



Merry Christmas!



AMERICAN RIVER

M E S S E N G E R

Volume 6 Issue 24

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

Second Edition for December 2011

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The Most Wonderful Time of the Year



Photo of Jonathan G. Meath portraying Santa Claus.

By Paul V. Scholl, Publisher

The Christmas season is the time of year we all show our love and gratitude for those around us who play significant roles in our lives. We express our love to our husbands and wives, our children, our parents, our brothers and sisters.

Most grant well wishes to neighbors, co-workers and friends. Few well-wish to other drivers on the freeway or in the parking lot. Maybe we should? It might make it all just a little less challenging.

Let's not forget to spread our love to those who must work through the holidays behind the check stand counters or on the sales floor. Let them know how much you appreciate them, even if they may seem a little disinterested. They are probably tired,

and wishing they were somewhere else for the holidays.

I am truly grateful this Christmas for the gifts I have in my life. My wife, my son, my mother and her health at 88, my large family of ten brothers and sisters, and all those who work for my company that help to bring you our news products.

I am grateful to all those organizations with which we do business. A special thank you goes out this season to all of our loyal advertisers, our vendors, our suppliers, to all of the Chambers of Commerce, all of the media firms and public relations people. You make this business a joy.

Remember to be kind to one another. After all, that was the Great Example we were given. Remember the Reason for the Season. *Merry Christmas!*

Unclaimed Checks Listed on SMUD.org

SACRAMENTO REGION - The Sacramento Municipal Utility District has posted the names of customers and vendors with checks dated October 1, 2008 or earlier who have not yet cashed them. The list of names will remain online until December 27, 2011.

Each year SMUD posts this information in an effort to locate the money's rightful owner. Claims against these uncashed checks should be filed on or before December 27, 2011 with SMUD Unclaimed Monies, 6201 S Street, Mail Stop B302, Sacramento, CA 95817-1899 or by calling (916) 732-5556. Replacement checks will be issued only to the payee whose name is on the list. Checks not claimed by December 27, 2011 become SMUD property under California Code Section 50050-50056.

Sac Metro Fire Announces Board Vacancy

SACRAMENTO REGION - The Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District is accepting applications to fill a vacant position of Director for Division 4 on its nine-member Board of Directors. The selected applicant will serve the remainder of a four-year term expiring the first week of December, 2012. Applicants must be a registered voter, residing within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District.

While all interested applicants within the District will be considered, preference will be given to applicants from Division 4. The approximate boundaries for Division 4 are Elkhorn Boulevard to Auburn Boulevard on the north, Cypress Avenue to Edison Avenue on the South, Manzanita Avenue on the east, and Watt Avenue to Elkhorn Boulevard on the west.

Interested persons may apply for the position by submitting the Board of Directors District Employment Application and a letter of interest to Board Clerk Charlotte Tilson, Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District, 10545 Armstrong Avenue, Suite 200, Mather CA 95655. Application must be received by noon on Friday, January 6, 2012. A Special Board of Directors meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. at the City of Rancho Cordova City Hall, 2729 Prospect Park Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA for the purpose of interviewing qualified candidates.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting Charlotte Tilson, Clerk of the Board, at 859-4305, or visiting the District website at www.sacmetrofire.ca.gov for the Board of Directors District Employment Application form and division map.

Posted: 12/12/2011.

Meals on Wheels and Maita Subaru Help Local Seniors

SACRAMENTO REGION - Maita Subaru and Meals on Wheels by ACC teamed up to help deliver meals to homebound seniors on Monday, December 12. Subaru representatives and Meals on Wheels volunteers driving new 2012 Subaru vehicles delivered meals in the Fair Oaks, Citrus Heights, North Highlands and Orangevale areas.

"This is a great way to help spread the word that volunteers are needed to help deliver meals to homebound seniors throughout Sacramento County," stated David Morikawa, Volunteer Director for Meals on Wheels by ACC. "It's gratifying to see local businesses support the community with so much personal interest and commitment," he added.

Maita Subaru representative, Rachael Van Cleave, stated "This is a great opportunity to have our team learn and experience first-hand Maita Auto Group's commitment to residents in the Sacramento area."



Rachael Van Cleave from Maita Subaru, Mary Hardesty from Meals on Wheels, and Carol Keehner, Meals on Wheels Volunteer Driver from Carmichael. Photo by Meals on Wheels by ACC

Subaru dealerships across the country are supporting local service organizations like Meals on Wheels during December as part of their "Share the Love" event. To become a volunteer driver and deliver meals to homebound seniors, please contact Meals on Wheels at (916) 444-9533.

Santa's Elves Gather Early in Fair Oaks



FAIR OAKS - Some of Santa's elves gathered throughout the afternoon on December 10th at the home of Mary and Daniel Martinez, Gold Country For The Troops, to share in a little Christmas cheer. The open house was held by Mary and Daniel to thank all of those who have helped support their cause this past year and to invite local service member families to open hearts and open arms. Those who stopped by enjoyed holiday season appetizers, refreshments and holiday cheer.

Mary Martinez (Santa's helper outfit) and her husband Daniel (being hugged by Mary) are surrounded by many of Santa's helpers.

Fair Oaks Community Update



By Supervisor Susan Peters

Through the generosity of The American River Messenger I intend to use this column as an opportunity to provide an update periodically about matters affecting the Third District, which includes the unincorporated communities of Arden-Arcade, Carmichael and now Fair Oaks. This is my first report to you since Fair Oaks became part of the Third District following redistricting.

The Next Economy

A broad-based public-private partnership effort dubbed the “Next Economy” is now under-way to create effective strategies over the next 12 months to drive new job creation, investment, and innovation for our region. The group consists of employers, business, government, educational institutions, utilities and labor.

I am serving as the co-chair of this effort. It is my hope that by bringing together leaders representing a cross-section of private industry, education and government, we can chart a path for transforming our regional economy into a long-term sustainable, growth economy.

Together we are re-examining our region’s competitive position and evaluating the area’s economic strengths and weaknesses. This effort was inspired by four prominent regional-scale non-profit organizations – Sacramento Metro Chamber, Valley Vision, Sacramento Area Regional Technology Alliance, and the Sacramento Area Commerce and Trade Organization.

The first regional forum was held in November with more than 200 stakeholders participating in an interactive session that included responding to preliminary research findings. The next Regional Forum is scheduled for Friday, February 17 from 9–11:30 a.m. at the Folsom Community Center, 52 Natoma Street. For more information, including results of the first meeting, please visit nexteconomycaptialregion.org.

Hazel Avenue Phase 1 Done

Motorists on Hazel Avenue traveling over the American River Bridge between U.S. Highway 50 and Curragh Downs Drive now have more vehicle lanes with the completed widening from four to six lanes under the first phase of the Hazel Avenue Improvement Project. This is a big step forward in relieving congestion on this vital north-south corridor.

Hazel Avenue has a current traffic demand of up to 55,000 vehicles per day and was designed

to handle just 36,000. The widening of the bridge was a natural first step in moving toward reducing congestion and improving safety. Future phases will complete the widening northward to Madison Avenue.

Besides providing immediate benefits for motorists, construction improvements included new bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian facilities to improve connections to the American River Parkway. Most notable is the separation barrier keeping those modes of transportation away from vehicle traffic on the bridge over the American River.

