



AMERICAN RIVER MESSENGER

Volume 7 • Issue 24

Serving Fair Oaks, Gold River, Rancho Cordova & Sacramento County

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Gifts and Stockings for Foster Youth



Many members of United Way's Women in Philanthropy and community volunteers stuffed stockings for local foster youth.

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA – (MPG) One hundred twelve women donated 147 stockings and 132 gifts through United Way's Women in Philanthropy so 197 local foster youth would have holiday wishes fulfilled. Fifty foster youth in Sacramento County's Gifts From The Heart program received the holiday gifts they requested. United Way's Women in Philanthropy and community members also filled stockings for 147 foster youth with United Way's SenSe-Ability project funded partners: Amador-Tuolumne Community Resources, Child Abuse Prevention Council of Sacramento, Koinonia Family Services and New Morning Youth and Family Services.

"Some of these kids are scared, suddenly removed from their homes during what is supposed to be the happiest season of the year," said Lisa Watts, chair of United Way's Women in Philanthropy. "Others have experienced years of pain as they bounce from one foster home to another and now prepare to live on their own. United Way's Women in Philanthropy gives women across the region a tangible way to touch these kids' hearts during the holidays."

Dozens of volunteers wrapped gifts, stuffed stockings and wrote personal notes to foster youth, including United Way's Women in Philanthropy members, community volunteers, representatives of nonprofits

supporting foster youth, members of Girl Scouts Heart of Central California Junior Troop 1841 and two foster youth who received stockings in previous years. The gifts and stockings will be distributed through United Way's SenSe-Ability project nonprofit partners and the County of Sacramento.

United Way's Women in Philanthropy brings women together to foster the future, preparing foster youth for a successful adulthood. A dynamic group of businesswomen, homemakers and community leaders, Women in Philanthropy members raise funds, hold drives and provide trainings focused on helping foster youth rise to their dreams. The group also is a partner in

United Way's SenSe-Ability project, helping foster youth become financially self-sufficient through financial literacy courses and individual development accounts that provide a matched savings program. For more information, visit www.yourlocalunitedway.org/wip.

Sacramento County's Gifts from the Heart is an annual holiday gift-giving program that operates on donations and benefits children and seniors who are in the Department of Health and Human Services' system of care. For more information, call (916) 875-2027.

Source: Kristin Thébaud
Communications

District Attorney Receives Grant for Existing DUI Prosecution Program

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA – (MPG) District Attorney Jan Scully announced today the receipt of continued funding from OTS for the vertical prosecution team that handles DUI cases involving death or injury, from arrest to sentencing, and prevention outreach efforts. This one-year \$970,000 grant comes from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The goal of this program is to reduce alcohol and drug-impaired traffic fatalities and injuries. In 2010, there were 42 deaths and 1,054 serious injuries as a result of DUI crashes in Sacramento County. With this grant, DUI offenders face specialized prosecutors that are highly trained to handle both alcohol and drug-impaired driving cases throughout each step of the criminal justice process. In fatal and major injury DUI collisions, team members may be involved as early as the investigation of a crash scene.

In the past year alone, the team successfully prosecuted 23 cases, all of which involved gross vehicular manslaughter, vehicular manslaughter and DUI with great bodily injury. In addition, 115 felony and 142 misdemeanor cases of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs were successfully prosecuted.

The vertical prosecution team includes two full-time prosecutors and one investigator. Funding is also provided for a criminalist to participate in DUI check points. The prosecutors work with the "California Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor Program" to increase their capabilities through specialized trainings, including training in the emerging problem of drug-impaired driving. Team members share information with peers and law enforcement personnel throughout the county and across the state.

The community awareness component will be conducted through the educational programs "Moment of Impact," "Real DUI Court in Schools," and "Every 15 Minutes," all of which are focused on the prevention of underage driving while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, texting, and cell phone use.

"DUI can be a violent, tragic crime," said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. "This special team will help insure that no one falls through the cracks, and that the worst-of-the-worst offenders face a highly skilled, dedicated prosecutor."

DA Scully states, "The citizens of this county know all too well the devastating impact alcohol and drug-impaired driving collisions have on its victims, surviving family and friends, and the entire community. While I am excited about what we have already accomplished, the ongoing support of OTS will ensure we can continue to aggressively prosecute DUI offenders and prevent future victims."

Source: District Attorney's Office

Year-End Travel Highest in Five Years Over 11.7 Million Californians to Travel over Christmas & New Year's, Says AAA

SACRAMENTO REGION – Consumer optimism is offsetting unresolved financial issues as millions of Californians help propel this year's holiday travel season into the second highest number of travelers seen in the past decade, according to the latest travel survey from AAA Northern California. They predict an estimated 11.7 million Californians will travel during the end-of-the-year holiday season, representing an overall increase of 1.8 percent compared to 2011.

"For the fourth consecutive year, California has seen a slow to steady increase in travel volume," said AAA Northern California spokesperson Cynthia Harris. "This season we are experiencing the highest number of travelers since the 2006-2007 travel peak as Californians kick-start the New Year with a holiday vacation."

AAA estimates that more than 10 million Californians traveling during Christmas and New Year's will choose to drive to reach their holiday destinations, representing a 1.4 percent increase compared

to last year. The air travel industry will also experience an increase of 4.4 percent this year as more than 950,000 Californians are expected to fly.

Approximately 398,000 state residents are expected to travel by other modes of transportation, such as boats or trains. This represents an increase of 7.4 percent compared to last year. Nationally, AAA projects that more than 93 million people will travel 50 miles or more during the holiday festivities. That's a 1.6 percent increase compared to last year.

Family travel constitutes 32 percent of total travelers during the year-end holidays. An average West Coast family of four will save money by staying with friends and family, spending an average of \$1,048 on their trip. An average West Coast road trip will consist of approximately 838 miles.

Californians who take to the skies during this holiday season will pay an average price of \$203 per round trip ticket for the top U.S. air routes. This represents a decrease of three percent from last

year. On a national level, air travel is expected to increase 4.5 percent as 5.6 million travelers will take to the skies.

According to AAA's latest travel survey, the most popular activities for West Coast families this holiday season will be dining, visiting family and friends, sightseeing, nightlife, and going to beach/waterfront areas.

AAA Winter Travel Survival Tips

- Pack a cellular phone and car charger. Have emergency numbers available. Carry your AAA card for help in an emergency. For members who become stranded, AAA can be reached by calling 1-800-AAA-HELP (1-800-222-4357).

- If you become snowbound, stay with your vehicle. It is an excellent shelter and makes it easier for rescuers to find you.

- Stay focused. Avoid distractions such as texting, talking on the phone and adjusting the radio or other electronic devices. AAA Air Travel Tips

- Hit the web before the airport. Check in online up to 24 hours

before flying and print your boarding pass at home. Many airlines offer discounts for prepaying during online check-in.

- Pack light. Avoid checked bag fees and bring carry-on luggage only. Check with your airline on the maximum size of bags allowed in overhead bins. TSA regulations require the name on your airline ticket/boarding pass to exactly match your name as it is printed on your government-issued identification.

- Make reservations for accommodations and rental cars ahead of time so prices can be locked in. Air fares are typically cheaper if arrangements are made early.

- Liquids and gel carry-ons will only be allowed in containers no larger than 3 ounces and must be placed in a quart-size Ziploc clear plastic bag.

AAA's projections are based on research conducted by IHS Global Insight. AAA has been reporting on holiday travel trends for more than two decades.

Source: AAA

Chamber of Commerce Presents Awards

FAIR OAKS, CA – (MPG) The Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce presented its annual awards at their monthly meeting at the Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse December 13, 2012. The Awards were presented during the Awards/Installation of Officers and Directors Luncheon.

Safe Credit Union was awarded Business of the Year. Bob Clouse, of Bob Clouse Insurance (right) was chosen as the Citizen of the Year. Rose Erickson, Moth Hole Consignment & Boutique was awarded the Business Person of the Year. The Volunteer of the Year award was given to Roselyn Barbray of Take Shape for Life and Charles Miller of William Charles Salon as Co-Volunteers of the Year for all their hard work and support of chamber events.



