM machines.

It appeared that somehow the

"mobile credit card machine" which the delivery man carried now had all the info necessary to create a "dummy" card with all our card details after my husband swiped our card and entered the requested PIN and security number.

Upon finding out about the illegal transactions on our card, we immediately notified the bank which issued us the card, and our credit/debit account was closed. We also personally went to the Police, where it was confirmed that it is definitely a scam because several households had been similarly hit.

WARNING: Be wary of accepting any "surprise gift or package", which you neither expected nor personally ordered, especially if it involves any kind of payment as a condition of receiving the gift or package. Also, never accept anything if you do not personally know or there is no proper identification of who the sender is.

Above all, the only time you should give out any personal credit/debit card information is when you yourself initiated the purchase or transaction! If you pass this on, it may just prevent someone else from being swindled! ★

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Paul V. Scholl**

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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.

American River Messenger is a member
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Over 50 and Functionally Fit

By Linda Harper

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - A brisk walk to the corner and back, riding a bicycle and Dance Aerobics are all good forms of exercise for those 50 years old and beyond. That is, unless you suffer from the tremors of Parkinson's Disease, the instability associated with Multiple Sclerosis, or the immobility that accompanies Arthritis, Obesity and a multitude of other Neurologic and Orthopedic conditions.

For older people who have these afflictions, life as they knew it can seem lost and unattainable. For those with balance difficulties, the simple act of walking across a room can be terrifying, for fear of falling. Taking a tumble can be life threatening for a senior who can't get up on their own, or someone who suffers broken bones and even worse. According to several research organizations, there's been a staggering increase in Neurological diseases in seniors over the last two decades. There have also been hopeful breakthroughs in the creation of new drugs, more accurate treatments and the development of programs to provide symptom management.

Although there is no cure for many current Neurological diseases plaguing our aging communities, one positive goal is keeping older people with special needs successfully independent and out of the "old folks home," so to speak. Pam Markee, owner of Markee Personal Trainer (MPT), is determined to help as many seniors as she can to experience a happy, self-reliant life.

From the outside of MPT, a private studio located at 5250 Date Ave. Ste B, Sacramento, you can't tell that inside, people's lives are changing for the better, one movement at a time. Pam and her assistant, Lanell Martinez, lead their students in balance exercises and strength activities, individually designed to achieve flexibility and functionality. The ultimate outcome for seniors participating in a program at MPT, is to regain the ability to take care of themselves. No two programs are alike because everyone has different needs. Classes are private and focused. Pam's professionalism, and her sensitivity to each pupil's situation can be attributed to her caring nature, and her extensive specialized education and experience. She's worked as a Personal Trainer and



Markee recognizes that embarking on a path to independence for those who are trapped by their body's inability to move fluidly, can be very challenging. Photo by Paul Scholl

Nutrition Consultant for over 20 years. Markee and her assistant are CAFS certified through the Internationally acclaimed Gray Institute of Functional Training, a school of Applied Functional Science. The instruction they received has allowed them the ability to bridge the gap between Physical Therapy and Personal Training. They consider themselves "Movement Practitioners."

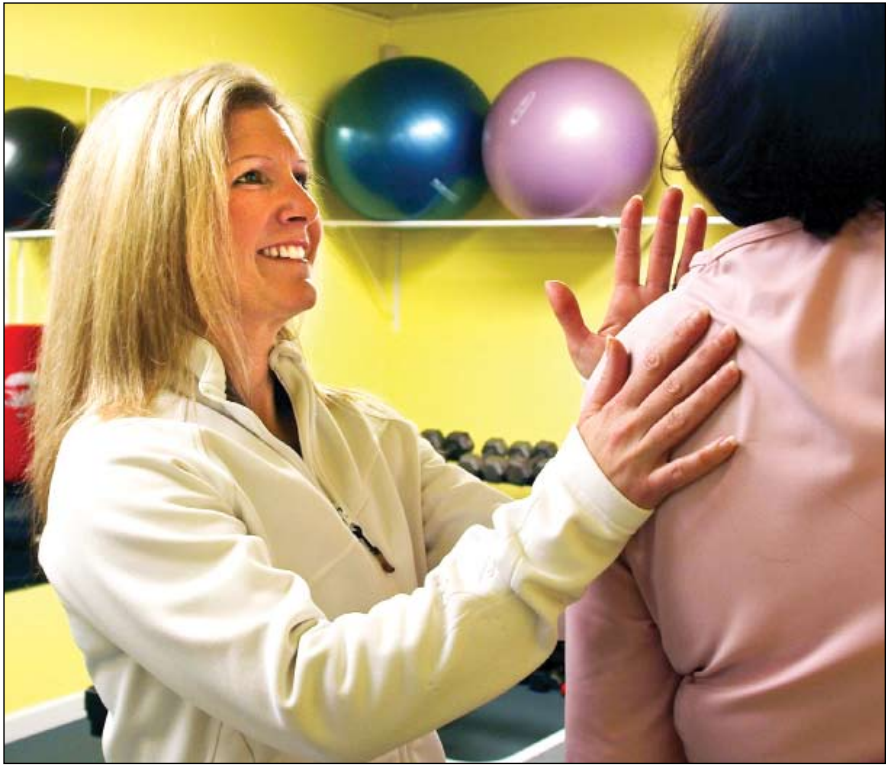
Markee recognizes that embarking on a path to independence for those who are trapped by their body's inability to move fluidly, can be very challenging. The sessions she designs for her clients are as individual as their symptoms are. A course of physical exercises is distinguished by the overall needs of each person. Some people require anonymity for one reason or another, so privacy is a key factor in all classes. Pam evaluates every new person who comes to her studio. She takes into consideration

their personal situation and goals, then develops a plan which includes exercises, lifestyle coaching and nutrition awareness. Creating an avenue for overall well-being is what Pam Markee strives to accomplish for each senior who comes to her for help. She feels a sense of pride for every client who meets their goals and regains their self-confidence, integral steps to gaining independence. Pam's unique approach to Personal Training was recently featured on "Good Day Sacramento."

