



Rancho City Employees Start "House Band"

Page 11



PLUS: Upward Sports Program Concludes Fifth Season

Page 3

AMERICAN RIVER MESSENGER

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Second Edition for March 2013

Author Lundquist Pens Second Book "Polly Plastic"



Page 3

Kaiser Permanente to Offer Eye Screenings for Free Cataract Surgeries



Page 10

Pastor Joe Leads Safehaven Ministries



Page 12



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Fair Oaks Village Streetscape Project Dream Comes True



Local dignitaries and community busines owners gathered for the Fair Oaks Village Streetscape Ribbon-cutting. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County.

FAIR OAKS, CA - (MPG) The Sacramento County Department of Transportation (SACDOT) and Fair Oaks Village Enhancement Committee (FOVEC) hosted a ribbon-cutting event to celebrate completion of the Fair Oaks Village Streetscape Project.

The ribbon-cutting event was held Friday, March 1st at 10:00 a.m. at Plaza Park, at the corner of Park Drive and Fair Oaks Boulevard.

Speakers at the event included Supervisor Susan Peters (District 3), Barry Brown, Fair Oaks Village Enhancement Committee, Jan Bass Otto, Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce, Nan Danford, Fair Oaks Village Merchants Association and Scott Werth, Department of Transportation

The completed project included new curb extensions with ADA compliant sidewalk ramps at the intersection

of Fair Oaks Boulevard and Bridge Street/Howard Street, new curbing and sidewalk along the east side of Fair Oaks Boulevard, south of California Avenue, and at the intersection of Fair Oaks Boulevard and Winding Way, and new walkways through the landscaped triangle area at the intersection of Fair Oaks Boulevard and Winding Way.

Improvements also included new striped crosswalks at the intersections of Fair Oaks Boulevard & Bridge

Street/Howard Street and Fair Oaks Boulevard & Winding Way, and at a mid-block location

on Fair Oaks Boulevard south of California Avenue, new decorative street lighting and new landscaping, changes to the location of stop signs and modifications to the channelization of turning traffic at the intersection of Fair Oaks Boulevard and Winding Way to minimize traffic conflicts, improve safety and enhance pedestrian walkability.

Shoppers and visitors to the Village will also see increased parking within the area, along with pavement repairs in the parking area along Plaza Park.

According to Supervisor Peters, "Sacramento County has partnered with the Fair Oaks Village Enhancement Committee, community organizations, local businesses and residents on the recently completed Fair

Oaks Village Streetscape project. These project enhancements make the village safer for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles as well as have improved the area's appearance by adding decorative street lighting and new landscaping. This is a positive step towards the shared vision to increase the village's viability as a thriving business district that attracts more local and regional shoppers."

Construction costs (\$534,000) were covered with a combination of Federal transportation funding, the County Road Fund and Measure A sales tax proceeds. Ariza Construction was the project contractor.

Source: Sacramento County

City Grant Funds Free Spay and Neuter Program

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA - (MPG) Rancho Cordovans who own pit bulls and pit bull mixes can have their pets spayed and neutered for free. A PetSmart grant will fund the procedures for 600 pit bulls and mixes during a two-year period.

"An added benefit for having your pet spayed or neutered is that annual license fees for altered pets are \$15, compared to \$150 per year for unaltered dogs," said Kerry Simpson, Manager of the City of Rancho Cordova Neighborhood Services Division.



Spay-neuter your pit bull for free. Photo Courtesy SPCA

The free program is available to residents with 95670 and 95827 zip codes. The grant was a joint application of the City of Rancho Cordova and the Sacramento Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) which is coordinating and providing the spaying and neutering procedures.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact the SPCA at (916) 504-2825. Additional information is also available at www.sspca.org/repitbulls.

Source: City of Rancho Cordova

History Comes Alive for Students and Visitors at Sacramento County History Day Experience

By Elises Spleiss

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA- (MPG) History is NOT dead. It became very much alive for a day thanks to over 300 students from all corners of Sacramento County who participated in this year's Sacramento County History Day Experience at Inderkum High School in Sacramento on March 9.

The theme for 2013, Turning Points in History: People, Ideas, Events inspired students from 22 schools to spend the last six months researching and writing historical papers, creating exhibits, and constructing 2-dimensional displays. They produced interactive websites, made documentaries, and wrote and rehearsed live performances to illustrate their chosen topic depicting this year's theme. All categories included Individual and Group entries.

The local event is associated with National History Day, which is a year-long educational program that encourages

elementary, middle and high school students to explore local, state, national and world history.

Armed with invaluable information from the National History Chair, Adrienne Pritchard, on how to choose their topic, and very specific rules that must be followed precisely, students were ready to do their research, then design and create their project. History Day coaches and advisors provided guidance throughout the process, but projects were to be entirely the work of the student, with only minimal direction from teachers or family members.

Levels of competition were Elementary (Gr. 4 & 5), Junior (Gr. 6 - 8), and Senior (Gr. 9 - 12).

The results of these contestants's hard work were inspiring on all levels, but not only regarding history. They learned much more than the historical significance of their topic, which was 60% of their evaluation.

According to Tim Herrera,
Continued on Page 11



Starr Anderson, Mills Middle School in Rancho Cordova, shows 'She Did It' with her award winning exhibit, 'Rosie the Riveter and the Women's Rights Movement' She will advance to the History Day State competition in Sacramento in April. Photo credit Elise Spleiss .

Polly Plastic: “She’s So Fake”

By Julie Parker

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA- (MPG) Do you remember that awkward, self-conscious time of adolescence; when you may have struggled to fit in?

Jenny Lundquist recalls being a shy, introverted girl. Books were a passionate coping mechanism. Her favorites included the Candice Ransom “Thirteen” series of books. “I remember how helpful they were. I re-purchased them as an adult.”

An author now herself, her second book, “Polly Plastic,” aimed at middle school readers, covers this very topic.

“I remember hearing a phrase in junior high – ‘she’s so fake.’ So I wanted to get into that ‘fake’ girl’s head and tell her story.”

In the book, Polly Pierce is number two in popularity, but got there by following the most popular girl. A popularity war heats to boiling when follower Polly has to take over the leadership of a middle school talent competition. She discovers that



Jenny Lundquist shows off her new book. Photo by Julie Parker.

the contestants don’t have any talent; they are only popular. What should she do?

