



# Berry-licious Snacks

KIDS CAN MAKE

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**PLUS:** “It’s a Wonderful Life” and Other Near-Death Experiences

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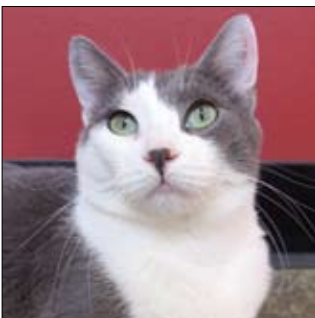
# AMERICAN RIVER MESSENGER

Volume 8 • Issue 1

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

First Edition for January 2013

More Than 1,500  
Animals Find Homes  
for the Holidays



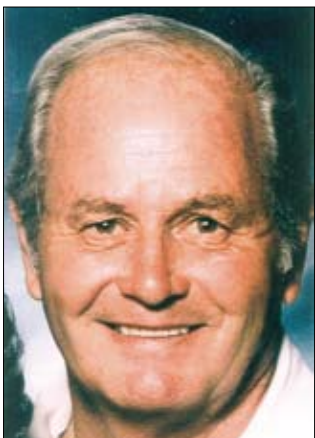
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Personal Trainer  
“Secret Friend”  
to Closet Clients



Page 3

Keith Hall, Loved  
and Well Known  
Local Builder, Dies



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## Big Changes With New Driver Laws



### California Highway Patrol Special Report

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) – New rules that govern the California driving public went into effect on January 1, 2013. These rules are the product of legislation passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. in 2012.

“The changes to California’s traffic safety laws are designed to protect the motoring public,” said California Highway Patrol (CHP) Commissioner Joe Farrow. “Citizens are encouraged to familiarize themselves with these new laws in advance of the new year. Adhering to the rules of the road may save your life, or the lives of your fellow motorists.”

The following are summaries of some of the new laws taking effect January 1, 2013:

• **Driving Under the Influence** (AB 2020, Pan) The law no longer allows a person who has been arrested and is suspected of driving under the influence (DUI) of drugs, the option of a urine test. Prior to this change, a person had the option of submitting either urine or blood to determine the

drug content of their blood.

• **Charter-Party Carriers of Passengers: Alcoholic Beverages: Open Containers** (AB 45, Chesbro) This new law prohibits underage drinking in charter-party carriers (limos, buses, etc.) and makes the carrier and driver responsible for communicating this to their passengers.

*Continued on Page 5*

## Prestigious Paintings in Local Art Show

By Susan Maxwell Skinner

CARMICHAEL, CA – (MPG) A traveling exhibition by some of the world’s finest watercolorists has settled in Carmichael. Opening last week, the 40-canvas show remains at the Sacramento Fine Arts Center until January 26.

The gallery is the show’s fourth stop on a year-long national tour.

A significant coup for the 27-year-old facility, the Fine Arts Center is among only seven in the United States chosen to host the exhibit. Much of the art – including David Van Horn’s canvas pictured here – have

received prestigious awards. Some are sold; others are still available for purchase. All paintings will complete a seven-city circuit before being claimed by their buyers. Next stop for the exhibition is Kerrville, Texas.

Anyone may visit the exhibition at the Fine Arts Center, 5330 Gibbons Ave.

Hours are 10 am to 5pm daily; extended hours on Second Saturday (January 12). A \$10 admission donation is suggested.

For more information, visit [sacfinearts.org](http://sacfinearts.org) or call (916) 971-3713.



Art lovers Debbie Koerner (left) David Peterson and Marilyn Whidmann at the opening of the American Watercolor Society exhibition in Sacramento Fine Arts Center. The trio focused on Coloradan painter Donald Van Horn’s winter portrait of Rondout Railway Station. Photo by Susan Maxwell Skinner.

## Upwards Basketball: Fun for the Whole Family

By Will and Karri Eggers

FAIR OAKS, CA – (MPG) Fair Oaks Presbyterian and Upward Sports are kicking off the 5th season of basketball (and year two of cheerleading) with 360 children ages Kindergarten through 6th grade. The 2013 season starts with the first game on January 12th with 40 basketball teams and 6 cheer squads. Like last year, practices and games will be held at Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church (11427 Fair Oaks Blvd, Fair Oaks) and at Faith Lutheran Church (4000 San Juan Ave, Fair Oaks).

And the events for the kids just keep getting better – once again the Upward teams have been invited as special guests to a Kings game, the players at William Jessup University host the kids for a night of basketball, Fair Oaks Presbyterian conducts “Upward Sunday” where all the players, coaches and volunteers



Many local businesses support the annual program. Photo courtesy of Upwards Basketball.

are recognized and there is a great end of season celebration on March 10th.

Upward Sports is a community outreach that is fun for the whole family. The programs teach sport skills and values, offer family-friendly schedules, allow kids to

make new friends and learn the value of teamwork, all with positive role models. You can still be part of the fun – volunteers are always welcome to drive children, man the snack bar, set up or clean up, and most importantly, cheer on the kids!

We want to thank some of the local businesses that have supported the Upward Basketball and Cheer program at Fair Oaks – Mountain Mike’s Pizza (Fair Oaks & Madison), Play it Again Sports (Greenback & Fair Oaks), Habit Burger (Sunrise & Madison), Big Spoon Yogurt (Hazel & Madison), Panda Express (Hazel & Madison), State Farm Insurance (Greg Polley), Ameriprise Financial (Westlake, Gauhl & Glover), Automotive Electronics Services, the Orangevale Chamber of Commerce.

If you would like to volunteer, provide a donation, or just want more information, you may contact Ken Friedman at [kenvfi@gmail.com](mailto:kenvfi@gmail.com), Will and Karri Eggers at [wikaheje@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wikaheje@sbcglobal.net) or go to the FOPC website at [www.fopc.org](http://www.fopc.org) and select Upward Sport under Ministry News.

Source: Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church

## Ami Bera Sworn in to 113th Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Ami Bera has been sworn in as the U.S. representative for California’s 7th Congressional district. He offered the following comment: “I am incredibly honored humbled that the people of Sacramento County have placed their trust in me to represent them in the U.S. House of Representatives. Now begins the hard work of addressing the many challenges facing our region and our country. I look forward to working with my new colleagues from both parties to find common ground and to rebuild an economy that works for the middle class. My parents emigrated here from India in the 1950s with very little but the dream of a better life. I grew up believing America was a land of opportunity, where if you worked hard and played by the rules, you could reach your full potential. Thursday, my father was among those watching as I was sworn in to the U.S. House of Representatives. My family’s story isn’t unique; it’s the story of the American Dream. I will work every day to ensure that we continue to invest in the next generation and keep the American Dream alive.”

Bera was also recently named to the House Committees on Foreign Affairs and Science, Space and Technology. “I am honored to have been named to the House Foreign Affairs Committee,” he said. “In an increasingly complex global landscape, relationships with other nations have tangible effects here at home and we need strategic thinking to guide our foreign policy in the 21st century. Additionally, the Sacramento region is uniquely situated to benefit from opening up new markets for our goods and services around the world. That would help create jobs here at home. Through my new role on the Science, Space and Technology, I’ll also work to foster innovative industries that can bring good jobs to the 7th district.”

Congressman Ami Bera represents Sacramento County in the 113th Congress. A life-long Californian and first generation American, Bera is a medical doctor and the only Indian American currently serving in Congress. He and his wife Janine live in Elk Grove with their 15-year-old daughter Sydra.

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# More than 1,500 Animals Find Homes for the Holidays!

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) – The Sacramento SPCA, City of Sacramento Animal Care Services, Sacramento County Animal Control & Regulation, and Happy Tails Pet Sanctuary teamed up over the holidays with the goal of placing 1,000 homeless animals in new homes between Black Friday and the end of the year. The group was able to facilitate a total of 1,561 adoptions during this period – 561 more than the group had initially hoped for.