A program at MPT is affordable and comprehensive. The studio is also open to those without Neurological problems, who want to achieve good health through personal training. To make an appointment with Pam Markee for an evaluation and tour of her studio, call (916) 704-4330. For more information log on to www.markeepersonaltraining.com. ★



A program at MPT is affordable and comprehensive. The studio is also open to those without Neurological problems, who want to achieve good health through personal training. Photo by Paul Scholl



From the outside of MPT, a private studio located at 5250 Date Ave. Ste B, Sacramento, you can't tell that inside, people's lives are changing for the better, one movement at a time. Photo by Susan Maxwell Skinner

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By Pastor Ray Dare

What are you expecting out of life? When you look into your future, what do you see? Do you look at your future with the eyes of faith or with fear? If you're not expecting the best, if you're not facing your future with faith, if you're not expecting God to do something significant in your life, then God wants to change your perspective.

When I say, "Expect the best," I'm not talking about wishful thinking. You know, "I hope I don't have any problems in life." Right! You will have problems in life! You've already lost that one. You will have difficulties – count on it. Expecting the best, is not denying reality; it's not denying the facts, the circumstances. The Psalmist writes in Psalm 125:1, "Those who trust in the Lord are steady as Mount Zion, unmoved by any circumstance." Faith is not denying the circumstances, faith is being unmoved by the circumstances. Faith is moving ahead in spite of the circumstances. Faith is facing the facts without

How to Expect the Best

getting discouraged by them. You may be thinking, "Pastor, how can I expect the best, when everything in my life seems so wrong? You don't know what I'm going through! My problems are too big! Why should I expect the best?" The answer to that is found in a very famous Bible story. The story of David verses Goliath, found in 1 Samuel 17. It's a story about faith, about expecting the best in the face of over-whelming circumstances. The Bible says that Goliath was over nine feet tall! He was buff, a skilled warrior and a fighting champion. Goliath had everything that the world said he needed to be successful. He had the size, he had skill, he had the right education and training, he had the right equipment. But David had something that Goliath didn't have. David had faith! David had a relationship with God and he expected the best. Notice what he said to Goliath, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord...This day the Lord will hand you over to me...for the battle is the Lord's..." 1 Samuel 17:45-57 (NIV). David expected the best; he expected God to slay the giant.

You may have some giant problems in your life right now. Today you may be facing a financial Goliath. You may be facing a health Goliath. You may be facing a relational Goliath. I don't know what you've been through or what you're going through right now, but I do know this – God is bigger than your Giant and He wants to help you. He will help you, as you place your hope and trust in Him. Not in your own ability or reasoning or resources, but in Him.

God wants you to enjoy life! He doesn't want you to go through life in fear and doubt and dread. He wants you to face your future with faith, to expect the best. But that begins by taking the first step of faith – turning control of your life over to Him, relying upon Him. I'm not talking about religion or joining a church. I'm talking about a genuine, day-by-day relationship with God, a daily reliance upon God through his son Jesus Christ. That's what gave David the confidence to face his giant and it will give you confidence to face the giants in your life.

So, never let another person or people or giant problem intimidate you, because with God on your side, you can expect the best. Today's impossibility is tomorrow's miracle.

Pastor Ray. ★

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Annual “Sacramento Museum Day” Returns February 1

Free or Half-Priced Admission to 30 Sites

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Imagine. Explore. Discover. To the delight of the greater Sacramento area community, thirty local museums will offer free or half-priced admission from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, February 1, 2014, during the 16th Annual Sacramento Museum Day! Two museums have recently joined the association and community-wide event, including the California Statewide Museum Collections Center and the Center For Sacramento History. During the highly anticipated event, 28 of the 30 museums will offer free admission whereas two destinations located in residential areas — the Sacramento Zoo and Fairytale Town — will offer half-priced admission to offset parking control and security costs. Coordinated by the Sacramento Association of Museums (SAM) and the Sacramento Convention & Visitors Bureau, this hugely popular event is proudly presented by Chipotle Mexican Grill.

Sacramento Museum Day, a popular Sacramento cultural tradition, is designed to encourage all members of the community to experience the Capital City’s incredible wealth of art, history, science and wildlife — at little or no cost. Many of the museums are within walking distance of each other and easily accessible via public transportation. Event coordinators suggest that guests plan to visit no more than two or three different museums on this day in order to allow adequate time to enjoy the experience and to travel between individual sites.

In addition to offering free or reduced cost admission, some of the destinations are offering special activities during Sacramento Museum Day. For instance, the Aerospace Museum will offer an “open cockpit” day where most aircraft will be open for viewing (weather permitting), a children’s art contest and on-site exhibitors such as the Tuskegee Airmen. And, some of today’s big monster tractors will hit the road to make a special trip to be on display at the Heidrick Ag History Center in Woodland.

“We are very excited to continue this popular annual tradition and we are proud to welcome two new museums to the event this year,” said Sacramento Association of Museums Chair Kristina Swanson. “With each passing year, more and more community members are introduced to the amazing array of arts, culture and museum offerings available in the Sacramento region. And, we are especially pleased that Chipotle Mexican Grill has continued as a title sponsor. The support of generous corporate sponsors is invaluable and helps to make Sacramento Museum Day possible each year.”

While admission is free at 28 of the participating museums during Sacramento Museum Day, admission to two destinations located in residential areas are half-priced as follows: Sacramento Zoo is \$5.75 for adults, \$3.75 for children ages 2-11 and free for children under two; Fairytale Town is \$2.50 per person and free for children ages one and under.

Due to the popularity of Sacramento Museum Day, some locations must limit the number of admissions for safety reasons. The event is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. but note the last guests will be admitted at 4 p.m. More detailed information about participating museums, addresses, limitations, suggested parking and public transit options is available at www.sacmuseums.org (click on “Events”), or by calling the Sacramento Convention & Visitors Bureau at (916) 808-7777.

Sacramento Museum Day 2014 is proudly supported by active and engaged community partners. In addition to the title sponsor Chipotle Mexican Grill, other sponsors include KSEG 96.9 FM, Outword Magazine and STAR 106.5 FM.

