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Remember the Reason for the Season



Serving the City of Citrus Heights & Sacramento County VOLUME 10 • ISSUE 52 DECEMBER 25, **2020**

Citrus Heights



City Council Approves Final Documents on Traffic-Safety Programs

Story by Shaunna Boyd

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - As part of the City's goal to improve streets and infrastructure, the Citrus Heights City Council unanimously voted to adopt new policy documents for two traffic-safety-related programs. Both the Multi-Modal Transportation Safety Program and the Carriage Drive/Lauppe Lane Safe Schools Corridor Plan have been in the works for a while now, and the final plans were presented to Council for approval at the December 10 meeting.

The Multi-Modal Transportation Safety Program (MMTSP) was created in response to the high number of resident requests for traffic calming measures such as crosswalks, speed humps, and traffic enforcement in local neighborhoods throughout Citrus Heights. The new MMTSP system scheduled to launch in the spring of 2021 - will prioritize requests and increase the transparency of the process. The development of the program was funded by a Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant totaling \$180,000. But those funds only covered the development of the project; the costs of maintaining the MMTSP system and implementing the countermeasures will require additional funding. Mary Poole of the General Services Department explained that adopting the program gives the City the opportunity to access more funding sources, as the City will now meet more eligibility requirements for state, regional, and local grant programs. The costs can also be included in future City budgets. The Carriage Drive/ Lauppe Lane Safe School Corridor Plan was developed to address the many safety concerns along the onemile-long stretch of roadway that connects Antelope Dr. and Auburn Blvd. There are three schools along the Carriage Drive and Lauppe Lane corridor - Carriage Drive Elementary School, Sylvan Middle School, and Mesa Verde High School as well as various adjacent residential neighborhoods. Traffic congestion during peak hours (school drop off and pick up) has only gotten worse over the years as school enrollment has increased and the majority of students arrive by car.





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Brighten Your Holiday!

Miracle on Fountain Square Drive Brightens Hundreds of Lives

By Elise Spleiss

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG)

- While parents, grandparents and others have been working hard for months to help their students with online school, keeping them entertained during COVID lockdowns, working at home, shopping, cooking, cleaning et cetera, the city of Citrus Heights has come through again to help lighten the load.

In a joint effort between the City of Citrus Heights and the Citrus Heights Police Department (CHDP) two holiday events were created to make this season brighter and easier for all to continue to maneuver through these unusual times.

During the first event on December 5, over 300 vehicles brought more than 800 children through



The City of Citrus Heights and the Citrus Heights Police Department (CHDP) joined to make this season brighter. Photo: City of Citrus Heights

the Citrus Town Center in a drive-thru magical of a 'reverse' car parade

Santa's Magic Trail at Christmas holiday experience. The kids became part

surrounded themselves by all the wonders of a parade including huge balloons, lights, music, fairies, Santa and a 'spare change' donation to help support the Citrus Heights Homeless Assistance Resource Team (HART).

That magic carried over to the parking lots of the CHPD and City Hall on December 10, as Miracle on Fountain Square Drive transformed those areas into even more magic for many of the same families.

The Citrus Heights Youth and Family Services Division of the CHPD sponsored the shining, flashing lights, noisy Christmas tree lane created by those who showed up at 3 p.m. to decorate 30 uniquely themed Christmas trees, dressed up by police teams, Metro Fire, city staff, *Continued on page 3*

Although minor improvements have been attempted, including staggered bell Continued on page 3





Above, the staff of KP International Market gather to wish you a happy holiday season. Right, KP makes it their mission to support local charities throughout the year. Photo above courtesy MPG. Photo at right courtesy KP Market

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Brighten Your Holiday! Council Approves Final Documents



Santa greets kids from his chair wishing everyone Happy Holidays. Photo: City of Citrus Heights

Continued from page 1

small businesses, service organizations, high schools and other members of the community. As families drove through two golden arches beneath palm trees and greeted by a 20-foot Mickey Mouse they entered a new dimension. According to Master Sergeant Janet Schaefer, "approximately 255 vehicles visited the event (at the police parking lot), with approximately 800-1,000 passengers that enjoyed the festivities".

Across the street at City Hall several stations offered goodies for the young ones sponsored by City Hall staff. The kids got cookies and fancy goodie bags, and a second Santa Claus in his cozy home gave a wave and accepted letters written to him. Photos were taken of the children in their cars.

Just prior to the Miracle on Fountain Square Drive event, outgoing Mayor Jeff Slowey performed his final official act as mayor as, along with Santa, they pulled a virtual switch to light the 22-foot Christmas tree in front of City Hall. The 10-minute virtual ceremony was shown live on Facebook and can be viewed now on You Tube.