“We are happy to announce that Sacramento’s animal shelters surpassed our goal by more than 500 adoptions this holiday season,” said Rick Johnson, Sacramento SPCA Chief Executive Officer. “The 1,561 adoptions that were done between the four shelters means 1,561 happy endings. We all work hard for those happy endings.”

In 2012, adoption rates increased at all four Sacramento



animal agencies, thanks in part to a continuing partnership between the organizations and the ASPCA. Through a variety of adoption specials and outreach, the four Sacramento animal shelters will continue to work together in 2013 and beyond to place an increasing number of animals into new homes.

Source: Sacramento SPCA

# Assemblyman Ken Cooley Re-Appointed to the Alfred E. Alquist California Seismic Safety Commission

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) – Assemblyman Ken Cooley was appointed by Speaker John A. Pérez to the California Seismic Commission. The Speaker is allotted one appointment to the Commission which is composed of 20 commissioners. The body investigates earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes; researches earthquake-related issues and reports; and recommends to the Governor and Legislature policies and programs needed to reduce earthquake risk. Mr. Cooley was previously appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger in April of 2007 to represent California’s Cities on the Commission.

“I believe the design of the Seismic Safety Commission — a unique multidisciplinary body which fosters peer-to-peer collaboration among our state and nation’s top emergency, engineering, and seismic specialists — can be relied upon to formulate and refine practical insights which can reduce loss of life and

property damage when a catastrophic earthquake strikes,” said Assemblyman Cooley.

His re-appointment brings the Commission a unique storehouse of knowledge on disaster resilience and earthquake safety public policy. As a University of California, Berkeley student in the 1970s, Mr. Cooley interned at the Association of Bay Area Governments as it surveyed members on disaster readiness following the San Fernando Valley “Sylmar” earthquake of 1971. When the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake hit, Mr. Cooley’s work as Assembly Finance and Insurance Chief Counsel included collaboration on legislative responses to that destructive earthquake. Additionally, he gained expertise on resilience issues while serving on the League of California Cities Flood and Infrastructure working group which addressed issues of disaster resilience especially vital to Sacramento County.

“The Seismic Safety



Assemblyman Ken Cooley

Commission is honored to have Assembly Member Cooley as its newest commissioner. His long experience in developing and implementing earthquake risk reduction and recovery policy will greatly help reduce the earthquake risk to the people and property of California”, said Richard McCarthy, Executive Director, Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission.

“I sought re-appointment to the Seismic Safety Commission to further, on behalf of California’s

cities, Senator Alfred Alquist’s vision of a California which uses its time well to steadily improve its state of readiness to weather the earthquakes we know are a part of living in earthquake country,” said Cooley.

The Seismic Safety Commission was established by the 1975 Seismic Safety Act to advise the Governor, Legislature, and state and local governments on ways to reduce earthquake risk. The name was revised in 2006 by Senate Bill 1278 which changed the name to the Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission.

Assemblyman Ken Cooley represents the 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. For more information, please visit <http://asmdc.org/members/a08/>

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# Trainer “Secret Friend” to Closet Clients

By Susan Maxwell Skinner

CARMICHAEL, CA – (MPG) Aged 45 and super-buff, Pamela Markee was a personal trainer before private workouts became fashionable.

But her specialty is people in not-so-fashionable circumstances. Indeed, many of her clients choose her Carmichael studio for its low profile: a business leader who has multiple sclerosis and hates the community knowing; a well-known entertainer with Parkinson’s disease. “Their privacy is vital,” says Markee. “They don’t want people to know. Neurological disease is bad for business. We can’t cure them but specialized exercise can keep them active for longer.

“Twelve years ago, a client came to me with Parkinson’s. I researched her problem and we developed a support group. I found great need for programs for this condition. Even with progressive brain diseases, there are many options to keep neuromuscular connections firing. We can slow the deterioration process; keeping the brain talking to muscles. In tune with diet and medication, we help people stay self-sufficient for as long as possible.”

Attests a client: “I’m amazed at the depth of research Pam has done on Parkinson’s and her understanding of my problems. She really knows what can help me.”

Rather than “personal trainer,” Markee prefers the job description of lifestyle coach. “My mission is to develop programs that change lives through exercise, education and nutrition,” she says. “Heart attack is still



Pam Markee in her gym.. Photo by Susan Maxwell Skinner.

the leading cause of death in women.

If you’re 200 pounds overweight, working out at a gym next to a skinny Minnie is humiliating. I believe you respond differently to exercise with every decade of age.

“Diet and the right exercise play a huge part in feeling lean and lowering cholesterol.

“I’ve had health issues of my own. I’m in tune with women’s mid-life stages. Hormone changes impact metabolism but we can still tip the odds in our favor. We develop a program for current fitness and gently progress to stronger levels. Privacy takes the humiliation out of the equation. We don’t allow interruptions in the studio. The

student is the total focus for (associate) Lanell Martinez and me.” Costs for Markee programs, she says, compare favorably with corporate gym prices.

Boutique-sized, her Studio is tucked away near Madison Ave and patronized mostly by weight-challenged students. Other visitors reflect Markee’s interest in post rehabilitative workout. Paraplegics, stroke and Alzheimer’s patients — and those with neurological problems are on the mat. A graduate of the American Academy of Health Fitness and Rehabilitation, her intent is to bridge the gap between physiotherapists and fitness professionals.

One Parkinson’s client, says Markee “is a community icon

who wants to continue business without public sympathy. He can count on our confidentiality. We’ve developed his balance and eye/hand motor skills. He takes his neurologist’s medications and has worked with me for two years. Between visits, he does homework routines.

“His disease won’t go away. But his muscular function seems to have stabilized. He’s appearing stronger and more connected. My aim is to keep him active for a long time to come. Confidentiality is my promise.”

Pam Markee’s gym is at 5250 Date Ave, Suite B. Learn about training programs at [www.markeepersonaltraining.com](http://www.markeepersonaltraining.com) or call (916) 704-4330.

# Fair Oaks Community Update

By County Supervisor  
Susan Peters

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

## Community Coffee Meetings Resume

My community coffee meetings for Fair Oaks will resume this month and the regular meeting spot again will be Dianda’s Italian Bakery and Café. The first meeting of the year will be on Wednesday, January 16, at 7:30 am. The featured speaker will be County Executive Brad Hudson who will discuss innovative changes occurring at Sacramento County. These Community Coffee Meetings have been an on-going tradition dating back to when the late Dave Cox was on the Board of Supervisors. The complete new meeting schedule for 2013 is published on my webpage at [bos.saccounty.net](http://bos.saccounty.net).

## Old Fair Oaks Village Improvements

Progress is being made to improve Old Fair Oaks Village with the aim to attract more visitors to this charming shopping and entertainment district. Work started in autumn that included new sidewalks, more parking spaces, a new mid-block crosswalk, installation of landscaping in new planter areas, improved bicycle and decorative street



lights. The improvements are part of a long-term vision developed by the Fair Oaks Village Enhancement Committee. More information is available online at [fovec.net](http://fovec.net) and [sacdot.com](http://sacdot.com).

## Sheriff’s January Community Meetings

The Sheriff’s Department holds regular community meetings to share information about trends in crime and recent activities, including sessions for Carmichael and Fair Oaks residents.

The Carmichael meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 15, 6:30 p.m., at the Del Campo High School Library, 4925 Dewey Drive.

The Fair Oaks meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 22, 6:15 pm, at La Vista School, 4501 Bannister Road (North of Winding Way).

Susan Peters represents the Third District on the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. She can be reached at [susanpeters@saccounty.net](mailto:susanpeters@saccounty.net).