Comprised of 30 greater Sacramento area museums working in partnership with the Sacramento Convention & Visitors Bureau, SAM’s mission is to raise awareness of local museums by giving the community the opportunity to discover California’s fine art, history, science and wildlife treasures. SAM achieves its mission through implementing cooperative promotions and developing strategic marketing alliances, by encouraging sharing of knowledge and resources among its partner institutions, and by conducting Sacramento Museum Day each year.

Source: T-Rock Communications

FAIR OAKS COMMUNITY UPDATE



By County Supervisor Susan Peters

Through the generosity of The American River Messenger this column serves to provide an update about matters affecting the unincorporated community of Fair Oaks.

Community Coffee Meetings Begin

Please join me this month when my community coffee meeting series starts up again. These morning sessions are held five times throughout the year and include guest speakers.

The first meeting for 2014 will be at 7:30 am on Wednesday, January 15, at the Fair Oaks Water District’s conference room, 10326 Fair Oaks Blvd. near Winding Way. That morning’s topic will be

the state of our local water supply presented by the San Juan Water District.

Coffee naturally will be provided. I hope you can attend.

Sheriff Community Meetings

The Sheriff’s Department holds regular community meetings to share information about trends in crime and recent activities. Please consider starting 2014 by becoming involved in Neighborhood Watch as a way to help keep Fair Oaks safe by attending the next community meeting. It will be held on Tuesday, January 28, 6 pm, at La Vista High School, 4501 Bannister Road, north of Winding Way.

Process Keeps Parkway Safe

It worked! Last summer a new procedure was implemented for the American River Parkway when Sacramento County discovered a boozing Saturday was being promoted through social media that fell outside the standard alcohol restrictions for the weekends of Labor Day, Independence Day and Memorial Day. By implementing the new procedure, parkway rangers were able to corral the unofficial party so it did not become a dangerous day on the river like years past when excessive alcohol consumption fueled fights, public nudity, littering, etc.

The Board of Supervisors started the alcohol ban with the 2006 Labor Day weekend and it is applicable for all warm weather holiday weekends in the parkway between Hazel and Watt avenues with an exception for Ancil Hoffman Golf Course. This reasonable restriction had been working well to keep the parkway safe but party-going advocates attempted to encourage excessive alcohol consumption via social media on other weekends so in 2012 the Board delegated authority to the Director of Regional Parks in consultation with the County Executive the ability to prohibit alcohol in the Parkway on any additional days between Memorial Day and Labor Day when such a ban is needed to maintain order. Last year an attempt was made to circumvent the ban via another social media campaign but it was not successful as a result of implementing the additional restriction.

It should be a thought provoking discussion. For more information, contact the Metro Chamber at 319-4261 or visit metrochamber.org. ★

Susan Peters represents the Third District on the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. She can be reached at susanpeterson@saccounty.net.

Registration Opens for Nature Bowl Science and Conservation Competition

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Registration is now open for the 29th annual Nature Bowl, an elementary school activity-based competition held in the spring. Coordinated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) in partnership with local organizations and agencies, the Nature Bowl increases the science and conservation literacy of third through sixth grade students in the Sacramento Valley and Sierra foothills.

The Nature Bowl is open to students from any school, group or organized youth club. Participants employ teamwork, creativity and critical thinking while participating in group learning activities centered on local and regional natural environments. The first round will be held at 10 locations from mid-March through early May. Teams will consist of three to seven students each and several teams will advance to the finals to be held at California State University, Sacramento on May 17, 2014.

Teachers, youth group leaders or parents can coach a team.

A coaches’ workshop is scheduled Jan. 16, 2014 from 3:45 to 5 p.m. at the Nimbus Hatchery in Rancho Cordova and the semifinal at Nimbus Hatchery is scheduled April 3, 2014. For reservations, please call (916) 358-2884. Another coaches’ workshop is scheduled Jan. 15, 2014 at Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael from 3:45 to 5 p.m., with the semifinal at Effie Yeaw Nature Center scheduled March 11, 2014. For more information, please call (916) 489-4918. A new semifinal is also being offered at Sutter’s Landing Regional Park in Sacramento on either May 1 or 2 (date to be determined). For more information, please call (916) 284-1627.

For more information about the Nature Bowl, please call (916) 358-2353 or visit the CDFW website at www.dfg.ca.gov/regions/2/naturebowl/. ★

Source: California Department of Fish and Wildlife News Release

New Motor Laws Take Effect

Continued from Page 1

States —by drafting new regulations and preparing field offices to process new applications. The new law becomes operative by January 1, 2015. The applicant will be required to meet all other driver license qualifications.

For complete information on chaptered bills enacted in 2013, please refer to the Legislative Counsel website at www.LegInfo.ca.gov.

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1. Kenyan warrior
6. That male
9. * ____ down snow pile to build fort
13. Graven images
14. E in B.C.E.
15. Coveted publicity spot
16. Flooring choice, pl.
17. Bag in Paris
18. Get up
19. *Ice fisherman's gear, pl.
21. *Christmas, e.g.
23. Of a female
24. Farmer's joy
25. Nile viper
28. Famous bus rider
30. Comes clean
35. Denials
37. "National Velvet" author Bagnold
39. Like 1950s style, today
40. Put one over
41. Paisley in paisley fabric, e.g.
43. Large aquatic tetrapod
44. Impede
46. Lush
47. * "I flew like a flash, tore open the shutters, and threw up the ____"
48. Sci-fi weaponry
50. Snaky swimmers
52. Yellow river tributary
53. "Twelve ____" of "Gone with the Wind"
55. Feverish
57. *Cozy fabric
61. Dough
64. Sanctioned by law
65. Boiling blood
67. Pontifical
69. Convex molding
70. Convent dweller
71. Manicurist's file
72. Pay for work
73. Down Under bird
74. Ranees wrap

DOWN

1. Technology school
2. Mine entrance
3. Solo activities
4. First in Hebrew alphabet
5. Federal Reserve in relation to U.S. currency
6. Hitler's deputy
7. George Gershwin's brother
8. " ____ Man" (Village People)
9. Reality TV actress Spelling
10. Full of enthusiasm
11. ____ Verde National Park
12. Mouse to a snake
15. Less agitated
20. Intro
22. Stupid person
24. Groups of lay people
25. *Winged impression