To sum up the evening, Lieutenant Kris Frey with the Special Services Division of the CHPD 'said it all' in an email, "This festive event was an amazing collaborative effort between our Police Department staff as well as the staff at City Hall. With the challenges that 2020 has caused for many families in our community, it was a true pleasure to be able to give families the opportunity to spend quality time together this holiday season in order to enjoy the lights, activities, and the true "miracle" that took place on Fountain Square Drive.



on Traffic-Safety Programs



The current location of the Carriage Drive Elementary School Entrance results in significant traffic congestion during peak hours. The Carriage Drive/Lauppe Lane Safe Schools Corridor Plan recommends relocating the entrance to align with the Pratt Ave. Intersection. Photo: City of Citrus Heights

Continued from page 1

schedules, the high traffic congestion and associated safety concerns still discourage families from walking or biking to school. The congestion also affects nearby residents, who have difficulty getting in or out of their driveways during peak hours.

After a thorough review of traffic patterns, crash data, and roadway conditions - as well as an extensive public outreach campaign the Safe School Corridor Plan was developed. To address the major concerns of pedestrian safety, residential access, and school parking lot access, the plan recommends the following general improvements along the Carriage/Lauppe corridor: speed humps, curb extensions, vertical curbs, high-visibility crosswalks, and green conflict markings at intersections.

Strategic improvements are also recommended for some specific areas of concern: a pedestrian crossing with a rapid-flashing signal light at Carriage Dr. and Midnight Way; a wider sidewalk on Auburn Blvd. between Carriage Dr. and Sylvan Middle School; and a wide shared-use path for pedestrians and bicycles on the west side of Lauppe Ln. between Antelope Rd. and Pratt Ave.

A raised roadway - essentially a large, raised crosswalk that requires drivers to slow down to drive up and over -is proposed on the portion of Lauppe that bends to the east at the rear entrance to Mesa Verde High School. Circular intersections are recommended at both the Carriage/Kanai and Carriage/Pratt intersections to regulate traffic, reduce vehicle speeds, allow for safe and predictable U-turns, and reduce crashes. The plan also suggests widening the bike lanes

and narrowing the drive lanes along Carriage Dr. from Kanai Ave. to Auburn Blvd. in order to reduce vehicle speeds and increase bicycle safety while maintaining parking on both sides of the road.

This plan was developed in partnership with the school district, so it also includes recommendations for some improvements on the school properties. The Carriage Drive Elementary School entrance is currently just south of the Pratt Ave. intersection, which results in traffic congestion in front of the school and left-turn conflicts as vehicles try to enter the school from the south. To address these issues, the plan recommends relocating the entrance to align with Pratt Ave.

The plan also recommends closing the northern driveway into the Mesa Verde parking lot to all vehicles except for busses. Vehicles would instead enter the campus at Kanai Ave. at a one-way entrance and circle around the parking lot to a one-way exit. This would reduce traffic congestion by getting vehicles off the roadway and onto the campus, where they can queue on the school site instead of on Carriage Dr.

Development of the plan, which involved a feasibility study and conceptual designs for the improvements, was primarily funded by a Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant totaling \$196,000. Additional studies are required to analyze the potential construction impacts, and the actual costs of implementation-including engineering design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction—is estimated at \$9,000,000. Adoption of the plan increases the City's eligibility for state and federal funding opportunities to fund the construction.



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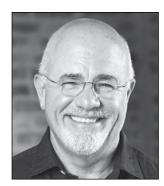


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Only You Can Make It Happen

Dear Dave.

I've got so many things I want to address and change about my life, both personally and professionally, in the coming year. Do you have any advice or practices for helping people be successful and achieve their goals?

-Tim

Dear Tim,

Goals are dreams, but dreaming. Examining your goals inside and out, and by thoughtfully constructing small, achievable steps toward them is the key to creating change in your life. Remember, too, that it's your responsibility not someone else's – to

Dave Ramsey Says

fix things in your life. If goals, too. And last, you're waiting for someone or something else to make things better, you're going to be disappointed.

When it comes to setting and achieving goals, be specific about what you want to achieve. Vague, unspecified ideas will only cause you to feel overwhelmed, and this will likely lead to you giving up. Also, make your goals measurable. If you want to lose weight, don't simply write down "lose weight" as a goal. How much weight do you want to lose? How many pounds would you have to lose per week in order to see the desired result in a

specified amount of time? This one may sound you can't stop with just silly, but are the goals you have in mind your goals? If a spouse or friend sets goals for you, you're probably not going to succeed. Creating a goal, and taking ownership of it, will give you more incentive to meet your goal. Setting a time frame will help you develop more realistic

always put your goals in writing. Write them down, and review them often. This will provide you with added motivation to make your goals a reality.