# Make Your New Year's Resolution Come True!

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By Pastor Ray Dare

We have a tendency to get stuck in life. We get stuck in relationships. We get stuck with habits. We get stuck in grief when we lose a loved one. We get stuck in anger. We get stuck in work. Once you're stuck it's easy to feel guilty and even angry. You think, "I wish I could change but I can't!" You start to get angry at yourself. Then your anger turns to fear. "I'll never be able to get out of this...I'll never get this under control." Then your fear eventually turns into depression and you begin to wonder..."Is there any help for me, is there any hope?" You feel like giving up on yourself.

As we enter this New Year what would you like to change about yourself? In what way do you need to become better, healthier and different? You

## Hope for the New Year

may think, "I'll never be different...I tried that before...My situation will never change, it's hopeless!"

Jesus said, "*The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.*" *Luke 18:27.* The Living Bible says it this way, "*God can do what men can't.*" I like that: God can do in you what you cannot do in yourself. God can make the changes in you that you cannot make on your own. God can give you a power that's beyond your own.

So what area of your life would you like to change? What is it that seems impossible to you? What is it that you want to give up on? A relationship? A marriage? Your finances? Physical health? Maybe a hurt from your past and you think, "I'll never recover from this...I'll never be able to get over this." Maybe it's an emotional or physiological problem and you think, "I'll never break free from this...I'll never become the person that I want to be."

God is aware of the changes you would like to make in your life and He wants to help you. The Bible tells us, "*Let us approach (God) with confidence, so we may receive mercy and*

*find grace to help in our time of need.*" *Hebrews 4:16.* Approach Him today in confidence and you'll find His grace and power to help you make those changes that you cannot make on your own. Approach the New Year with confidence by making some new resolutions and new personal goals and He will help you do what you cannot do for yourself.

The Bible says, "*For God is at work within you, giving you the will and the power to achieve His purposes.*" *Philippians 2:13.* As you enter the New Year, what is God doing? He's at work within you. What's He doing? He will give you the WILL and the POWER to accomplish His purposes. God gives you the "will" that's the desire to make the changes. Then He gives you the "power" that the ability to make the change. God gives them both to you as ask Him and trust Him.

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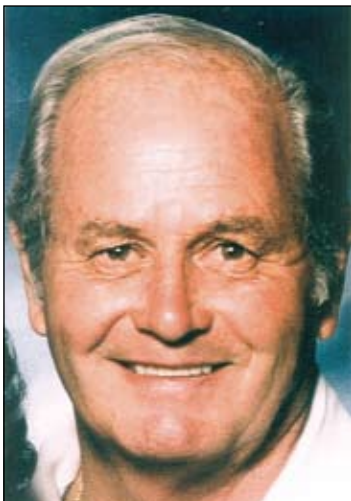
## Keith Hall, Well Known Local Builder, Dies

Keith Hall, a well known figure in the construction business in the greater Sacramento area for over 60 years died Thursday 12/27/12 at his home in Sacramento.

The Hall family, moved to Carmichael in 1938 when Keith was 11 years old. Carmichael had about 300 residents. The family attended Carmichael Presbyterian church. He graduated from Carmichael Elementary School and then from San Juan High School in 1945. Marvin Marshall, Jimmy Van Maren, Harry Dewey and Ancil Hoffman were boyhood friends and Laurel Ruff was his elementary school principal, not names of schools, streets and parks.

As the youngest of eight, his work life started early at age 11 working on Mr Henshaw's farm earning 50 cents a day and the value of hard work. He enlisted in the US Navy after high school and during WWII served as Sonarman aboard the USS Gainard with a mission to locate one man submarines trying to leave Tokyo Bay.

After returning home he went to work for H. S. Crocker Co, a stationery and office supply company in Sacramento. His job was to call on businesses in the area. For those that knew him,



Keith Hall, Builder, Active community Member and Patriot.

long time friend Ken Duncan and Carmichael Construction Company in 1967. Over the next 45 years the company completed over 200 tilt up buildings, 150 restaurants and numerous warehouses, banks and churches. Commercial projects included the Metro Business Center, PG&E regional office, Sunrise East Business Park, UPS-West Sacramento and most recently the Meyers Cookware Distribution center in Fairfield.

Hall was also an active community member and a passionate patriot. He would always, always thank every veteran he saw. He is a past President of the Orangevale Chamber Commerce, a past Folsom Lion and past Folsom Rotarian. He is also a proud member of American Legion post 637 in Citrus Heights.

His wife of 44 years, Marilyn Hall, died in July 2011. He is survived by his former wife Lorna Thorson and children-Cristie Gerard, Bryan Hall, William Gutenberger, Terri Soloman, Donna Gary and Lynda Kahn, 18 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren. Very few men have been as big an influence in our lives as he has and is already greatly missed.

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A Film Review by Tim Riley

PARENTAL GUIDANCE  
(Rated PG)

Like most holiday seasons, this year has a few epics and a bunch of passable comedies. In the former category, you’ve got “The Hobbit” and Russell Crowe singing during the 1832 Paris uprising, in a movie nearly as long as the French Revolution itself.

“Parental Guidance” falls into the grouping of the ostensible family comedies suitable for all ages at a time when kids are out of school and everyone is in a festive holiday mood.

There was a decent reason to believe that the pairing of Billy Crystal and Bette Midler, as traditional-minded grandparents with love in their hearts and hell-bent for family-oriented fun, would result in more than acceptable entertainment.

To a decent extent, Crystal and Midler bring a generational dimension of old-school parenting to the fore in a way that is alternately amusing and frustrating, the latter more so for their own kids than grandkids.

Artie and Diane Decker (Crystal and Midler) have been the type of carefree yet caring parents that proved embarrassing to adult daughter Alice Simmons (Marisa Tomei), now married with three children of her own.

The Deckers live in Fresno, California, where the sports-obsessed, motor-mouthed Artie has been the baseball announcer for the Fresno Grizzlies. Diane

Riley  
Reviews  
COMEDY IN “PARENTAL GUIDANCE” PURELY FAMILY FRIENDLY

is as equally brash and loud as her husband.

Meanwhile, Alice and her husband Phil (Tom Everett Scott) live in Atlanta, which is almost as far away as you can get from Fresno while still remaining within the continental United States.

Alice and Phil want to slip away for a week’s convention trip, and Phil’s parents are not available for babysitting duty. As a measure of desperation, they call for help from the “other grandparents.”

Possessed of the Type-A parental gene, Alice and Phil are reluctant, to say the least, to turn over their three precious children to parents who may not follow their indulgent ways.

The kids have their own set of issues. The oldest, Harper (Bailee Madison), is pushed constantly to practice her violin. The older son, Turner (Joshua Rush), has a stuttering problem that causes him to be bullied at school.

The youngest, Barker (Kyle Harrison Breitkopf), is oddly attached to his invisible best friend, a kangaroo named Carl. But Barker is also the cageiest sibling, as he cleverly black-mails his grandpa into forking over hush money.

Before Alice and Phil can even pack their bags, the grandparents clash with the overly protective parents over child-rearing tactics. As a result, Alice becomes a nervous wreck, adding to the discomfort that is mined for comic effect.

Phil has designed an ultra-modern home where a computer

monitors everyone’s movement, sort of a creepy Big Brother-is-watching surveillance system that decides, on its own power, to disrespect Artie.

Meanwhile, Artie decides to tackle problems with his own blunt methods. For one, he candidly confronts Turner’s speech therapist over her questionable techniques.

Since Artie was also recently fired from his announcer job, he makes the unwise choice of taking Barker with him on an audition with ESPN, making a fool of himself for trying to fit in with the extreme sports crowd.

Naturally, the grandparents make a ton of blunders in caring for the grandkids. Though sugar has been banned from the household, Artie figures that the sugary treat of a nice cake won’t do any harm. Big mistake!

What’s not a mistake, however, is that the loving grandparents and the kids finally reach a level of familial connection, though it involves something as simple as a backyard game of kick the can.

