



**CHP Needs Your Assistance
in Locating a Hit and
Run Driver and Vehicle**

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PLUS:
If You Like Your Snow,
You Can Keep Your Snow.
Please!

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Carmichael Times

Volume 34 • Issue 52

Serving Carmichael and Sacramento County since 1981

December 25, 2013

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Winner Shares
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See inside for details

Sacramento Life Center Raises \$350k for Mobile Medical Clinic

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Six hundred fifty local residents raised \$350,000 for the Sacramento Life Center's free medical care, counseling and education for pregnant women and teens at the organization's annual fundraising dinner last month. The Salute to Life Dinner and Auction at the Hyatt Regency Ballroom in Sacramento included a gourmet dinner, auction, raffle and stories of people who have received help from the Sacramento Life Center.

"The generosity of this community has made it possible for us to roll out our second Mobile Medical Clinic so more women in the Sacramento area can receive the free medical care they need," said Marie Leatherby, executive director. "We are so grateful to everyone in this community who supported this event, especially those who came out to our dinner and responded to the amazing stories that were shared."

The Sacramento Life Center's mission is to offer compassion, support, resources and free medical services to women facing an unplanned or unsupported pregnancy in the greater Sacramento area. The center's licensed Sac



Destiny Robbins is joined on stage by her counselor and son as she speaks about how the Sacramento Life Center helped her continue her pregnancy. She spoke at the Salute to Life Dinner, which raised \$350,000 for the nonprofit's free counseling and medical services.

Valley Pregnancy Clinic includes a primary clinic and two mobile clinics, all providing free services including well woman exams, pregnancy tests, STD tests, ultrasounds, counseling for men and women, education and resource referrals. The Sacramento Life Center also offers a school-based teen education program,

a 24-hour hotline and a program for women seeking support after having an abortion.

For more information about the Sacramento Life Center's Sac Valley Pregnancy Clinic, visit www.svpclinic.com. For more information about the Sacramento Life Center: www.saclife.org. ★

The CHP Needs Your Assistance in Locating a Hit and Run Driver and Vehicle

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On December 16, 2013 at approximately 6:22 a.m., Robert Neal Ivey, a 53 year old male from Carmichael, was riding a blue 1993 Honda Goldwing motorcycle on westbound I-80 west of West El Camino Avenue in the #1 lane at an unknown speed.

Due to a traffic collision just west of the motorcycle's location traffic slowed abruptly. Ivey applied the motorcycle's brakes due to slower moving traffic at which point he lost control of his motorcycle and struck the roadway.

The motorcycle continued in a westerly direction and came to



rest blocking the #2 lane of westbound I-80. Ivey was ejected from the motorcycle and came to rest in the #2 lane east of the motorcycle. While lying in the #2 lane Ivey was struck by a passing vehicle which caused fatal injuries.

At this time, the only information we have on the vehicle that struck Ivey is that it is a large profile vehicle. This vehicle could possibly be a tractor

trailer or box truck type vehicle with a considerable amount of weight. It is possible that the driver of this vehicle is unaware that they ran over Ivey. There were no other injuries in this collision and this collision is still under investigation.

If you have any information or witnessed this collision, please contact the California Highway Patrol North Sacramento office.

CHP North Sacramento Area business phone number of (916) 338-6710, Monday through Friday 8:00 to 5:00 p.m. After hours, or if urgent, please contact him by cell at (916) 284-2727. ★

Holiday Travelers Ready To Go!

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - With only one week to go for the busiest holiday travel of the year, Californians are expected to stretch their budgets and take to the roads, rails, and skies to celebrate with family and friends, according to the latest travel survey from AAA Northern California.

AAA predicts more than 11.7 million Californians are expected to travel, during this end of the year holiday season, representing an overall increase of 0.5 percent compared to 2012.

"This year's increase in travel is due in part to the longer holiday travel period that covers two weekends," said AAA spokesperson Cynthia Harris. "This enables families to travel for a longer period of time to destinations that are further away."

AAA estimates more than 10.4 million Californians traveling during Christmas and New Year's will choose to drive to their

holiday destinations, representing a 1.1 percent increase compared to last year. The air travel industry will experience a decrease this year as slightly more than 900,000 Californians expected to fly, a drop of -2.6 percent compared to 2012. Approximately 365,000 state residents are expected to travel by other modes of transportation, such as boats or trains. This represents a 7.8 percent decrease compared to last year.

Nationally, AAA projects 94 million people will travel 50 miles or more during the holiday festivities. That's a 0.6 percent increase compared to last year.

Family travel constitutes 13 percent of total travelers during the year-end holidays. An average West Coast family of four will save money by staying with friends and family, with overall expenditures of \$812. An average West Coast road trip will consist of approximately 750 miles.

AAA Three Diamond lodgings are expected to increase by 1 percent, costing an average \$138 per night, while AAA Two Diamond lodgings are expected to pay an average of \$102, a slight decrease from last year. Weekend car rental rates will average \$63 per rental, compared to \$55 per last year.

Californians who take to the skies during this holiday season will pay an average price of \$199 per round trip ticket for the top U.S. air routes. This represents a decrease of 1.4 percent from last year.

AAA's projections are based on research conducted by IHS Global Insight. The Boston-based economic research and consulting firm teamed with AAA earlier this year as part of an agreement to jointly analyze travel trends during the major holidays. AAA has been reporting on holiday travel trends for more than two decades. ★

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Merry Christmas

FROM

We Wish All Our Readers A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Carmichael Times

"Written by the people and for the people"
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Publisher, Paul V. Scholl

Publisher's Statement: It is the intent of the Carmichael Times to strive for an objective point of view in the reporting of news and events. We consider our Editorial and Opinion pages to be a public forum for our readers. It is understood that the opinions expressed on these pages are those of the authors and cartoonists and are not necessarily the opinions of the publisher or our contributors.

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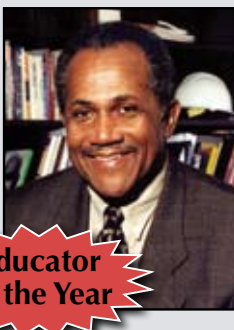
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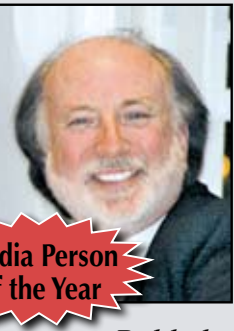
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Tea For Ten...



Bon appetite. Ladies from the Bayside Church (Granite Bay) took tea in a member's Carmichael home. The all-age Bible study group celebrated harvest festival with English-style high tea and a cornucopia of scones, eclairs and cucumber sandwiches. Picture by Susan Maxwell Skinner.

Food Network's "Cupcake Wars" Winner Shares Tips for Holiday Desserts

If there's one downside to fabulous, food-filled holiday celebrations, it's the gurgles and groans of post-feasting indigestion.

"We assume it's because we overate, but for a lot of people, that pain and sick feeling may not be about how much you ate but what you ate," says Kyra Bussanich, (www.kyrasbakeshop.com), three-time winner of The Food Network's "Cupcake Wars" and author of a just-released recipe book, *Sweet Cravings: 50 Seductive Desserts for a Gluten-Free Lifestyle*.

"About 2 million Americans have celiac disease – an autoimmune reaction to gluten, the protein in wheat," says Bussanich, whose painful symptoms became life-threatening before she was finally diagnosed with the illness. "Most of those people aren't diagnosed though, because the symptoms look like so many other intestinal ailments."

People with celiac disease must completely avoid gluten, which is also in rye, and barley, to avoid a case of painful and gut-damaging indigestion. But, as Harvard Medical School reported earlier this year, avoiding gluten also appears to help people with less serious digestive issues.

"It really does seem to provide some improvement in gastrointestinal problems for a segment of the population," says Harvard assistant professor Dr. Daniel Leffler.