26. Composer of U.S. military marches
27. *Hides or skins used for hats and gloves
29. *From above in winter
31. Shorter than seconds
32. Scarecrow stuffing
33. Jagged, as a leaf's edge
34. *2014 Olympic site
36. ____ gin fizz
38. Can be done in our out
42. Manuscript sheet
45. Quick, to Dora
49. Ed.'s request
51. *To be hit in winter?
54. "A Fish Called Wanda" star
56. Andean animal
57. Move like lava
58. Bulgarian money
59. All excited
60. Cairo's waterway
61. Maitre d's list
62. Copycat
63. Fabled racer
66. *Hot buttered ____
68. Caustic chemical

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

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

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Volunteers Needed

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Crossword Puzzle on Page 6

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



By Ronnie McBrayer

I chuckle every time I hear this story. It seems a poor fellow’s vehicle had conked out on the side of the road. After waving about like a banshee for more than an hour, he finally convinced a speeding motorist to stop and help. “If you could just push my car at a speed of 40 miles per hour,” the stranded motorist said to his newly arrived partner, “I’m convinced it will start, and I will be on my way.”

Sliding back behind the wheel of his car, the driver was relieved. The ordeal of being stuck in the middle of nowhere was finally over. He would be rolling again in a matter of seconds, all his worries behind him. Sadly, that exactly where his worries were: Right behind him.

As he waited for that gentle nudge on the rear bumper that would move him down the road, it never came. Looking around he discovered that his Good Samaritan had disappeared. What a cruel joke! Where could he have gone?

It was then that he saw his rescuer in the rearview mirror. He was a quarter of a mile away and bearing down on the broken down car at 40 miles per hour – just as he had been instructed. But the driver had not communicated as clearly as he had intended.

We Christians tend to bumble our communication a little

Clear Communication is Compassionate Communication

more than most. In these harrowing days when fewer and fewer people seem to stop and listen to what we have to say, we sometimes think the answer is to scream a little louder. Picket signs. Demonstrations. Boycotts. Petitions. Displays of righteous indignation accompanied by red faces and bulging carotids. The result is indeed clearer communication. It’s clear that we are mad as hell about something.

Without a doubt most Christians want to see serious change in the world. I do too. I would love to see less violence, greater compassion, a moratorium on our limitless consumerism, and fewer public displays of vulgarity, just to name a few. But the solution is not to meet what we regard as societal inadequacies with the equal inadequacies of being judgmental, taking revenge, waging cultural warfare, and condemning every person who doesn’t agree with us.

If, in our passion to communicate something we feel very strongly about, said communication becomes hateful, as Christians we have betrayed our message. The path of Christ is to love those whom we consider our opponents. The way of Jesus is to engage and pray for our enemies, not to kill them. And don’t be fooled; our words can be as murderous (or more so) than flying bullets and hand grenades.

Mahatma Gandhi was a man that the world – including the Christian universe of which I am a part – could learn a great deal from. He revolutionized India with his leadership of the Indian Independence Movement, and he perfected the philosophy of

non-violent resistance. He met the injustice and oppression of his day with peace, integrity, and resolve.

Gandhi famously said, “We must become the change we wish to see in the world.” That is, if I want a less violent society, I must become less violent. If I want to experience more compassion, I must become compassionate. If I want less consumerism, I should pull my own leg out of the commercialistic trap. If I want to protect my children from overt sensuality, then I should teach them respect for others, the value of a person and the human body, and I should probably turn the TV off earlier in the evening.

So, if you are one who loves a good boycott, why not take a different tactic: A little grace, a truce, a lowering of the weapons might be a necessary change of pace. And if you have been on the receiving end of a few displays of virtuous disapproval, cut some slack for your accusers as well. We’re all just trying to get the car rolling again, but without clear communication, it is nothing but a wreck waiting to happen.

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. ★

Ronnie McBrayer is a syndicated columnist, pastor, and author of multiple books. You can read more and receive regular e-columns in your inbox at www.ronniemcbrayer.me.

Cold is as Cold Feels and I Don’t Like Feeling Cold

Dr. James L. Snyder

I was sitting on the back porch sipping an ice-cold tea with a splash of lemon when I received a text from a relative up north. I was enjoying a pleasant afternoon basking in the winter sun of Florida.

I am not sure what God was thinking of when He created the north with all that bad weather and snow and such, but I know what He was thinking of when He created the South especially Florida. He was thinking in particular of me and my insatiable love of the sun. Basking in the Florida sun is the great reward of being smart and moving to Florida.—

I have some friends who were born in Florida and think they are a little bit better than me. I remind them that they had no choice of being born in Florida but I, on the other hand, moved to Florida on my own volition. I think I have the upper hand on that one.

I may be old but I certainly do delight in the modern technology. It used to be that when you got a call from a relative you had to answer the telephone and talk to the person on the other end for as long as they hung on. Today, thanks to modern gadgetry; when a relative wants to contact me, they usually do it by text. I love it.

Getting a text is a strange thing, or it can be. If I do not respond right away, I can always claim that there is “something wrong with my cell phone and my texting isn’t working right today.” Then I can get back to that relative whenever it suits me. Or, as the case with some relatives, and you know who I mean, I can ignore it.

If you are a relative of mine and have not heard from me or had any of your text answered the simple answer is, I am not really ignoring you (ha ha ha) my cell phone is not working correctly.

This relative that text me was complaining about how cold it was up north and even had the courtesy to send me a picture of their backyard just chock-full of some white substance known as snow.

The text read, “I bet you wish you were here to enjoy this?”

I think that relative would have lost that bet for sure. I love those snow scenes on postcards or in text messages like this one, but as to be personally involved with all of the frigid snow, do not bet on me!

Years ago, Cold and I experienced a deep disagreement and we have been separated ever since. As far as I am concerned, the separation is final! I really do not want anything more to do with Cold. We are not even on speaking terms.