Artie also helps Turner overcome his stuttering with a clever use of a radio replay of Bobby Thomson’s walk-off home run hit on a pitch by Ralph Branca during the 1951 Giants-Dodgers pennant playoff series.

“Parental Guidance” falls into the trap of forging some of its comedy with the formulaic use of certain bodily functions. Apparently, the filmmakers had to resort to juvenile humor to fill the vacuum in a movie that is well short of two hours.

On the other hand, this is a minor quibble with a film that is, for the most part, a family-friendly entertainment that offers plenty of laughs and heartwarming moments.

“Parental Guidance” is not a film for jaded cynics. Sure, it is rather generic, but it is a welcome relief to some of the corrosive junk that’s out there.

Motorists Prepare for Change: New Laws

Continued from Page 1

The law also requires a designee, who is at least 25 years of age, to be present whenever there are passengers who are under 21 years of age on board the vehicle and alcohol is being transported. The designee shall be responsible for ensuring the rules are followed, and the safety of the underage passengers throughout the duration of the trip.

- **Electronic Wireless Communications** (AB 1536, Miller) This law allows California drivers to use hands-free technology to talk and text while driving. This will require the use of a device that is specifically designed and configured to allow voice-operated and hands-free operation to dictate, send or listen to a text-based communication. The device is required to also be used in a voice-operated, hands-free manner to be in compliance with the law.
- **Financial Responsibility and Insurance** (AB 1708, Gatto) Drivers will now have the option of providing proof of insurance and registration on an electronic device (smartphone, tablet, etc.), when it is requested by law enforcement.
- **High Occupancy Toll Lanes** (AB 2405, Blumenfield) This law creates the Choose Clean Cars Act, which allows cars with a Clean Air Vehicle Sticker free access to carpool lanes that are converted to High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes.
- **Autonomous Vehicles** (SB 1298, Padilla) This new law allows driverless cars to be operated on public roads for testing purposes, provided that each vehicle has a fully licensed and bonded operator in the driver’s seat to take control if necessary. The bill also instructs the Department of Motor Vehicles to adopt regulations that govern the licensing, bonding, testing and operation of autonomous vehicle technology.
- **Emergency Services: Seniors** (SB 1047, Alquist) Similar to an AMBER Alert, the CHP would activate a “Silver Alert” upon request if a person, age 65 or older, is reported missing to a law enforcement agency and that agency determines that certain criteria is met. The criteria includes: the person is missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances or the law enforcement agency believes the person is in danger due to age, health,

mental or physical disability, environment or weather conditions; the person is in the company of a potentially dangerous person; or there are other factors indicating that the person may be in peril. Finally, there is information available, if given to the public, may assist in the safe recovery of the missing person.

- **Driver License** (AB 2189, Cedillo) This law allows a driver’s license applicant who provides satisfactory proof that his or her presence in the United States is authorized under federal law, but who is not eligible for a social security account number, is eligible to receive an original driver’s license if he or she meets all other qualifications for licensure.
- **Automated Traffic Enforcement Systems** (SB 1303, Simitian) This new law establishes consistency in the operations of red-light enforcement cameras throughout the state by requiring governmental agencies to follow specified guidelines regarding intersections, signage, and the notice to appear.
- **License Plates: Obstruction or Alteration** (AB 2489, Hall) This new law prevents the altering and positioning of license plates from its original markings and clarifies the penalty imposed for obscuring the readability of license plates.
- **Child Passenger Restraints** (AB 1452, Hill) Hospitals, clinics, and birthing centers will now be required to provide and discuss contact information regarding child safety seat requirements, installation, and inspection to parents and caregivers upon discharge of a child, if the child is less than eight years of age.
- There are also two new laws related to **recreational off-highway vehicles**. One (AB 1595, Cook) defines an off-highway motor vehicle to include a recreational off-highway vehicle (ROV) and establishes additional requirements governing its safe operation. The other law (AB 1266, Cook), which goes into effect July 1, 2013, prohibits a passenger in an ROV from riding in a seat location not designed and provided by the manufacturer. It also prohibits operation of the ROV if the passenger is not seated with both feet on the floorboard and able to grab the occupant handhold with the seat belt and shoulder belt or safety harness fastened.
- **Additional Registration Fees** (AB 1404, Feuer) This law authorizes

three counties (Los Angeles, San Diego and San Bernardino) to increase vehicle registration fees to help fund vehicle theft programs. Increases would be from \$1 to \$2 for passenger vehicles, and \$2 to \$4 for commercial vehicles.

- **Inflatable Restraint Systems** (AB 1854, Brownley) This law makes it illegal for a person to knowingly distribute or sell a previously deployed air bag or component that will no longer meet the original equipment form, function or proper operation.
- **Driving Under the Influence: Alcoholic Beverage or Drug** (AB 2552, Torres) Although this change in the law does not take effect until January 1, 2014, it distinguishes whether an individual was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Ultimately this change, singling out drugs with its own subsection in the Vehicle Code, will make it easier to track the prevalence of drugged driving in California. This new law, coupled with the efforts requiring the use of Ignition Interlock Devices, will help reduce impaired driving throughout California.

These points are only a synopsis of some of the new laws adopted. For complete information on chaptered bills enacted in 2012, please refer to the Legislative Counsel website at [www.LegInfo.ca.gov](http://www.LegInfo.ca.gov).



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Wild bald eagles may live as long as thirty years. An eagle's lifting power is about 4 pounds. Their diet is mainly fish, but they will take advantage of carrion. Once paired, bald eagles remain together until one dies.

The bald eagle became the National emblem in 1782 when the great seal of the United States was adopted.

Larry Whiteley is host of the award winning "Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World Radio"

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By Ronnie McBrayer

Imagine that tomorrow morning I deposit into your bank account \$86,400. This money is all yours to do with as you please, no strings attached. Now, not only am I going to deposit this amount into your account tomorrow, I'm going to do the same thing every day next week. That is a combined \$604,800 that will be waiting for you. But I'm not finished. I'm going to make this daily deposit into your account every day for the next year (you are *really* using your imagination now). At the conclusion of twelve months you will have received more than \$31.5 million. What if I told you that you have in your possession, today, something even more valuable than \$31 million. I wonder if you would believe me. You see, every day that you awake to draw air into your lungs, you receive that deposit of sorts, though it's not measured in dollars. It's measured in seconds. Every day contains 86,400 seconds; every week more than 600,000; and every year more than 31 million. They are yours to spend as you please. The only catch is this: When each day is

# It's Time

over, and after each week passes, and when the calendar turns, your "funds" expire. They have to be spent with urgency, for tomorrow your account will reset. And because it will reset, and because we can only spend those precious seconds we have today, what we do with those seconds matters a great deal. We know this. No preacher behind a pulpit or columnist at a keyboard has to tell us this. Yet, maybe we do need to be reminded. Because there is always the temptation, as Frederick Buechner said, "To believe that we have all the time in the world, whereas the truth of it is we do not...For each of us there comes a point of no return, a point from which we no longer have life enough left to go back and start over." We seemed to have celebrated New Year's Day 2012 just last week. Now that year, with all its promise, joy, heartache, dread, and transition is gone. And before we can catch our breath from the race that was, we lurch forward into another January and another year. The real danger for us all is to come around twelve months from now and be exactly where we were twelve months ago. Still stuck in a job we loathe. Still planning to take that big chance, or make that big move. Still at odds with the longestranged loved one with whom we hope to one day reconcile. Still tripping over the same addiction, still trapped in that same poisonous relationship, still struck

in the same soul-sucking routine. Time is far too short to live like this, and deep in our hearts, we know it. We know that there is an unmerciful ruthlessness to time that demands we spend what we have – all we have – while today is still called today. Because today we still have opportunity. We still have time. We cannot, then, put off until tomorrow, next week, or next year what must and can only be done while there are still seconds in our banks. The majestic Erma Bombeck, who cannot be improved upon, provides a summary on this point. She wrote, "I have learned that silver tarnishes when it isn't used, perfume turns to alcohol, candles melt in the attic over the summer, and ideas that are saved for a dry week often become dated. When I am asked to give an accounting of my life to a higher court, it will be like this: 'So, empty your pockets. What have you got left of your life? Any dreams that were unfulfilled? Any unused talent that we gave you when you were born that you still have left? Any unsaid compliments or bits of love that you haven't spread around?' And, I will answer, 'I have nothing left to return. I spent everything you gave me. I'm as naked as the day I was born.'" Amen.