For Bussanich, a chef, there was no choice: One speck of gluten would make her ill. But she refused to give up pastries, cakes and other treats, so she perfected gluten-free varieties. Her award-winning desserts left their flour-based competition in crumbs on "Cupcakes Wars" in 2011 and 2012, and she was a runner-up on the show's "Cupcake Champion."

Bussanich offers these tips for whipping up gluten-free baked goods this holiday season:

- If you're following a recipe, don't substitute the listed flour or



starch with another type unless you're familiar with its properties. There are many different types of gluten-free flours and starches, including millet, sorghum and sweet white rice flour, and potato and tapioca starches. Each has its own idiosyncrasies. For example, millet flour has a slightly nutty flavor and is well-suited for goods with a hearty texture. Sweet white rice flour holds moisture well and is good for recipes that have a slight gumminess to them. Potato starch is light and good for fluffy cakes.

- Use eggs and butter at room temperature. Eggs are often used as a binder, the protein that substitutes for the missing gluten. Eggs and butter are both easier to work with when used at room temperature, and room-temperature egg whites whip up fluffier. If you forget to pull the butter out of the refrigerator beforehand, heat it for 7 to 12 seconds in the microwave. Put cold eggs in warm (not hot) water for 30 to 60 seconds.

- Don't overwork batter and dough with xanthan gum in it. Corn-based xanthan gum is often used as a stabilizer and thickener in gluten-free baked goods, sauces, dressings and soups. Once this ingredient is added, overworking the dough can give it a slimy, gummy texture, and cause it to lose flavor. (A good

substitute for xanthan gum is ground psyllium seed husk.)

- Heat higher, cream longer for lighter cakes. One complaint people sometimes have about gluten-free baked goods is that they're too dense. To prevent this, try setting the oven temperature 25 degrees warmer than you would for flour. This will cause the butter in the recipe to release its water as steam, which helps the cake rise quickly. Also, cream eggs and butter together longer – about 10 minutes – than you would for flour cakes.

Try some gluten-free desserts and maybe your holidays will be indigestion-free this year, Bussanich says.

"If your recipe doesn't turn out wonderfully the first time, don't give up," she says. "I promise you, anyone can make delicious gluten-free desserts. It just may take a little practice." ★

Kyra Bussanich is a three-time winner of The Food Network's hit show, "Cupcake Wars." She graduated with honors from Le Cordon Bleu and opened her award-winning bakery, Kyra's Bake Shop, which features gourmet, gluten-free sweets. She has branched beyond desserts to other gluten-free goods in order to help those with celiac and other autoimmune diseases enjoy quality treats.

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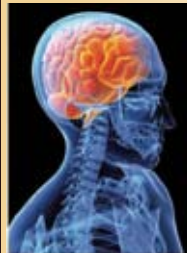
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Federal Judge Opens the Door to Polygamy

SALT LAKE CITY, UT (MPG) - This summer when the Supreme Court struck down the federal Defense of Marriage Act, Liberty Counsel warned that the decision would lead to polygamy and religious intolerance. Homosexual activists, such as the LGBT news magazine, the Advocate, called Liberty Counsel's warning "erroneous" and "hyperbolic." Just six short months later, that warning has become prophetic.

On Friday, a federal judge ruled that key parts of Utah's polygamy laws are unconstitutional, violating the free exercise of religion. Kody Brown and his four wives, on the TLC reality show Sister Wives, and other Mormons filed suit in July 2011 and then left Utah for Las Vegas.

It took Utah nearly 50 years to be admitted to the Union. The

reason for the delay was polygamy. The Republican Party, which advocated natural family, said in its 1856 Party Platform that polygamy was "barbaric" and a "twin" of slavery. One of the conditions to admit Utah to the Union was that it ban polygamy and that such a ban be placed in its constitution. After Utah complied, it was admitted to the Union. Several other states in which polygamy was practiced were also required to ban polygamy as a condition to being admitted to the Union.

"We have warned of this slippery slope for years," said Mat Staver, Founder and Chairman of Liberty Counsel. "If marriage is deconstructed to include people of the same sex, then there is no logical or legal argument to ban polygamy or polyamory. Same-sex marriage is the abolition of

marriage and will destroy the most basic foundation of family and civil society," Staver said.

"Marriage predates government and civil authorities. No legislative body or court has the authority to redefine marriage," says Mat Staver. "Marriage was not created by religion or government and is ontologically a union of one man and one woman. Deconstructing marriage will hurt children and society," concludes Staver. ★

Liberty Counsel is an international nonprofit, litigation, education, and policy organization dedicated to advancing religious freedom, the sanctity of life, and the family since 1989, by providing pro bono assistance and representation on these and related topics.

Hud Announces Nearly \$14.8 Million to Preserve Rental Assistance in Senior Housing Developments

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (MPG) - The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) today announced \$14.8 million to preserve affordable rental assistance for elderly tenants living in subsidized properties. This funding is provided through HUD's Senior Preservation Rental Assistance Contracts (SPRACs) and is targeted for properties in HUD's Section 202 "Supportive Housing for the Elderly" program where rental assistance may expire without this important preservation tool.

"The HUD Senior Preservation Rental Assistant Contracts are an important tool for preserving the nation's subsidized affordable senior properties," said HUD Regional Administrator Ophelia Basgal. "This funding will continue to support affordable rent

for seniors living in more than 700 units in six California developments. California's 731 units is 40 percent of the total of 1,716 units in six states receiving funding."

The Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Act of 2010 authorizes HUD to provide SPRACs with 20-year terms to prevent displacement of elderly residents of certain projects assisted under HUD's Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly program in the case of refinancing or recapitalization and to further preserve and maintain affordability of Section 202 Direct Loan projects. The purpose of SPRACs is to prevent displacement of income-eligible elderly residents of Section 202 Direct Loan properties with original interest rates of 6% or less in

the case of financing changes.

The majority of the mortgages in this portfolio of properties will reach their respective maturity dates over the next ten years. HUD estimates that without interventions like SPRACs, maturing mortgages will signal the elimination of affordability protections for approximately 19,000 low- and very-low income seniors.

HUD staff will provide guidance for completing the funding process so the subsidy can flow to the unassisted seniors at the projects. HUD's Multifamily Hub/Program Center Staff will oversee the execution of SPRAC contract and use agreement; will close any FHA financing; and will perform ongoing contract administration and servicing/monitoring of projects. ★

Sacramento County DA Reports

Recent cases of interest



CASE: Paul Anthony Harris (12/16/13)

PROSECUTOR: Deputy District Attorney Nancy Cochrane, Special Assault & Child Abuse Unit

District Attorney Jan Scully announced today that the Honorable Trena Burger-Plavan sentenced Paul Anthony Harris to 135 years to life in prison. On November 14, 2013, a jury convicted Harris of nine counts of lewd and lascivious conduct involving three young children.

Harris knew the children through their families. The molestations spanned a time period of almost five years. Deputy District Attorney Nancy Cochrane stated, "Hopefully, the three victims can continue their healing knowing that they and society are now protected from Mr. Harris."

CASE: Keith Williams (12/16/13)

PROSECUTOR: Deputy District Attorney Noah Phillips, Gangs & Hate Crimes Unit

District Attorney Jan Scully announced that Keith Williams was convicted by jury of first degree murder and that the special circumstances of lying in wait and committing the murder in furtherance of a street gang were found true. The jury also convicted Williams of attempted murder with premeditation on a separate victim.

On May 19, 2009, Williams, an active gang member, took part in a shooting which was precipitated by the exchange of gang signs.

Williams faces a maximum sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole. Sentencing is scheduled for January 17, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. in Department 11 before the Honorable Trena Burger-Plavan.