“My target audience is for

those girls who stand in the shadows and feel confused by the changes around them. My hope is that after reading my

books they’ll believe they have what it takes to become the person they want to be, and can step confidently into the next phase of their life, when they’re ready.”

When not busy taking care of their two sons, Lundquist and her husband Ryan are actively involved with Project 680. Residents in the Folsom and Rancho Cordova school districts find practical ways to support local homeless students. You can help, too.

You are invited to attend Lundquist’s book launch/signing on March 23, 2013 at 1:00 p.m. at Barnes & Noble, 6111 Sunrise Boulevard, Citrus Heights, when up to twenty-five percent of each sale of her book will go to the Folsom Cordova Education Foundation. If you are unable to attend, purchase the book online at Barnes & Noble that day, enter the code “11041704” and the school will still receive the funds.

You can learn more about Lundquist and both of her books at <http://jennylundquist.com/>.

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FAIR OAKS, CA – (MPG) Bradley N. Baer CFP, LUTCF, FIC a Wealth Advisor, Fair Oaks with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Has qualified for the Summit Circle conference by providing financial guidance and solutions to members of the organization in 2012. Nine percent of Thrivent Financial’s nearly 2,300 financial representatives qualified for this honor.

Baer is with Thrivent Financial’s Southwest Regional Financial Office, serving Lutherans and their family members in Fair Oaks and Orangevale and surrounding communities.

Baer was recognized by his peers from across the country at Thrivent Financial’s annual conference. Baer has been with Thrivent Financial for 23 years. He has been recognized for his performance 23 times.

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Upwards Sports Concludes Fifth Season

By Ken Friedman

FAIR OAKS, CA—(MPG) The Upward Sports program at Fair Oaks Presbyterian has grown from 39 children the first year to 360 children in the fifth season. There were 40 basketball teams and 6 cheerleading squads. The program has grown large enough that facilities are now being used at Faith Lutheran Church in Fair Oaks. The league is for children from K-5 through 6th grade. The Kindergarteners are coed and from there we go to boys’ divisions and girls’ divisions.

What is the reason for this rapid growth to a sports program? The reason is quite simple, the program features the child more than the game. Each child plays at least half of the game and the starting five is rotated throughout the season. Ken Friedman,

Upward League Director says it this way. “I have seen in sports where winning the game is the major focus and I believe that at the younger age, the children should learn the fundamentals of the game, learn teamwork and just have fun doing it. We don’t keep score until 5th and 6th grade and we do that so that the players learn the consequence of winning and losing”.

As a Christian based program, Upward provides material for a huddle halfway through each practice where the children learn biblical based life lessons. This season, the children learned and discussed “Self Control”, “Responsibility” and “Hope”. We believe in teaching lessons that do apply to everyday life.

The Upward Sports program concluded on March 10th with a celebration for the children and

families. There was entertainment, team recognition and a gift for each child from Upward. Upward Sports is a national Christian program that has 2400 churches involved and last season, there were 550,000 children playing Upward Sports. Upward provides materials and assistance for basketball, flag football, soccer and cheerleading. They will be soon adding baseball to their list of sports. There will be an Upward soccer camp from July 29th to August 2nd hosted by The Church on Cypress. Contact them for more information.

Next season starts with registration in mid-September with practices starting the first part of December. For more information visit www.upward.org for seeing the vision and where leagues are available.



A picture perfect jump shot! Photo courtesy of Upwards Basketball.

Union Gospel Mission, Sacramento

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By Pastor Ray Dare

On March 31st, we will celebrate the focal point in history, the greatest event that ever happened – Easter. It split history in two: A.D. and B.C. Do you realize that every time you write down the date you're referring to the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Why is Easter such a big deal? Because it proved who Jesus was. When Jesus was on earth he made some amazing, outrageous statements. He said things like, "I am God... I am the Savior of the world... I am the Messiah... I am the only way to Heaven." Incredible challenges and claims and then He said, "I'm going to prove it... after they kill me, three days later I'll come back to life." And He did! Hundreds of people saw Him; they walked with Him, they ate with Him, they touched Him.

Easter is all about God's power. God took the worst

The Power of Easter

possible situation, the death of His Son, and He turned it around and used it to prove His power to the world. The resurrection of Jesus Christ demonstrated how powerful God is and how that same power is available to you today. There's nothing too difficult for God. If God can raise Jesus Christ from the dead, He can handle any problem you give Him. "How tremendous is the power available to us who believe in God. That power is the same divine energy which was demonstrated in Christ when He was raised from the dead." Ephesians 1:20 (Ph)

I don't know what you're going through today. I don't know how dark and hopeless things may seem to you. But I want you to be assured of one thing: All things are possible when God is in your life. God is aware of what you're going through right now. He sees your struggle. He sees every tear you've shed. He sees every sleepless night you've had. He knows exactly what you're going through. He's heard every single prayer that you've prayed. And you know what? He loves you, He cares for you and He has the power to help you.

The Bible says in Hebrews 4:15 that "God can be touched

with the feelings of our infirmities." Jesus was here; He lived on this earth for 33 years. He knows what it's like to face the trials and struggles and the hardships of life. He himself has been down. He knows what it is to feel sorrow and pain. Easter is proof of that. That's why the Bible says you can "boldly come to the throne of grace so that you may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16)

I would like to personally invite you to be my guest this Easter Sunday at New Beginnings Church on March 31st. There are two Easter services to choose from: 9:30am and 11:00 am. I'll be sharing a message of hope at both services. New Beginnings is a place where people find hope and love, not critical or judgmental attitudes. For directions or more information visit our website at www.newchurch-comingsoon.org or call (916) 992-1997.