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](http://www.ronniemcbrayer.net).

# Let's Do It All Over Again

By Dr. James L. Snyder

The fact we actually survived another year is a tribute to somebody's tenacity; I am not sure whose. I know the only thing that got me through the year was the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and boy is she graciously tenacious. I was sure everything would collapse and of course, several times I collapsed in my easy chair. It is a New Year, or so they tell us but I have my suspicions. After this latest episode with the Mayan's calendar, I am not too sure what date it is or what year it is, for that matter. They certainly got everything wrong and I have my suspicions about the rest of it. How do we really know that January 1 is actually January 1? Moreover, how do we know what year it is exactly? I think somewhere along the line somebody has pulled a scam on civilization and has messed up our calendars. If the Mayans got it wrong, maybe we have it wrong also. Whatever day and whatever year it is I am going to celebrate the New Year. If I am wrong, I have a lot of company. When we celebrate the New Year, there is nothing new about it. Everything we did last year we are going to be doing this year only we will be one year older. Perhaps as we get older we forget about what we have done and think we are doing something new. Hooray for senility! I really do not care about that; my philosophy is, let's do it all over again. If it is worth doing the first time, it is worth doing again. This brings me to a great point, which is, some things are worth repeating while other things are not. It is trying to find out the difference between these two that makes life challenging. I do not mind repeating things if I am

in charge of what I am repeating. I think we all should choose what we are going to repeat. For example, I wish I could choose a year to repeat. If I could repeat any year, it would be 1971. That year represents the greatest con in the history of mankind. I am not sure anything like it has ever happened before or since. That was the year I married a young lady who turned out to be the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. What bothers me about this is why did she really marry me? Was it my charm and good looks or did she think I was rich? There have been times I have wanted to query her on this very subject but then, I am always afraid she will tell me the truth. I do not mind the truth of it does not involve anything personally. I just will settle with the fact that that was the year I conned her into marrying me. We have been a great team ever since. She has kept me straight and I have given her opportunities to exercise that career, which she has become quite proficient. One of the great things resulting from this marriage is the fact that she has been faithful to point out my mistakes. Through her help, I discovered I have quite a few mistakes. I begin every year with a clean slate. I am able to celebrate January 1 with no mistakes whatsoever but then the next day my wife begins the ominous task of pointing out my mistakes. This is a joint effort, which leaves me out of joint often. I have a little theory along this line. I think that if it is a mistake you have made before it should not count anymore. I think the only thing that should be legitimate to point out are new mistakes. I find myself so busy practicing my old mistakes that I rarely get around

to making new mistakes. All these years I have revealed in my old mistakes. Trying to find something new is a great strain on my little grey cells. At this point in my life, they are exhausted and are encouraging me to rely upon those old mistakes and give them a well-deserved rest. At my stage in life I think new is overrated and, if experience is anything, something new is always taxing and in more ways than one. Do not let the government find out that you have something new or Uncle Sam will come knocking at your door with a gentle request for tax money. There is an old saying that says insanity is doing the same things over and over expecting different results. Well, that does not describe me. I do not want different results. I like the results I have. I like doing the same thing over again because I know what to expect. And if ignorance in this area is bliss, I am the most blissful person on the planet. My challenge this year is to surprise my wife with some unexpected new mistakes. Just one! To get on the right track for the New Year, I start with the Bible. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17 KJV). Instead of just celebrating the New Year, I plan also to celebrate that "new creature" in Christ. No mistake about it.

Dr. 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 1-866-552-2543 or e-mail [jamesnsnyder2@att.net](mailto:jamesnsnyder2@att.net). His web site is [www.jamesnsnyderministries.com](http://www.jamesnsnyderministries.com).



By Karen Anderson

There is something in your home and work that is all-revealing. It is relentless in its continual observations of you. It will show you every kindness, happiness, joy, awe, and wonder but it can also show sadness, cruelty, anger, depression, and whatever else you can think of. It can be heartless in its reality. The only thing it doesn't show is love and true emotions. You guessed it...your mirror and any reflective surfaces in your home. This item can be a rude awakening of your humanness and flaws. How many times have you looked in the mirror to walk away in disgust, because your hair's not right, you're heavier than you want to be, or you now have a

# Accepted Just As You Are

blemish on your face? You may feel like something is always wrong with you and wonder who could ever care about you. If you think about it, you know there is someone who cares for you, imperfections and all. Remember that your Maker took delight in the mere idea of you before you even existed. His Word says, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth." It really bothers me when I hear others putting themselves down, saying that they can't do anything right, or they must be the dumbest person in the world. Don't you realize, dear ones, you are forgetting about the God who made you? He is perfect, and He don't make no junk. I personally

feel that when you put yourself down like that, it's like slapping God across the face with the judgment of yourself. Instead, you should be thanking Him for making you unique. There is no one like you! You are special! In His eyes you are precious! Now is the time to accept yourself for how God made you. Get on your knees and thank Him for every imperfection you have. This is a really liberating act. Don't worry about what other may think. The only opinion that counts is God and yourself. ACCEPT YOURSELF TODAY! Live in the freedom that God loves you unconditionally, "warts and all." PASSAGE: Psalm 139:13-15 (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](http://www.doablesteps.com/contact).



By Marlys Norris, Christian Author

LOVE is the most powerful word and emotion in any language. Most of us experience a form of love as children we receive from our parents. We erroneously believe we know what love is when we approach our teenage years. Love is not mere fascination and we quickly learn real love is much more complicated. When we believe we have fall-in-love, again we believe we know what love is -- only to learn love is even more complicated when two ideas of what family is about is joined in matrimony

# What Kind of Love do You Give to Others?

we feel confused.. Then, when we have our first child love is expanded as we give our child parental love. Different problems we face are difficult, but each one has a way of teaching and deepening our love for others. In the process of just living life, we most likely don't understand as we begin to hear God's grace loves us with an all-encompassing and everlasting love. However, not until we come to the place we understand why Jesus was born and gave His life to mercifully purchase our souls for eternity do we have a deeper understanding exactly that "love" is really about giving. We learn that Love is so much more and it is an all encompassing love, it cannot be defined simply with only one description. The Love of God that graces our existence as believers is given to us when Jesus becomes our Savior and Lord. We learn and experience

His divine love in our lives. Our knowledge about God and His love is expanded as we learn love has four different descriptions: There is a family kind of love; a love between a man and woman; a friendship kind of love; and an "agape" kind of love that is unconditional and complete, the kind of love given to each one of us from God alone. He loves each one of us to the ultimate degree and it is everlasting. All taught and described eloquently in the Word of God. When a Christian who fully understands the four kinds of love and they sign a card or e-mail with LOVE, please understand which love (above) they are reflecting! It is because they really care about you and cherish your relationship with them. Marlys Johnsen Norris [Marlysjn@gmail.com](mailto:Marlysjn@gmail.com) Seven Christian Books Senior Gleanings I now available



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MPG

A	C	M	E	S		A	S	P		C	H	A	P		
D	R	I	N	K		M	A	O		S	H	O	N	E	
D	I	C	T	A		O	D	E		T	A	L	O	N	
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Crossword Puzzle on Page 8