CASE: John Murdock Pierce (12/13/13)

PROSECUTOR: Deputy District Attorney Morgan Gire, Gangs & Hate Crimes Unit

District Attorney Jan Scully announced today that the Honorable Patrick Marlette sentenced John Murdock Pierce to 59 years to life in prison. On November 6, 2013, Judge Marlette convicted Pierce of first degree murder and personal use of a firearm as well as felony assault with a firearm, personal use of a firearm, and inflicting great bodily injury. Pierce was also found to be sane at the time of the crime.

On February 13, 2011, Pierce summoned his wife, their 11-year-old daughter and two young boys into the living room of their home. Pierce and his wife then began to argue and he attempted to tie her up. As she resisted, he struck her in the head with the pistol and accused her of plotting to kill him. She screamed for her daughter to call 911. As their daughter grabbed the phone to dial, Pierce shot his daughter in the arm. She and her mother then ran to the front door, but only the daughter was able to run outside to a neighbor's house for help.

Before the wife was able to exit the house, Pierce shot her in the back of the head, killing her. Pierce then disassembled his pistol and threw it out of the house as police surrounded the home.

Neighbors testified that Pierce had been acting strangely for a few days prior to the shooting and he was admitted into the jail's psychiatric unit after his arrest. He subsequently entered pleas of not guilty and not guilty by reason of insanity and presented evidence of a mental disorder.

CASE: Ricardo G. Jimenez (12/09/13)

PROSECUTOR: Deputy District Attorney Kelly L. Mulcahy, Insurance Fraud Unit

District Attorney Jan Scully announced today that 25-year-old Ricardo Jimenez pled guilty to all charges of felony evading an officer, insurance fraud and misdemeanor charges of hit and run and driving under the influence (DUI) with one prior.

On April 4, 2012, Jimenez met his mother for drinks in downtown Sacramento and consumed the equivalent of 16 mixed drinks in a period of four hours. After leaving the last bar, Jimenez had a minor traffic accident. He pretended to pull over to the side of the road to exchange information with the other driver, but then fled the scene and engaged in a high speed chase in an attempt to avoid a second DUI arrest. After running several stop signs and red lights, a Sacramento police officer took over the pursuit. Jimenez continued to drive in excess of 65 mph through downtown Sacramento. The pursuit ended when Jimenez went northbound on southbound 12th Street. The victim of the hit and run obtained Jimenez's license plate number and later identified Jimenez in a photo lineup.

In order to get his car repaired and escape arrest on the felony evading charge, Jimenez reported his car stolen to the Sacramento Police Department as well as his insurance company.

During the investigation by the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office, the Department of Insurance and Anchor General Insurance, it was determined that although Jimenez had a sober designated driver in the car with him at all times, it was Jimenez who drove while under the influence of alcohol and attempted to evade an officer.

Jimenez was sentenced by the Honorable Ernest Sawtelle to 365 days in the county jail and ordered to pay \$8,948 to Anchor General Insurance.

CASE: Danny Valine (12/06/13)

PROSECUTOR: Deputy District Attorney Leland Washington, Homicide Unit

District Attorney Jan Scully announced today that the Honorable Eugene Balonon sentenced Danny Valine to 40 years to life in prison. On October 30, 2013, a jury convicted Valine of second degree murder with arming enhancements in the shooting death and marijuana theft of 60-year-old Kelly McClurg.

In the early morning hours of October 27, 2012, Danny Valine and co-defendant Kailan James went to Mr. McClurg's Wilton home to steal 20 marijuana plants he was growing inside his home. Once on the property, Valine shot Mr. McClurg twice in the face and once in the heart with a sawed-off shotgun. James then collected the marijuana plants and escaped in a car with Valine.

Co-defendant James was convicted by a separate jury of first degree murder with a special circumstance and first degree robbery. He faces a potential sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole. His sentencing is scheduled for January 17, 2014.

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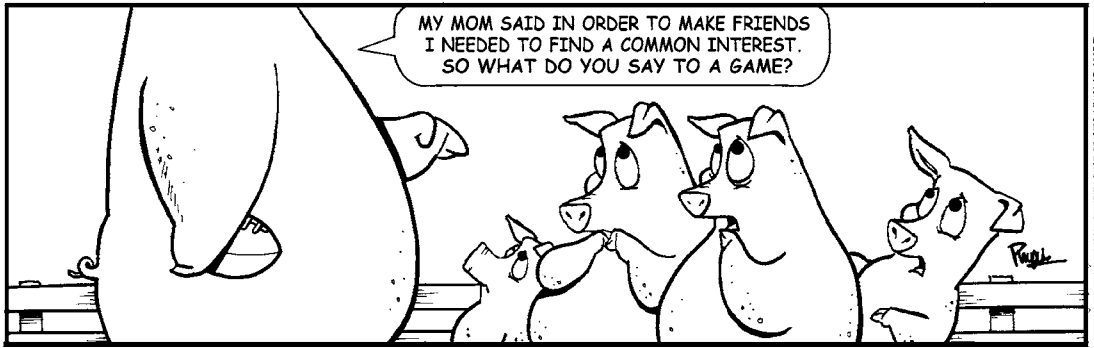
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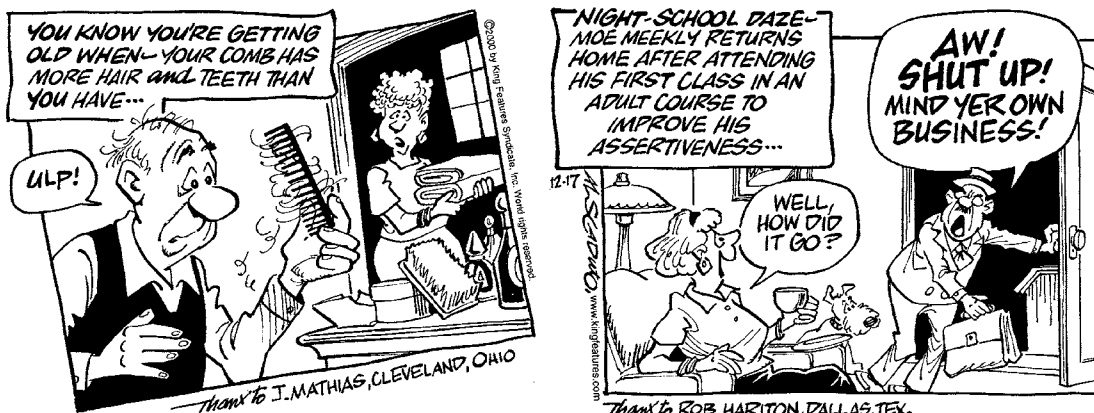
Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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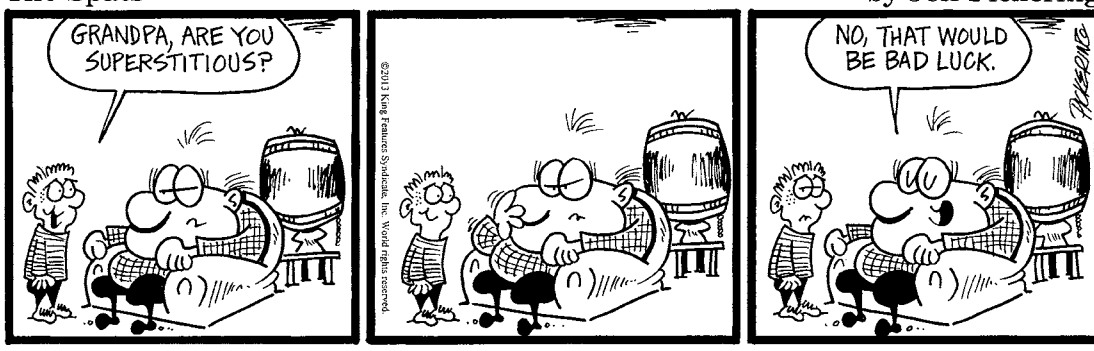
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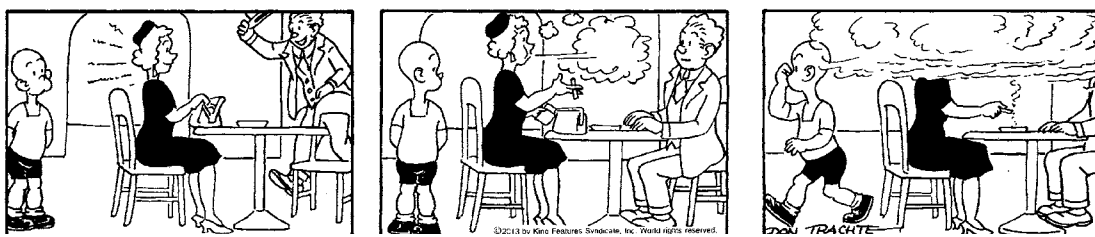
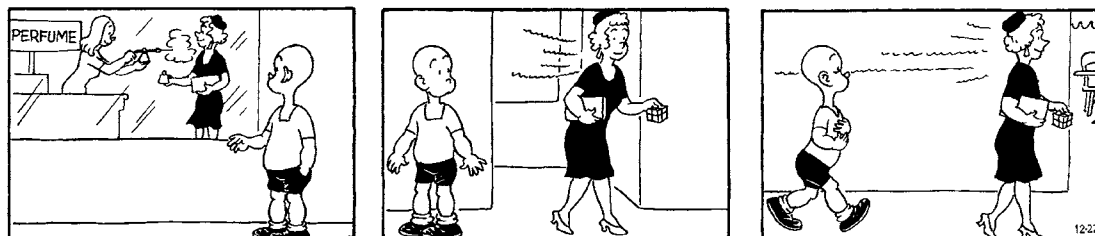
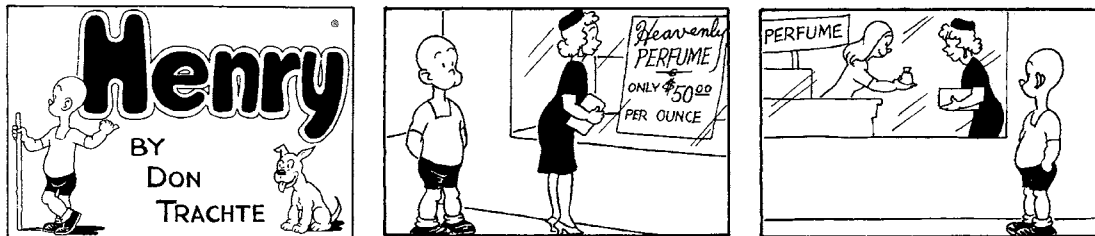
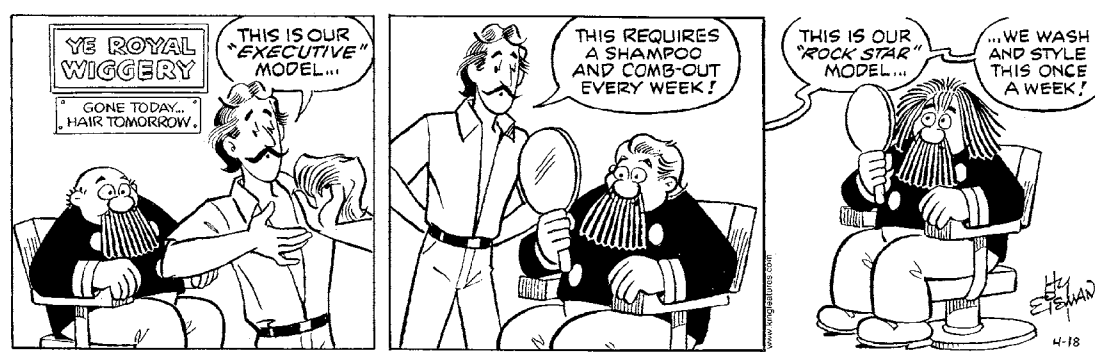
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Newsworthy Trends