Chicago Creek Bridge Repaired

Erosion repairs were completed in October by the Sacramento County Department of Transportation to maintain the structural integrity and stability of the Winding Way Bridge over Chicago Creek.

The work was performed following an inspection by Caltrans earlier which revealed some erosion of the soil had occurred surrounding the bridge’s foundations. Now the piers and abutments constituting the bridge’s foundations are protected by a shield of rock.

Speed Controls for Phoenix Avenue

The County Department of Transportation received the green light from the Board of Supervisors in December to implement speed controls on Phoenix Avenue between Kenneth and Illinois Avenues as well as on Valonia Street between Madison and Phoenix Avenues. The placement of these traffic calming devices is part of SCDOT’s Neighborhood Traffic Management Program and designed to slow down speeders.

To be considered for the NTMP, residents must submit a petition request which the department evaluates using objective traffic criteria like volume, speed and collision history. Each request is ranked by SCDOT and the Board of Supervisors authorizes which streets can participate.

After the Phoenix Avenue/Valonia Street area was selected, residents worked with SCDOT to come up with a specific traffic management plan that was subject to a separate neighborhood vote to demonstrate consensus before receiving approval from the Board of Supervisors.

Residents in the area gave 75 percent approval to have three speed tables on Phoenix Avenue plus a speed bump on Valonia Street. Because the Laying of asphalt requires a warmer ambient temperature, the construction will occur in the spring rather during the winter months.

For more information about the NTMP, please visit sactdot.com.

Protecting the Parkway

Last year the Board of Supervisors officially went on record opposing a plan to put a new large federal-state operations center next to the American River Parkway near Lake Natoma and the Nimbus Fish Hatchery. Whether it will occur is still unknown but we are continuing to voice our opposition.

If the Federal Bureau of Reclamation, the National Weather Service and the State Department of Water Resources have their way, a joint operations center will be built that will be around 200,000 square feet in size and be home to up to 600 employees open 24 hours in a very sensitive area by the parkway. It would clash with the parkway and damage the scenic vistas and natural habitat enjoyed in the parkway’s Upper Sunrise area.

Several meetings have been held with state decision-makers and I have voiced opposition at every opportunity, including at a meeting with representatives of Governor Brown’s administration. Despite strong community opposition, the possibility still exists that the project could advance even though there are other alternative locations outside the Parkway that are more suitable than the site preferred by the federal and state authorities.

Curbing Medical Marijuana Dispensaries

Sacramento County’s Zoning Code does not permit the operation of any marijuana dispensaries or marijuana-related distribution businesses, and business licenses to operate these businesses are not available. Notwithstanding that prohibition, numerous establishments had popped up operating without licenses and, once reported, they were investigated. To curb that unauthorized activity, the Board of Supervisors authorized stepped up enforcement practices on medical marijuana facility operators and those property owners who allowed such facilities to operate in violation of our local planning and building regulations.

As part of the enhanced enforcement, progressive administrative penalties have been used subjecting landlords to up to \$500 per day for zoning code violations and \$1000 a day for building code violations. Liens also are a tool against the property for unpaid penalties as well as the pursuit of injunctions against facilities and property owners to shut down these unpermitted operations.

This increased enforcement appears to be generating closures of many establishments although a few indicate the desire to litigate the issue. The reports to date, however, are encouraging — 91 out of 99 identified illegal dispensaries in the unincorporated area have closed.

In light of the success of the County’s enforcement activities as well as recent court decisions and increased enforcement activity by the federal government through the U.S. Attorneys, the Board of Supervisors adopted an amendment to the Zoning Code clarifying no activity is allowed that is against state or federal law. As a result, dispensaries remain barred under the Zoning Code due to the current federal prohibition.

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

FOURTH NOEL
COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER

December 25th, 2011
12 Noon - 3pm, in our Parish Hall

All are welcome to come share our dinner: especially, Veterans, Families, Parishioners, and anyone that is alone on this joyous day.
Come share in friendship, a visit with Santa & Mrs. Claus, and a traditional Turkey Dinner.
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To find out if your home was randomly selected to participate in this pilot, visit smud.org/smartpricing or call 1-855-736-7655.

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Publisher,
Paul V. Scholl

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County Animal Shelter and Partners Aim for 1,000 Holiday Pet Adoptions



SACRAMENTO – Through the month of December, the Sacramento County Animal Shelter, City of Sacramento Animal Care Services, Sacramento SPCA, and Happy Tails Pet Sanctuary are joining together in a major campaign to place 1,000 homeless animals in forever homes. “Home for the Holidays” is the theme, and to encourage pet adopters all adoption fees will be reduced by 75 percent.

“Together, local shelters take in tens of thousands of animals every year and we are joining forces to make a dramatic impact this holiday season,” stated Dave Dickinson, Interim Director of Sacramento County Animal Care. “We all have wonderful animals looking for a lifelong, loving home and offer the incentive of 75 percent off on all adoptions.”

Typically adoption costs range from \$81 to \$147 before the

75 percent discount. In addition to the holiday discount, at the Sacramento County Animal Shelter, qualified new pet owners will also receive the following benefits with their pet adoption through December 31.

- Spay/neuter surgery
- Health vaccinations
- Rabies vaccinations
- Microchip ID (with lifetime registration)
- 1 year animal license (County adopters)
- Free vet exam voucher
- Pet care information packet
- Disease testing (on most adult cats)
- Starter bag of food

Available animals can be viewed online at www.SacCountyShelter.net, www.sacpetsearch.com, www.sspca.org, or www.happytails.org. The County Animal Shelter is open Wednesday through Friday from 12:30 - 5:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from Noon - 4:30 p.m., and is closed Monday and Tuesday and most holidays. The shelter is located at 3839 Bradshaw Road, one mile south of Highway 50.

Rancho Cordova Permit Supervisor Gets Building Official Credential

RANCHO CORDOVA – Joe Cuffe, Permit Services Supervisor for the City of Rancho Cordova, has earned a California Building Official Credential from the California Building Officials Training Institute (CALBO), the state-wide organization dedicated to promoting public health and safety in building construction. At the City, Cuffe supervises staff members who issue building permits and take in plans from residents and developers. He also helps develop policies for permit issuance, plan reviews, and building inspections.

“It is important for the health and safety of our community that I keep up with current building and construction laws, statutes, and codes



Rancho Cordova employee, Joe Cuffe, continues to complete California Building Officials Training Institute classes so he can keep up with ever-changing building and construction laws, statutes, and codes. He recently earned his California Building Official Credential.

that change almost every year,” said Cuffe, who took 10 one-day CALBO classes during and outside of work hours. Cuffe has worked in the Rancho Cordova Public Works Department since the City’s incorporation eight years ago.

He started as a Sacramento County contract employee at the City. He then transferred to a Senior Engineering Technician position when the City began its own Building Division. Cuffe has completed two of the six CALBO credential programs and has already completed some of the requirements for the next programs. He asks, “How can I competently assist our customers and staff if I’m not professionally trained?”

Rancho Cordova gets Intern Program Plaque

RANCHO CORDOVA — The City of Rancho Cordova received a City Semester Intern Program perpetual plaque at the City Council meeting on Monday, December 5th.