Safe Credit Union was awarded Business of the Year. Maria Mengotti (with plaque) and SAFE Credit Union staff are pictured here accepting the Business of the Year Award; from left to right Anne Carlson, Monica Waters, Christina Bartlett, Shawna Mitten.



Bob Clouse, of Bob Clouse Insurance (right) was chosen as the Citizen of the Year. He is given the award by Chamber President Paul Lindser.



Co-Volunteer of the Year, Roselyn Barbray, of Take Shape for Life and Charles Miller, of William Charles Salon were chosen Co-Volunteers of the Year



Rose Erickson, left, Moth Hole Consignment & Boutique was awarded the Business Person of the Year.

Photos provided by the Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce. To join the chamber call Jan Bass Otto, Executive Director at 916-967-2903.

Branden Lawson of Fair Oaks in Graduating Class at Golf Academy Of America

CARLSBAD, CA – (MPG) Branden Lawson of Fair Oaks joined 69 fellow students from the Golf Academy of America (GAA) of San Diego to earn an associate degree in Golf Complex Operations and Management during graduation ceremonies on December 14. The San Diego graduating class was composed of students from 10 states.

“These students put in a lot of hard work and all of them are now well prepared to step into golf career opportunities anywhere in the country,” said Rich Iorio, campus director of the Myrtle Beach Golf Academy of America. “Our students are some of the best trained and most knowledgeable golf career professionals in the industry. When they leave Golf Academy of America, they are recognized as the future golf professionals who will lead this industry.”

The GAA is the largest and longest-running two-year golf career college in the world and prepares graduates for a wide array of golf career opportunities in the \$76 billion a year industry. Golf Academy of America is an accredited golf course management school offering a comprehensive curriculum of

golf instruction and business management. The 16-month program balances classroom studies, practical experience and a comprehensive understanding of both the game and the business of golf.

The GAA boasts an exceptional career placement record for graduates for opportunities including: golf teaching professionals, tournament organizers, club managers and owners, golf manufacturing representatives, product development specialists and golf professionals at golf-related companies, among many other golf career options.

For more information about Golf Academy of America, go to www.GolfAcademy.edu, or call (800) 342-7342.

Golf Academy of America (formerly the San Diego Golf Academy) is the largest and longest-running two-year golf college in the world. Golf Academy of America’s 16-month program balances classroom studies, practical experience and comprehensive understanding of both the game and the business of golf. For more information, call 800-342-7342 or visit www.GolfAcademy.edu.

Source: The Brandon Agency

Sac Library Launches New Website

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA – (MPG) The Sacramento Public Library is proud to unveil its newly designed website at www.saclibrary.org. New features such as major search improvements and a cleaner and more modern design will connect thousands of patrons not only to books and media but also to events, research tools, self-publishing tools, and event facilities.

Library staff worked with PMC, a Rancho Cordova-based municipal services agency, to simplify and streamline the website, which is viewed by more than 356,000 library visitors per month. The new website features improved navigation and site search to connect Sacramento readers to their favorite books and stories before they even leave the house. This includes a “virtual shelf” of recommended books, a revolving slideshow of

library events and services, and an online library newsletter to which the public may subscribe for free.

“We looked at many other library sites and incorporated strategies that would benefit our patrons. I love how it looks now! People can now find what they’re looking for easily, and it’s easier for our staff to manage,” said Rivkah K. Sass, library director.

“The new library website helps promote our upcoming events, news bulletins, and new and existing services with large slideshows on the main pages that are easy to display and manage. It’s now easier to search for particular library events, and we can display events just for kids or teens on their web pages,” stated Amy Calhoun, electronic resources librarian.

Source: Sacramento County Library System

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

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

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Local WWII POW Author to Speak at Fair Oaks Library


This candid, first person account of terror behind enemy lines, capture and imprisonment in Nazi Stalag prisoner of war camps begins on a sunny day at 20,000 feet. It takes readers into the muddy encampments and freezing death marches prisoners of war faced as Russian forces advanced across Eastern Europe. Second Lt. Len Kovar shares the strategies that kept him and others alive as they struggled to survive each day.

Having just celebrated his 90th birthday, this WWII hero and POW survivor can still wear his WWII uniform. He will speak about his personal struggles, the importance of strong beliefs and faith in overcoming his terrible captivity. Meet local author Len Kovar on Saturday, December 22, 2012 in the Community Meeting Room at the Fair Oaks Library from 1pm – 3 pm.

“WWII Prisoner of War: How I Survived” is the story of young American airman, Second Lt. Len Kovar, a B-24 Bombardier from Carmichael, CA shot down over Eastern Europe on a beautiful day in 1943. Len Kovar provides a candid story of survival, his personal struggle to endure and a unique insight into the minds of prisoners and German soldiers following orders of their Nazi leaders. Kovar’s tale features photographs taken with a smuggled camera inside the Stalag razor wire and barracks of Nazi P.O.W. camps before VE Day.

As this ‘Greatest Generation’ passes into history, this may be one of the final documented stories of a WWII POW’s courageous survival. “WWII Prisoner of War: How I Survived” helps recall how victory is won in the singular stories of the men and women who served. Get to know this WWII hero at <http://powhowisurvived.com>

Author: Second Lt. Len Kovar 156 pages, ISBN 978-0-9845424-8-2 Available at Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble or visit http://kohopono.com/?page_id=955. com to order. \$16.95. Media contact: Rick Reed 916-704-0080



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By Black Belt Master Jonathan Peschke, Robinson's TKD Carmichael

Thanks to the many people who have come by the school, said hello in the grocery store or given me the ‘thumbs up’ at services on Sunday for this column. We often are involved in sports because someone put us in it as children, despite our wishes and physical makeup. While we might all like the spotlight as the starting quarterback, center on court or anchor leg in the relay, our bodies may not be right to achieve the best results. This can be frustrating, for parents and children, when your 5-foot child wants to become the next NBA star center. By taking the type of body we have into consideration, finding the best match for your physical attributes becomes critical to success.

This is just common sense. There are several basic body types which brings us to the question: *Dear Mister Fit, My child is interested in playing football, but we are worried he's too skinny and may get hurt. Is there an alternative that might be better suited for his abilities?* Ginni, Fair Oaks.

According to website Keep in Health, in 1940 the American psychologist William Sheldon, introduced the theory of somatypes. His theory described three basic human body types: the endomorph, characterized by a preponderance of bodyfat; the mesomorph, marked by a well-developed musculature; and the ectomorph, distinguished by a lack of either much fat or muscle tissue. As your child exhibits the ectomorphic-type, and he is fired up about football, let's get him interested in kicking the ball. That satisfies his interests, gives him a position better suited to his body-type and puts him in the game where he is less likely to get injured. And kickers are often the heroes who also make big bucks! And, my own shameless plug, having him take some Taekwondo will help improve strength, aerobic endurance, agility and flexibility, so it couldn't hurt in addition to his gridiron ambition.

Email your questions to AskMisterFit@robinsonstk.com and look for your answer on-line, or in the pages of this newspaper.