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Dave Ramsey is a their lives. He also serves as CEO for Ramsev Solutions.

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Social Security Matters Should a Working Widow **Claim Now or Wait?**



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: My husband died 13 years ago at age 50. I am now 64, never remarried, and work full time making a healthy income. I have never claimed any of his benefits. What are my best options? Signed: Working Widow



You can find out what your survivor benefit will be by contacting Social Security. They can also tell you what your age 70 benefit will be, but you can get that too by cre-

may find that you will not receive any benefits, even if you were to claim. That's because they will "take back" benefits by withholding your future Social Security payments until they recover what you owe. For example, if your annual earnings are \$60,000, you would exceed the limit by about \$41,000, which would mean you would need to repay them \$20,500. If your monthly SS benefit was about \$1500 (about average), they would withhold benefits for about 14 months to recover what you owe, meaning you wouldn't be getting any SS benefits while you were earning that much money. Thus, you may find your best option right now is to wait until your FRA to claim any Social Security benefits. In the interest of full disclosure, there are some nuances related to the earnings limit. The limit is higher, and the penalty less punitive, in the year you reach your FRA (during the months before you reach your FRA). And while you may gradually recover withheld SS retirement benefits starting at your FRA, survivor benefits withheld before your FRA may not be fully recovered, depending upon how long after your FRA you collect them.

Dear Working Widow: You have several options available as both a widow and a worker entitled to your own Social Security benefit.

- 1. You could collect a reduced survivor benefit (only) from your deceased husband and allow your own SS benefit to grow to a larger amount. At age 70, your own benefit will be about 29% more than it will be at your full retirement age, or FRA, which is 66 years and 4 months (your own benefit stops growing at age 70). If you take your survivor benefit now, since you are claiming it before you reach your FRA it will be reduced by about 11% from the amount your husband was eligible to receive at his death. But at your FRA your survivor benefit would reach the maximum of 100% of what your husband was eligible for at his death.
- 2. If your survivor benefit from your husband at your FRA will be more than your own benefit will be at age 70, you should strive to maximize your survivor benefit by waiting until your FRA to claim it.

ating your "My Social Security" account, which is easy to do at www.ssa. gov/myaccount.

3. If your own benefit at age 70 will be your highest benefit, you should strive to maximize your personal benefit by claiming your survivor benefit (only) first, as described in 1. above, and delaying the claim for your own benefits until age 70.

But here's a big red flag: since you still work full time at a "healthy income," be aware that if you claim any SS benefit before you have reached your full retirement age, you'll be subject to Social Security's "earnings test" which limits how much you can earn before they take away some of your benefits. The earnings limit for 2021 will be \$18,960 (changes annually) and if you are collecting early SS benefits of any type and exceed that limit, they will take back benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit (half of what you exceed the limit by). The earnings test is in effect until you reach your full retirement age, after which there is no longer a limit to how much you can earn while collecting benefits.

So, what is your best option, considering the above? Well, if your earnings from work are substantially more than the annual earnings limit, you

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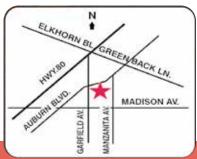
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Christmas Is More Than Jingle, Jingle

By Rev. James L. Snyder

I have been trying lately to remember my first Christmas. I know my memory isn't perfect, but I thought maybe I could bring up some old memories of my first Christmas.

Unfortunately, I couldn't think of a thing about that first Christmas of mine. Of course, it might be that I was only five months old at the time.

Down through the years, I have celebrated more Christmases than I want to let on. It's not that I'm old; I just haven't died yet.

The thing about Christmas was all the stuff I was getting. I thought Christmas was all about me and all I wanted for Christmas and all that would make me happy.

I remember my parents taking me downtown to sit on Santa's lap and tell what I wanted for Christmas. That's what I thought Christmas was all about.

I was a little disturbed when my siblings came on the scene, and Christmas was no longer all about "me." For some reason, they thought they were part of Christmas. Being the terrific brother that some of the Christmas time around the tree.

Then I was introduced to the fact that not only was I not the focus of Christmas but now I needed to purchase Christmas presents for my siblings.

Things went along nicely, and then another thing changed everything in my Christmas activity.

Going to a Bible school up in New York, I happened to meet a young lady. Before I could process everything, I found myself married.

That Christmas we spent with my wife's family. At first, I thought the whole neighborhood had come to celebrate Christmas with us. Then, much to my chagrin, I realized these were siblings to my wife. I don't remember how many there were; I couldn't count them; they were running around too fast.