Plumbing

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Pool & Spa Service

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Senior Housing

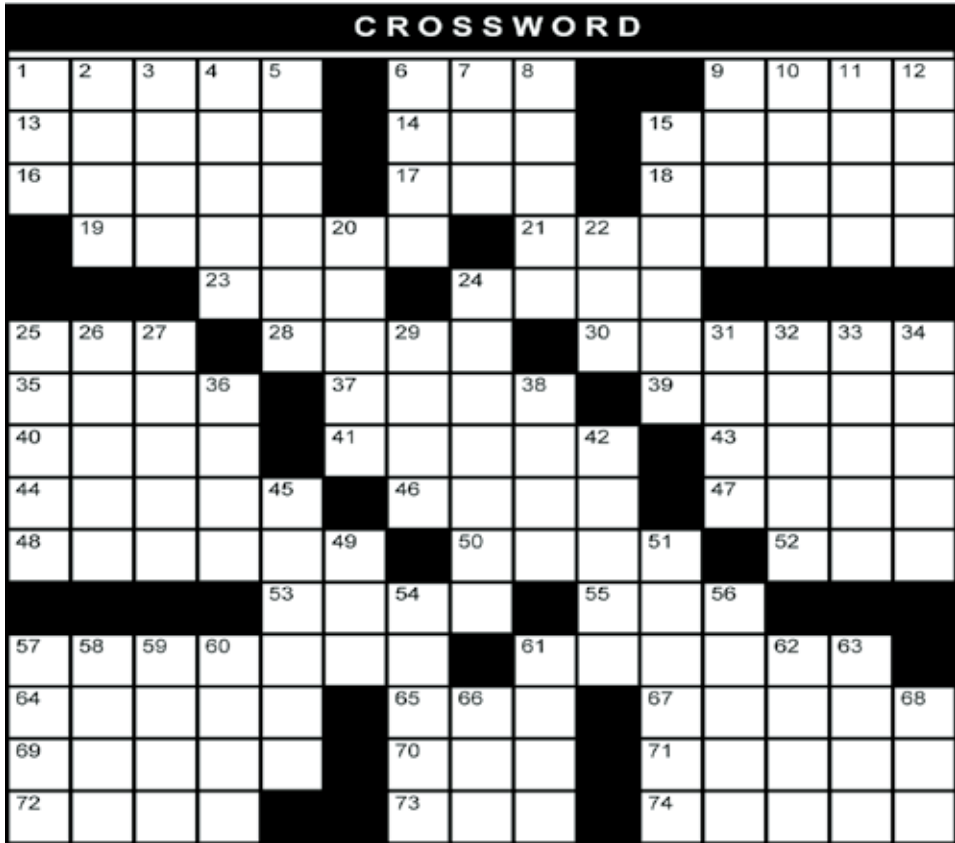
Mobile Homes for sale/rent, 1 and 2 bedroom Stonegate MHP A 55-yr and over Community in Citrus Heights. 916-728-5511. stonegatemhp@live.com (MPG 10-31-12)

\$355 to \$669 - Foothill Farms, a newly built affordable senior apartment community in Sacramento has 1 and 2 bedroom apartments available for seniors age 55 and up. AEK, elevators, and swimming pool. Applications will be available and accepted beginning at 10:00 am on Monday, June 18th. Leasing office will not be open prior to June 18th. Temporary leasing office is located at 5415 Palm Avenue (off of Auburn Blvd). Income, age and other restrictions apply. Section 8 is welcome. Applications will be processed on a first qualified, first offered basis. For 24 hour application information, please call 916.484.4007. EHO. (MPG 07-31-12)

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CLUES

- ACROSS  
1. Mt. Everest, McKinley and such  
6. Cleopatra's cause of death  
9. Crack in a lip  
13. "Hot toddy, e.g.  
14. Former Chinese communist leader  
15. Glowed or beamed  
16. Pronouncements  
17. "\_\_\_\_ to Joy"  
18. Bird of prey weapon  
19. Hungarian composer Bela  
21. "Popular winter sculpture  
23. Thus far  
24. Greenish blue  
25. Former refrigerant  
28. "A snow \_\_\_\_ is one for trekking on snow  
30. Astronomer's sighting  
35. Miners' bounty, pl.  
37. One who "\_\_\_\_ on the safe side"  
39. Start eating!
40. Heaven's Gate, e.g.  
41. 1:3, e.g.  
43. Captured in fun  
44. "Well-\_\_\_\_ machine"  
46. Falls behind  
47. Like tiny print  
48. Like number 1 to hydrogen  
50. Cuzco valley empire  
52. Jack Kerouac's Paradise  
53. Pottery oven  
55. Everybody or everything  
57. "\_\_\_\_ break  
61. Done after a trip  
64. Worms  
65. Gas station abbreviation  
67. Florida Key, e.g.  
69. Turf, as opposed to surf  
70. Unagi  
71. "Heard on sleigh ride?  
72. Cab blower  
73. "Snow falls from it  
74. Irregularly notched  
DOWN  
1. Sum it up
2. Where a baby goes  
3. Maryland Institute College of Art  
4. Diary note  
5. "Used for gliding  
6. In a frenzy  
7. "\_\_\_\_ but true"  
8. Literature in metrical form  
9. Tobacco mouthful  
10. River islet  
11. Dwarf buffalo  
12. In the Ivy League  
15. Pitted peach, e.g.  
20. Not the same one  
22. Indian restaurant staple  
24. Feeling no doubt  
25. "Hot treat  
26. "Ingredient in infamous cake  
27. Played by Yo-Yo Ma  
29. Kind of surgeon  
31. Marty McFly's antagonist  
32. Tangerine-grapefruit hybrid, pl.  
33. Tarzan's swing rope
34. "Snow impression  
36. Kind of cell  
38. "Capricorn or Aquarius, e.g.  
42. Extinct Italic language  
45. Tiny antelope  
49. Result of Truman's National Security Act of 1947  
51. "Kind of skiing  
54. Ancient Greeks' harps  
56. Lightsaber beam  
57. Be quiet!  
58. "The Simpsons" palindrome  
59. Malicious look  
60. Ayatollah's home  
61. Pre-swan state?  
62. Greek muse of history  
63. Party casks  
66. Expresses mild alarm or surprise  
68. "\_\_\_\_ End" by The Doors

For Solution  
See Page 7

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with Mary Jane Popp

surprised at what they told me. Were they looking for more money and fame? No way!!!

Do you remember **Martin Kove**? He was the villain in “Karate Kid” and his credits run deep from “Wyatt Earp” with Kevin Costner to “Rambo II” with Sylvester Stallone. Over 100 films under his belt, and what do you think he shared with me. Yes, he wanted to be more disciplined with his exercises on a regular basis, but he also wanted to meditate more, like a couple of times a day. He wanted to develop more positive thinking...as much as he can. And I loved this one, he wants to better his skills. You’d think it would be his acting, but no, his computer skills. Seems like he wants to better himself in as many ways as he can.

Then I got the inside track from **Dr. Elmo**, the man behind “Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer” fame. Did you know the Gray Panthers actually picketed him at a club for singing that song? He thought they were fans outside the club with signs honoring him. Instead, they wanted to attack him. But that’s history. Now Dr. Elmo vows to run a double marathon, and he ain’t no spring chicken. He also vows to tell his dear wife how much he loves her everyday and what she means to him. Ain’t that sweet?

**Stanley Livingston** wants to do something his mom always wanted him to do. Of course, we will always love Stanley as “Chip” on the “My Three Sons” TV classic. He has done so much since then from director to writer to producer. But his mom always wanted him to follow his natural talent as an artist. He’s done stained glass work too along with his landscapes, florals, and street scenes. He wants to devote his time to getting back to that talent his mom always loved. You can see some of what Stanley is doing at [www.stanleylivingstonart.com](http://www.stanleylivingstonart.com). I’m sure we can look forward to some real beauty from the heart!