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“Home For The Holidays”



Photo by Ronnie Johnson

By James Lajoie
For MPG

SACRAMENTO, CA – (MPG) *Wells Fargo Home For The Holidays* has become a community concert tradition that officially kicks off the holiday season in the Capital Region. The Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra unveiled their 17th season of this Christmas program on Saturday, December 8 in Memorial Auditorium in the heart of downtown Sacramento to a packed crowd of over 2500 guests. The hall sparkled in its recent renovation enhanced with festive lights and holiday decorations. The Sacramento Children’s Chorus, Lynn Stevens, Director, was the guest Chorus on a program that was filled with both familiar and new works for chorus and orchestra. The event also unveiled the SCSO’s new Christmas CD “Home for the Holidays”. Music Director Donald Kendrick put led his forces through a program that started in darkness with the purity of the Sacramento Children’s Choristers singing Benjamin Britten’s “Hodie, Christus Natus Est” from his familiar “Ceremony of Carols”. Lara Hoggard’s “Personent Hodie” (written for the Dallas Symphony) rang out in full force from the Choral Society through the darkened hall with only the light of their candles that surrounded the audience in a warm glow. Both choirs moved gracefully in procession from the first balcony to the stage as the formidable SCSO Orchestra showed their true grit in a polished reading of Leroy Anderson’s “Christmas Festival”. John Rutter’s “I Wish You

Christmas” was sung with a touching poignancy and clarity by the SCSO followed by the Sacramento Children’s Chorus who filled the hall with Dan Forrest’s arrangement of “The First Noel”. Lynn Stevens conducted the children in an old English Carol “Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day” featuring Bailey Jones’ crystal clear, warm young soprano voice with excellent accompaniment by Harpist Beverly Wesner Hoehn. One of the most ethereal parts of the evening was the performance of Barlow Bradford’s “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” that featured members of the Handbell Choir from St. John’s Lutheran Church in Sacramento. The haunting arrangement and lush string writing created a spell binding effect. To honor the 20th anniversary of the Sacramento Children’s Chorus, the founding Conductors Kendrick and Stevens joined forces with their organizations to create a brand new commissioned work that received its premiere on the first half of the program. They selected American composer Randol Alan Bass whose “Festival Magnificat” is dedicated to these two arts groups. The work is a fiery and virtuosic celebration for full orchestra, children and adult voices that will remain in the repertoire for ensembles around the globe to enjoy. From its fanfare beginnings to the quiet and introspective middle section, the composition is appealing and energetic with a brilliant handling of the orchestration. Kendrick carefully kept the balances of his mighty forces in control and delivered an historic moment artistically with style and nuance. It is a welcome

addition to the repertoire and hopefully will enjoy a long life. Following an Intermission, the entire audience rose to their feet and filled the venerable hall with a Carol sing-along. Numerous schools were in attendance and it was heart-warming to see so many families singing together. The Nigerian Carol “Betelehemu” with soloist Tim Mascarinis received a deafening applause from the audience. The orchestra played Carmen Dragon’s classic arrangement of “Deck the Hall” and Leroy Anderson’s “Sleigh Ride” with elegance and brilliance. Kendrick had fun saluting the Wells Fargo sponors with some re-written words in their theme song “Home For the Holidays”. Mack Wilberg’s huge orchestration of “Angels We Have Heard on High” opened with excellent solo work by Chiara Di Benedetto Brown” whose voice filled the large hall with a clarion brilliance. The Sacramento Children’s Chorus sang John Rutter’s “Angel’s Carol” with excellent diction and tone and also a touching opening verse to his setting of “Silent Night”. The audience was treated to a rousing finale of “We Wish You A Merry Christmas” the unleashed the full and majestic forces of the SCSO and the SCC in a rousing standing ovation. The Choral Society has two more concerts in the spring before the head off to Italy for a concert tour that includes a performance on the great Altar of St. Peters in the Vatican in Rome. For more information please visit their website at www.sacramentochoral.com

Assemblymember Ken Cooley Sworn into Office Introduces First Bill Increasing Accountability of the Regulatory Impact of Governmental Agencies

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) – Ken Cooley was sworn in on December 3rd, 2012 as the California State Assemblymember for the new 8th Assembly District which includes the communities of Arden-Arcade, Carmichael, Citrus Heights, Rancho Cordova, Rancho Murieta, Rosemont, Wilton, and other portions of unincorporated Sacramento County. As a longtime community leader in Rancho Cordova and a founding member of the City, Mr. Cooley will hit the ground running as an experienced leader. “As an Assemblymember, I will continue my work representing the people of the 8th District. My door is open, and I look forward to partnering actively with the community and representing them in both my capitol and district offices,” said Ken Cooley. Immediately after the swearing-in proceedings concluded, Assemblymember Cooley introduced AB 12, increasing the accountability of the regulatory impact of governmental agencies, where they are issuing major regulations that can burden the economy.



Assemblymember Ken Cooley

Under current law, when state agencies create or modify regulations that have an economic impact of \$50 million dollars or more they must issue a standardized regulatory impact analysis which explains the potential adverse impact on California businesses, including whether the regulation encourages the creation or elimination of jobs and industry. The Department of Finance and the Office of Administrative Law are to review those regulatory impact analysis reports to ensure they are being properly created and compiled but there is no specific reporting

timeframe and no public notification requirements. This bill requires the Department of Finance and the Office of Administrative Law to review those regulatory impact analysis reports and report annually to the Legislature to promote state agencies’ compliance. It further instructs the Office of Administrative Law to make public notice on its website of any state agency failing to issue a standardized regulatory impact report and the reason for the agency’s noncompliance creating a mechanism for accountability and transparency. “I understand the sacred trust placed in elected officials to be good stewards of the people’s money. To that end, I will use the full power of this office, and the power of the Assembly, to shed light on government programs to ensure that regulations are not unduly burdensome, to create cost-savings and higher accountability. A more streamlined and efficient government means a higher performing government,” said Cooley.



By Pastor Ray Dare

Home is where you belong. Home is where your heart is. This Christmas, I’d like you to consider a different kind of homecoming. A coming home to the One who made you, knows everything about you and loves you. This is the very first reason for Christmas. God came to earth so He could say to you, “I love you and want a relationship with you.” What could keep you from coming home to God this Christmas? Fear. Fear of rejection. Guilt. Guilt over things from your past, mistakes that you’ve made. You may think, “Maybe God wouldn’t want me now. I’m too far away. I’ve been away from Him too long. I’ve done too many things He probably doesn’t approve of. I’m too far away to return now.” You’re wrong. Jesus often told stories to teach truths about God. In Luke

Home for Christmas

15, Jesus tells a story about one of the greatest homecomings of all. He said a man had two sons and one of the sons comes to him one day and says, “Dad, I want my share of the inheritance. I’m out of here! I’m splitting town!” So, the father gives him his half of the inheritance, and the kid takes off to a foreign country and blows it all! He squanders it all on wine, women and song. He’s messed up, he’s on the streets, he hits bottom. He winds up feeding pigs in a pigsty. Finally, he comes to his senses, “What am I doing? My father’s hired servants have it better than this!” So, he begins to return home to his father. As he’s coming home, his father sees him a far way off (no doubt the father was eagerly watching, waiting for his son’s return). His father sees him, runs out to meet him and before the kid could hardly get a word out, the father opens wide his arms and hugs him, he kisses him on the cheeks. He tells his servants, “Go get my best robe and put it on him! And place shoes on his feet!” Then he places his ring of authority on his finger and says, “My son was lost, but now he’s home!” This is a picture of God’s love for you. This is a picture of how

much you matter to God no matter what you’ve done or how many times you’ve done it. No matter where you’ve been or how long you’ve been there—God still loves you! He wants a relationship with you. This is what Christmas is all about. God came to earth to say, “I love you and want to forgive you.” Sadly, the Bible says that many people miss this. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 6:1, “Some people have missed the most important thing in life. They don’t know God.” I’m not talking about religion or rituals or rules or regulations. I’m talking about a relationship with God. On Christmas Eve, I’ll be sharing more about the true meaning of Christmas our Candlelight Service, it beings at 5:30 pm. I invite you to join me and the community as we celebrate Christmas together.

Merry Christmas!