The plaque lists each year’s intern and will be placed in a prominent public area in the City Hall building. Proberts Engraving in Rancho Cordova is a major sponsor of the plaque project. Started in 2007, the City Semester Program provides an opportunity for a CHS social studies student to experience city government and introduces them to civil service and politics.

At the end of the school year, the intern receives a scholarship



Participating in the presentation were (from left) Vanessa Martinez, the 2010-11 intern; Sara Carrillo, the 2011-2012 intern; Cameron Billeci, Faculty Advisor for the Intern Program at Cordova High School (CHS); Stacy Delaney, the City’s Intern Supervisor; City Manager Ted Gaebler; Mayor Robert McGarvey; and CHS Principal Dan Anklam.

from the City and units of school credit. During their internship, students work in the City’s Administrative Support

Division, the Human Resources Department, and the City Manager’s Office.

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Friday, January 20th at 6:30pm
Saturday, January 21st 10am
Sunday, January 22nd at 10:30am

Expansion Weekend with Rev. Dr. Kim Clarity
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Sunday, January 29th at 1pm

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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Plan B Not the Plan A for Children

The American College of Pediatricians applauds Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius in her correct and courageous decision to retain the age restrictions on the emergency contraception pill, Plan B. Given the potential for misuse, overuse, and the significant side effects of this drug, these age limits are in the best interest of the adolescent and are supported by science.

In this nation, where we hold the health and care of children in such high regard, the over-the-counter sale of Plan B to unsupervised minors would have been an unmitigated medical and psychosocial disaster. Modern science has made clear for at least the past decade that the cognitive areas of the brain needed to make such major decisions do not mature until twenty to twenty-five years of age. That's why



parent and physician involvement is essential to achieve optimal medical decisions for teens. It is disturbing to see this significant science ignored by so many when it comes to adolescent health policymaking.

Thank you, Secretary Sebelius, for placing the well-being of children above the political agendas of others.

The American College of

pediatricians is a national medical association of licensed physicians and healthcare professionals who specialize in the care of infants, children, and adolescents. The mission of the College is to enable all children to reach their optimal physical and emotional health and well-being. For more information about the College, please visit our website www.Best4Children.org.



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Fair Oaks Chamber Presents End of Year Awards



Recognition of Service Awards were presented to Kathy O'Brien as Business Person of the Year, Barry Brown as Volunteer of the Year, Mariah Eli, representing both Fair Oaks Safeway Stores as Business of the Year, and Diane Templeton as Citizen of the Year.

Roberta MacGlashan, (center in red) former County Supervisor for Fair Oaks, is shown appreciation of her support by the community. Honoring Roberta were (L to R) Bob Clouse from the Fair Oaks Cemetery District, Jim McCormick from the Sacramento Choral Society & Orchestra, Mike Maddox from Rotary, Pat Rooney from the Fair Oaks Theatre Company and Don Troutman from the Chamber of Commerce.



Former Assemblyman Roger Niello swears in the 2012 Board of Directors of the Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce at this month's luncheon.

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Hazel Avenue Improvement Project is the SACOG Salutes Regional Project of the Year

SACRAMENTO – The Sacramento County Department of Transportation (SACDOT) is pleased to announce that the recently completed Hazel Avenue Improvement Project – Phase 1, has won the prestigious Sacramento Area Council of Governments 2011 SACOG Salutes Regional Project of the Year award. Award recipients were honored at the SACOG Board of Directors meeting on Thursday, December 15. Phase 1 of the Hazel Avenue Improvement Project was completed in September, and is part of a major roadway infrastructure project to improve Hazel Avenue from U.S. 50 to Madison Avenue, to reduce congestion and improve safety and mobility for all modes of transportation in this corridor.

According to Mike Penrose, Director of the Department of Transportation, “We are honored to receive the Regional Project of the Year Award for the Hazel

Avenue project. From initial community input efforts, to the planning, environmental, project design and approval process to final construction -- our contractors, consultants and County staff have completed a great project with many benefits to the community and to local and regional roadway infrastructure.”

Completion of the Phase 1 project is a big step forward in Sacramento County’s efforts to improve the Hazel Avenue corridor. The Phase 1 bridge widening effort came first, and future project phases will complete the widening from Curragh Downs Drive to Madison Avenue. The Phase 1 project provides immediate benefits for motorists, users of local recreational facilities, bicyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. In addition, this \$22 million construction project helped support local businesses, material suppliers and contactors during this continued downturn in the economy.

Roadway improvements completed in Phase 1 project work included:

Widening Hazel Avenue from four to six lanes over the American River Bridge from U.S. 50 to Curragh Downs Drive.

Construction of new bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian facilities and improved connections to the American River Parkway.

Architectural treatments on the bridge structure and decorative street lighting.

Extensive landscaping and decorative retaining walls along Hazel Avenue.

Phase 1 project construction costs were \$22 million and covered with a combination of Developer Fees, Measure A Sales Tax funds and State and Federal funding sources.

Please contact Dan Regan (Communication & Media Officer) at 916-874-7056 or (regand@sacounty.net) for additional information.

California Democrats Seek a Virtual Ban on Handguns in Urban Areas

Commentary by Charles Nichols

Under current California law, if you live within 1,000 feet of a K-12 public or private school you can legally transport a handgun so long as it is unloaded and in a locked container.

Under a bill introduced by State Senator Ted Lieu (D-28 Redondo Beach) the law will change. It will expand the so-called “gun free” zones to 1,500 feet and a handgun can only be transported, unloaded and in a locked container, within your motor vehicle.

Take it one step outside your automobile on a public street, even if you are just carrying it to a firing range or purchasing a handgun from a sporting goods store, and you are guilty

of a misdemeanor or potentially a felony with a seven year prison term.

For the millions of Californians who live in residential areas without parking spaces on private property, this law will make it impossible to take your handgun out of your home or bring a newly purchased handgun into your home.

For those who may be unfamiliar with Senator Ted Lieu, the Democrats recently passed two of his bills. One bans the sale of shark-fin soup, the other makes it a crime for persons under 18 years of age to use a tanning booth.

Senator Lieu is currently boycotting Lowe’s Home Improvement stores and “may consider legislative action” because the company pulled

an advertisement from an anti-American, pro-Muslim cable TV show.

In short, Ted Lieu is your typical left-wing, lunatic Democrat politician from California which has made this state the laughing stock of the nation.

Ironically, it would take just over 11,000 signatures on a recall petition to give the voters an opportunity to remove Senator Lieu from office.

His bill, SB661, has a hearing before the Senate Public Safety Committee on January 10th at 9:30am in room 3191 at the state capital in Sacramento.

The Senate Public Safety Committee is stacked with similarly minded Democrats.

If you would like more information about this topic, please send inquiries to Charles Nichols: email Press@CaliforniaRightToCarry.org

California Right To Carry is a California nonprofit registered with the California Secretary of State. It does not solicit or accept public donations for its organization. Operating expenses are provided entirely by its membership.

SACDOT Bus Stop ADA Accessibility Study

SACRAMENTO – The Sacramento County Department of Transportation (SACDOT) was recently awarded a Caltrans Planning Grant to evaluate the accessibility of Regional Transit bus stops within the unincorporated county.