The Pursuit Of Bliss: New Survey Reveals Americans' Thoughts On Bliss

(NAPS)—“Follow your bliss,” advised author and anthropologist Joseph Campbell, and “doors will open for you that wouldn't have opened for anyone else.”

So what's your bliss? A recent survey conducted by Harris Interactive and commissioned by Hanes Hosiery has discovered some intriguing facts and figures about what Americans consider to be bliss.

Bliss Defined

The survey explored the very meaning of bliss, asking which words Americans associate with bliss. The result? More Americans associate bliss with satisfaction than with ecstasy (55 percent vs. 40 percent, respectively). Is Brad Pitt the Key to Bliss in Hollywood? While everyone on the red carpet might appear blissful, Brad Pitt's current partner, Angelina Jolie, is considered to be the most blissful female celebrity by 19 percent of U.S. adults. Pitt's ex-wife, Jennifer Aniston, came in second, with 17 percent. The remaining female celebrities cited were Taylor Swift (14 percent), Jennifer Hudson (13 percent), Gwyneth Paltrow (13 percent), Adele (13 percent) and Jennifer Lawrence (9 percent). Is hitting the jackpot or hitting the town with friends more blissful? More find quality time with family and friends (60 percent) to be blissful than vacations (57 percent) or winning a lot of money (45 percent). Is downward dog the key to bliss? Many people find yoga blissful. Eighty-five percent of U.S. adults who do yoga to keep themselves fit agree that practicing yoga makes them feel blissful.

The survey also explored the topic of wellness and found that younger Americans want to take



A recent survey found 80 percent of women like hosiery to have a dual function: It makes them look great and feel good, too.

better care of themselves but don't have the time. Eighteen-to-44-year-olds (55 percent) are significantly more likely to agree with the statement “I want to take better care of myself but I don't have the time” than those ages 45 and over (34 percent).

The survey also found that wellness is an essential part of life for the vast majority (90 percent) of Americans. Manufacturers are responding by creating new lines of apparel that promote wellness. One example is a new line of hosiery called Hanes Silk Reflections Pure Bliss, a legwear collection where beauty and wellness meet innovation. Modern knitting technology, combined with luxury yarns, work to micromassage, pamper, soothe and revitalize legs. That could be blissful for the 80 percent of women ages 18 to 34 who like hosiery products to have a dual function (make them look good and feel good).

Learn More

For further information and full survey methodology, visit www.haneshosiery.com.

Feeding Your Feline: Common Cat Challenges

by Dana Watkins, M.S.,
Animal Nutrition

(NAPS) - As a nutritionist specializing in pet food, I receive countless questions about finding the right food for cats, especially those with dietary challenges.

Finicky Felines

It is important to note that finding the right food for your cat is a process. While the food must supply the required nutrients, to do so it has to be consumed. Cats often have personal preferences as to specific tastes and textures. My company, for example, offers five unique, dry cat foods and four artisan canned cat foods. They present a variety of ways to meet your cat's desires.

Canned vs. Dry

When it comes to delivering the right nutrients to your cat, dry or canned foods can achieve the same results. While dry food is often more cost effective, canned foods usually contain about 80 percent moisture, which can be beneficial if your cat needs more moisture intake.

Urinary Stones and Crystals

Often, cats have urinary tract problems caused by stones and crystals. Research suggests many factors involved in the cause and prevention of urinary tract issues. These include excessive amounts of poor-quality nutrients, individual metabolism, water consumption, urine pH, incorrect mineral balance and, according to one



It's a healthy idea to keep your cat well hydrated.

new study, stress. In any case, however, since some cats do not drink adequate amounts of water, increasing water consumption can help.

Increasing water consumption will increase the frequency of urination and help dilute the solid portion of the urine, making it more difficult for stones and crystals to be formed.