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A Film Review by Tim Riley

KILLING THEM SOFTLY (Rated PG-13)

The bleak landscape of small-time gangster thriller “Killing Them Softly” rests not just with urban decay, but with the backdrop of the run-up to the 2008 presidential election. Based on the George V. Higgins novel, “Cogan’s Trade,” this criminal enterprise film involves petty hoods and sleazy losers who are pretty much oblivious to world affairs and the economic meltdown. As if to create a sense of impending doom, “Killing Them Softly” makes plentiful use of radio and TV clips of posturing by various political figures to underscore the gravity of America’s financial crisis. The political chatter is little more than background noise to the crooks and wise-guys who foolishly scheme to rob a high-stakes mob-protected poker game. Even in a bad economy, they just want a quick score for big bucks. A longtime hanger-on in the underworld, Johnny Amato (Vincent Curatola), now in the dry-cleaning business, has come up with a slick plan to rob the card game run by regular dealer Markie Trattman (Ray Liotta). To complete the actual theft, Johnny turns to jittery young crook Frankie (Scoot McNairy), who is fresh out of jail and flat broke. In other words, Frankie is the perfect patsy. For his part, Frankie makes the dubious choice of tapping for a partner his drug-addled friend

Riley Reviews TALKY YET VIOLENT THRILLER BLUNTS “KILLING THEM SOFTLY”

Russell (Ben Mendelsohn), a gleefully seedy Australian junkie whose latest criminal enterprise involves dog theft. The Markie Trattman card game is a convenient target because Markie once imprudently boasted of his complicity in a robbery of one of his own mob-protected games. Naturally, the conspirators are only too certain that the mob’s suspicion will fall immediately upon Markie, the guy most likely to know all the inside information. With more bluster than brains, Frankie and Russell manage to pull off the robbery and escape without being recognized. But only a fool believes in a foolproof plan. And there’s the rub. While the low-rent hoods are congratulating themselves, the mob takes drastic steps to deal with this situation, bringing in the seasoned enforcer Jackie Cogan (Brad Pitt). Dealing through the mob’s buttoned-up middle manager Driver (Richard Jenkins), Jackie is hired to investigate the heist and restore the criminal status quo. It won’t be easy or pretty. While Jackie is cool, cynical and detached, his usually efficient manner is constrained by the bureaucratic mentality of the unseen mob bosses who expect Driver to communicate their instructions. The essential imperative for Jackie is not only to mete out punishment, but to deliver a message to would-be thieves that no one is beyond the reach of a criminal enterprise

jealously guarding its turf. Though he’s the consummate professional, Jackie finds it’s frustrating to navigate mounting complications, so he brings in trusted colleague Mickey (James Gandolfini) to assist with the assignment. The once reliable Mickey has now become surprisingly unpredictable, seeing how he’s much more interested in overindulging in alcohol and prostitutes than taking care of business. A gangster thriller that involves contract killers is bound to be violent. “Killing Them Softly” certainly has its share of mayhem, including one of the most brutally grotesque beatings of recent memory. But this crime story plays out to a different tempo than others in the genre. Indeed, the violence is either sadistically brutal or just simmering below the surface, keeping the audience on edge. Surprisingly, the hoodlums are often garrulous, talking at great lengths often to the point of annoyance. This is particular true when the dim-witted Frankie and Russell prattle on like high school stoners. The political context frequently gets in the way of the film’s essentially nihilistic worldview. Quite frankly, it seems unlikely that hoods would hang out in dive bars where C-SPAN is the TV channel of choice. “Killing Them Softly” also goes against the grain by doing unusual things like making Ray Liotta a relatively sympathetic figure and James Gandolfini even more malevolent than his turn on “The Sopranos.” The film’s saving grace is Brad Pitt’s unflappable, subdued performance as the world-weary hired gun. And when his Jackie has a conversation with Mickey or Driver, it’s worth paying attention. “Killing Them Softly” is not effortlessly categorized, and as such, it may not find its audience easy to reach. In short, this film was not made for hardcore action junkies.

Flooding: Precautionary Measures and Whom to Call When Problems Arise



By County Supervisor, Roberta MacGlashan

As winter is upon us, we must all take steps to prepare for the wind and rain that we know is coming over the next several months. Recent storm activity certainly gave us all a reminder that we can never do too much to be prepared, and that it is essential to take both precautionary measures and to know whom to call when various problems arise. First, and foremost, is advanced preparedness. Much of the flooding experienced in the recent storms was due to localized street flooding caused by clogged storm drains. You can help the County and your neighbors prevent flooding by doing two things: first, please keep your streets, sidewalks, and driveways free of fallen leaves that can get washed into and clog storm drains. Second, if there is large debris in your street,

perhaps caused by illegal dumping, please call 875-5171 to report it. The County is continually responding to complaints about illegal dumping, and will respond as quickly as possible, depending on the work load. You can take additional precautions if you know that your property has a tendency to flood sooner than most, particularly by buying your own sand bags and preparing for possible flooding on your own property that is not caused by clogged storm drains. While the County will open sand bag locations during extreme weather events to assist with creek and river flooding, we cannot predict all local flooding that may occur, and I urge you to take precautionary steps if you have experienced flooding before. You can also help the county to respond to flooding and other storm-related problems by helping be our eyes and ears in the community. Depending on the situation, we have several numbers to call during a storm event to obtain a response to various situations. First, if you are experiencing flooding for any reason due to rain, please contact (916)875-RAIN. It is essential that you report things that are occurring, both to receive a response and to help us keep track of flooding events as they are occurring. The more real-time data we receive, the better. As for trees that have fallen and blocked the road, please call (916)875-5171. The County Department of Transportation works

very hard during storms to remove trees that have fallen into the roadway, to keep the streets and sidewalks clear for traffic to flow. Of course, some situations are much more urgent, and require a call to 911. Please, please do not call 911 with non-emergency situations like the ones previously mentioned. The 911 operators are not equipped to handle such requests, and you may be preventing someone with a true emergency from getting through. Life-threatening emergencies should, of course, be called in to 911 immediately. Additionally, serious, life-endangering hazards such as downed power lines should be called in to 911. Please be responsible and use your best judgment when deciding to call 911. If it’s not an emergency, please use the numbers mentioned above. As we go through the winter months, we will also be starting a new year. With the new year, I will begin my regular community meetings once again. In Citrus Heights, we will be meeting on Friday, January 25 at 7:30am at Denny’s at Sunrise Blvd and Greenback Ln. We will be hearing from the new Director of Community Development, Lori Moss, who will be discussing the ways in which the County is working to make the development and business approval process more business friendly. In the meantime, if you have questions please do not hesitate to email me at macglashanr@saccounty.net, or call my office at (916)874-5491.

SMUD Thanks Customers Who Help the Needy Pay their Electric Bills “EnergyHELP” nears \$3 million mark; benefits more than 19,000 households

SACRAMENTO REGION – (MPG) As the local economy continues to struggle, many folks find that making ends meet is especially challenging during the holiday season. Though times are tough, Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) customers continue to deliver for those in need. Fellow customers who are in need can get assistance paying their electric bill thanks to the EnergyHELP program. EnergyHELP provides an easy way to contribute funds to help struggling customers. The program has been going nine years now and in that time, SMUD customers have contributed nearly \$3 million to EnergyHELP. More than 13,000 customers now voluntarily donate monthly to help struggling low-

income SMUD customers keep the lights on. Here’s how EnergyHELP works: Customers can contribute automatically in their monthly bill payment to any of four partner charity agencies. The donation is tax-deductible, and SMUD sends 100 percent of the proceeds directly to the charity. Those charities then provide as much as \$200 in one-time bill assistance to low-income customers whose electric power has been, or is about to be, disconnected for non-payment. While typical monthly donations are between \$1 and \$10 per month, some customers contribute \$20 to \$100 per month. Since EnergyHELP’s start in 2004, a total of \$2,926,611 in assistance has been distributed

to more than 19,000 local households in crisis through all four EnergyHELP partner charity agencies: Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services, the Salvation Army, Travelers Aid Emergency Assistance Agency, and the Folsom Cordova Community Partnership. Based on customers’ stepping up to help their neighbors, SMUD will surpass \$543,000 in annual pledged EnergyHELP contributions by this year’s end. For more information about SMUD, contributing to EnergyHELP or SMUD’s low-income programs, or to inquire about qualification guidelines for assistance, visit smud.org or call SMUD at 1- 888-742-7683.