Cold, after all, is a relative thing especially when the relatives are up north in the winter.

Up north, they complain when the temperature falls below 30.

Here in Florida I complain when the temperature falls below 70.

Whenever the temperature dips below that magical 70, I have to break out one of my sweaters. What an inconvenience for me to have to put on a sweater because it is just a little bit cool on the outside.

Then my relative sent me a picture of her standing in the snow looking like the abominable snowman. She had more clothes on than I actually own and have in my closet. I wonder how she walks around wearing all those clothes? How in the world does she ever sit down wearing all those clothes?

And what about that thing wrapped around her head? We have hats here in Florida but not quite like the one she was wearing. It looked like she was wearing some igloo.

At this point in my life, I could not afford, for a variety of reasons, to move back north.

I do not think my relatives up north could put up with me at this point. They offer me a friendly invitation to come and spend some time with them during the winter season. I really could not handle it. As soon as the temperature dropped below 70, I would be complaining, grouching and working on everybody’s nerves.

I would be such a nuisance that they would have to get together and buy me a plane ticket back to sunny Florida. My relatives should thank me for not moving up north to “enjoy the snow” with them. See how much I am saving my relatives? Do they appreciate it?

No relationship is quite like that relationship that spans several hundred miles. You know the old saying, “Absence makes the heart grow fonder.” So, if you add distance to that absence you have the epitome of a wonderfully fond heart.

Many things separate us from one another. Sometimes that separation is voluntary and sometimes it isn’t.

The apostle Paul understood that nothing could separate him from God. “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

It does not matter how cold it is outside as long as inside there is a warm relationship with God bordering on fiery expectation. ★

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.

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Sunday the 9th at 1:30 PM – Squirrel! - Feeling a little nutty? Come join us for a relaxing stroll in the Nature Preserve to learn about our little bushy-tailed neighbors.

Saturday the 15th at 10:30 AM – Birding for Families - Bring the family out for a birding walk led by a Naturalist and our special guest guides from the Sacramento Audubon Society. Birdwatchers of all levels welcomed! Make sure to bring your binoculars!

Sunday the 16th at 1:30 PM – Sensational Senses - How do humans and animals explore and get information from their environment? Come learn some fun facts about the function of your senses and compare them with the sensory ability of local wildlife. Meet a live animal!

Saturday the 22nd at 10:30 AM – Duck, Duck, Goose – Winter is a great time to see waterfowl along the American River. Join a naturalist on a guided walk to look for herons, ducks, geese and other birds along the river. Bring your binoculars or borrow some of ours! All ages welcome.

Sunday the 23rd at 1:30 PM – Leapin’ Lizards - Come meet a skink, blue belly and other resident lizards and find out what make these cold-blooded critters so amazing.



By Marlys Johnsen Norris, Christian Author

Believers need to realize some interesting facts about their personal relationship with God. When one sincerely invites Jesus into their heart and life, He never leaves regardless what kind of life one determines to live. His promise is never violated even if the person decides to ignore His teaching and facts. God knows the heart of every person. Their name is written in indelible ink in God’s Book of Life and God does not erase it when a person strays from Him.

However, some people will

Sin Separates Us from the Family

refer to one who walks away as not being sincere when they accepted Christ as their Savior. And they fail to follow the precepts of God as written in the Bible. They say they are using God as an insurance policy to avoid Hell; thereby dishonoring God. Believers need to stop judging. It is God’s job not ours! We are not God!

Our job is to be a vessel of His love to restore that person back into God’s grace. They listen, read and examine your happier life, they will desire the same thing for themselves. Ultimately because of a loving witness they will return.

We went to church where a man was unfaithful in his marriage. Everyone knew about it! I was shocked when for the first time our church followed the precepts taught in Scriptures about such a situation. The elders made a decision and ex-communicated

him publicly in front of the congregation. He left for a couple years and He was no longer a part of the church. Then, he humbled himself and came back after asking his wife to forgive him and she did. He repented publicly before the congregation and was restored. This was a powerful witness of God’s saving grace and mercy in operation within the church as they also forgave him.

When someone is a part of the kingdom of God in any church, Scripture tells us in John 17 -- we become “One in Him” so it is like a family. When one sins and falls away it affects the whole body of Christ. I know only how deeply it affected me! ★

Marlys Johnsen Norris Christian Author of 7 books “God Moves Mountains, It was a Miracle!” Marlysjn@gmail.com



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Small Business Wish List for 2014



Commentary by John Kabateck, NFIB/CA Executive Director

To say that 2013 was challenging for small business is really an understatement. Coming off of 2012 saddled with additional taxes with the passage of Prop. 30 and more regulations with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, many small business owners certainly thought that some restraint might be shown this year.

That turned out to be too good to be true – our elected representatives were able to get a 25% increase in the minimum wage passed, which means that small business owners will be paying \$10 an hour in 2016. And there are some who are proposing \$15 an hour in the future!

While legislators opted to heed the call of Big Labor instead of their constituents to get the minimum wage bill passed, NFIB was able to stop a slew of other bills that would have lowered the threshold for increasing parcel taxes and raised upwards of \$6 billion in taxes on a host of other things including property, plastic bags, sweetened beverages and oil. But make no mistake – these bills will be back in 2014 as legislators try once again to tax and fee small businesses out of existence.

So as we look forward to 2014, what is it that small business wants – no, needs – in order to survive and thrive in California?

First, small business owners call on the Governor and

Legislature to rein in the out-of-control California Air Resources Board. CARB has never taken the time to talk to and hear from small business about the devastating impacts that AB 32, cap and trade, and diesel regulations are having on Main Street. If those regulations continue to be rammed through without small business – our number one job creators – in mind, there will be unintended consequences for small employers, including job loss and business closures. And while we are on the topic of state agencies, our state leaders need to match actions with rhetoric to stop state agencies from shaking down mom and pops. There are too many agency representatives out there acting like bounty hunters, instead of finding ways to help – there is no incentive to help businesses when the fines go into agency budgets. We don't think this is what the Governor had in mind as a way to keep and attract business here.