Then I had the opportunity to speak with former Olympic Gymnast **Cathy Rigby**. She was in Sacramento playing Peter Pan on stage, a part she has perfected

to the max. At 60 years old, she is still flying high as Peter, but this will be her last time playing the fanciful boy! Her resolution is to pray for patience, so she can move on and reach out to new goals in her life. I don’t think there will be a problem there. She and her husband Tom McCoy are executive producers in the McCoy/Rigby Entertainment series at LaMirada and they have a conservatory for the arts too. I’ll have more on Cathy’s story in another article.

And then there was **The Amazing Kreskin**. Remember him all the way back to being on with Johnny Carson to today’s Jimmy Fallon. From bending spoons to predicting our president, he has done it all and not a regret in life. No, he is not a psychic, but he is a mentalist. Yeah, just like the TV show. He doesn’t make New Year’s Resolutions generally because he gets his energy from everybody anyway. But he said his favorite Christmas song is “I’ll be home for Christmas.” Why? Because he has done 447 performances in 2012, and that’s being on the road for a very long time. Ten days before Christmas, he was in Saudi Arabia. I’m sure home looked pretty darn good to him!

I know, you are wondering what my New Year’s resolution is. How about to keep bringing you the best and brightest interviews on POPPOFF. I will vow to inquire, challenge, and dig in to get the truth because the truth is out there! Oooohs! Do I hear the theme from “The X-Files?”

And so our hopes and dreams go on. I love to hear the resolutions from all walks of life. I will finish 2012 with the saying I always use at the end of my show, because it is so appropriate for this time. Always live simply, laugh often, love deeply, and most of all dare to dream! Why? Because without a dream, how can you make your dreams come true? **A HAPPY AND BLESSED NEW YEAR TO YOU AND YOURS!!!**

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

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

We make these fabulous New Year’s resolutions, vowing to keep them on the pain of...well you know! Do they last? Most of the time no, but we make them anyway...usually a few minutes before midnight! But do you know how it all began? I checked in on an article on Ezine articles online by a Gary Ryan Blair and found it to be a fascinating history. It goes all the way back to 153 B.C. It seems that Janus, a mythical king of early Rome was placed at the head of the calendar. Supposedly, he had two faces, so Janus could look back on past events and forward to the future. He became the ancient symbol for resolutions and many Romans looked for forgiveness from their enemies and also exchanged gifts before the beginning of the new year. Oh, and the New Year has not always begun on January 1. It doesn’t begin on that date everywhere even today. It begins on that date only for cultures using a 365-day solar calendar. January 1 became the beginning of the New Year in 46 B.C., when Julius Caesar developed a calendar that would more accurately reflect the seasons than previous calendars had. The Romans named the first month of the year after Janus, the god of beginnings and the guardian of doors and entrances. Because Janus was always depicted as having on face on the front of his head and one on the back, at midnight on December 31, the Romans imagined Janus looking back at the old year and forward to the new.

So now that we have reached into a New Year, I thought I’d share some of the New Year’s resolutions some celebrities I had on my POPPOFF Radio Show shared with me. You might be

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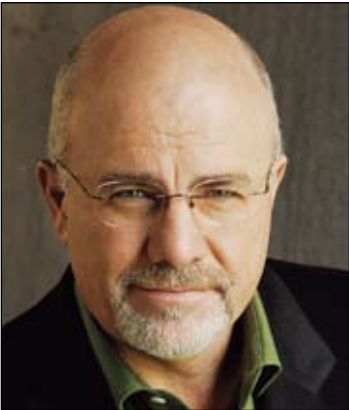
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**Better Safe Than Sorry**

Dear Dave,  
My wife and I are 70, and we have \$950,000 in annuities in the market, plus \$68,000 in our emergency fund. The only debt we have is our mortgage. I'm considering converting our stocks to a money market account to lower the risk. What do you think?

- Howard

Dear Howard,  
There are two sides to this. One is the asset allocation method, where as you grow older you move away from equities like mutual funds toward safer, more conservative investments like money markets, bonds and certificates of deposit. This is

# Dave Says

standard financial planning theory. I disagree with that theory, and here's why. Statistics show that if you make it to 72 years of age and are in good health, you have a high probability of living into your nineties. If you're making around one percent on your money market and inflation is four to five percent, then your money isn't going to be worth a lot. You need to outpace inflation, at least with your investments, in order to break even.

You might move some cash over to money markets and CDs for your own peace of mind, but I'd also recommend growth and income mutual funds along with some balanced funds. You want the entire group to be hitting the four to five percent range over the next several years, so you can at least keep up with the rising costs of gas and bread.

In my mind, you're avoiding one type of risk by moving everything to money markets, but you're taking on a different kind of risk—the chance you'll get tackled from behind by inflation. My advice is to balance things out so you can sleep better at night, but at a pace where you and your money stay ahead of the curve!

- Dave

**Is This An Emergency?**

Dear Dave,  
My wife just had our first child. As a result, we now have \$2,500 in medical bills not covered by insurance. We've got \$7,000 in our

emergency fund, and I make about \$25,000 a year. Should we dip into our savings for this or set up a payment plan with the hospital?

- Matthew

Dear Matthew,

Congratulations on your new baby! I know this is going to make the new year extra-special for you.

If I were in your situation, I'd write a check today and knock out that hospital bill. This definitely falls under the heading of "emergency" in my mind, so pay the bill and jump back into rebuilding your emergency fund.

You've done a good job of saving on \$25,000 a year, but let's look around and see what you can do about making more money, too. Additional classroom education or extra training in your field could increase your income pretty quickly. Your emergency fund probably needs to be a little bit bigger as well, and it'll be a lot easier to make this happen if you're bringing in more cash.

I'm sure you're a hard-working guy, but the truth is it's going to be pretty tough for even a small family to make it on what you're bringing home now. Life happens, and the unexpected can become a common occurrence when there's a little one loose in the house!

- Dave

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

# 'It's a Wonderful Life' and Other Near-Death Experiences

**Commentary by Eric Nelson**  
*Reprinted by permission*

On Christmas Eve my wife and I enjoyed our newest holiday tradition, watching Frank Capra's 1946 classic, It's A Wonderful Life, at the historic Stanford Theatre in nearby Palo Alto.

The movie is vintage Capra: A sentimental storyline, loveable characters, a clear distinction between good guys and bad and, of course, a happy ending. But despite its simplicity, the movie provides a powerful and much-needed reminder of what it takes to live a happy, healthy life. Perhaps that's why so many of us like to watch it every year.

If you've seen it, you'll recall that a crisis occurs when Bedford Falls resident, George Bailey, finds himself standing along a snow-covered bridge. His bank business having failed, his intent is to commit suicide by jumping into the icy river below. However, in an ironic turn of events, George finds himself jumping into the river, not to take his own life but to save the life of a man who appears to be drowning. We soon learn that this "man" is actually George's guardian angel, Clarence, sent from heaven to save him.

In a plot reminiscent of Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol, Clarence sets out to show George what life in Bedford Falls would be like had he never been born. Of course, we soon learn that life would be horrible, prompting George to beg Clarence to let him live. His prayer is answered and (cue sappy music) everyone lives happily ever after.

Although I doubt it was Capra's intent, It's A Wonderful Life does a pretty good job of portraying the upside of what today might be called a near-death experience. Thanks to Clarence's ability to put things into perspective, George soon finds himself in possession of a remarkable clarity of thought, a lot less stress, a happier family life and, by all appearances, a much healthier

body. While this account is purely fictional, a more recent – and true – near-death experience paints a similar if not more convincing picture.

In 2008 Dr. Eben Alexander, a neurosurgeon and author of Proof of Heaven, A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife, spent seven days in a coma. During this time the part of his brain that controls thought and emotion was totally inactive.