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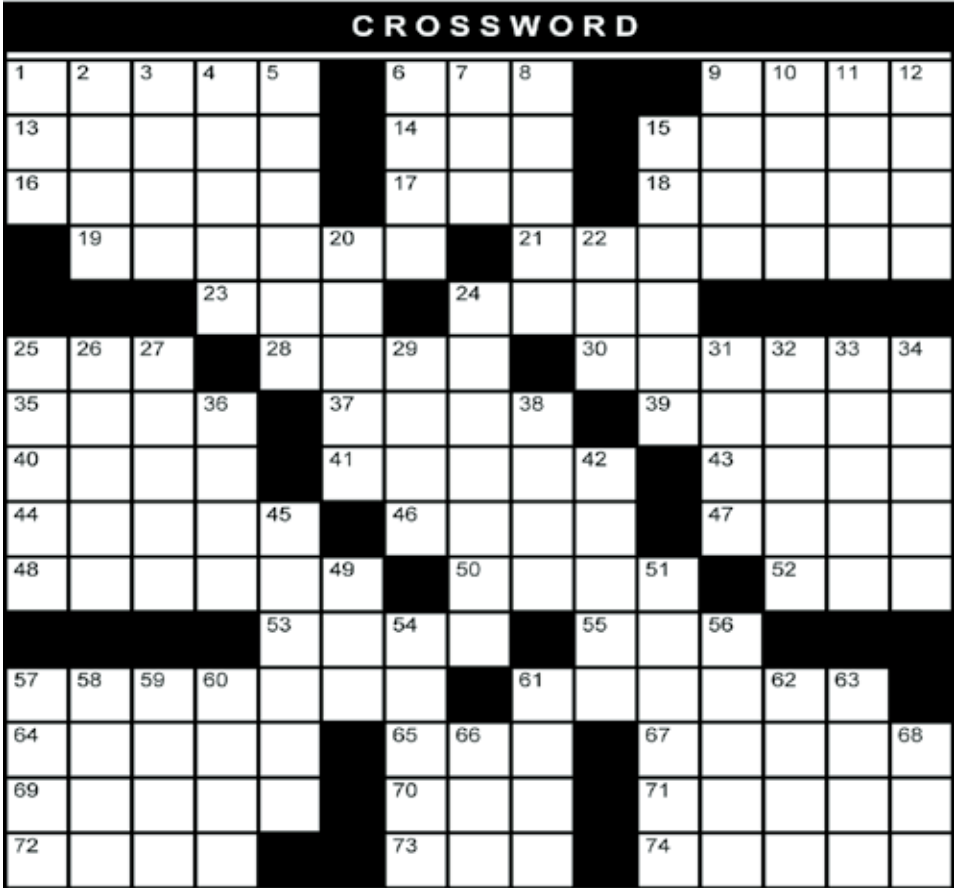
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CLUES

ACROSS

1. Father of Hector, Paris and Cassandra
6. Young newt
9. Perching place
13. Fungal skin infection
14. Tap order
15. Less than right angle
16. On pins and needles
17. Bottom line
18. Isabel Allende's "Portrait in ____"
19. "Say ____ to winter and hello to spring
21. Celebrated saint
23. One of peeps
24. Cobbler's concern
25. Mudbath site
28. Cellist great
30. "The ____ Spring, led by Alexander Dubcek
35. Snaky swimmers
37. "Daffodil or tulip, originally
39. Yuletides

40. Competitive advantage

41. Skedaddle
43. Profit
44. REM picture
46. Fuzzy fruit
47. Second-most traded currency in world
48. Kinda
50. One who speaks a Slavic language
52. OB-GYN test
53. Boor
55. *These sox train in spring
57. *Precedes May flowers
61. Okinawa martial arts
64. Great reviews
65. Lawyer group
67. She turned to stone
69. Amber ____
70. "Family ____"
71. Ar, atomic number 18
72. Homework to a student
73. a.k.a. Tokyo
74. City on Rhone River

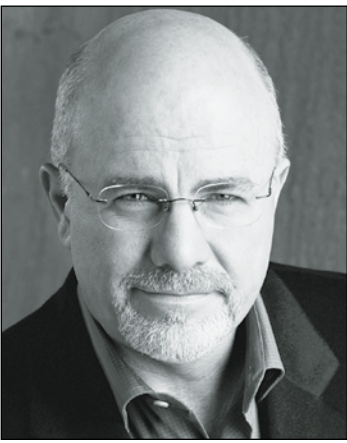
DOWN

1. "Harper Valley ____"
2. Sign of engagement
3. A fan of
4. Famous for his fables
5. *Dance-around-the-pole holiday
6. ____ button from Staples
7. 1918 pandemic, e.g.
8. Dancer's beat
9. Maple, to a botanist
10. Brazilian indigenous people
11. Relating to the ear
12. Reach a high
15. Rearward
20. Splotches
22. European peak
24. Lonely musician?
25. *Garden's beginnings
26. Peter in Spain
27. Tattered Tom's creator
29. Exclamation of disgust
31. First rate

32. "Faster!" to a horse

33. U in UV
34. To impede
36. The Vatican to Catholics, e.g.
38. B in BCS
42. Miss America's topper
45. Harass
49. Either ____ or against
51. *Occurring now
54. Utilization or employment
56. Farm type
57. 32-card game
58. Maui dance
59. Lyric poem, pl.
60. W in W-Fd
61. Boxer's last blow
62. Not for here
63. Jet black
66. *Spring Growth
68. European Nuclear Society

For Solution
See Page 7



Dave Ramsey is America's most trusted voice on money and business. He's authored four New York Times best-selling books: Financial Peace, More Than Enough, The Total Money Makeover and EntreLeadership. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 5,000,000 listeners each week on more than 500 radio stations. Follow Dave on Twitter at @DaveRamsey and on the web at daveramsey.com.

Can I Motivate My Parents?

Dear Dave,

My parents are close to retirement and very heavily leveraged. Do you have any advice on how I can help motivate them to succeed financially?

- Jack

Dear Jack,

I appreciate your concern for your mom and dad, but I'm not sure you can motivate anyone to do something. Sometimes people don't have motivation because they've lost hope. In turn, it's that sense of hopelessness that keeps them from moving forward. I think in these situations the best you can do is to show them hope. And one of the best ways to do that is to share your own story. You can also examine the numbers with them to show that the light at the end of the tunnel isn't always an oncoming train.

I do this a lot with callers on my radio show. After we look at the pieces of the puzzle together, I might show them how they can pay off \$50,000 of debt in a year's time. Most of these people aren't bankrupt; they're just plain scared. So there's a lot of power in that little word "hope."

Sit down with your parents and let them know how much you love them and want them to

Dave Says

enjoy their retirement. See if you can find out how much income they have versus the amount of debt they've piled up, then begin to formulate a step-by-step plan. Show them how they can begin to get traction and free up their money by living on a budget and getting out of debt. You can even offer to be their counselor or accountability partner.