Regulatory reform also needs to continue to be a priority for the Governor and those in the Capitol. We were able to achieve some Prop. 65 reform this year, with Assembly Bill 227 (Gatto), which will allow certain businesses, including restaurants, fourteen days to fix any Prop. 65 warning problems before they can be sued. This is important and welcome because Prop. 65 lawsuits generate twice the revenue for attorneys that ADA lawsuits do. We need to bring honest science to "green chemistry" and need to stop paving the way for plaintiff's attorneys to sue small businesses. Much more needs to be done to hold greedy lawyers accountable and give small business owners more certainty in the midst of all the permits and rules they have to comply with.

Finally, on the legal front, we are hopeful that next year the California Supreme Court will review and overturn precedent in the lower courts that says that business owners must compensate employees at a minimum hourly rate for non-productive time, even if those employees

make an annual salary far in excess of what they could possibly make working at minimum wage. It is time for some level-headed decisions to be made in favor of small business owners, who treat their employees like family and want what is best for them.

If all else fails and we don't get what we need from those already in office, small business owners want to see more of their own serving in the Legislature. NFIB/CA and our members certainly appreciate those currently in office who support small business, but there aren't nearly enough in the Capitol building. We need leaders who have had direct experience in signing the front of a check – and who will put Main Street's interests above unions, trial lawyers, or big corporations. This is a huge priority for NFIB and is the only way that small business owners will truly be heard and given opportunities for success in this state.

We don't think hard working, uncertain mom and pops are asking too much of our leaders in Sacramento these days – simple common sense will go a long way in fixing a lot of the challenges that small businesses face. Perhaps if our politicians make it a practice to stop and ask themselves, "What would a small business owner do?" we all might find a greater spirit of hope on Main Street - not just during the holiday season but every day of the year.

For more than 70 years, the National Federation of Independent Business has been the Voice of Small Business, taking the message from Main Street to the halls of Congress and all 50 state legislatures. NFIB annually surveys its members on state and federal issues vital to their survival as America's economic engine and biggest creator of jobs. NFIB's educational mission is to remind policymakers that small businesses are not smaller versions of bigger businesses; they have very different challenges and priorities. Learn more at www.NFIB.com/ca. ★



Commentary by David Koenig

I love that line from the movie Caddyshack. Judge Smails offers it up to Danny Noonan who is shamelessly begging for a scholarship as he tells of his family's financial woes while caddying for the judge. I thought of this while watching the debates and protests this month over raising the minimum wage for fast-food

workers. Speaker after speaker got up and whined about people not being able to support their families and the evil CEO's reaping all the profits. What I want to know is when working at a McDonalds or Subway became a career to support a family?

I thought these jobs were for kids just starting out looking for work or students working their way through college. \$8.00 per hour is a lot of money to pay some kid for flipping burgers or mopping floors but if we start paying them \$10.00-\$15.00 per hour then businesses are just going to close up shop or scale back the workforce. When will we finally learn our lesson? Back in the 90's they tried to make it so everyone could own a house and the market collapsed because of faulty loans.

In the early 2000's they tried to say that everyone deserved a college education and you ended up with a bunch of people with worthless degree's and mounting

student loan debt. We just passed the Affordable (?) Care Act so everyone can have health coverage and that nightmare is just starting to unfold so why are we looking to raise the minimum wage on top of it? But if you're going to raise it to \$10.00 per hour, why not make it \$20.00 so people can afford more for their families? Or \$30.00 so people can splurge on their kids like the evil rich people who probably stole their fortunes or cheated someone out of them?

What happened to hard work and earning your keep? Our nation has turned into a bunch of Cousin Eddie's from Christmas Vacation being unemployed for 7 years holding out for a management position. Since when did cleaning toilets, picking up trash or digging ditches become jobs that were below us? Or \$8.00 minimum wage become too little to work for? Isn't it called minimum wage for a reason? ★

CDPH Warns Not to Eat The Cultured Kitchen's Cashew Cheese Products Due to Health Risk

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director and State Health Officer Dr. Ron Chapman today warned people not to eat cashew cheese products manufactured by The Cultured Kitchen because they may be contaminated with Salmonella. Fifteen cases of illnesses have been reported in the Western United States, with twelve of the cases occurring in California. Three patients have been hospitalized and no deaths have been reported.

The Cultured Kitchen of West Sacramento, California has initiated a voluntary recall of all flavors of its cashew cheese products with expiration dates on or before April 19, 2014,

due to the risk of contamination with Salmonella. The products were sold in natural food stores throughout Northern California and Northern Nevada, and at farmers markets in Sacramento County.

The cashew cheese products were sold in eight-ounce plastic containers in the following flavors: Herb, smoked cheddar, pepper jack, habanero cilantro lime, basil pesto and white cheddar. Photos of the recalled product labels are on the CDPH website.

While the cashew cheese products are no longer being sold at retail facilities, CDPH is concerned that consumers may still have some of these products in their homes. Consumers in possession of these recalled products

should discard them or return them to the place of purchase for a refund.

Symptoms of Salmonella infection include fever, abdominal cramps and diarrhea, which may be bloody. Most infected people recover within a week; however, some may develop complications and require hospitalization. Infants, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems are at highest risk for severe illness.

Consumers experiencing any ill effects after eating these products should consult their health care provider. Consumers that observe the product being sold should call CDPH's toll-free complaint line at (800) 495-3232. ★

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Thursday, June 12
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Thursday, January 30 • Friday, February 28
Friday, March 28 • Thursday, April 24
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Friday, January 17 • Thursday, March 20
Friday, May 16
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**Reservations Required, please RSVP
to Lisa West at LisaW@EastLawn.com**

Seating is limited to 30 attendees per seminar

AARP Tax-Aide Program Requests Volunteer Phone Bank Assistance

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The AARP Tax-Aide program requests volunteers who will schedule tax appointments for AARP tax preparation locations. Volunteers work at the 2-1-1 call center phone bank, located at 2020 Hurley Way, near Cal-Expo. Volunteers are requested to work a minimum of two four-hour (half day) shifts, Monday - Friday.