Providing accessible bus stops is a high priority for Sacramento County and Regional Transit, to help ensure that everyone can physically access bus stops and properly load and unload from buses. As part of this study, SACDOT staff will visit existing unincorporated area bus stops (approximately 1,100) and make note of any ADA accessibility improvements to enhance access. This information will enable

SACDOT and Regional Transit to better manage, prioritize and schedule improvement projects as funding becomes available in the years ahead.

We would like to encourage residents to assist by voluntarily filling out a survey if they are having difficulty accessing bus stops in the unincorporated area. Interested residents can visit www.sacdot.com/survey to answer a brief and anonymous “Ridership Accessibility Survey” to help identify specific bus stop access issues. This feedback will supplement the SACDOT database for consideration in future projects. Examples of physical obstructions that could prevent access to a bus stop may include

the following:

1. Lack of sidewalks leading to the bus stop.
2. Lack of curb ramps at street intersections in route to the bus stop.
3. Inadequate loading/unloading area at the bus stop to accommodate a wheelchair or scooter.
4. Physical barriers on a sidewalk such as a power pole restricting wheelchair or scooter passage.

This Accessibility Study is being funded by a \$250,000 “Environmental Justice and Community-Based Transportation Planning” grant made available through the California Department of Transportation.

Air Board Fuel Mandate Threatens Recovery

SACRAMENTO – The California Trucking Association (CTA) released the following statement on the California Air Resources Board (CARB) proposed adoption of amendments to the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS).

“California trucking companies have faced a number of major and rapid disruptions to their businesses at the hands of CARB,” said Michael Shaw, Vice President of External Affairs for the California Trucking Association.

“Now CARB wants to impose a new fuel standard that even under

the best of circumstances would lead to higher fuel prices for trucks and cars in the short term and possible fuel shortages in the future. “The California Energy Commission tagged the LCFS with an annual cost to California of more than \$4 billion. How can CARB impose a major drag on our economy at a time when California’s unemployment rate still hovers at almost 12 percent?”

“CARB’s LCFS mandate also fails to provide any safety net against biodiesel blended fuels that exceed national standards and may damage engines or reduce

their efficiency. Until CARB can provide independently verifiable data that this new fuel mandate will not impose a massive financial burden on truckers and Californians, we ask CARB to pull back and take a more reasoned approach. The California Trucking Association supports the research and development of alternative fuel technologies and encourages CARB to continue working down that path. However, it must be done in a responsible manner with a very strong consideration for economic impacts to truckers and the economy as a whole.

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For Solution See Page 7.

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CLUES

ACROSS

1. Presumptuously daring

6. He has final say at the plate

9. Where to get pampered, pl.

13. Scoundrel

14. Needlefish

15. Diver's lung

16. Independent African ruler

17. Big Island necklace

18. Type of paint

19. "Deposed despot

21. "Atlantis was the last one

23. Right-angle building extension

24. Another spelling for #16

Across

25. ___ Bon Jovi

28. Like Jekyll and Hyde's personality

30. "Arab ___

35. Stratfor-upon-___, Shakespeare's birthplace

37. "The Man Who ___ Too

Much"

39. Become established

40. Holy Father

41. It cuts edge of yard

43. ___ Verde National Park

44. A rooster to farmers?

46. Ready and eager

47. Eurasian duck

48. Scandinavian, e.g.

50. It can be wringed?

52. Greed or sloth, e.g.

53. Diamonds or hearts, e.g.

55. Nervous twitching

57. "They were super

61. "Royal beau

65. Autumn color

66. Witness

68. Polynesian kingdom

69. Like a new car

70. Employ

71. Homework assignment

72. "Pitched at Occupy Wall Street

73. 6th sense?

74. Reminiscent of the past

DOWN

1. Big talk

2. "Rome" in Italy

3. Matured, as in wine

4. Like Elvis's famous shoes

5. Official messenger of news

6. Tangerine/grapefruit hybrid

7. Legendary West

8. Rainbow-producing device

9. Jazz singing

10. Stroke on a green

11. Cain's unfortunate brother

12. Original home of the Saxons

15. Eats noisily

20. Stroke of luck

22. Her counterpart

24. Graceful or refined

25. "Site of nuclear disaster

26. Convex molding

27. With no face value

29. "Retired from "60 Minutes"

31. Roentgen Equivalent Man, pl.

32. Particulars

33. One born to Japanese

immigrants

34. Chewed on

36. Smart but awkward

38. "The Way We ___"

42. Straight muscles

45. It loves company

49. Mixed breed puppy

51. Out of ___

54. October's "Time," e.g.

56. Bring to an end

57. Well-mannered Emily

58. Heart feeling

59. Body part that can double

60. Superman's last name

61. "Read'em and ___"

62. In or of the present month

63. Petri dish gel

64. ___ Clinic

67. Female suffix

For Solution See Page 7



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Crossword Puzzle on Page 5

BRASH	UMP		SPAS
ROGUE	GAR		SCUBA
AMEER	LEI		LATEX
GADD	AFI		SHUTTLE
	ELL		EMIR
JON	DUAL		SPRING
AVON	KNEW		SETIN
POPE	EDGER		MESA
ALARM	YARE		SMEW
	SUIT		TIC
PACKERS			WILLIAM
OCHER	SEE		TONGA
SHINY	USE		ESSAY
TENT	ESP		RETRO

Sudoku Puzzle on Page 5

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

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Six Year-End Tips to Reduce 2011 Taxes

The Internal Revenue Service today reminded northern and central Californians that there is still time to take action to lower 2011 federal taxes.

“In order to claim certain benefits on your 2011 taxes, you need to take action no later than Dec. 31,” said IRS spokesman David Tucker. “Taking steps now could save you money when you file your taxes next year.”

Here are six steps that you can take before the year ends to save on your 2011 taxes:

1. **Make Charitable Contributions** - Donations must be made to qualified charities no later than Dec. 31 to be deductible for 2011. Taxpayers must have a canceled check, a bank or credit union statement, a credit card statement or a written statement from the charity showing the name of the charity and the date and amount of the contribution. Donations charged to a credit card by Dec. 31 are deductible for 2011 even if the bill isn't paid until 2012. Clothing and household items donated to charity must be in good used condition or better to be deductible.
2. **Install Energy-Efficient Home Improvements** - Homeowners still have time
- this year to make energy-saving and green-energy home improvements and qualify for either of two home energy credits. Installing energy efficient improvements such as insulation, new windows and water heaters can provide up to \$500 in tax savings. Homeowners going green should also check out the Residential Energy Efficient Property Credit, designed to spur investment in alternative energy equipment. For details see Special Edition Tax Tip 2011-08.
3. **Contribute the Maximum to Retirement Accounts** - Elective deferrals to employer-sponsored 401(k) plans or similar workplace retirement programs, such as a 403(b) plan for employees of public schools and certain tax-exempt organizations, a governmental 457 plan for state or local government employees, and the Thrift Savings Plan for federal employees, must be made by Dec. 31. However, taxpayers have until April 17, 2012, to set up a new IRA or add money to an existing IRA and still have it count for 2011. A taxpayer normally can contribute up to \$5,000 to a traditional or Roth IRA, and up to \$6,000 if age 50 or over.
4. **Consider a Portfolio Adjustment** - Check investments
- for gains and losses and make sales by Dec. 31. Taxpayers may normally deduct capital losses up to the amount of capital gains, plus \$3,000 from other income. Net capital losses that are more than \$3,000 can be carried forward and deducted in future years.
5. **Make a Qualified IRA Charitable Distribution** - The qualified charitable distribution allows individuals age 70½ or over to exclude up to \$100,000 from gross income that is paid directly from their individual retirement accounts to a qualified charity. The excluded amount can be used to satisfy any required minimum distributions that the individual must otherwise receive from their IRAs in 2011.
6. **Don't Overlook the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit** - Small employers that pay at least half of employee health insurance premiums may qualify for a tax credit of up to 35 percent of the premiums paid. An employer with fewer than 25 full-time employees that pays an average wage of less than \$50,000 a year may qualify. For more information see the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit page on IRS.gov.