You want them to be safe and secure in their retirement, and they deserve some dignity after working hard all their lives. So, in my mind, hope is the best thing you can offer. Motivation is a different story. That has to come from within. You can't really motivate the unmotivated.

- Dave

No On Rent-To-Own!

Dear Dave,

What do you think about rent-to-own housing? I'm not sure we're financially ready to buy yet, but we don't like giving money to landlords. Is rent-to-own a wise compromise?

- Mike

Dear Mike

I wouldn't recommend getting mixed up in a rent-to-own

situation. I don't think it's a wise compromise, and it's also the kind of deal that works out well for the landlord, not the buyer.

If you're not financially ready to purchase a house, then you need to get your life in order before you take on a major commitment like becoming a homeowner. Get your debts paid off, get an emergency fund of three to six months of expenses in place, and save up for a down payment of 20 percent. I know it'll take some time and it might be difficult, but that's what I'd recommend.

Buying a home when you're broke, or trying to trick the system with a rent-to-own deal, usually doesn't work. I spent a lot of time in the real estate business, and I still own several properties. I don't do these deals because statistically the majority of people who rent to own never end up owning the property.

Take my advice and go slow, Mike. When you buy a home, you want it to be a blessing, not a burden!

- Dave

**For more financial help, please visit daveramsey.com.*

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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.

Come back every week for Sudoku!

For Solution See Page 7.

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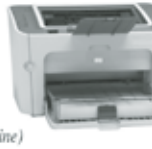
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1	6	8	5	4	2	7	3	9
9	7	5	6	1	3	2	4	8
4	3	2	9	7	8	5	6	1
2	1	7	3	6	4	8	9	5
5	4	6	2	8	9	1	7	3
8	9	3	7	5	1	4	2	6
3	2	1	4	9	5	6	8	7
7	8	4	1	3	6	9	5	2
6	5	9	8	2	7	3	1	4

Sudoku Puzzle on Page 6

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By Ronnie McBrayer

In ancient Jerusalem there was a pool of water called Bethesda. The location served as an impromptu hospital ward, a collection point for the sick, blind, and paralyzed. These infirmed went to Bethesda to receive a hoped for healing – not from a physician – but from the therapeutic waters themselves. Back then it was a common belief that an angel came from heaven at certain times and “stirred up the water” of Bethesda’s pool, resulting in miraculous healing for anyone who could get in the water. They didn’t take this stirring as natural warm springs, percolating mineral water, or air escaping the limestone aquifer. They believed it was a divine intervention. In the New Testament gospels, Jesus makes a visit to Bethesda and finds a lame man lying alongside Bethesda’s waters. Jesus doesn’t drag him over to the pool and dunk him. He simply heals him. Then, he gives the now-made-well man excruciatingly practical instructions: “Pick up your mat and walk.” This wasn’t to get the man’s bed out of the way. Jesus was saying, “Get it out of here so that you won’t come back to it!” This former invalid, the best we can tell from the gospels, had

Walk On

been coming to Bethesda for the better part of four decades. That is a long time to waste lying alongside a bubbling brook. And now that he was empowered to live a better, healthier life, it would be easy for him to fall back into old habits. Jesus wanted this stretcher removed so that the man would not have the temptation to return to it. This olden story of faith pre-dates today’s advances in neuroscience by centuries, but Jesus already knew what researches have confirmed in recent decades: When habits are formed, the brain actually changes. Routines – good or bad – cause neurons in the brain to alter their patterns. So in the process of breaking a habit, the brain must also be “rewired” to not only change a person’s behavior, but to change the firing of synapses inside his head. Recent studies also show, that if a person returns to their former habits, the brain returns to its former patterns as well. But every addict and Al-Anon participant already knows this. We will return to the things that hurt us, again and again, and again and again. Body and spirit will slide right back to where we once were. If we want sustained change for our lives, if we want to be whole, redeemed, complete, reinvigorated people, then yes, we must admit our powerlessness to be well on our own, and at the end of ourselves collapse into grace. But as important as this first step is, here is another: If we are going to live out this

transformation, there must be a grace-infused commitment, not to return to those ways, habits, persons, lifestyles, and behaviors that will only take us back to the unhealthy way of life we knew before. The door to the past has to be slammed shut. Obstacles have to be put in the way to keep us from returning to old ways of thinking and old ways of acting. Spiritual reprogramming and rewiring has to take place. That is why Jesus told this man to get his mat and get out, because that was the only way he could remove himself from this dead-end, superstitious pool-sitting that would only enslave him, not heal him. If we are going to remain well, we can’t go back. Life, redemption, wholeness, and healing: These are waiting for us only as we move forward. After the hard work of being brought back to life has been done, let us not lose our future by returning to the past. So while we all will have to carry the burden of our yesterdays, our wasted days, and our years of regret – the mats and stretchers we used to rely upon – God’s grace and healing will lighten that burden. And that same grace will help us to walk on, never returning to who and what we once were. Ronnie McBrayer is a syndicated columnist, speaker, and author of multiple books. You can read more and receive regular e-columns in your inbox at www.ronniemcbrayer.net.

Excuse Me, But I Just Gotta Be Me

By Rev. James L. Snyder, D. Litt

I refuse to answer for anybody else because it is a full-time job trying to answer for myself. I must confess though, I sometimes cannot give a good answer for myself. I can give an answer, but not a good one, and when it comes to answers, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage demands good ones. How do you explain yourself to someone when you cannot even explain yourself to yourself? I do not pretend to be a man of mystery, but many things about Yours Truly I certainly do not understand. For one, I am not an actor. I want to make that very plain to all and sundry. Within the confines of my presence, are absolutely no acting skills. I have some friends who are always acting like a fool. I am assuming they are acting and give them the benefit of the doubt. Another friend of mine at certain times acts dumb. I have known him for a very long time and I can usually tell when he is acting. By the way, he is a very good actor. Many of my friends are excellent actors and if they ever were competing for some Oscar or Emmy award, they would come pretty close to winning. I am another story. It is very difficult for me in the area of acting. With me, what you see is what you get. I suppose when you boil it all down, I am just not smart enough to be a good actor. I am not even smart enough to be a bad actor. Putting all of this in context, I must confess that my wife believes I am a great actor. I have tried to dissuade her from this opinion, but up to this point, I have not been successful. When she thinks of me she always says, “And the Emmy goes to...”