Source: SMUD Newsroom



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YOUR WORLD, YOUR VOICE



By Ronnie McBrayer

While in Central America earlier this year, I visited the Mayan ruins at Tazumal, El Salvador. Tazumal is one of the best preserved ruins in that country, and I learned from my guide, that it was a central religious site. Tazumal was a place where the ancients gathered to ceremonially soothe their cruel, bloodthirsty deities.

If a severe drought struck the region, then the gods were angry; shed some blood. If the rainy season was monsoonal, the gods were perturbed; shed some blood. If the spring corn crop refused to grow, the gods were against the people; shed some blood. Sickness, plague, earthquakes, tidal waves, floods, or accidents; these all had the same explanation. The fickle and nefarious gods had to be appeased.

All ancient religions were built on a similar foundation: God is angry and humanity stands in constant danger, thus someone has to pay. Much of current religion is anchored to this mooring as well. Is it no wonder then, that the world is filled with hate, bloodshed, panic, and terror when religious people, the vast majority of the world's population, expect the same from their gods? Regrettably, faith has failed

Keeping the Faith

to mature or evolve beyond its most elementary and primitive beginnings; and when Christianity succumbs to this type of fear-driven hysteria, it is especially disconcerting. That God is an unpredictable executioner with an itchy, twitchy trigger finger that must somehow be pacified is a gross misrepresentation of our faith, because it is a gross misrepresentation of Jesus Christ, his person, and his mission.

We who are Christian believe that Jesus "is the visible image of the invisible God," as the Apostle Paul wrote. Paul continued, "And through Christ, God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth."

Put simply, the Advent of Jesus, his coming into the world that we celebrate during this season, was not to save us from God, but to show us what and who God is really like. And what is he like? He is at peace with us. He has reconciled all things. There is no anger to placate and no blood to shed, only his love to receive, explore, and share.

God loves us, not because we are good; not because we are loveable; not because of what we can do for him or for others; and not because of the way we make him feel. He loves us because he is actually, truly, really that good. And what we and our world need more than anything – a world up to its collective ears in fear and bloodshed – is that kind of real, unconditional, healing love.

I enjoy how Father Richard Rohr explains this. He tells a

story about eating dinner with a family from his parish. They had a wonderful meal and the whole time the toddler in the family, who had just learned to walk, was running about everywhere. The little guy could really move, but he had a problem stopping.

He ran to the top of a set of stairs but could not find his "brakes" in time to stop. He toppled, over the edge, banging and careening his way downward. No one at the table moved; they all held their breath in dread. Four, five, six, seconds passed. The father finally jumped up and ran to the stairwell. There the youngster was at the bottom of the steps, only bruised a bit, but lying in shock, his eyes bugged out over what had just happened to him. Only when his dad got to him and picked him up did he start crying.

Father Rohr made this appropriate observation: "We can never acknowledge our pain and let the healing begin, until we are taken up in the arms of love. Love allows the crying and the mending to begin." God wants to take up the hurt and injured into his arms to love and mend, not destroy. So let the mending begin in each us, and we might discover that the mending will begin in our world.

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.

I'll Have A "Red" Christmas, Thank You

By Rev. James L. Snyder, D. Litt

The Christmas holiday season is always ablaze with beautiful colors. I find it hard to be gloomy or grumpy this time of the year. I must confess, not everybody belongs to this "Holiday Cheer Club." It is an exclusive club but open to anybody who is tired of being grumpy.

Colors abound throughout the season and the Christmas songs highlight this. "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas." "I'll have a blue Christmas without you." "Rudolph the red nose reindeer."

Oh the wonderful colors of Christmas.

One of the most obvious colors of Christmas is green. Right at the center of this Christmas holiday is the Christmas tree decked from top to bottom in beautiful colors and lights. Nothing says Christmas quite like an old-fashioned Christmas tree.

My thoughts along this line are, let the grumps and grouches complain about the Christmas tree. For myself, I will look with admiring wonder at the beauty of the Christmas tree.

Then of course, who could forget good old Santa Claus dressed in his red suit. I never could figure out why Santa's suit was always red. Throughout the years, I never gave it too much thought and assumed it was a fashion statement from the North Pole.

I had some time this week to do a little rummaging through my old thought gallery. For the most part, we only celebrate Christmas once a year. I think Charles Dickens had it right with old Mr. Scrooge, after his conversion, celebrating Christmas every day of the year. I wonder what kind of world this would be if all of us would celebrate Christmas every day of the year?

If I were president of the United States, I would enact a law that would set aside one year to be a year of celebrating Christmas all 365 days.

I think I would only have to do it once and nobody would want to go back to the old grumpy times of celebrating it only one time out of the year.

I was thinking about this the other night when the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage jarred me back to reality. "Have you," she queried most seriously, "finished with your Christmas shopping?"

Christmas shopping! I had forgotten about it. I know we celebrate Christmas every year but I sometimes get so caught up with celebrating Christmas I forget about buying Christmas presents. After all, that Christmas tree would be somewhat naked if there were not Christmas presents to litter around the bottom.

I had to look at my wife and say, "No, I haven't even started."

By the time the dust of that thought settled I had to ask her, "How many Christmas presents do I have to buy?"

"Silly boy," she said with a chuckle that could compete with good old Santa Claus any day of the week, "you got to buy Christmas presents for everybody in our family." Then she chuckled some more just to set that thought into my cranium.

Everybody in our family? Now I am beginning to see red.

Santa's red suit has nothing to do with a North Pole fashion statement; it has everything to do with my financial statement.

I got a piece of paper and together my wife and I jotted down all of the members in our family. A few members I wanted to veto, but my wife vetoed my veto. By the time we were done, I would have to purchase Christmas presents for hundreds and hundreds of family members. Boy, did I see red!

At the beginning of the month of December, my checkbook is in the black, but each day of the month the black begins to fade into expanding shades of red. By the time the 24th of the month comes around my checkbook is a solid, brilliant, scarlet red.

I sighed quite deeply as I closed my checkbook. I almost said to my wife, "Remember the day...?" I stopped short of vocalizing that thought. I thought back when we first were married, which seems like hundreds of years ago, we only got presents for each other. I bought one present for her and she bought one present for me. What a Merry Christmas we had back in "the day."

A few days later as we were wrapping those presents I began thinking of another color. I looked at my wife and said, "This must be what they mean when they talked about the golden days." She laughed, and I thought some more.

My thoughts centered on the fact of what a wonderful family we have. After all those years, we have accumulated a marvelous family. Thinking about all the ones in my family, I began to retract those thoughts of veto.

"You know," I said to my wife quite thoughtfully, "red becomes my checkbook." All that red means all that family.

The Christmas holiday season means family. There is no family more glorious than the family of God. The Bible says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16 KJV). The whole spirit of Christmas has to do with giving, and God started it all.

I do not mind a "red" Christmas because everyone in my family is worth it. As Tiny Tim said, "God bless us all, everyone."

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 jamesnyder2@att.net. The church web site is www.whatafellowship.com.



By Karen Anderson

It's time to take stock of your life...look closely, don't miss anything. Can you actually see the hand of God working in your life? If not, why not? I have said this before; you need to first have that wonderful relationship with God's Son, Jesus Christ. Now, if that relationship is where it should be, then why are you not seeing the "Hand of God" working in your life? God's Word says, "With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all..." I know this verse is talking about that Jesus Christ has risen but I want you to take notice the phrase "And God's grace was so powerfully at work

Hands of God

in them all." You need to identify the blinders in your life that stop you from seeing Him.

I want so much for you to understand the true gift that God has for you. Be constantly aware of how He can impact your life. Sometimes, I find myself living in my own little world, not really aware of His presence. I can almost imagine Him standing, in the distance, waving His arms frantically to get my attention. He wants so much to be a part of every moment of my life. Let's make an agreement, you and me, that whatever we do in our day, we bring God along with us. Also, don't forget His son, Jesus. He wants to be with you too.