New Website Provides Info Source to Residents and Businesses

RANCHO CORDOVA – The City of Rancho Cordova has added another tool to its website. The Rancho Cordova Community Map Portal enables residents and business owners to quickly and easily find property related information such as garbage pickup days, water service providers, street sweeping days, and permitted zoning land uses for specific addresses.

Located at <http://maps.cityof-ranchocordova.org>, the site can also be used to find out what school or political district the

location is in and who the government representatives are. Users can focus on a single property or investigate the surrounding geography. More than 50 layers provide information regarding parcels, streets, parks, schools, aerial photography, bikeways, redevelopment areas plus many more categories. Other layers show streetlights, speed humps, and geographic landmarks.

There is also an area for comments that goes to City staff who respond in a timely manner. “It is a convenient way for members of

our community to obtain answers to their geographic related questions or be directed to sites that can provide the information,” said Mark Dumford, the City’s Geographic Information Systems Analyst. “And the service is available 24/7.”The site will be continually updated with new functionality and information.

For additional information, please contact Dumford at mdumford@cityofranchocordova.org or contact the City at (916) 851-8700.

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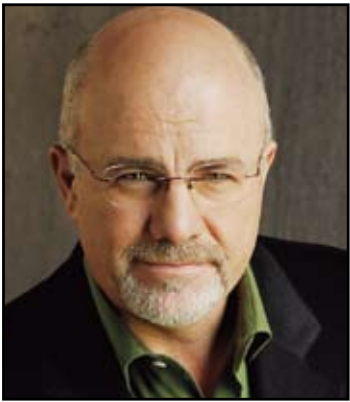
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Dave Ramsey is a personal money management expert, popular national radio personality and the author of three New York Times bestsellers – The Total Money Makeover, Financial Peace Revisited and More Than Enough. In them, Ramsey exemplifies his life’s work of teaching others how to be financially responsible, so they can acquire enough wealth to take care of loved ones, live prosperously into old age, and give generously to others.

Where Does the Donation Go?

Dear Dave,
Our financial situation is pretty good now, and my husband and I feel it is time to start giving something back. There are several organizations we’re interested in helping, but how can we know if they’re legitimate and will use our money wisely?
- Laura
Dear Laura,
I really appreciate your giving spirit, but the truth is you can never be 100 percent certain about this kind of thing. About the best you can do is put in some serious time researching and digging beneath the surface of various organizations to find some that are a comfortable fit for you.

Dave Says

My wife and I give the majority of our donations to Christian ministries. It’s not unusual for us to take a tour of the place to see what kind of feel we get while we’re there. If they’re secretive or not forthcoming with what we consider to be basic information about how they operate, or if we see signs of opulence or super-luxury, you can bet we’ll be asking lots of questions.

Talk to the leaders and administrators about what they plan to do with the money from your donation. You have a right to know this. I mean, if they’re going to give the money to hurricane victims, you want the victims to get the money, right?

People who work for a charitable organization need to make a decent living just like everyone else. But if they’re ultra-rich, it could be a sign that they’re not being responsible with their donations. Take a look at their administrative costs – what percentage of donations goes directly to the cause - and anything else you feel would help you make the right decision.

Giving is like anything else. It takes time and work to do it responsibly and with excellence!
- Dave

Where Does Debt Go When Filing Bankruptcy?

Dear Dave,
What happens to the money that is owed when someone files

bankruptcy? Do creditors just have to write it off, or do other people pay the price through taxes or higher interest rates?

- Grace

Dear Grace,
In most cases the creditor just loses the money. That’s one of the risks businesses face. Of course, any bankruptcy is also a seriously bad mark against the filer’s credit record.

Chapter 13 filings may be considered a little less severe than Chapter 7 because you’re showing an interest in retiring the debts. They often allow – if you have a regular income and limited debt – to keep some of the property you might otherwise lose. Also, some debt balances may be partially discharged, with the filer agreeing to make monthly payments to the trustee for distribution among remaining creditors.

A Chapter 7 bankruptcy is lots tougher on the one who files. It involves liquidating all assets that aren’t exempt. Some of the filer’s property may be sold by a court-appointed official – a trustee – or just turned over to creditors.

It’s really a lose-lose situation, Grace. The business loses money, and the filer suffers the emotional pain of participating in a shameful process.
- Dave

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



NO SWEAT HOLIDAYS

All right, calm down and don’t get a hernia. I know the holidays are upon us, and you’re about to have a nervous breakdown. Well, don’t! I had the opportunity to speak with **Jeanne Benedict** to get us a helping hand. I know you’d recognize her from the Today Show, and also from her four season run as host/chef/designer for the DIY Network’s show “Weekend Entertaining.” She also shared lots of tips with “Regis and Kelly,” “The Ellen DeGeneres Show” and a myriad of other popular programs. It was great to have her on POPPOFF to do the same. She actually paired up with Dunkin’ Donuts to offer last-minute tips and gift ideas as well as remedies for the inevitable entertaining snafus that include the following:
1) **Last Minute Gifts:** Find last-minute gifts while shopping. Look to your favorite aisles for inspiration. For example, a bag of Dunkin’ Donuts packages coffee makes a great stocking stuffer or

POPPOFF!

with Mary Jane Popp

hostess gift when paired with a holiday themed mug. I threw in my two cents and suggested purchasing the mug at the dollar store of your choice. Hey, why not! A mug’s a mug! All you have to do is spruce it up!
2) **Lights Out:** Stock up on all the lighting essentials. Keep a supply of extra light bulbs in a variety of sizes for your house and both indoor and outdoor strings of holiday lights. Also, include surge protectors, extension cords and power strips. Between your holiday lights, decorations, and visiting friends, the last thing you need is to blow a fuse...at least the electric kind!
3) **Coffee Compost:** Reuse and recycle. After you brew your coffee, add the grounds to your composting efforts to keep your garden green.
4) **Writing Thank You Notes:** Get a jump on thanking folks like teachers, party hosts, and gift-givers by printing out a bunch of holiday thank-you cards ahead of time, which can usually be found for free.
5) **Create A Quick Holiday Atmosphere:** Pick up a new set of votive candles (remember the dollar store) and glass holders for instant and elegant atmosphere. And, a little water in the bottom of the candleholder will help prevent melted wax from sticking to the glass. Give your kitchen a simple

holiday feel with a few seasonal items like snowmen oven mitts or reindeer dish towels.
6) **Low-cost Holiday Touches:** Freeze cranberries, fresh mint, or citrus twists in ice cubes to add a hint of seasonal flavor to beverages when unexpected guests drop by.
7) **Keep the Kids Occupied:** Be sure to have plenty of frozen sugar cookie dough on hand along with holiday sprinkles and cookie cutters as last minute baking activity for parents and kids. Then keep homemade holiday cookies crisp by putting crumpled wax paper in the bottom of the cookie jar so the air can circulate and prevent them from becoming soggy.
8) **Keep the Adults Occupied:** For easy group entertainment, make sure you have a selection of classic board games on hand and take a minute to make sure all the playing pieces are intact, cards are accounted for and pencils are sharpened.
9) **Contain Spills and Thrills:** Have a stain stick handy for the inevitable table mishaps. No one wants a family photo with a big stain on their holiday sweater. That should get you started. If you want more tips, go to www.jeannebenedict.com. And bottom line...HAVE FUN!!!