How she came to this point, I’m not quite sure. No matter what I do, she still holds to this personal opinion of me. I keep telling her that I am not that good of an actor, which she keeps smiling and nodding her head in my direction. Some examples need to be given here to show my point. Just the other night we were at a restaurant with some friends, having a good time, or so I thought. I must say when I’m on a roll, I’m on a roll. But all during my “roll,” I kept feeling somebody under the table kicking me. I ignored it thinking perhaps our friends did not quite know what they were doing. Never once did I suspicion my companion with this action. I kept rolling on. Finally, both of them excused themselves to take a break and when they were out of listening distance, my wife said to me, “Will you stop acting so foolish?” I looked at her, not quite knowing what she was referring to, and said quite innocently, “But, my Precious, [it’s a name I use when I’m in trouble but don’t know why] I’m not acting.” She gave me one of “those looks” and said, “Stop acting foolish.” This is what I admire about my wife. She has the highest opinion of my abilities particularly in the area of the thespian arts. Our friends were coming to the table when I was about to tell her I was not acting foolish, it just came natural. Another example comes to mind. I remember she was trying to explain something to me one time. I do not know what it was now. It was something to do with something in the garage, a place I have not been for years, and I was not connecting the dots, as they say. She was going into a

long dissertation on what needed to be done and I was just standing there staring at her. I was trying to understand what she was saying, but nothing was clicking upstairs, if you know what I mean. In the middle of her dissertation she stopped, looked at me intensely, placed both hands on her hips and said, “Don’t act so dumb.” Smiling broadly I whispered, “My Precious, I’m not acting.” With a glare that could have intimidated good old Goliath, she quipped, “I’m coming to believe you’re right. You are not acting. You’re just naturally dumb.” Somebody once sang a song called, “I gotta be me” which has become my theme song. What you see is what you get, when you are dealing with me. I am not smart enough to act and I am too old to play. Therefore, it all boils down to this one thing, I am what I am, like it or lump it. I do not like it when people pretend to be something they are not. I want people to be real with me. This is doubly true with my relationship with God. He is honest with me and I want to be absolutely honest with him. “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?” (1 John 4:20 KJV). Many people say they love God and yet it is all an act. It is easy to love somebody you cannot see but hard to love a brother right in front of you. The Rev. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, PO Box 831313, Ocala, FL 34483. He lives with his wife, Martha, in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at (352) 687-4240 or e-mail jamesnsnyder2@att.net. The church web site is www.whatafellowship.com.



By Karen Anderson

Once again there is that voice, telling me what to do and what not to do. I want to say, “Mind your own business! Get out of my way and let me work on my goals and dreams.” Does this happen to you? Do you have a little person inside you that stops you from achieving your heart’s desire? I do, and she comes up at the worst times. This is your conscience talking to you. She needs to be there to help us

The Little You

stay on the right course, but she can be a burden as well. When I really want to do something important in my life, she stands there with her hands on her hips saying NO. I have found a way to keep her quiet. This is when I need God’s help and direction to find out if her stubbornness is for His direction and purpose for my daily life. Recently, I have realized that God uses my conscience to talk to me and help me stay on the straight and narrow. I also know that Satan can use it against you and trap you into bondage. Sometimes his suggestions seem perfectly acceptable, but they are wrong and he is leading you away from God. “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.”

This is where you need to pray for discernment in every decision of your life, whether it is something like getting out of bed to spend time with God, or sleeping that extra 30 minutes. Remember that whatever time you share with God, He will give back to you. That means you don’t have to worry about your busy day. Spend the time with God...it is worth it, and the ‘little you’ will also be working with you instead of against you. PASSAGE: Ephesians 6:10-11 (NIV) Karen Anderson is an accomplished speaker, author, and chaplain. Latest books, “Nikki’s Tail-Waggin’ Lessons” and “The Little Book of BIG Thoughts Series.” Leave a message for Karen through her website www.doablesteps.com/contact.

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A Film Review by Tim Riley

OZ THE GREAT AND POWERFUL (Rated PG)

The director of the “Spider-Man” trilogy and “The Evil Dead,” among other titles in an eclectic resume, turned his sights to a cinematic prequel of L. Frank Baum’s book “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.”

Sam Raimi also directed his baseball homage, “For Love of the Game,” starring Kevin Costner, and the supernatural thriller, “Drag Me to Hell.” His filmmaking talents are abundant and diverse.

If the grand Broadway musical “Wicked” can become a popular hit, why not tinker with “The Wizard of Oz” legend to be reinvented as the backstory of how the Wizard arrived in the Emerald City?

Raimi’s “Oz the Great and Powerful” is the story of how the wizard came to be the wizard. It’s the tale of a smalltime carnival magician, a charlatan and sly con artist, who arrived in a magical, fantastic world.

Based on an imaginative screenplay by Mitchell Kapner and David Lindsay-Abaire, Raimi’s colorful invention follows Oscar Diggs (James Franco), an amoral circus huckster with dubious ethics.

The setting is the black-and-white world of 1905 Kansas, where Franco’s fast-talking Oscar fools gullible audiences with cheap tricks and low-grade sleight-of-hand, aided by his frantic assistant Frank (Zach Braff).

Oscar also employs his seductive wiles to woo beautiful young

Riley Reviews “OZ THE GREAT” POWERFUL ENOUGH TO DAZZLE WITH EFFECTS

women, but his tryst with Annie (Michelle Williams) causes him to stir the wrath of a jealous circus strongman.

Fleeing in a hot air balloon, Oscar is soon caught up in a fierce tornado sweeping the dusty plains, and as a result, he’s whisked away to the Technicolor world of the Land of Oz.

Greeted like a conquering hero, Oscar is assumed to be the great wizard that is eagerly anticipated by the fearful inhabitants of the Land of Oz. For his part, Oscar thinks he’s hit the jackpot of fame and fortune.

Instead of meeting up with the Scarecrow, the Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion, Oscar finds his new companions are the talking winged monkey Finley (voiced by Zach Braff) and China Girl, the porcelain doll, (voiced by Joey King).

His protean charm and evident reputation as a seducer of women is immediately put to the test in the Land of Oz, where no less than three beautiful witches compete for his attention.

Oscar’s first encounter is with the youngest of the trio, a beguiling but emotionally naïve Theodora (Mila Kunis), who bats her big brown eyes ever so seductively that Oscar is quickly smitten by her beauty.