Calls would be taken January 15 through April 15. Volunteers would be given a 3 hour orientation session by 2-1-1 staff. Please contact Norm Losk at norm.losk@comcast.net.

AARP Tax-Aide is a program of the AARP Foundation, offered in conjunction with the IRS. This volunteer position provides an opportunity to learn new skills and provide valuable, fulfilling service to the community. AARP membership is not a requirement. ★

Grief Recovery Workshop begins in February

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The next Grief Recovery Workshop will begin on Friday, February 7, 2014, 2:30-4:30 PM and will end on March 14, 2014. Doors open at 2:00 PM. The Grief Recovery Workshop is a 6-Week program, two hours each session. The topics include: Understanding Grief, Stress/Anxiety, Changing

Roles and Relationships, and Moving On With Your Life. All widowed people are encouraged to attend. Should you not be able to attend every session, you are encouraged to attend a make-up session later in the year. There is no charge for the workshop and you need not be a member to attend.

The workshops are held at the Widowed Persons Association Meeting Room located at 2628 El Camino Avenue, Ste. D-18, Sacramento, CA 95821-5936. Enter from the back parking lot. The office is open Mon-Friday from 10 AM - 3 PM. The office number is (916) 972-9722. Please call the office for more information. ★

Root Cellar Genealogical Society Membership Meeting

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Thursday, February 13; 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm - Christ Community Church, 5025 Manzanita Avenue, Carmichael

• Program TBA by Glenda Lloyd. Plus Genealogical "Show & Tell" - Root Cellar Members share their family heirlooms and family history displays.

• 6:15 - 7:00 Pre-meeting Open discussion on "Documenting, Preserving and Displaying your Family Treasures". Visitors always welcome! ★

Military Retiree/Spouse Meeting

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Our first meeting for 2014 will be held on 14 Jan at the North Highlands Park and Recreation District on 6040 Watt Ave. We are pleased that Suzi Vinci,

the new Sacramento County Veterans Service Officer, will be our guest Speaker. She is undoubtedly one of the best VSOs around and is completely dedicated to serving

our veterans. If you have any questions, please contact our volunteers at 916-640-8446, Mon thru Thurs, 0900 to 1500 hrs. ★

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SCOE Operation Recognition Seeks Eligible Veterans to Receive High School Diplomas

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) is again awarding high school diplomas to qualifying U.S. Veterans and Japanese American citizens through its popular "Operation Recognition" program.

The Operation Recognition program was adopted in October 2001 by the Sacramento County Board of Education to honor the contributions and sacrifices of individuals who missed completing high school to serve in the U.S. military (specifically World War II or the Korean War) or relocated to a World War II internment camp for Japanese American citizens. In 2005, the County Board of Education expanded the program to include veterans of the Vietnam War.

The Sacramento County Board of Education has provided diplomas to 171 veterans and Japanese American citizens through Operation Recognition since 2001. Eight of the diplomas have been awarded posthumously.

Residents of Sacramento County are encouraged to request diplomas on behalf of themselves or qualifying family members, including persons who are now deceased. April 30, 2014 is the deadline to submit applications. The Sacramento County Board of Education is scheduled to hold its next Operation Recognition diploma ceremony on Tuesday, May 20, 2014.

Operation Recognition applications are available online at www.scoe.net or by mail from: Operation Recognition, P.O. Box 269003, Sacramento, CA 95826-9003. To request that an application be mailed, phone (916) 228-2416. Applications are also available from the Sacramento County Veterans Service Office, located in midtown Sacramento at 2007-19th Street. There is no charge to participate in the program.

Qualifications for an Operation Recognition diploma include:

- Applicant or recipient is a Sacramento County resident;
- Veterans—show proof of Honorable Discharge from U.S. military service occurring during WW II, the Korean War or the Vietnam War
- Japanese American citizens — show proof of internment in a WW II relocation camp; and
- Veterans and Japanese American citizens — give name of high school applicant was attending at time of induction into military service or internment.

An application may be submitted by a family member of a qualifying individual, living or deceased. Persons who meet the qualifications, but earned a GED, also are eligible. Diploma recipients and/or survivors should be current or former Sacramento County residents. Those living outside Sacramento County may be referred to their local county office of education. ★

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Monday, September 23, 2013

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New Law to “Zap” Tax Evasion

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - New laws that take effect Jan. 1, 2014 give the California State Board of Equalization (BOE) new resources to fight the underground economy and protect taxpayers.

BOE-sponsored Assembly Bill 781 makes it a crime to buy, sell, install, or use “zappers.” This technology is used to hide or remove sales transactions and evade paying tax. Additionally, it defrauds the state and provides users an unfair advantage over taxpayers who comply with the law.

Another weapon against tax evasion is BOE-supported Assembly Bill 576, which creates the Revenue Recovery and Collaborative Enforcement (RRACE) Team, composed

of the BOE, Franchise Tax Board (FTB), Employment Development Department (EDD), and the Department of Justice (DOJ). The bill authorizes the team and other agencies to exchange information and investigate underground operations.

The BOE also sponsored Senate Bill 442 which helps protect taxpayers’ rights by assuring taxpayers are notified timely of bank charges they may incur due to a BOE processing error. Taxpayers may file a reimbursement claim 90 days from the date a bank or third-party incurred the charge, and the BOE must respond within 30 days of the claim.

Other notable bills that affect taxpayers include: Senate Bill 90 grants a sales

and use tax exemption for manufacturing and research and development equipment from July 1, 2014 – July, 1 2022. Manufacturers, researchers and developers of biotechnology, engineering, and life science will receive a 4.1875% sales and use tax exemption for qualifying purchases.

Assembly Bill 551 allows cities and counties to create Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones and offers landowners preferential property tax assessments if they use this land within a zone for “small-scale” agriculture.