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

A Healthy Pregnancy Later in Life



By James N. Martin, Jr, MD
President, The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Many women in the US today are choosing to have babies later in life. Although the majority of births are still by women in their 20s, birth rates among women in their 30s and 40s are the highest they’ve been in decades.
Women in their 30s and 40s have a very good chance of having a normal pregnancy, but certain factors that may complicate a pregnancy are more likely in older women than in younger women.

likely than younger women to have blockages in the fallopian tubes or conditions such as endometriosis and fibroids, all of which could make pregnancy harder to achieve.

There is an increased risk of birth defects or genetic disorders. As a couple ages, they have a greater chance of having a baby with a birth defect or inherited disorder, such as spina bifida. Your doctor may refer you to a genetic counselor or a doctor who specializes in genetics to assess your risk and help decide if genetic testing is appropriate. An ultrasound exam—called a nuchal translucency test—may be recommended at about week 10 or 11.

You may also be screened for chromo-somal problems during your pregnancy.

Common tests used are amniocentesis and chorionic villus (CVS) sampling. With amniocentesis, a small amount of the fluid that surrounds the baby is removed. With CVS, a small sample of the placenta is removed and tested.

Uncontrolled medical conditions can spell trouble. Medical problems that can complicate a pregnancy, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, are more common in older women. These conditions may lead to small

or preterm infants and can also endanger the mother’s life.

Older women should be aware of the unique challenges that they may face during pregnancy. Talking to your doctor when planning a pregnancy can help you avoid or minimize some complications associated with later childbearing.

Before you become pregnant, try to schedule vaccinations and work on getting current medical problems under control. Your doctor may also suggest that you lose weight if you’re overweight and that you begin taking a folic acid supplement, eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly, reduce your stress levels, and get plenty of rest. Once you become pregnant, get to your doctor early and often for prenatal care. Regular prenatal visits will help you to have the healthiest pregnancy possible.

For more information, the ACOG Patient Education Fact Sheet “Later Childbearing” is available at www.acog.org

As a national sponsor of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, ACOG encourages women to focus on breast health now. For more information and resources on breast cancer, treatment options, and where you can find support, go to nbcam.org.

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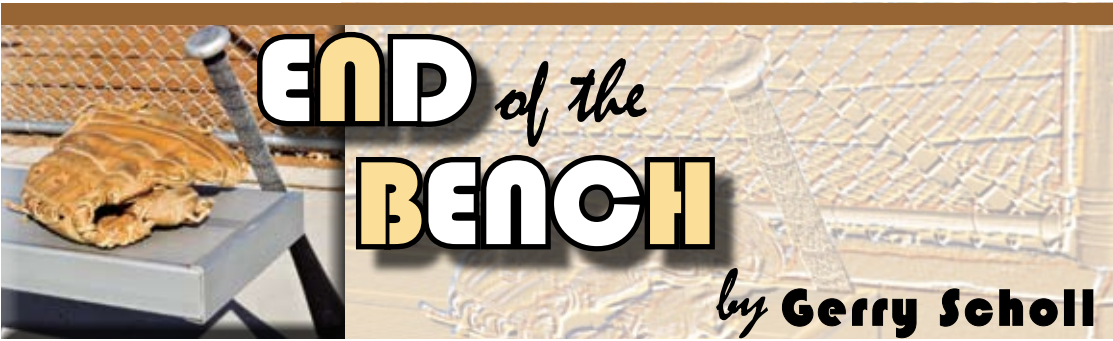
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Once Upon a Time, But No Time Soon

Once upon a time, long, long.....long, long, long ago, a NBA championship was won in northern California.

Sacramento Kings fans, sorry to remind you of this, but it wasn't your team. Came close about a decade ago a couple times, but some bad calls, some poor free throw shooting, a lucky shot, some guy named Robert Horry...and the Kings were denied.

Golden State Warriors fans, so many of you were not alive or old enough to remember, but it was your team in the 1974-75 season...a long time ago.

Our world has changed an awful lot since then, but one constant has remained — no more National Basketball Association championships for the north state faithful.

Thanks to Comcast, while waiting for this delayed NBA season to get underway, the opportunity has been there to review that one championship year on television. So far I've watched most of a couple of the games in the Warriors' Western Conference Finals win over the Chicago Bulls (Jerry Sloan, Chet Walker, Bob Love, Norm Van Lier), and the first game of the finals against the Washington Bullets.

That Washington team was a powerhouse, with a speedy point guard (Kevin Porter), a great shooter (Cal's own Phil Chenier), and a first-rate front line with the great "Big E," Elvin Hayes and brute Wes Unseld. The Bullets won 60 games and eliminated the Boston Celtics to reach the Finals and face the Warriors.

They all said it was going to be a sweep. The Bullets would smash the upstarts from the west coast. It was a sweep, all right. In what is still regarded as the biggest upset in NBA Finals history, it was the Warriors who won four straight and the title.

Coach Al Attles (the nicest guy I've ever met in professional sports) primed his team for Game One by pointing out to them that one Washington scribe called them "the worst team to ever play in the finals." That worked. The Warriors, led by one of the top players in league history, Rick Barry, and truly smooth-as-silk Keith (later, Jamaal) Wilkes, guard Phil Smith (out of USF) and center Clifford Ray, rallied from a 16-point deficit to win on the road, 101-95.

It was really something to see again, as it was back then.

Just over two years into married life, the wife and I got together with our former college friends to watch that Warriors playoff run. We were ardent followers of the game and that team. We were into every shot, every play. When a bad call went against the Warriors we would throw our dirty socks at the TV screen.

We've come a long way since then, and so has the game.

Watching it now — oh, how things have changed. There's no three-point arc or shot, and bonus free throws are one-and-one or three-chances-to-make-two. There are only two refs, and TV has no crawl at the bottom of the screen and they're using grade-school graphics. The players are lean and not so mean. Look at the hair and the clothes — like Attles' leisure suit and the short shorts on the players (the girls loved those). There are no shaved heads on the floor, but lots of bushy sideburns everywhere.

Comcast even runs occasional commercials from the original broadcast (with a young Brent Musburger on play-by-play). Two things I took from those were: Candice Bergen was hot when she was young and I don't need Aqua Velva to feel like a man.

The station will show Game Three Friday night, Dec. 23 and the clinching Game Four at a later date.

On the show Attles said, "We never talked about winning a championship, we talked about the next game...until the last game."

Well, we NorCal folks haven't talked much about winning a championship since then either. The following year the Warriors had a great regular season but got knocked out of the playoffs too early. There was the big upset of top-seeded Dallas in 2007, but they had no chance of going all the way. The Kings, of course, had their great seasons during the Chris Webber-Vlade Divac-etc. era, but the fates conspired against them, and only once did it really feel like they had a real shot at the top prize.