I know you can probably already answer this question, but it needs to be asked again. Why do you think that you don't see God's Hands? It is the enemy (Satan), who creates those blinders. As a piano teacher, I have worked with students over the past 30 years. Every student has the instinct to watch their hands instead of their music when playing so they won't make a mistake. Maybe they think I'm

going to be upset if the music is not perfect. As a result, the song comes off choppy and not very musical, and it lacks the love and feeling that music can produce. Maybe, dear friends, this is why you let Satan create blinders. Are you afraid that maybe God won't want to be with you anymore because your life isn't perfect? Maybe you harbor some bad habits that would offend God? Remember, perfection is impossible without God. We will not be perfect until we are in heaven with Him.

Once and for all, bind Satan from putting the blinders over your eyes. Rejoice in the fact that God loves you, no matter what. I am thankful to be His daughter, and I can't even imagine a life without Him. Thank you, Jesus, for being the love of my life. AMEN!

PASSAGE: Acts 4:22 (NIV)

Karen Anderson is an accomplished speaker, author, and chaplain. Leave a message or questions for Karen through her website www.doablesteps.com/contact.

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By Marlys Norris, Christian Author

Listen to the prophetic words of the Old Testament. Jeremiah 7:14 **"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."** New Testament records Jesus the son of Joseph and Mary, (both were from the blood line of David) was born. When they went to the Temple a religious man met them and told them his name would be "Immanuel". Immanuel means God with us! Yes, He was with us and He is

Recapture the "Wonder of it All!"

still with us today. Imagine a magnificent God would be born of a woman and come to earth to forgive and save mankind from all their sins. All because God Almighty loves us completely and desires us to be washed clean by His sacrificial precious blood covering. He died, shed all His blood and came alive again (resurrected) and many saw him. No other figure in history has shed every ounce of his blood, died and then came alive again with a new body.

God for ordained this event in history for you and I and was brought about for us-all to be reconciled to God and to live with Him in eternity. He came to be the Savior of the world and we celebrate His birth and His death. Year after year the whole world recognizes these important times in history and our calendars mark its beginning from the year one of this special occasion. And those who can relate

the very moment they accepted God's forgiveness and invited Jesus into their heart and life fully truly understand the love, power, mercy and grace that has invaded and miraculously changed their lives. The "wonder of it all" is to know and experience the very presence of God in their daily life. A journey of passion is theirs.

Has Christ been born into your heart and life? Won't you consider doing it today? You will never be sorry when you experience His personal magnificent love is just for you! **MERRY CHRISTMAS AND RECAPTURE THE TRUE WONDER OF IT ALL!**

Marlys Johnsen Norris Seven Christian Books "God Moves Mountains, It was a Miracle!" Contact me: Marlysjn@gmail.com



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Crossword Puzzle on Page 8

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Sutter Auburn Faith Hospice Thrift Store invites volunteers to work as cashiers, sales floor assistants, donation processors or pricers. Training is provided; a four hour weekly commitment is requested. Location: 13342 Lincoln Way, Auburn. Call store coordinator, Kim Chase, 530-887-0561. (MPG 12-31-12)

Volunteers Needed: The Domestic Violence Intervention Center needs caring people to assist victims of domestic violence. For more information call 728-5613 or visit our office at 7250 Auburn Blvd., Citrus Heights, CA (MPG 12-31-12)

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Sudoku Puzzle on Page 9

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13						14				15				
16						17				18				
	19				20			21	22					
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48					49		50			51		52		
				53		54			55		56			
57	58	59	60					61				62	63	
64						65	66			67				68
69						70				71				
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CLUES

ACROSS

1. Come from an egg
6. Bad-mouth
9. Cargo
13. Gem state
14. Make a choice
15. Move sideways
16. Chocolate substitute
17. Wade's opponent
18. "The _____" moved to Chicago from NYC
19. "GOP's 2012 choice
21. "Deceased singing legend
23. Pock mark disease
24. Boris Godunov, e.g.
25. Chicken order
28. Vegetative prickle
30. Speed of play, pl.
35. Like decorated cake
37. Luau souvenirs
39. Third rock from the sun
40. Laughing on the inside, in a chatroom
41. Small drum
43. Memorization method

44. Full of pep
46. Russian parliament
47. Farmer's purchase
48. Auteur's art
50. Peacock's pride
52. "Ann to Mitt
53. "Anything ____?"
55. Excessively
57. "PSY" style
61. Bronx Bomber
64. Whippet or Basset, e.g.
65. Bard's before
67. Lifeboat support
69. Elephant trainer's goad
70. Summer mo.
71. "Lohengrin," e.g.
72. In a golfer's pocket
73. Registration, for short
74. One born to Japanese immigrants

DOWN

1. Wino's sound?
2. Month of Purim
3. Tropical tuber

4. Bite
5. Rub elbows
6. Nemo's forgetful friend
7. "Facebook's big move
8. Seethes
9. Dryer fire hazard
10. Scandinavian war god
11. Burn soother
12. Refuse to accept
15. Evening party
20. Jump for joy
22. Pillbox or tricorn, e.g.
24. Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, e.g.
25. Whitman's dooryard bloomer
26. A threat to food safety
27. "_____ on the ground floor"
29. Part of ROM
31. "Curiosity" landing site
32. Preface
33. Weasel's aquatic cousin
34. Outbuildings
36. "Felix Baumgartner's space _____

38. "Brave New World" drug
42. Indian side dish of yogurt and cucumbers
45. Corrects or edits
49. Chicken ____ king
51. "Where many struck gold
54. _____ campaign
56. Giraffe-like African animal
57. Steps to the river
58. First rate
59. Heat in a microwave
60. African migrators
61. Safecracker
62. December 24 and 31, e.g.
63. Michael Collins's country
66. Parisian way
68. Chi precursor

For Solution
See Page 7

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with Mary Jane Popp

it as a sign of that great event in the land of the Jewish people. This may have been the star of Bethlehem. Pisces became the special constellation of the Hebrew people.

Now to some of the more fun traditions. Mistletoe was held sacred by the Norse, the Celtic Druids and the North American Indians. The Druid priests would cut mistletoe from an Oak tree with a golden sickle. The branches had to be caught before they touched the ground. Sprigs were hung over doorways as protection from thunder, lightning, and other evils. In the 18th century, the exchanging of kiss between a man and a woman was adopted as a promise to marry. Today, it's just a fun kiss me under the mistletoe, but be careful what you wish for!

What about the beleaguered fruitcake? According to "The joy of Cooking," by Irma Rombauer and Marion Becker, "Many people feel that these cakes improve greatly with age. When they are well saturated with alcoholic liquors, which raises the spirits and keep mold down, and are buried in powdered sugar in tightly closed tins, they have been enjoyed as long as 25 years after baking." I think that fruitcake first fruitcake is still circulating today. And then there's eggnog. According to Captain John Smith, the first eggnog made in the United States was consumed in his 1607 Jamestown settlement. Nog comes from the word grog, which refers to any drink made from rum. AHA!!!

Now on to that gorgeous Christmas tree. Long before the advent of Christianity, plants and trees that remained green all year had a special meaning for people in the winter. In many countries it was believed that evergreens would keep away witches, ghosts, evil spirits, and illness. Germany is credited with starting the first Christmas tree tradition as we know it in the 16th century when devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes. Most 19th century Americans found Christmas trees an oddity. The first record of one being on display was in the 1830s by German settlers of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania German

settlements had community trees as early as 1747. But as late as the 1840s Christmas trees were seen as pagan symbols and not accepted by most Americans. My how times have changed, and we do love out trees!