Ways to increase water consumption include:

- Leave a faucet dripping that cats have access to.
- Use two or three recirculating or waterfall-type watering bowls.

- Feed canned foods either as a meal or as a topper three or four times per week.

- Add water to the dry food.

- Use small ice cubes as treats.

- Mr. Watkins is the on-site nutritionist and technical services specialist at Fromm Family Foods, a fourth-generation, family-owned company specializing in premium dog and cat nutrition.

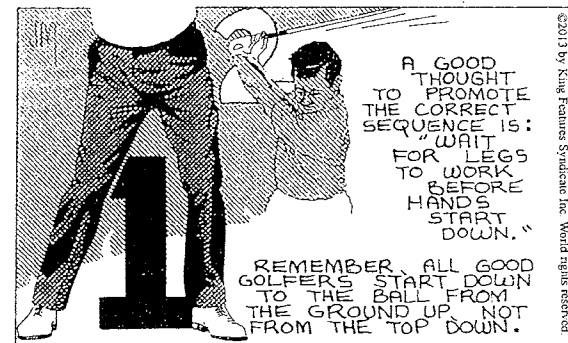
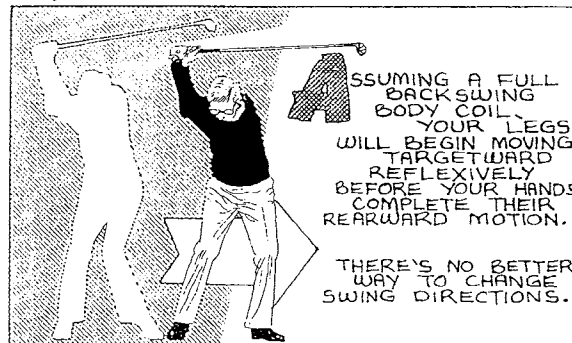
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LEO (July 23 to August 22)

Before you pounce on that shiny new opportunity, take more time to check it out to see how much substance actually lies beneath all that glitter. A family member has important news.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22)

A personal situation you thought was resolved resurfaces, thanks to a possibly well-intentioned move that went awry. Deal with it as soon as possible. Accept the help of a trusted friend.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22)

That goal you set way back when is finally in sight. Maintain your focus on achieving it, and don't allow yourself to be distracted by unimportant demands for your attention.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21)

A temperamental flare-up creates negative feelings that need to be dealt with immediately. But things once again go well after the apologies are made and hurt feelings are soothed.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19)

You might be busier than you had expected right now. But between the socializing rounds and the workplace tasks, there are opportunities for special moments with that certain someone.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20)

Your creative approach leads to a quicker-than-expected solution to a workplace problem. Now you can devote more time to that proposal you hope to introduce by midmonth.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20)

Technological glitches create problems early on. But by midweek, all runs smoothly once again, and you're well and truly on your way to meeting all your deadlines.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22)

Your energy levels are high, and you feel you can handle everything that comes along. But try to take a break from your hectic pace for some quiet time with someone close to you.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21)

An early impulsive act causes confusion. But all is smoothed over once explanations are made. Expect a friend or family member to ask for your kind and always wise advice.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19)

You might have to do some juggling of your priorities, as a personal matter appears to require more time and attention. Put your pride aside and accept help from those who offer it.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18)

Your creative aspect is strong. Not only does it help you accomplish your goals, but it also inspires others. This could lead to a potentially rewarding collaboration opportunity.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20)

Be careful about making major decisions when you're not really committed to them. And resist any pressure to do otherwise. Better to delay action until all doubts are resolved.

BORN THIS WEEK: You set goals and are rarely distracted by any attempt to move you off the path you've chosen to reach them.

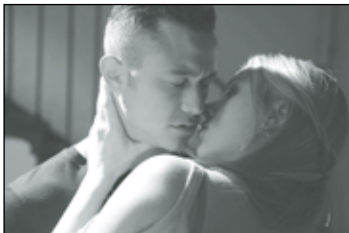
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COUCH THEATER -- DVD PREVIEW

By Sam Struckhoff
 EDITOR'S NOTE: DVDs reviewed in this column will be available in stores the week of Dec. 30, 2013.

PICKS OF THE WEEK



Joseph Gordon Levitt, Scarlett Johansson in "Don Jon"

"Don Jon" (R) -- Jon Martello (Joseph Gordon Levitt) is as buff and tan as he is shallow and vain. The loud-mouthed young man is dubbed "Don Jon" by his friends for his abilities to seduce pretty ladies every weekend. He's finally challenged by a gorgeous gal (Scarlett Johansson) who won't "give it up" on the first date. You may think an adorable relationship is blossoming, but they have to get over their respective media delusions: She wants the saccharine romance of terrible romcoms, and he's addicted to adult entertainment.

This is the directorial debut for Joseph Gordon Levitt -- who also wrote the script and took the title role. He's shown himself to be a capable commander in the director's chair. There is plenty to dislike about the lead roles, but they somehow come across as charming human beings.

"Last Love" (NR) -- Mr. Morgan (Michael Caine) is a crusty old American philosophy professor lamenting his golden years alone in Paris. His hobbies include being alone and talking to his deceased wife. In a chance meeting on a crowded bus, he meets Pauline

(Clemence Poesy), an adorable dance instructor who helps Mr. Morgan come to grips with this phase of his life. Add two unaffectionate adult children, and the late-in-life romance is completed with a touch of family drama.

It's hard to say if much happens in the nearly two-hour-long runtime of the film. While Caine, Poesy and the adult children (Michael Kirk and Gillian Anderson) deliver decent performances, the story doesn't supply enough drama for the relationships to shine.

"Sweetwater" (R) -- In a sun-scorched corner of the Wild West, the dullest revenge story ever told slowly unwraps. Sarah (January Jones of TV's "Mad Men") is a reformed prostitute living the frontier life. A local preacher (Jason Isaacs) -- crooked as they come -- commands the town's thugs to carry out his will. The best part of the film is the underutilized Ed Harris, playing an eccentric lawman investigating the preacher. For a rootin' tootin' shootin' good time, do not hitch your wagon to this lame horse.

"CBGB" (R) -- How can a movie about the cradle of American punk rock be so sweet and tame? That's the problem in this low-volume tribute to the NYC bar where many an act -- including The Ramones and Blondie -- tuned their guitars and blew minds. Alan Rickman delivers an underwhelming performance as the bar's proprietor. The majority of the film involves semi-famous young actors portraying famous music acts, with little edge or insight. Yep, those guys sure are dressed up like The Ramones. The final nail in the coffin is the music scenes -- all of the performances are lip-synched to famous recordings, destroying any illusion of energetic live performances.

TV RELEASES
 "Perry Mason Movie Collection Volume 1"
 "Wolfblood: Season 1"
 "WWE: Best Pay-Per-View Matches 2013"
 "Watercolor Techniques -- Wet Glazing"

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• It might be hard to get motivated to exercise with winter's shorter days and lower temperatures. Exercise is important to your health, so get it any way you can. Did you know that a half-hour snowball fight can burn 100 calories? Get out there and enjoy the winter weather! -- JoAnn

• If you face frequent snow in your area, invest in a pair of running shoes that are designed for trail running. They have deeper cleats for better traction. Some are even waterproof. This will encourage you to run when it's been snowing!

• "To help your sneakers dry faster, remove the laces and sock liner and hang separately. Stuff them with newspaper to draw out moisture. Hang them to dry on a sturdy hook or line, but not too close to a heater, as it's possible to break down the support materials that way." -- E.D. in Minnesota

• "If you are outdoors on freezing days, you know to dress in layers. When you exercise outside, you do that too, but be prepared to strip off a layer if you get overheated. I have a carabiner clip on my waistband, and I can clip my outer light jacket to it, or even my fleece through a button-hole." -- P.S. in Virginia

• "Here's a tip about sledding in a pinch: A laundry basket can make a fine sled for a small, sturdy kid -- especially if you are blessed with surprise snow! If you attach a rope or belt to one side of the basket, it's easy to pull the kids along." -- M.B. in Missouri

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475 or e-mail JoAnn at heresatip@yahoo.com.