But, with each new season there is new hope. The Warriors-Kings preseason matchup Saturday showed off their new top draft picks, Klay Thompson (Warriors) and Jimmer Fredette (Kings), and both teams' revitalized and upgraded rosters and coaching staffs. But in all honesty folks, neither team has much hope for raising that long elusive championship banner any time soon.

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FAMILY FEATURES

The holiday season is the perfect time to gather around the table with friends and family and share delicious dishes and treats. Every family has their traditional favorites — whether sweet or savory. Consider giving your traditional holiday feast a creative twist with these three recipes. They all feature the fresh-roasted taste of Jif® Peanut Butter, a versatile ingredient that complements both sweet and savory dishes, turning simple recipes into new holiday classics.

Peanut Butter Caramel French Toast: This decadent breakfast or brunch dish can be prepared the night before, so all you have to do in the morning is pop it in the oven. It's an easy way to start the day off with friends and family.

Rigatoni Romesco with Grilled Shrimp: This flavorful pasta dish features peanut butter in a zesty red sauce with grilled shrimp. And it comes together in no time — which means you have more time to enjoy the company of good friends.

Apple Cranberry Peanut Butter Crisp: Take baked apples to a whole new level with a peanut butter crumble topping. It's so good you might want to make two and save one for later.

For more sweet and savory holiday recipes with a peanutty twist, visit www.jif.com.

Peanut Butter Caramel French Toast

- Servings: 8
Preparation Time: 30 minutes
Cooking Time: 45 minutes
- 1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar
 - 1/2 cup butter
 - 1/2 cup Jif Extra Crunchy Peanut Butter
 - 2 tablespoons light corn syrup
 - 12 1-inch-thick slices French bread
 - 6 large eggs, beaten
 - 1 1/2 cups milk
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
 - 1/4 teaspoon almond extract
 - Whipped cream or whipped butter
- Coat 13 x 9-inch baking dish with no-stick cooking spray. Stir brown sugar, butter, peanut butter and corn syrup in small saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly, until smooth and thickened. Pour peanut butter mixture into baking dish. Place bread slices over mixture, trimming to fit.
 - Whisk together eggs, milk, salt, vanilla and almond extracts in a medium bowl. Pour egg mixture over bread. Cover and chill 8 hours or overnight.
 - Heat oven to 350°F. Remove cover. Bake 45 minutes or until lightly browned. Invert onto large serving platter. Cut into servings. Serve with whipped cream or whipped butter.



Create Your Own Classics — and Win

Now through January 18, 2012, creative cooks can share original recipes using at least two tablespoons of Jif Peanut Butter in Sweet and Savory categories for the chance to win one of two \$10,000 kitchen makeovers in the Jif New Classics Recipe Contest.

Complete Official Rules are available at www.jif.com. Contest open to legal residents of the 50 United States and D.C., 18 years or older. Void where prohibited.

- Apple Cranberry Peanut Butter Crisp**
- Servings: 9
Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Cooking Time: 40 minutes
- 6 cups peeled, sliced Gala apples (about 3 large)
 - 1/4 cup dried cranberries
 - 1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
 - 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Topping**
- 6 tablespoons Pillsbury Best® All Purpose Flour
 - 3 tablespoons toasted wheat germ
 - 1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
 - 1/2 cup Jif Omega-3 Creamy Peanut Butter
 - 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
 - Smucker's® Sundae Syrup™ Caramel Flavored Syrup (optional) or Smucker's Sugar Free Sundae Syrup Caramel Flavored Syrup
- Heat oven to 375°F. Stir apples, cranberries, 1/4 cup brown sugar and cinnamon until coated. Spoon evenly in 9 x 9-inch baking pan.
 - Mix flour, wheat germ and 1/4 cup brown sugar in medium bowl. Cut in peanut butter with fork until crumbs form. Stir in walnuts. Crumble over apples.
 - Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until apples are fork tender and top is golden brown. Cool 10 minutes. Drizzle with caramel flavored syrup, if desired. Serve warm.

- Rigatoni Romesco with Grilled Shrimp**
- Servings: 6
Cooking Time: 20 minutes
- 2 tablespoons Crisco® 100% Extra Virgin Olive Oil, divided, plus 1/3 cup olive oil
 - 3 cloves garlic, divided and chopped
 - 1 slice white bread
 - 1 cup Jif Extra Crunchy Peanut Butter
 - 1 (12-ounce) jar roasted red peppers, undrained
 - 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
 - 2 (14.5-ounce) cans diced tomatoes
 - 2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley
 - 2 teaspoons salt, divided
 - 3/4 teaspoon black pepper, divided
 - 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
 - 1 teaspoon chili powder
 - 1 teaspoon paprika
 - 3 pounds (about 3 dozen) large raw shrimp, peeled and deveined
 - 1 (16-ounce) package rigatoni pasta, cooked according to package directions and kept warm
- Optional Garnish**
- Chopped Italian parsley, chopped peanuts or roasted red pepper strips
- Add 1 tablespoon oil and 2 cloves garlic to a large non-stick skillet on medium heat. Sauté and stir about 1 minute.
 - Transfer garlic to small bowl. Add bread to skillet and cook 2 minutes on each side until toasted. Remove bread and tear into large pieces.
 - Place sautéed garlic, remaining clove raw garlic, bread, peanut butter and roasted red peppers in food processor and purée well. Add in pepper flakes, tomatoes, parsley, 1 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper, vinegar, chili powder and paprika; purée. With processor running, add 1/3 cup oil gradually through the feed tube and mix well. Return sauce to skillet and heat thoroughly. Keep warm.
 - Heat grill. Season shrimp with remaining 1 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon pepper and 1 tablespoon oil in large bowl. Stir to combine. Grill about 2 minutes on each side or until opaque.
 - Place pasta on large platter. Top with sauce, then shrimp. Serve hot. Garnish with Italian parsley, chopped peanuts and red peppers if desired. Serve hot.



Riley Reviews

THE EXPLOSIVE,
COOL FACTOR FOR
“SHERLOCK HOLMES”
EXCITES

almost incomprehensible action scenes. It may all be a bit confusing at first.

Fortunately, the story settles down into a globe-trotting adventure that has Holmes absconding with his best pal and reluctant partner, Dr. Watson (Jude Law), just as the good doctor has married the lovely Mary (Kelly Reilly).

Set in 1891, the action quickly shifts out of London when Holmes and Watson, investigating terrorist plots that target political figures, get pulled into a rescue mission for Gypsy fortune teller Simza (Noomi Rapace).

Soon enough the trio is racing through France, and then Germany, in search of Simza’s missing brother who is apparently caught up in revolutionary schemes.

The ever-smart Holmes, of course, figures that his arch enemy Professor Moriarty (Jared Harris) is cleverly manipulating and orchestrating a dastardly plot to assassinate various European diplomats.

The nefarious Moriarty plan is to spark all-out conflict between France and Germany so that he may profit from having cornered the munitions market.

To this end, Moriarty schemes his evil plan to occur at a summit that is scheduled to take place high in the Swiss alps at a hide-away that looks like something from a James Bond film.

Given his cinematic history, Guy Ritchie puts a real premium on the breakneck pace of explosive action, and “Sherlock Holmes” delivers the action goods in spades.