Having doubts about Oscar’s intentions, Theodora’s older sister Evanora (Rachel Weisz) is a schemer who can play both sides of the moral divide with great ease.

At first, Evanora seems convincing as somebody just looking out for the welfare of the Emerald City and its citizens, but shifts into a dark wicked mode when she feels threatened by the roguish stranger.

Then there’s Glinda, the Good Witch (also Michelle Williams), a beautiful creature whose motives, at the outset, are cloaked in mystery.

Oscar is naturally drawn to Glinda because she’s the alter ego to Annie, his love interest that he left behind in Kansas when he made his desperate escape in the hot-air balloon.

The role of Oscar requires James Franco to come across as alternately slimy huckster and sincere savior of an oppressed people. Franco does not appear completely up to the task to play this duality.

This shortcoming is something of a problem for a story that focuses so intently on Oscar’s transformation from selfish con man to the gallant, altruistic Wizard of Oz.

A lot of effort was also put into generating suspense about the identity of the Wicked Witch of the West, but the savvy viewer may pick up the telltale signs long before the magical revelation.

In the end, with little surprise, Oscar summons the courage and will to organize a motley bunch of tinkers, farmers and Munchkins to reclaim Emerald City from the evil machinations of the witches.

The ruby red slippers, iconic songs and even Toto are missing here because the 1939 original version “The Wizard of Oz” is copyrighted intellectual property to which Disney has no claim or legal right to use.

“Oz the Great and Powerful,” facing certain creative and artistic limitations, does the best that it can with the source material that is usable.

At the very least, this Disney version, which uses its 3D to great effect in limited but vital scenes, is a visual spectacle that is satisfying for the family audience.

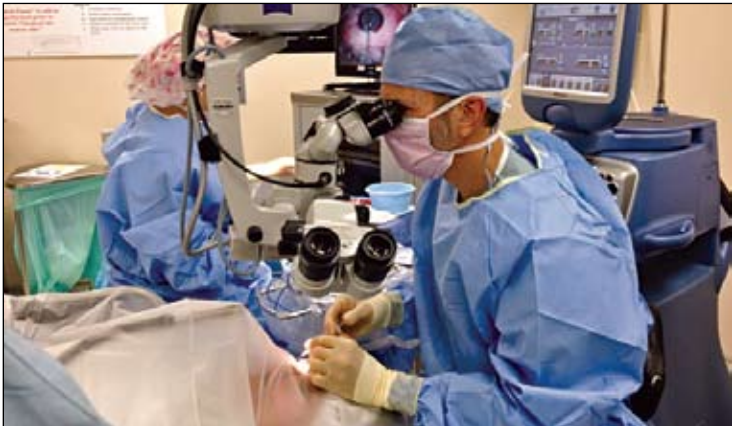
“Oz the Great and Powerful,” though not the great film one would have hoped for, is still powerful enough in its wondrous beauty to deliver the goods in a satisfactory manner.

Kaiser Permanente to Offer Eye Screenings for Free Cataract Surgeries

SACRAMENTO REGION CA- (MPG) For the 18th consecutive year, Kaiser Permanente physicians and staff in Sacramento will offer screenings for area residents who may be eligible for free cataract surgeries that will be performed this spring.

The screenings will be on Saturday April 13 at the Kaiser Permanente Point West Medical Offices, 1650 Response Road, Sacramento.

The surgeries are part of Mission Cataract USA, an annual program in which participating doctors provide the sight-restoring procedure to hundreds of people across the nation who have no health insurance and can’t afford the operation. Kaiser Permanente physicians and staff will perform as many as 20



Thomas Kedwell, MD, performs cataract surgery during Mission Cataract 2012 on a patient who regained her eyesight following the operation. Photo courtesy ofKaiser Permanente

free cataract surgeries on eligible individuals in early May.

Screening appointments can be made through April 5 or until the slots fill up, whichever comes first. To sign up for the screening, or to request more information, call: (916) 973-7159.

Governor Brown Announces Medin Appointment

SACRAMENTO – Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. recently announced the following appointments.

AnMarie Medin, 46, of Fair Oaks, has been appointed to the State Historical Resources Commission. Medin has held multiple positions at the California Department of Transportation since 2000, including supervising environmental planner, senior environmental planner and associate environmental planner. She was historical archaeologist at KEA Environmental from 1997 to 1999. Medin earned a Master of Arts degree in cultural resources management from Sonoma State University. This position does not require Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$100 per diem. Medin is a Democrat.

Volunteers are Greatly Needed to Support our Outreach Program for Veterans.

This is our 5th year of our outreach program helping veterans and their families, in the Sacramento and the surrounding communities. We feed over 100 Veterans and their families through this program. In addition we provide advocate representation that gives the veteran access to legal services, helping in acquiring V.A. benefits, Medical access with transportation, and our Naturopath life Coaching program that combats Bio chemical addiction empowering the veteran to have a healthy body, and mind. We help the homeless, elderly, disabled, PTSD, veterans.

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History Comes Alive for Students



Back row: Parent Zain Abadin; “Dr. Bob” LaPerriere, Chair, Sacramento Area History Consortium; Craig Irish, Sac. County Office of Education - Event Co-Chair; Greg Geeting, Sac. County Board of Education, Area 1 Trustee
Front row: Participants: George Bitter, Natomas Charter School; Talha Abadin, Russell Ranch Middle School; Zainab Abadin, Folsom Middle School; Ishmael Abadin, Vista del Lago H.S. Photo credit Elise Spleiss .

Continued from Page 1

Communications Director for the Sacramento County Office of Education, “the program helps students develop problem-solving skills, oral and written communication and presentation skills, self-esteem and confidence, and a sense of responsibility for and involvement in the democratic process.”

Late Saturday afternoon, after hundreds of hours of blood, sweat and very possibly tears spent by contestants in the creation of their masterpieces, family and friends were at last allowed to enter the main gym and peruse the many displays and exhibits.

Documentaries viewed in the theatre included turning points of the Transcontinental Railroad, the Atomic Bomb, and the British Music Invasion. Guests also enjoyed dramas including depictions of The Battle of Saratoga, the life of Cesar Chavez, and the California Women’s Suffrage movement.