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Birding Bits BY Cindy Brook

Birding by Season
 Winter was filled with migrating sparrows, catbirds, goldfinches and robins. Spring was filled with cowbirds, wrens, titmice and woodpeckers. Babies, babies everywhere in the summer. Fall has red-winged blackbirds, crows and blue jays. My yard is always filled, and so is my heart. Happy New Year, everyone!
 E-mail: birdingbits@cftr.com

Mulch protects against chilling temperatures and the repeated freezing and thawing of soil that causes plants to "heave" out of the ground. Mulching needs to be done after the ground starts to freeze but before the first significant snowfall of the year. If you mulch sooner, mice and other rodents may nest in the mulch, and plants may not be completely dormant.

- Brenda Weaver
 Source: pss.uvm.edu

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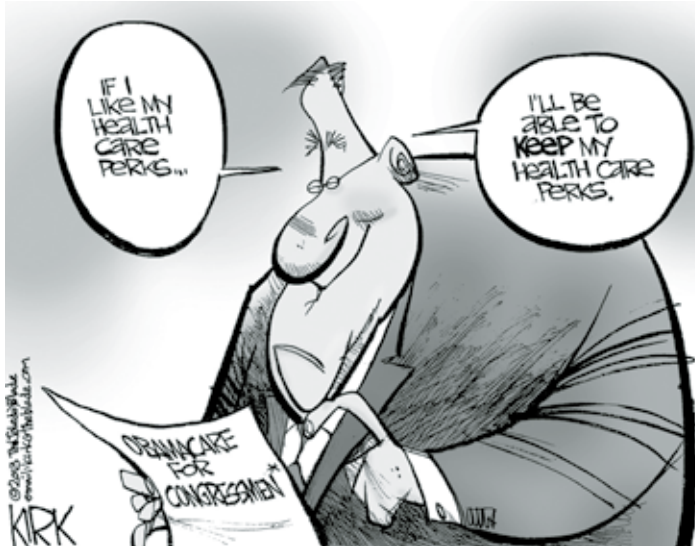
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THE RICH LOWRY COLUMN
By Rich Lowry

A Manufactured ADHD Epidemic

If at any time while reading this article your attention wanders, you may have ADHD. If you pause to check your email sometime during the next three paragraphs, you should consult a doctor. If you fail to read this article all the way to the end, you should get on Adderall, Ritalin or some other drug to treat your condition as soon as possible.

This isn't quite the standard for diagnosing attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, but it's close. The New York Times ran a long exposé on how the drug industry has stoked the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD that had a revelatory quote from Keith Conners, a doctor who has long advocated for the recognition of the disorder. Conners called the overdiagnosis

of ADHD "a national disaster of dangerous proportions," telling the Times that the rising number of cases "is a concoction to justify the giving out of medication at unprecedented and unjustifiable levels." This isn't bomb-throwing from an outsider, but a critique from the namesake of the Conners ratings scale widely used to evaluate kids for ADHD.

There is no doubt that ADHD is a legitimate neurological condition that makes kids (and those around them) miserable, that blights their potential and that can be alleviated by prescription stimulants like Adderall and Ritalin. There also is no doubt that diagnosis and treatment of the disorder has run wildly out of control. According to the forthcoming book "The ADHD Explosion," 19 percent of high-school-aged males have received a diagnosis. The numbers differ from state to state. In North Carolina, an astounding 30 percent of boys over age 9 are supposedly suffering from ADHD. Overall, 6 percent of children and adolescents in the United States are on drugs to treat ADHD.

It's a wonder more kids aren't diagnosed with it, given the overlap between the description of the disorder and failings to which we are all prone. The New York Times points out that the American Psychiatric Association criteria for ADHD include "often has

difficulty waiting his or her turn" and "makes careless mistakes," hardly rare childhood behaviors.

The drug companies -- for whom ADHD is a \$9 billion-a-year business -- target mothers with alluring ads suggesting their children will become little angels through the wonders of risk-free stimulants. Their kids will get better grades, spend more quality time with the family and remember to take out the trash. Who wouldn't want their child thus magically transformed? According to the Times report, the Food and Drug Administration has constantly rebuked the companies for going beyond the evidence in selling visions of childhood Valhalla secured through the right drug.

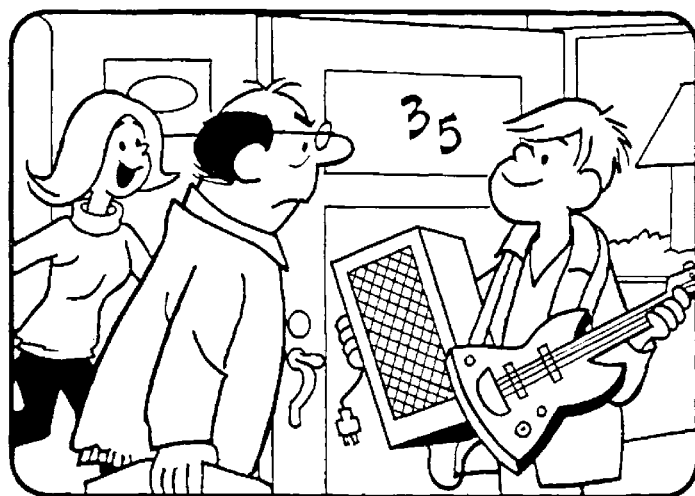
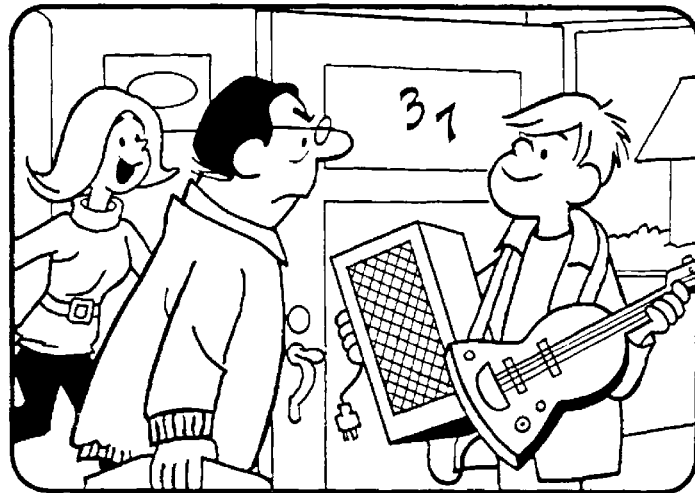
Undertrained primary-care physicians and worried parents default much too often to the diagnosis of ADHD and to the answer of a prescription. The next frontier is adult ADHD, with the promise of a vast new pharmaceutical market made up of people deprived of ADHD diagnoses when they were children. Some of these diagnoses will be warranted and life-changing, but others will be overreach prompted by vague and dubious symptoms, like inattentive op-ed reading.

Sure, you got to the end of this article. But how about the next one?

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTIKOFF



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Vote to Eliminate Costly Security Deposits Removes Burden for California Startups



SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - George Runner today hailed a 5-0 Board of Equalization vote to end the sweeping security deposit requirements automatically imposed on new California corporations and LLCs.

"Since being elected to BOE three years ago, ending this onerous practice has been my top priority," said Runner. "It's challenging enough starting a new business in California. Forcing new business owners to turn over up to \$50,000 of their money does nothing to help them succeed, nor has it proven cost-effective for the state."