Most impressive of all is Ritchie’s slow-motion technique for many action sequences, where the unhurried pace is used brilliantly to allow Holmes to

visualize in great detail his next moves on the action chessboard.

Of course, there’s more to the action scenes than just the deliberate, measured pace of the slow-motion sequences. Once visualized, Holmes’ perceptions are rendered expertly into real time speed with forceful impact.

Though it may not seem this way, there’s more to this “Sherlock Holmes” than just high octane action. One of the best scenes is a chess game between Holmes and Moriarty realized as a cerebral cat-and-mouse exercise.

In a film filled with delightful characters, one of the best may be Stephen Fry’s Mycroft Holmes, the famous sleuth’s older brother who provides some comic relief.

“Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows,” loaded with explosive action, is an exciting adventure. But best of all is the great chemistry between Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law; their collaborative effort really pays off.

DVD RELEASE UPDATE

I find it hard to pass up a DVD release of old buried treasure from the glory days of television. “I’m Dickens...He’s Fenster” falls into this category.

This brilliant but short-lived 1962 ABC TV situation comedy starred John Astin (“The Addams Family”) and Marty Ingels (“The Dick Van Dyke Show”).

The show was created by Leonard Stern, the writer and/or producer for such great comedies as “Sgt. Bilko,” “Get Smart” and “The Honeymooners.”

“I’m Dickens...He’s Fenster” followed the comic exploits of two construction workers and bosom buddies (Astin and Ingels).

Though the TV show was a favorite of critics, it ran for only one season of 32 episodes. It suffered the fate of a premature cancellation.

Because it never had enough episodes to qualify to run in syndication, “I’m Dickens...He’s Fenster” has been a lost treasure up until now.

The Volume One release offers the first 16 episodes, along with bonus material such as commentaries from the original stars.

Small Business Wish List



By John Kabateck
Executive Director, National
Federation of Independent
Business/California

“I’m dreaming...of a ...White Christmas...just like the ones we used to know.”
Irving Berlin

So goes the well-known holiday carol that Bing Crosby croons this time of year. Small businesses certainly have things that they are dreaming of – increased business, expanding their workforce, building their customer base and supporting their communities. The question is – will our state leaders make those dreams a reality in 2012?

Believe it or not, there *were* some victories for Main Street in 2011, thanks in large part to the leadership efforts of the National Federation of Independent Business: holding the line on tax increases, implementing a review of new regulations, and the vetoing of card check legislation, to name a few.

Looking ahead to 2012, what is small business hoping for from their elected leaders and Sacramento?

First, like every other year, small business owners have made it quite clear that they are overwhelmingly opposed to any new taxes. Time and time again when balloted, NFIB/California small business owners have said that now is not the right time for more taxes on individuals or businesses. In June, when NFIB polled members across the state, 96 percent of those responding indicated

that California should not use tax increases to balance the state budget. I’m not sure how much clearer we need to be – especially when 87 percent of those surveyed didn’t support even putting tax increases on the ballot. The message is clear – government should only spend what it brings in – and not a penny more. And when revenues are down, they need to adjust, just like the small business owner does.

Second, small business owners are ready to see real regulatory reform and accountability for government. Senate Bill 617 (Calderon and Pavley), which Governor Brown signed, was a step in the right direction. It requires a thorough economic analysis for every regulation with an economic impact of over \$50 million. This doesn’t fix everything, but it is a huge step in the right direction for addressing California’s regulatory nightmare. On the flip side, the Governor missed a huge opportunity to allow small business to have a voice on the California Air Resources Board by vetoing NFIB-sponsored legislation that would have required one member of the board be a small business owner. While we are disappointed in that decision, NFIB and small business will not give up our effort to ensure Main Street has a seat at the table in the regulatory process.

Small business owners also want help stemming the tide of frivolous lawsuits in our state. In a survey released this year by California Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse, California voters believe the number of lawsuits filed in our state hurts our economy, and they’re concerned that if we don’t make reforms now, these lawsuits will continue to cost us more jobs and send us further down the financial hole. In a survey of NFIB members, more than one-third of small business owners have been sued in the past five years and nearly 6 in 10 have been threatened with a lawsuit during the same period. Clearly there is as problem – but the challenge is to get legislation passed

in Sacramento to fix the problem. Recently, NFIB was proud to participate in a press conference with Congressman Dan Lungren where he announced federal legislation to reform the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). H.R. 3356, or the ACCESS Act, would allow small businesses sufficient, reasonable time to fix alleged ADA violations before they are hit with a lawsuit. Small businesses are eager for someone in Sacramento to take up this cause and pass similar legislation in 2012 that would provide them additional protections in California.

Finally, small business owners want to see that their legislators understand their challenges and support them. Too many of our elected leaders get to Sacramento and then forget who they represent – our annual voting record released each January makes that clear time and time again. It is time for those sent to Sacramento to walk the talk – and leave the sound bites and campaign slogans behind. NFIB is actively working to recruit candidates this next cycle that genuinely understand small business and know the challenges that they face. Small business owners are too critical to the economic recovery of this state for them to sit on the sidelines and be ignored any longer. Keep an eye out for the NFIB Voting Record, which is expected to be released soon -- and be sure to hold your Senators and Assembly Members accountable if their actions don’t match their rhetoric.

So, will 2012 be the year in which small business’ dreams come true? Or will it be another year of cleaning up the sludge after a storm that leaves them worse off than they were before? Only time will tell, but this is the perfect storm for small business owners and all Californians to hold their legislators accountable – now through Election Day.

More information about NFIB is available online at www.NFIB.com/newsroom.

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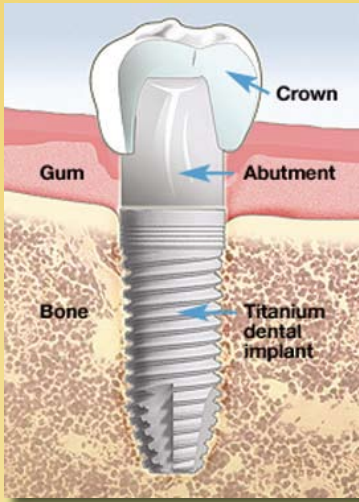
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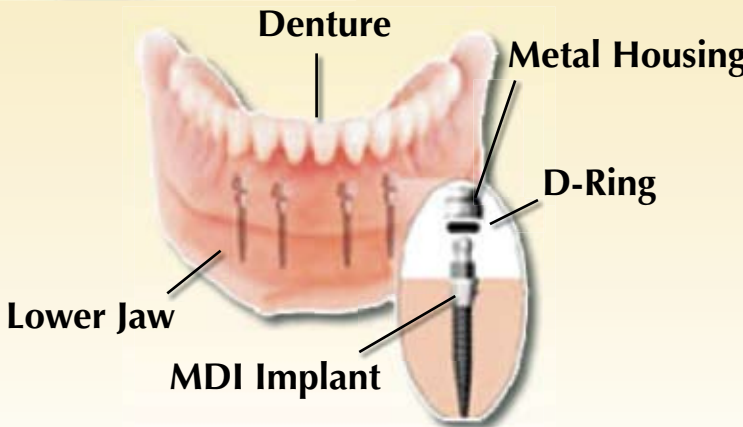
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