Only have time for one more, so how about Rudolph? I used to love that song until I really thought about it, and how that poor Reindeer was bullied to the max. Then I found out Rudolph's origin. In 1939, Copywriter Robert L. May of the Montgomery Ward Company created a poem about Rudolph, the ninth reindeer. May had been "often taunted as a child for being shy, small, and slight." He created an ostracized reindeer with a shiny nose who became a hero one foggy Christmas eve. A copy of the poem was given to Montgomery Ward customers. In 1949 Johnny Marks wrote the song and Rudolph was relocated to the North Pole. The rest is history!

Of course, much of this is conjecture, and I'm sure you can find lots of reasons for so many of the traditions, but what does it matter? I found all my info on the good 'ole internet. All we should care about is what the meaning of Christmas is all about. It is about loving and caring. It's not about big fancy presents, but about sharing yourself with others. So enjoy the mince pies and the turkey, even the fruitcake. But remember that the word love needs to be at the top of the list. It lasts so much longer than all the bright shiny things we get on Christmas Day.

Wherever you are, it will be a Merry Christmas just the same. For our troops in Afghanistan, it is "De Christmas Akhtar de Bakhtawar Au Newai Kal de Mubarak Sha." For those in still in Iraq, it's "Idah Saidan Wasanah Jadidah." For our friends south of the border, its "Feliz Navidad." But for all it's still MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! GOD BLESS YOU ALL!!!

Join Mary Jane for the **KAHI Noon News Monday-Friday and then again for POPOFF 10 PM - Midnight.**

Free Business Workshops Coming to Rancho Cordova

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA – (MPG) The SCORE Chapter of Sacramento will bring a free series of workshops designed for small business owners to Rancho Cordova in 2013.

The six week "How to Become a Well-Run Business" series focuses on three categories to help your business flourish: operate, navigate, and communicate. Workshop instructors are former or current small business owners who volunteer for SCORE, a nonprofit association dedicated to helping small businesses start up and grow to achieve their goals through education and mentorship.

The City of Rancho Cordova's Economic Development


Department has partnered with SCORE to host the program. The six week series of one hour classes runs from Wednesday, January 9 to Wednesday, February 13 at Rancho Cordova City Hall, 2729 Prospect Park Drive. Classes convene at 7 a.m. with networking and finish by 8:30 a.m.

"The City of Rancho Cordova is proud to partner with SCORE to bring these free workshops to our business community," said Curt Haven, Rancho Cordova Economic Development Director. "Businesses in Rancho Cordova and surrounding areas have enjoyed the networking and educational information offered through the workshops."

Each class addresses different components of becoming a well-run business. Classes 1 and 2 focus on operational issues to ensure your business has a solid foundation. Classes 3 and 4 target the issues of navigation (e.g. in what direction are you headed). Classes 5 and 6 discuss communications and how to promote your business to increase customers. Small business owners are invited to attend all six classes or fewer. Registration is now open at <http://sacramento.score.org/localworkshops>.

For questions or more information, contact info@sacscore.org or (916) 635-9085.

Source: City of Rancho Cordova



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Allen Treadwell is a member of the RedHead® Pro Hunting Team

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For Solution See Page 7.

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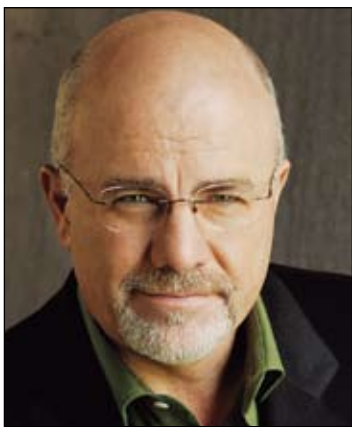
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Dave Says

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.

The Tuition Payment Plan

Dear Dave,
Our son is graduating from high school next spring. We've saved cash to pay for his first year of college, and we have enough in mutual funds to pay for another semester. When should we pull out the money to use for his education?

- Denise
Dear Denise,
I wouldn't touch the money until right before you write the

checks. However, I don't want you to follow my advice just because I said so. My mutual funds have made a little more than 16 percent this year. If they stay at that pace, or if they make just 10 percent during the first part of 2013, I'd want it to just sit there a while longer. Why not let the power of compound interest do its thing and make you as much money as possible?

The biggest question is what are you going to do for cash after the first three semesters? Your son needs to make sure he's working summers, and maybe even part-time during school, in order to fuel his education. And neither of you should borrow money to make it happen. You guys have gotten him off to a great start. So if he does his part there's no reason for either of you to go into debt for his college degree!

- Dave
Stop, Emergency Ahead!
Dear Dave,
If someone is following your plan, and they experience a health crisis, should they stop putting money into their debt snowball?

Dear Jacob,
Absolutely! When you're stuck in the middle of an emergency you always push the pause button on your Total Money Makeover and save as much as you can.

Think of it this way. Cash is your umbrella when it rains, and you never know just how bad the storm will be or how long it will last. Even if you have great health insurance, you're likely to end up paying a chunk out of pocket in situations like this. That's why it's important to have a big pile of cash on hand.

Remember, things like this are often just a bump in the road. They can be expensive, but taking care of important issues doesn't have to mean giving up on taking control of your finances. Take care of immediate issues with yourself or your family first. Then, the come back when things are better and pick up where you left off on your Total Money Makeover!

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



by David Dickstein

Family Films

"The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey"
Opens Dec. 14, rated PG-13
thehobbit.com

Did anyone really think we were done visiting Middle-Earth after Frodo destroyed that cursed gold band at fiery Mount Doom? Director Peter Jackson sends us back in this prequel adaption of the J.R.R. Tolkien classic, "The Hobbit." The epic follows the title character, a younger Bilbo Baggins (Martin Freeman), in a world of dwarves, dragons and some wizard dude named Gandalf. Gollum also shows up with his precious ring.

"Monsters Inc."
Opens Dec. 19, rated G
monstersinc.com

Like the employees of Monsters Inc. who turn children's screams into energy, Disney is squeezing more money out of moviegoers with 3-D reissues of 2-D animated classics. This past year has seen conversions of "The Lion King," "Beauty and the Beast," "Finding Nemo" and "The Little Mermaid." Now it's Sully and cycloptic Mike's turn to entertain with an added dimension as the good monsters protect a sweet little girl named Boo from bad monsters, and discover an alternative energy source in the process. Spoiler alert? Oh, please -- you and your child have seen this one a kazillion times.

"Parental Guidance"
Opens Dec. 25, rated PG
parentalguidancemovie.com

From blundering monster to blundering grandfather, Bill Crystal stars in a live-action comedy with Bette Midler.

Films and DVDs for the Whole Family



Marisa Tomei and Tom Everett Scott are the parents of their three grandchildren. The three-generational laughter centers on a babysitting experience in which differing parenting styles butt heads. Crystal also wrote and



produced the film that marks his first major screen role since the 2002 dud "Analyze That."

Family DVDs

"Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days" (Dec. 18 on DVD and Blu-ray, rated PG): excruciating for parents is this third adaptation of Jeff Kinney's best-selling children's books. The summer box office dud plays better at home. The kid, a less-wimpy Greg Heffley (Zachary Gordon), is threatened with attending military school during summer vacation if he doesn't stay out of trouble. Yeah, right. Grade: B-

"Ice Age: Continental Drift" (Dec. 11 on DVD and Blu-ray, PG): The fourth adventure-filled journey with the die-hard woolly mammoth, sloth and saber-toothed tiger is throwaway fun

and excitement, and an improvement from the prior "Dawn of the Dinosaurs." Their continent set adrift, a floating iceberg is how the changing world is explored for these animals who sound a lot like Ray Romano, John Leguizamo and Denis Leary. Grade: B

"The Odd Life of Timothy Green" (Dec. 7 on DVD and Blu-Ray, PG): The tale of a boy (CJ Adams) who sprouted from a garden works for the less cynical movie watcher, but the rest of us wish they sold weed killer at the concession stand. Sure, the story of a married couple (Jennifer Garner and Joel Edgerton) who can't make a child but sees their dream realized from out of top soil is imaginative. But so is topiary, yet who wants to gaze at that for 104 minutes straight? Grade: C

"Thomas & Friends Sticky Situations" (Dec. 11 on DVD, not rated): Every segment in the series ends happily with teamwork saving the day, but before the trains of Sodor Island can smile again, they must go through some peril. In this title that means getting caught in a bind for not listening to directions, getting lost in thick fog and dealing with a muddy river. Grade: B+

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Northminster Presbyterian Church invites you to join us and

Celebrate Christmas

Sunday, Dec. 9 — Bel Tempo Handbell Choir Benefit 4 p.m.
Bel Tempo is a world-class handbell choir performing a mix of religious and secular music sure to put you into the spirit of the season! The concert benefits Francis House Center. A donation of canned food items is requested.