"NFIB commends George Runner for spearheading today's vote to end a long-time California practice of forcing certain small businesses to hand over tens of thousands of dollars to the state to ensure that they will pay future taxes," said National Federation of Independent Business/California Executive Director John Kabateck. "This money is capital that is desperately needed

to help new businesses stay solvent and grow, but California was choosing to penalize businesses before taxes were even owed. Now those small businesses can focus on what is critically needed in this state—creating jobs for the nearly two million unemployed."

The Board action immediately suspends automatic security requirements for corporations and limited liability companies registering with BOE. Going forward, the Board will require security only when a business has a history of non-payment or poses a high compliance risk. The required security amount typically equals half a year's worth of taxes and ranges from \$2,000 to \$50,000 per company.

In addition the Board will review and release much of the security currently held in the form of cash and liquid deposits, surety bonds and personal guarantees.

"This is welcome holiday news for thousands of California small businesses," said Runner. "The state currently holds security belonging to more than 15,000 taxpayers and valued at nearly \$300 million. We expect more than half of this amount will be released to taxpayers, boosting California's economy and jobs."

Of the nearly \$300 million in security on deposit with the state, more than \$67 million is held in the form of cash and other liquid deposits, like certificates of

deposit. The remaining \$228 million consist of surety bonds and personal guarantees.

BOE staff plan to review security on hand to determine which deposits will be subject to release. They expect to begin releasing deposits to business owners in February 2014.

According to the staff recommendation, returned funds will provide "taxpayers with additional capital for their business operations and the economy." The funds have not been booked as revenue and are not subject to the state budget process.

Runner noted that eliminating security deposit requirements could encourage voluntary compliance as more businesses register and report taxes to the state. In addition, staff time and resources involved in the Board's security program will be redirected to more productive activities.

Most states do not impose automatic security requirements. In fact, California's requirements were among some of the most sweeping in the nation and have caught many new business owners by surprise. ★

Elected in November 2010, George Runner represents more than nine million Californians as a member of the State Board of Equalization. For more information, visit www.boe.ca.gov/Runner.

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If You Like Your Snow, You Can Keep Your Snow. Please!

This week I got a couple Christmas cards from some relatives who live up north. All of them had pictures of snow.

Watching the weather reports this week I knew many of them were having snowstorms and I chuckled to myself thinking about it. In one Christmas card, was the familiar title, "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas." Then at the bottom of the card, they scribbled, "Don't you miss all the snow this time of the year?" Then they drew a series of smiley faces.

I smiled and for a few moments, one brief moment, I

did miss all that snow.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage saw me smiling and asked, "Who sent the Christmas cards?"

I told her who the cards were from and added, "They think we miss all that snow." We then shared a hearty laugh together and went about our own business.

I just could not get it out of my mind. Did I miss all that snow? What a question.

I put my thinking machine in gear and began processing the Christmases we celebrated up north where there was plenty of

snow. As I begin thinking, I did begin missing all that snow.

At times, we forget some details of our memories and only think of the positive and good aspects. Do not get me wrong. Snow looks wonderful on a Christmas card. I do not mind watching a TV program where plenty of snow is falling and people are singing Christmas carols. I rather enjoy it in those venues.

The question is, did I miss all that snow?

My answer goes something like this. Yes, I do miss all that snow! Furthermore, I plan to miss all

that snow for the rest of my life.

The basic reason I moved to Florida when I did was that I do not like snow. I like looking at snow on a Christmas card but I do not like looking at snow through my car window.

It is not so much that I do not like driving in snow; it is the other idiots coming at me who do not know how to drive in snow and do not know how to stay in their own lane.

I remember the last time I did any driving in snow I ended up almost a complete nervous wreck. People drive in snow as

though they do not know how to drive in snow.

Yes, I do miss the snow, and the cold and being snowed in, did I mention the cold. I do miss all that and I plan to miss it the rest of my life. Period. Some things you can live without and as far as I am concerned this is one.

To all those who love snow and cannot get enough of it, please enjoy it this year for me because I do not plan to.

God said to Job, "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? Or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail?" (Job 38:22).

When God was trying to get Job to see is that no matter what your circumstances are, that is not the end. Look beyond your problems and difficulties and see the hand of God who created all things and then called them "good." In every circumstance you will find some treasure of God's amazing grace. ★

Rev. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, PO Box 831313, Ocala, FL 34483. e-mail jamestryder2@att.net. or sis web site is www.jamestryderministries.com.

SPECIAL ADVERTORIAL

U.S. residents set to get new infrared heaters to save up to 50% on heating bills for only \$159 and free shipping

Compared to the Suggested Retail Price of \$399.95 this is a great opportunity for our residents to own one of the highest quality, energy saving, cool-to-the-touch, portable infrared heaters available today, and stop spending a fortune on heating bills. The first 785 callers who beat the 48-hour deadline are getting these money saving portable infrared heaters.



■ **Simply Plug it in:** Saving money on heating bills is very easy with an iHeater infrared heater. Today's distribution is intended to help those in need of keeping warm this winter without spending too much on heating bills.

If you or a loved one has difficulty paying for heating bills, then this distribution of brand new portable infrared heaters is your chance to make life a little easier. These infrared heaters warm the room evenly and efficiently without drying out the air. They never get hot to the touch, like other heaters, so they are safe for pets and children.

These revolutionary infrared heaters are changing the lives for many that find it difficult to pay for the high cost of heating a home. Infrared heat warms in a way similar to the warmth we feel from the sun, it's been described by many as "bone warming" heat. It is completely safe and does not deplete oxygen from the air, which would make you tired, nor dry out the air, which irritates your skin. The iHeater brand is said to be the most sought after brand of infrared heaters. iHeaters have been selling strong for many years, they have in-house customer service located in Indianapolis, Indiana. The iHeater infrared heating elements are backed by a lifetime warranty and don't burn out, like other low-end brands of infrared heaters that use bulbs.

Similar infrared heaters of this quality are expensive, the suggested retail on this unit is \$399.95, but state residents are being urged to call the Toll Free hotline listed below because the first 785 callers who beat the 48-hour deadline will be able to claim one of these infrared iHeaters and have it delivered directly to their door for only \$159 and the shipping is free. This is an extraordinary opportunity for those in need of help on winter heating bills. "We're preparing ourselves for all the calls because a program like this, for a new infrared heater of this quality, has never been released before. So if the lines are busy, keep trying. We'll answer every call in the order they are received" Brinkman said.

Call toll free:
1-800-921-5970



The Toll Free Distribution Hotlines open at 9:00 am this morning for US residents only. You must be one of the first 785 callers who beat the 48-hour deadline to have your infrared heater delivered to your door for only \$159 and free shipping. (retail: \$399.95)

Union Gospel Mission Sacramento



For more than 50 years, Union Gospel Mission has been serving Sacramento's homeless with shelter, meals, clothing, a rehabilitation program and a life-changing Gospel message. Founded in 1962 by concerned Christians for men in need, the Mission now serves women and children, too, and is an amazing testament to the good that comes with committed volunteers, inspired leadership and the community's support.

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Target's Data Security Breach and What You Can Do

From ConsumerAction.org

In light of the recent news about Target's data security breach, Consumer Action, the National Consumer Law Center and U.S. PIRG remind consumers that:

1. Your liability for fraudulent charges is limited under federal law.

Credit Cards: Under federal law, your responsibility for unauthorized credit card charges is limited to \$50, and in some cases would be \$0.

Debit Cards: Your responsibility for debit card fraud charges is a bit more:

- \$50 if you notify the bank within 2 days.
- Up to \$500 afterwards.
- Unlimited if you fail to report the fraud charges within 60 days after you receive your bank statement.

Also, since the money to pay the debit card comes directly out of your bank account, you won't be able to use that money until the fraud charge is reversed.

Both VISA and MasterCard have "zero liability" policies that limit your losses to \$0, but these are voluntary policies.