Thirty-five 2-dimensional displays (4th & 5th grade), and 45 Junior and Senior level exhibits illustrated historical turning points in education, medicine, sports, science, music, fashion, visual entertainment, transportation, politics, women’s rights, and much more. Historical papers and websites were judges separately.

One participant, Starr Anderson, an 8thth grader at Mills Middle School in Rancho Cordova had no idea this competition would be responsible for a major turning point in her own life. Starr came upon the topic for her exhibit, “Rosie the Riveter and The Women’s Right’s Movement” through a chance set of events.

Starr shares that last fall she and her mother and three brothers found themselves homeless for several months. Her mother,

Nichole, was involved in an 8-week program, Women’s Empowerment, which helps homeless women with training, mentoring, and support to maintain employment. There happened to be a “We Can Do It” Rosie the Riveter poster in the restroom. She asked her mother who that was. Her mother briefly explained Rosie’s significance in our history. Starr did some research on her own and as her exhibit shows, learned Rosie was the image of a woman used by the war effort to recruit thousands of women needed to serve their country when WWII took their husbands, brothers, and fathers away to fight overseas. These women were left behind to perform the jobs of men, building the war ships and performing hundreds of other jobs throughout the country to keep the war effort going and help win the war.

Starr was inspired by Rosie’s story, so when she entered the History Day program and had to pick a topic, she didn’t have to look far. Since the goal of the Women’s Empowerment program is to change women’s lives by getting them back into the workforce, and knowing she already identified with the Rosie’s who had to be strong like she and her family had been forced to be, Starr knew she had her project.

She chose to be Rosie the Riveter for Halloween, and even had a friend Photoshop her face onto a copy of the famous War Department poster to become the iconic Rosie herself. She has truly ‘lived’ her project. When her mother graduated from her own program, Starr presented her with a pair of Rosie the Riveter socks!

Starr says, “The Women’s Rights Movement, and Rosie the Riveter in particular, are two of the most significant turning points in the history of the

United States of America.” This is just one story of the hundreds of participants in this valuable program.

Finally, at the end of the busy day participants, family and friends eagerly gathered in the Atrium to await the results of all their hard work. Almost 100 volunteer judges from the community, and from historical and educational organizations had brought their collective education, experience, and expertise in their field to the task of judging.

Fifty-four entries received weighty medals, with the winners becoming eligible to participate in the National History Day-California competition on April 26-28 at the Red Lion/ Woodlake Hotel in Sacramento. Just as they were leaving some were called back and pleasantly surprised to be told they had received one of the ten special awards sponsored by community historical and cultural groups.

Greg Geeting, Sacramento County Board of Education, Area 1 Trustee, observing the activity from the sidelines, summed up its’ significance well: “The students who participate in History Day are insightful, impressive, and inspiring. They give us insights with their thorough, detailed research and analysis. They impress us with their skillful, articulate presentations. They inspire us with their dedication and enthusiasm. They give us confidence that the future will be in capable hands.”

The Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) and the Center for Sacramento History hosted this event.

To view full results from the event go to www.scoe.net or www.sachistoryday.org. For more information on this event contact Cathy Sapunor, SCOE Special Events Coordinator (916) 807-4727.

Rancho Cordova Staff Makes Music during Lunch



City employees – Donna Silva, Director of Finance (left); Jessica Hayes, Housing and Neighborhood Development Specialist; Dana Grossi, Housing Services Assistant; and Paul Junker, Planning Director – say being in their noon-time House Band is a “team- and communication-building exercise.” Photo courtesy City of Rancho Cordova

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) A quartet of Rancho Cordova City employees has started a “House Band” that meets and plays over the lunch hour a couple times a week.

The group started a year ago when Planning Director Paul Junker and Finance Director Donna Silva started meeting up to practice guitar. Then Jessica Hayes, the City’s Housing and Neighborhood Development Specialist, joined in, initially playing some guitar but eventually focusing on the drums. She is a drummer in another band and said she “realized that a drummer would add more to the improvement of the group than a third guitarist.” Soon Dana Grossi, a Housing Services Assistant, became a member,

playing the viola and providing back-up vocals.

“I joined because I really enjoy singing, especially harmonizing, and it was also a good opportunity for me to start playing my viola again,” said Grossi. Silva, who is also the lead vocalist, says the group plays songs that they enjoy listening to. Some of their favorites include Pink Floyd’s “Wish You Were Here”, Neal Young’s “Heart of Gold”, Tom Petty’s “Free Falling”, and Dolly Parton’s “Jolene.” She added that they sometimes “tailor the songs to fit a particular style that the band is leaning towards.” Justin Arnold from Code Enforcement sometimes plays with the group. And Steve Twist, the City’s Commercial Plan Reviewer, has teamed with

the group to work on one of his songs. “We are looking for a bass player,” the group commented. At this time, The House Band is limited to City employees and City Hall volunteers.

The House Band is planning its first concert in April during the lunch hour for City staff and families. And they are looking into recording Twist’s original song as part of a City promotional video.

“Playing in the band really works as a team- and communication-building exercise,” said Grossi. “Learning to listen and collaborate with other people, especially on the fly as when playing music, is a challenge and can be a great growth opportunity.” Plus, they all added, “It’s great fun!”

Source: City of Rancho Cordova

River Cats Season Opener April 4th

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)– The complete River Cats promotional schedule for the 2013 season was unveiled recently, with twice as many fireworks shows, a nine-part bobblehead giveaway, and a pair of new recurring promotions—Throwback Mondays presented by Cache Creek and Free Parking Wednesdays presented by Jiffy Lube—featured as highlights to what was already one of the best promo schedules in all of baseball.

For the first time, Raley Field will be the backdrop for post-game fireworks after every Friday home game in addition to the return of the popular Sutter Health Fireworks Saturdays. With a fireworks extravaganza planned for the Independence Day Celebration on July 3 as well, there will be 22 fireworks shows after River Cats games this season.

Recurring promotions—a promotion for every day of the week, all season long—will return this season with a pair of unique additions. Throwback Mondays presented by Cache Creek will



feature the River Cats donning Sacramento Solons jerseys and hats, as well as “throwback” prices on popcorn and peanuts, available for just 50 cents each. Also, Free Parking Wednesdays presented by Jiffy Lube will debut this season, with free parking at Wednesday home games throughout the season (excludes July 3).