Friday, Dec. 14 — Jesus' Birthday Party 7 p.m.
Celebrate the birth of Jesus with cake, ice cream, games and a short skit, "A Prime Time Christmas", presented by our Youth Group and Youth Praise Band. Join this free family event and, if able, bring an unwrapped toy.

Sunday, Dec. 16 — Festival of Carols 4 p.m.
Everyone is welcome, especially the children, to join us for an old fashioned sing along of Christmas carols! Sing all your favorites and learn the origins of many of these timeless classics as we make a joyful noise to the Lord.

Monday, Dec. 24 — Christmas Eve Services 5 p.m. / 10 p.m.
Family Service & Living Nativity featuring the Youth Praise Band.
Candlelight Service with carols, handbell choir, scripture readings, and more.

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Happy Holidays from Unity of Sacramento

Please mark your calendar and plan to join us for these exciting holiday events

Friday December 14th at 7:00 pm
Unity of Sacramento presents: A Soulful Rockin' Hallelujah Christmas
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Sunday December 23rd at 6:30 pm
Annual Christmas Candle Light Service

Sunday December 30th at 6:30 pm
New Year's Burning Bowl Service

To secure your tickets, make reservations, or for more information call us at 916-368-3950 or visit us online at www.unityofsacramento.com

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Holiday House Treat, Crispy Cheese Crackers, Eggnog Hot Chocolate, Salted Caramel Bacon Cordial Cups, Fire Roasted Jalapeño Onion Dip, Gingerpops Cookie Kit

Holiday House Treat

Makes about 12 servings

- 6 cups cinnamon-flavored toasted oats cereal
- 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) butter
- 1 bag (10 ounces) mini marshmallows
- 1-1/2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Assorted Tube Icing, Decorating Gel, Sprinkles, Colored Sugars, Icing Decorations and other favorite candy

Prepare Wilton Stand-Up House Pan with vegetable pan spray. Place cereal in large bowl. In large saucepan, melt butter; add marshmallows, ginger and cinnamon. Cook and stir constantly until melted. Pour over cereal and mix well. Spread cereal mixture into prepared pan. When cool to touch, remove from pan; secure to foil-wrapped cake board with icing. Decorate as desired with icing, sprinkles, sugars, icing decorations and candy.

Crispy Cheese Crackers

Makes 16 to 20 crackers

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 3/4 cup (about 2 ounces) finely grated Asiago cheese
- 1 ounce (about 1/4 cup) toasted pine nuts, finely chopped
- 1-1/2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour

Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare Holiday Cookie Pan with vegetable pan spray. In medium bowl, beat butter, cheese, pine nuts, rosemary, garlic powder, salt and pepper with electric mixer until creamy and well combined. Add flour; beat until mixture looks sandy and holds together when squeezed in your hand. Press into prepared pan, filling cavities 1/2 full. Bake 13 to 15 minutes or until edges are light golden brown. Cool in pan 5 minutes. Remove from pan and cool completely.

Happy Holiday

ENTERTAINING

FAMILY FEATURES

Host a holiday party that’s simple and festive with a combination of pre-made and homemade delights from the celebration experts at Wilton. For starters, a cookie pan does double duty for holiday-shaped homemade Crispy Cheese Crackers. Serve these aromatic rosemary treats, made into Christmas trees, snowmen and stockings, alongside a colorful assortment of fresh vegetables and made-from-scratch fire-roasted jalapeño dip. “Guests will think you spent hours baking in the kitchen when you wow them with a seasonal selection of hand-decorated gingerbreads,” says Nancy Siler, vice president of consumer affairs at Wilton. Easy to assemble with all the trimmings included, there’s a ready-to-decorate gingerbread kit to fit any yuletide gathering. Complete with pre-baked gingerbread, each kit contains decorating accessories like candies and icings to personalize your own mini village, Christmas tree, gingerpop cookies and more. For another fun twist on a traditional gingerbread house, Siler recommends getting the kids involved. They’ll love the marshmallow-y Holiday House Treat made of cinnamon toasted oats cereal. Once the house is built, watch the kids decorate their yummy creation with a variety of gumdrops, licorice, icings and candies. To cater to a more sophisticated palate, Siler suggests Salted Caramel Bacon Cordial Cups. A lavish blend of vanilla pudding, crisp-cooked bacon and whipped cream is flavored with caramel ice cream topping and piped into edible, dark cocoa Candy Melt cordial cups. They’re bite-sized holiday bliss. Don’t forget eggnog. This year, give your favorite prepared eggnog a chocolate kick and serve Eggnog Hot Chocolate garnished with peppermint Candy Curls. For more holiday recipe project and decorating ideas, or to purchase gingerbread kits, visit www.wilton.com.

Eggnog Hot Chocolate

Makes about 4 servings

- 2 cups milk
- 2 cups prepared eggnog
- 1 cup Dark Cocoa Candy Melts Candy
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Whipped cream
- Candy Curls

In large saucepan, cook milk and eggnog on medium heat until the mixture is hot; turn off heat. Whisk in Candy Melts candy and vanilla extract. Continue whisking until candy is melted and mixture is smooth. Pour into mugs; garnish with Candy Curls.

Fire Roasted Jalapeño Onion Dip

Makes about 1-3/4 cups dip

- 4 jalapeño peppers
- 1 package (5.7 ounces) onion soup mix
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise

Preheat broiler. Place peppers on non-stick cookie pan; broil, turning at least once, 6 to 7 minutes or until blackened. Let stand 10 minutes. Remove stem and seeds; coarsely chop. In large bowl, stir together onion soup mix, sour cream and mayonnaise. Fold in peppers. Refrigerate at least 2 hours. Serve with cucumber and zucchini slices, celery, carrot sticks, sliced bell peppers and other favorite vegetables. **Note:** For spicier dip, include seeds from peppers.

Salted Caramel Bacon Cordial Cups

Makes about 24 filled cordial cups

- 1-1/2 cups Dark Cocoa Candy Melts Candy
- 3 containers (3.2 ounces each) vanilla prepared pudding
- 1/2 cup finely chopped crisp-cooked bacon
- 1 tablespoon caramel ice cream topping plus additional for drizzling
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream, whipped
- Sea salt

Fill cordial cup candy mold 1/3 full with melted candy. Using a decorator brush, paint the candy up the sides of each mold to the top edge. Coat mold so that no light can be seen through the shell. Refrigerate until firm, about 5 minutes. Repeat if needed. Carefully remove shells from mold. In medium bowl, combine pudding, bacon and 1 tablespoon ice cream topping; mix until thoroughly combined. Fold in whipped cream. Refrigerate at least 1 hour. Using tip #33, pipe filling into candy cordial cups. Drizzle with additional ice cream topping and sprinkle with sea salt.

Follow instructions on package of each kit:

- Deluxe Gingerbread Kit
- Gingerbread Tree Kit
- Gingerbread Boy Cookie Decorating Kit
- Gingerpops Cookie Kit
- Gingerbread Mini Village Kit



Deluxe Gingerbread Kit, Gingerbread Tree Kit, Gingerbread Boy Cookie Decorating Kit, Gingerbread Mini Village Kit, Gingerpops Cookie Kit

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