For a complete list of BOE-sponsored legislation enacted in 2013, visit <http://www.boe.ca.gov/legdiv/leg2013cont.htm> ★

Source: BOE Newsroom

Tax Tips for Charitable Contributions

The spirit of giving can lead to savings at tax time

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - When it comes to charitable giving, Americans are very generous. In 2012, charitable giving was up 3.5 percent, with Americans donating \$316.23 billion to charity according to Giving USA: The Annual Report on Philanthropy by the Giving USA Foundation and The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. On average, almost one quarter of charitable donations occur during the holiday season (also known as year-end giving). As we enter the 2013 holiday season, Jackson Hewitt Tax Service® reminds Citrus Heights taxpayers that altruism can give back at tax time.

“While taxes may not be at the top of the mind when it comes to charitable giving, the ability to receive a deduction on taxable income for their generosity is a unique privilege to American taxpayers,” said Frank Schwartz, an Enrolled Agent who operates Jackson Hewitt offices in Citrus Heights and Orangevale. “However, not all charitable contributions are equal under the tax code. To be tax deductible, charitable donations must be made to a qualified organization, and for tax purposes, there is a big difference between giving money, goods and time.”

Schwartz offers four helpful tips about claiming charitable contributions on an income tax return:

- What the IRS considers a charitable contribution – A charitable contribution is tax deductible if the donation or gift is made to a qualified organization. Taxpayers can visit www.irs.gov to view a list of qualified organizations. To be deductible, the donation must be voluntary and made without

receiving anything of equal value in return. Charitable contributions can include money or property given to a qualified organization as well as certain out-of-pocket expenses incurred when serving as a volunteer.

Tax deductible contributions do not include the cost of raffle, bingo or lottery tickets, the value of donated time or services or the value of donated blood, even if given to a qualified organization.

- What documents are required to deduct a charitable contribution – Taxpayers are required to keep records and receipts for all charitable contributions regardless of the amount or value. A bank record or a receipt from the organization is required for all cash contributions, and a separate, written acknowledgement from the qualified organization is also required to claim the deduction when a single cash or property contribution is \$250 or more.

- When charitable contributions can be deducted – Charitable contributions can generally only be deducted for the income year in which they are made. Contributions sent by mail are considered made on the date they are postmarked. Contributions that are not able to be deducted in the current tax year (because of adjusted gross income limits) may be carried over to future years.

- How to deduct noncash charitable contributions – Gently used clothing, toys, furniture or other household items donated to a qualified organization allow taxpayers to deduct the fair market value of the donated items. To qualify for the deduction, all items must be donated in good condition. The IRS does not provide a guide to determine fair

market value; instead, taxpayers must survey thrift and consignment stores for similar items to provide an indication of fair market value. IRS Publication 561, “Determining the Value of Donated Property”, provides general IRS guidelines on non-cash donations.

Generally, the deduction for property contributed is equal to the fair market value of the property at the time of the contribution. However, different rules may apply if the value of the property has increased or for vehicle donations.

“There are many rules and regulations surrounding tax deductions for charitable contributions,” continued Schwartz. “A conversation with a trusted tax preparer knowledgeable of the current tax code is the best way to maximize the deduction amount for charitable contributions made during the year.”

The Citrus Heights Jackson Hewitt office is open year round to assist taxpayers in identifying the best tax strategy for their individual situation and circumstances. To learn more about deducting charitable contributions, please visit www.JacksonHewitt.com. To speak with a tax preparer or make an appointment at the Citrus Heights Jackson Hewitt office, please call: (916) 721-0200. ★

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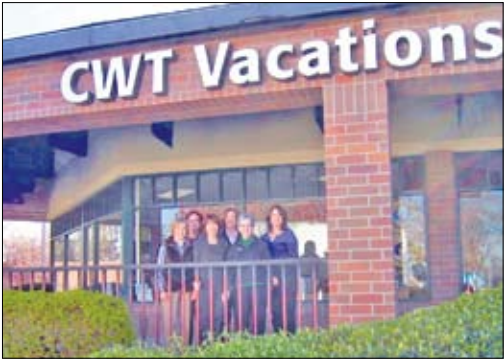
SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS

CWT Vacations

The World is Your Oyster



By Bill Martin



L to R front row, Barbara Andras, Liz Hoffman, Lynne Powlesland. Back row, Donna Welborn, Lindsey Bressani and Linda Nichols.

and leisure travel has given me invaluable insight into a wide range of travelers and complicated itineraries.” A favorite destination for Liz is Europe.

Linda Nichols, CTA, has spent 32 years in the travel industry, with personal trips visiting Asia to Zimbabwe, most of Europe, and many weeks aboard a myriad of cruise liners throughout the world. Linda’s passion is Africa. She will be returning to Africa in 2014, for her sixth trip, exploring Namibia’s Himba and Bushmen cultures.

A senior travel advisor at CWT Vacations, Lynne Powlesland, CTC, celebrates over 30 years of personal firsthand travel experience all over the world. Lynne has also earned her “Master Cruise Specialist” certification for her expertise in the different cruise lines, the latest itineraries, ships and the very popular River Cruises.

Donna Welborn, CTC, has also had the opportunity to travel extensively; her favorite destination tends to be the last place she visited. When pressed for choices, Donna says “Paris tops my list, followed by the Great Wall of China, the Coliseum in Rome, the Forbidden City in Beijing, Stonehenge in England and the Great Buddha in Japan.” Doesn’t that make you want to travel, too?

Don’t settle for another trip to Disneyland because planning your dream vacation seems too daunting of a task. If your wanderlust has been intrigued by these exotic destinations mentioned, the experts at CWT Vacations can help turn your dreams into reality. CWT Vacations boasts a staff of seasoned travel professionals dedicated to continuing education, so they are up-to-date on destinations around the globe. The world is your oyster and they will guide you to the pearls.

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SATURDAY	Sacramento Midtown Farmers Market 2020 J Street (Between the STANF Native American Health and Bioware buildings) Every Saturday from 8 am to 1 pm - all year round, rain or shine
SATURDAY	Sunrise Mall Farmers Market 6190 Sunrise Boulevard, Citrus Heights (behind Sears located in SE Parking Lot) Open every Saturday from 8 am to 1 pm - all year round
SATURDAY	Historic Folsom Farmers Market 915 Sutter Street, Historic Folsom Public Plaza, Folsom Every Saturday from 8 am to 1 pm - all year round

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