Finally, when you contact your credit card company, don't pay a fee to receive a replacement card — even during the holiday shopping season. Ask the issuer to waive the expedited fee to send a replacement card.

2. Check your credit report, but don't panic.

If you are worried that a security breach has made you a target of identity theft, check your credit report - it's always a good idea to do that regularly. But theft of a credit card number is unlikely to lead to the thief opening new accounts. That's because the key piece of information needed for "new account" ID theft—your Social Security Number—is not part of the credit card data.

3. Don't pay for expensive credit monitoring or fraud detection services.

You can check your credit report for free once a year using www.annualcreditreport.com—no need to pay for a monthly service.

As for fraud detection services, some of them have been known to do questionable things. For example, one of these companies, LifeLock, paid \$11 million to the Federal Trade Commission in 2010 to settle charges that it used false claims to promote its identity theft protection services.

4. The strongest prevention against ID theft after a breach is a security freeze.

A security freeze prevents your credit report from being shared with potential new creditors. If your credit files are frozen, a thief will probably not be able to get credit in your name. You have a right to place a security freeze on your credit report under the law in

most states, and freezes are available to residents of all 50 states.

In addition to the advice above, advocates questioned whether Target has been in compliance with state laws that require consumers to be notified when there is a security breach.

Since 1969, the nonprofit National Consumer Law Center® (NCLC®) has used its expertise in consumer law and energy policy to work for consumer justice and economic security for low-income and other disadvantaged people, including older adults, in the United States. www.nclc.org

U.S. PIRG, the federation of state Public Interest Research Groups, is a consumer group that stands up to powerful interests whenever they threaten our health and safety, our financial security, or our right to fully participate in our democratic society. www.uspirg.org

Consumer Action has been a champion of underrepresented consumers since 1971. A national, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, Consumer Action focuses on financial education that empowers low to moderate income and limited-English-speaking consumers to financially prosper. It also advocates for consumers in the media and before lawmakers to advance consumer rights and promote industry-wide change particularly in the fields of credit, banking, housing, privacy, insurance and utilities. www.consumer-action.org ★

Two Ways to Get Your Medicare Benefits



By David Sayen

Some people may not realize it, but there are actually two ways to get Medicare benefits.

The best-known way is Original Medicare. With Original Medicare, you can choose any doctor, hospital, or other health-care provider you want, as long as they accept Medicare. When you receive medical services or goods, Medicare pays the provider directly.

The other way is Medicare Advantage, which is a form of managed care, like an HMO or PPO. Medicare Advantage is provided by private insurance companies approved by Medicare. If you're in Medicare Advantage, you generally must go to doctors and other providers in the company's network.

If you go outside the network, you may have to pay more.

On the other hand, Medicare Advantage companies may offer some coverage — such as dental, hearing, vision, and wellness programs — that Original Medicare doesn't.

Most people with Original Medicare pay a monthly premium. If you're in Medicare Advantage, you sometimes pay an additional monthly premium

to the private insurance company that covers you.

With Original Medicare, you must pay deductibles, co-pays, and coinsurance.

To cover these "gaps" in Medicare, some people buy a type of supplemental insurance called Medigap. If you have a Medigap policy, Medicare pays its share of the covered costs, and then your Medigap policy pays its share.

Medigap policies also are sold through private companies. All plans offer the same basic benefits but some offer additional benefits. The costs vary between insurance companies — and often cost is the only difference between policies. Some Medigap policies also offer benefits that Original Medicare doesn't, such as medical care when you travel outside the United States.

Original Medicare generally doesn't cover prescription drugs. If you want drug coverage, you can get it through Medicare Part D. Part D policies are sold through private companies approved by Medicare. You have to pay an additional monthly premium for Part D.

About 75 percent of Medicare beneficiaries choose Original Medicare, with the rest getting coverage through Medicare Advantage.

Medicare Advantage companies must cover all of the services that Original Medicare covers, except hospice care and some care in qualifying clinical research studies. (Original Medicare covers hospice and qualifying clinical research care even if you're in a Medicare Advantage plan.)

In all types of Medicare

Advantage plans, you're covered for emergency and urgent care. Most Medicare Advantage plans also include prescription drug coverage.

But the plans can charge different out-of-pocket amounts and they have different rules for how you get service.

For example, you may need a referral to see a specialist. And you may need to stay in their provider network, unless you're willing to pay more to go outside the network.

You should always check with the plan before you get a service to find out whether it's covered and what your costs may be. If the plan decides to stop participating in Medicare, you'll have to join another Medicare health plan or return to Original Medicare.

How can you decide whether Original Medicare or Medicare Advantage is better for you?

There's a more detailed explanation of the differences between Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage in the "Medicare & You" handbook. An updated version of "Medicare & You" is mailed to all Medicare beneficiaries every fall.

You can also find "Medicare & You" on the website, www.Medicare.gov. If you have any questions, you can always call Medicare's toll-free number, 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

David Sayen is Medicare's regional administrator for Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, and the Pacific Territories. ★

Source: U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

Watt @ US-50 Interchange Construction Project

County Modifying Traffic Signals & Lanes to Improve Traffic Flow

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Department of Transportation (SACDOT) is making changes to the lanes and signal timing to improve traffic flow as construction moves forward on the Watt Avenue @ US-50 interchange. This is an active construction zone with 90,000 cars per day driving through the site, and at times construction activities will lead to traffic delays.

The recent reconfiguration of US-50 off-ramps and the installation of new traffic signals on Watt Avenue caused an increase in congestion throughout the interchange last Monday. To improve the flow of vehicles, additional lanes on Watt Avenue were opened up to traffic and timing adjustments were made to the traffic signals. These changes have improved traffic conditions such that the congestion and delay problems experienced on Monday have been solved and traffic conditions have returned

to normal. SACDOT staff is taking the following measures to improve the flow of traffic through the interchange:

• Traffic Signal Timing: Each day since Monday (12-16-13) traffic signal adjustments have been made to the new Watt Avenue traffic signals to improve traffic flow. SACDOT will continue to closely monitor traffic flows and make additional adjustments as appropriate.

• Additional Traffic Lanes: In early January, an additional traffic lane will be opened on northbound Watt Avenue and a third right turn lane will be opened on the westbound off-ramp. This additional capacity will also improve the flow of traffic through the interchange.

Motorists are advised to reduce speed and drive carefully through the interchange as construction activities, signal adjustments and lane openings continue.

It is important to note that the

configuration of the interchange today is not the final result. Significant improvements have been implemented this week to reduce delays and SACDOT will continue to make further improvements in the next few weeks. In the coming months, the completed interchange project will result in a significant reduction in overall delay through the Watt Avenue corridor and much easier and safer access on and off the freeway for everyone.

Patience is Appreciated: SACDOT understands the challenges and inconvenience that motorists may experience during this project work. The patience and cooperation of the traveling public is appreciated as work to construct the interchange project continues. Interchange Construction Goal: The Watt Avenue @ US-50 interchange project will reduce congestion, install dedicated transit facilities, and improve access and safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. ★

Protecting Our Youth in the 21st Century

Northminster Presbyterian Church (3235 Pope Avenue, Sacramento) is offering a series of meetings for families to inform parents on what current hazards children may be facing and to arm parents with knowledge which will enable them to better support and protect their children. The program includes the following:

January 8: Bullying
Janet Payne, Educational Psychologist

January 15: Internet Pitfalls
Nicholas Phirippidi, FBI Special Agent

January 22: Drug Abuse
Carla Lowe, Parent Advocate

January 29 Parenting Review – First Things First –
A Kurt and Brenda Warner

Autobiography, Ellen Cochran, Book Reviewer

Dinner: 5:45 to 6:30, presentation, 6:30 to 7:30. There is no charge. Youth welcome. Child care available – please RSVP for dinner and child care needs. Phone: (916) 487-5192, or Email: mailnorthminster@yahoo.com. ★

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