The River Cats also will celebrate a pair of ballpark milestones this season: the 1,000th game at Raley Field will be commemorated with “A Grand Celebration” on Saturday, June 22, and the 10-millionth fan at Raley Field will be honored with

a once-in-a-lifetime prize package, expected sometime early in the season.

Other popular theme nights that will return to Raley Field in 2013 include Military Appreciation Night presented by US Army (May 18), Star Wars Night (June 15), Hot Rods and Cool Cats Block Party (June 23), Fin Fest Block Party (July 13), and Bark in the Ballpark (July 24), where fans can bring their furry friends to Raley Field.

The complete 2013 promotional schedule can be found online at the River Cats brand new website, rivercats.com.

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Pastor Joe: The Challenges of Making a Comeback in Life

By Julie Parker

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA- (MPG) The 1300-1400 blocks of C Street in Sacramento is an encapsulated thoroughfare for the displaced and disadvantaged. One of the neighborhood organizations offering assistance is Safehaven Ministries of Sacramento, Inc., where “Pastor Joe” Talancon is the senior chaplain. “There are a lot of groups who come out here, drive up with food and clothes, and leave. But, they’re not hanging out, building relationships.” Talancon knows the challenges of making a comeback in life. His parents were “swingers” and drug use was a constant in his Fair Oaks childhood home. “I like to say I grew up in the devil’s den.”

He was evicted from Bella Vista High School, then La Vista (a continuation school) for getting high and stealing. He overcame the addictions of drug, alcohol, and smoking, and survived three divorces. He joined the Army to get healthy, serving five years in Germany, and a year in Fort Riley, Kansas. “In Germany I was still getting high. They didn’t test for acid.” After his father died of cancer, his mother was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and her parents took her into their home. When Talancon learned that his grandfather had been molesting her, he took her out, and cared for her until a convalescent home became necessary. “I was back in the streets, running hard; back to what I was in before I joined the Army. “I decided at the age of 37 that I was done. I went to bed for a month, got rid of everybody in my life, and ended up getting clean.



Pastor Joe making good on his covenant. Photo by Julie Parker.

“A month later, my third wife acknowledged she had a problem with alcohol and codeine. She went through the Kaiser outpatient program and got clean. About six months later, she became pregnant with my only child, a daughter. In 2005, she got really sick. Got her to the hospital on Friday. On Sunday, she died from sclerosis and liver damage. “I made a covenant with God that if he would take better care of me – my diabetes was out of control and I was overweight - so I could raise my daughter (who was seven at the time), then I would go the streets and preach to the homeless.” In 2002, he bought a clutch shop, but his employees ran it. “I was gone for almost a year spinning out of control - not getting high or anything – just not knowing if I was coming or going.” Meanwhile, Pamela Jaspar, a woman who sang with him in a community choir, invited him to

join her and a minister to feed the homeless. The two began seriously dating. He returned to the shop. “It supported the ministry to feed the homeless. We fed about 350 out here every Saturday.” He also set up a church in the shop for about six months. “The beams have metal crosses throughout the shop.” The shop, however, wasn’t succeeding at the necessary level, so he walked away from it. He and Pamela married, but his tow truck business went under. “I was making money here and there, helping at shops, working cars, or helping with recycling appliances. Pamela was working full-time and putting up with me. “I was taking food, clothes, furniture to people who were just getting into apartments and didn’t have anything. I even had a food closet in my mother-in-law’s garage in South Sacramento. There were bakeries who gave us bread. We did

that for about a year.” In addition to serving as community chaplain with the Sacramento Law Enforcement Chaplaincy (providing death notifications for the coroner and other agencies after suicides, murders), he now has an office through which he can provide assistance and ministry to those who need it most. “This last year, we had almost 500 breakfast burritos on Christmas morning, and we had 35 sleeping bags to give away, but 200 people. Since we’ve been out here, we haven’t seen any fights in our lines. If they didn’t need a sleeping bag, they gave it back and took something else – beanie, pair of gloves, scarf, blanket, or jacket. Instead of being greedy, they shared with each other. It took years to get to that point. I’ve seen stabbings in lines, fist fights. You’ve got to be able to reassure them that there’s enough, and that we’ll be back. “We also work with Interfaith Council. They have donated close to 3,000 sleeping bags in the last three years. “We want churches throughout Sacramento to accept the homeless into their churches on Sunday; to bus them out and back. If we expect our homeless to become mainstream acceptable, we have to show them that they’re acceptable to us. Safehaven also supports the business community with Third Thursday Business Breakfast for Sacramento Marketplace Christians from 7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. Their last speaker was Cassandra Jennings, Kevin Johnson’s senior advisor. Donations would be appreciated for the upcoming Easter services. Safehaven Ministries of Sacramento, Inc. is located at 1400 North C Street and can be contacted at (916) 290-6697.

Rancho Cordova Taking Pro-Active Role in Housing Discrimination Issues

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) Have you or do you know someone who has not been able to rent an apartment because of their race or color? Or have you or they been given different lease terms when renting because of religion or a physical disability? The City of Rancho Cordova is taking a pro-active position regarding fair housing in its community. Fair housing choice (under the Fair Housing Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968) refers to the rights of residents to pursue housing without discrimination. “The City wants to make more people aware of housing discrimination and to let them know they can do something about it,” said Phil Nichols, Code Enforcement Officer for the City of Rancho Cordova. The City is transitioning so that it will directly service the housing related needs of its residents by promoting fair housing choice, providing education, and becoming part of the response services. Federal and state laws prohibit housing discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin, marital status, familial status (presence of children), age, or physical disability. Other forms of discrimination are unequal

lease terms, different rental or home price quotes, and different rental terms because of race, national origin, familial status, etc. “If a housing provider discriminates against someone based on any of these factors, they have the right to seek help from the City,” said Nichols. But he added that “a landlord has the right to deny housing to a person based on income, credit rating, or other information that is related to the person’s ability and willingness to pay rent.” If you think you are a victim of housing-related discrimination or would like more information about fair housing, please contact the City of Rancho Cordova Fair Housing hotline at (916) 851-8979 or online at www.cityofranhocordova.org. Complaints may also be filed directly with the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing at (800) 884-1684 and with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at (800) 347-3739. The City maintains partnership with a listing of non-profit organizations that counsel property owners, managers, tenants, and homebuyers on fair housing-related issues. Source: City of Rancho Cordova

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