As he puts it in an article written for The Daily Beast, "There is no scientific explanation for the fact that while my body lay in coma, my mind – my conscious, inner self – was alive and well. While the neurons of my cortex were stunned to complete inactivity by the bacteria that had attacked them, my brain-free consciousness journeyed to another, larger dimension of the universe: a dimension I'd never dreamed existed and which the old, pre-coma me would have been more than happy to explain was a simple impossibility.... [A]s far as I know, no one before me has ever traveled to this dimension (a) while their cortex was completely shut down, and (b) while their body was under minute medical observation...."

What transpired during those seven days within this "larger dimension of the universe" is nothing short of extraordinary: "flocks of transparent, shimmering beings;" "a sound, huge and booming" from above; a beautiful woman able to communicate without saying a word – an odyssey Dr. Alexander says was "as real or more real than any event in my life."

But even more significant than this essentially sensory experience was a three-part message Dr. Alexander remembers being conveyed and committed to thought:

You are loved. You have nothing to fear. There is nothing you can do wrong. "[This] message flooded me with a vast and crazy sensation of relief," he writes. "It was like being handed the rules to a game I'd been playing all my life without ever fully

understanding it." Although he doesn't say this in his article, my hunch is that it was this "crazy sensation of relief" that precipitated Dr. Alexander's rapid and complete recovery from an obviously life-threatening condition. Of course, it would be a shame for any us to have to wait until we're at death's door before reaping the benefits of such life-transforming insights; to know, deep down, that we are loved, that we have nothing to fear, that we can do no wrong or, in the case of George Bailey, to know that our lives really do make a difference.

But maybe we don't have to. Maybe it's simply a matter of heading the words and wisdom of people like Jesus Christ who once said, "The kingdom of God is within you."

As I see it, it's this "kingdom of God" – a phrase that, for me, describes a state of consciousness that includes the rather blissful sense that I'm being cared for, that I matter – that can have such a significant impact on our health and happiness.

Of course, we may need to be reminded of this every now and then. But whether this reminder comes from watching a classic movie, living through a real-life near-death experience, or simply saying a prayer in support of the fact that our lives include a lot more than meets the eye, its effect can't help but be felt.

It worked for George Bailey. It worked for Dr. Alexander. It just might work for you, too.

*Eric Nelson is a Christian Science practitioner whose articles on the link between consciousness and health appear regularly in a number of local, regional, and national on-line publications, including The Washington Times. He also serves as the media and legislative spokesperson for Christian Science in Northern California (www.norcalcs.org). This article shared with permission by Communities @ WashingtonTimes.com.*



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Blueberry Biscuit Cookies

Yield: 14 servings

**Grown-Up Alert:** Supervise younger children when using the oven.

- 2 cups biscuit mix
  - 1 cup Florida blueberries
  - 1 cup pecans, chopped
  - 2 tablespoons low-fat milk
  - 1/2 cup honey, divided
- Place dough by tablespoonful onto a greased baking sheet about 2 inches apart.

Bake until edges begin to brown, about 15 minutes.

Remove from oven and drizzle remaining honey on each cookie. Bake an additional 5 minutes and serve immediately.

Preheat oven to 350°F.

In large mixing bowl, combine biscuit mix, blueberries, pecans and milk. Mix well and add enough honey to make mixture stiff like cookie dough.

Strawberry-Yogurt Freezer Pops

Yield: 10 servings

- 1 pound Florida strawberries, hulled and chopped
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 2 cups low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 10 freezer pop molds and sticks

In blender or food processor add half of the strawberries, sugar and lemon juice. Purée ingredients until sugar is dissolved. Pour mixture into a small pitcher or container and add the rest of the chopped strawberries.

Fill each freezer pop mold by alternating layers of strawberry mixture and yogurt. Insert handle or stick into each freezer pop and freeze at least 5 hours. To serve, run warm water over outside of molds until pops come out easily.

If you don't have freezer pop molds, use small paper cups. Cover tops of cups with plastic wrap and poke the sticks through the plastic to keep them standing upright while in the freezer.



Strawberry Mascarpone Panini

Yield: 4 servings

**Grown-Up Alert:** Supervise younger children when using the panini maker or griddle.

- 8 slices fresh bread (1/2 inch thick)
  - 1/2 cup mascarpone cheese
  - 1/2 pound Florida strawberries, hulled and sliced thin
  - Confectioners' sugar for dusting
  - 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- Spread a thin layer of mascarpone on top of each bread slice.

Add an even layer of strawberries to 4 bread slices. Use the other 4 slices of bread to top the sandwiches.

Brush sandwiches with butter and grill or press until golden, about 5 minutes.

Transfer panini to cutting board and dust with confectioners' sugar. Serve warm.

Heat a panini press or griddle over medium heat.

Berry Snack Bars

Yield: 20 bars

**Grown-Up Alert:** Supervise younger children when chopping nuts and using the oven.

- Crust:**
- 1 cup pecans, chopped, divided
  - 3/4 cup whole-wheat flour
  - 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
  - 1/2 cup sugar
  - 1/2 teaspoon salt
  - 4 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
  - 1 large egg
  - 2 tablespoons canola oil
  - 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
  - 1/4 teaspoon almond extract
  - Pan release cooking spray

- Fruit Filling:**
- 3 cups Florida strawberries, hulled and diced; divided
  - 2 1/2 cups Florida blueberries, divided
  - 1/4 cup orange juice
  - 1/2 cup sugar
  - 1/4 cup cornstarch
  - 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

For crust: Combine 3/4 cup chopped pecans, both flours, sugar and salt in food processor. Pulse together until nuts are finely ground. Add cold butter to mixture and pulse until well incorporated.

In small mixing bowl, whisk egg, oil, vanilla and almond extracts together.

With motor running on food processor, add egg mixture to pecan mixture. Continue to pulse until it begins to clump, 30 to 45 seconds.

Measure out 1/2 cup of mixture and combine in bowl with remaining 1/4 cup chopped pecans; set aside for topping.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Coat 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.

Combine 2 cups strawberries, 2 cups blueberries, orange juice, sugar and cornstarch in large saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture has thickened (about 4 to 5 minutes). Stir in remaining fresh fruit and add vanilla.

Transfer crust mixture to sprayed baking dish. Spread evenly and press firmly into bottom to form crust. Evenly spread fruit filling over crust. Sprinkle top of fruit filling with reserved topping mixture.

Bake bars for 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F and bake until crust and topping are lightly brown, 25 to 30 minutes more.

Let bars cool completely before cutting. Serve with fresh fruit.



Chef Justin Timineri

FAMILY FEATURES

One of the best ways to get kids to eat healthier food is to let them make it themselves. And these snack recipes using Florida blueberries and strawberries are so good — and so easy — you may have a hard time getting the kids out of the kitchen.

“You can get really creative with strawberries and blueberries,” said Justin Timineri, Executive Chef and Culinary Ambassador, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. “They can be tossed into salads or yogurt, marinated in teriyaki sauce and served with grilled meats, or turned into delicious snacks like these.”

Not only do they taste good, they're good for you. Blueberries are good for your eyes and memory, and they have antioxidants, which may prevent some types of cancer. Strawberries have vitamin C and fiber, which is good for your digestive system and helps you feel full.

To get more berry-licious recipes like these, visit <http://bit.ly/floridaberries>.



# Berry-licious Snacks

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- Pouring ingredients

Chefs ages 6 to 7

- Grating, peeling and zesting
- Greasing pans
- Scooping batter
- Mashing and kneading

Chefs ages 8 to 9

- Slicing and chopping, with supervision
- Peeling fruits and vegetables
- Measuring ingredients
- Breaking eggs

Chefs ages 10+

- Slicing, chopping and dicing
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