Then other things began to happen. One by one, children came into our family. Fortunately, we only had three children, unlike my wife's parents, who had somewhere near 100, at least by my calculation.

It wasn't long before I realized that a Christmas song with the word "jingle" in it meant that I was supposed to spend a lot of my coin for Christmas.

I am, I allowed them to have not about me, or was it? It was about me paying for Christmas, and the recipients seem to be growing without stop.

> It took a while for me to come to the right conclusion

that Christmas is more than "jingle, jingle." I came to that conclusion when one Christmas we were celebrating at our home, and our children and grandchildren were all around the Christmas tree opening up presents.

I sat back and just watched. Sure, I got a couple of Christmas presents. But that wasn't what Christmas was for me. I saw my family around that tree and realized that that's what Christmas was all about. Family coming together and enjoying one another.

Then I thought about what the Bible said. "And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:6-7).

Christmas is all about family. God's family comes into the family through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, Ocala, Now, Christmas was FL 34472. He lives with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 352-216-3025 or e-mail jamessnyder2@att.net. The church web site is www.

whatafellowship.com. *



By Pastor Ray Dare

As somebody who cares about you, as a friend, as a pastor, if I could give you any gift this Christmas, my wish would be that you would discover the one thing that matters most. And it isn't getting more money. It isn't becoming famous. It isn't even having fun. It's getting to know The Creator who made you and it's building a relationship so you can live a large, full life here on earth and go be with him forever in eternity when this life is over.

You know what I've discovered? You can do lots of good things but still not build a relationship with Jesus in your life. I've discovered if Satan can't make you bad, he'll just make you busy. He doesn't care what distracts you. It doesn't have to be evil a long as you stay disconnected from God. It could be all kinds of good things; they could even be gifts from God. But they are not God.

Pastor Ray's **Encouraging Words**

Christmas Reveals What Matters Most

The problem is, when you live disconnected from God, you live in a small, shallow way and you miss God's purpose for your life. Jesus said in John 10:10b, "....I have come in order that you might have life - life in all its fullness." GNV. Your life is not small, but often the way we live is small.

I read a story this week about a very well-known business leader who said, "In the eyes of everyone around me I am a great success, but inside I feel so insignificant and so small." Basically, he's asking "Why am I so unfulfilled? Why do I feel this void on the inside? Why do I feel like something is missing?" Because there is something missing. You were made for more. You were made for meaning, not money. You were made to live a large and full life. Not a small, shallow life. You were made by God and for God and until you understand that, life isn't going to make sense to you.

Do you know how significant you are? You are so significant that God cared enough about you to come to earth at Christmas, live a perfect life and then die on the cross for your sins. With is arms outstretched, Jesus said, "This is how much you matter to me. You matter so much I'd rather die that live without you."

Your life is extremely significant, but you may be living it in a small, insignificant way because you have stuffed your life with other things, instead of the most important thing. A relationship with Jesus is the whole purpose of Christmas.

Invite Jesus into your life this Christmas. That is where true purpose, significance and meaning is found. That is how you break out of smallness and live the full life Jesus promised. Jesus fills that void inside that you've been trying to stuff with other things. What's missing is God, a relationship with Him. Open up your heart to Him this Christmas and be amazed how much that decision matters!

Pastor Ray New Beginnings Church

www.NBC4u.org



By Marlys Johnsen Norris, **Christian Author**

The enemy of God has many ways to cripple our lives in meaningless ways. Some are called forms of "bond- issues. ages" that take away our ability to be "free". "Bondages" are the result of a "sin" that has taken hold in our lives. *We become slaves to it.* It is a hold on our lives that make us feel helpless to ever escape! Overeating, Alcoholism, Gambling, Sexual Activity, anything done to the extreme that cannot be considered good or honorable. In our life journey to know and love God He desires us to enjoy having victory and freedom in our lives. It is after we have begun to really walk with God, His Spirit



lem is "bondage"! At first we do not understand or know what to do. Once we are aware of it, God Life". Then, Jesus sacwill teach us to have the *rificially died shedding* ability and knowledge every ounce of His Blood how to rid our lives of to purchase Salvation those crippling bondage for everyone of us who

reveals that our prob- *miraculously birthed His* Son, Jesus He lived and taught us "He was the Way, the Truth and the



Possibly this is the very day that you will choose to trust and believe in a mighty miraculous and powerful God who loves you. In our own intellect and power we can do nothing! It is only through prayer talk with God. When God's answers He will show us how we need to have your prayer. Wait faith and believe. Then, to do it!

In Old Testament times the Jewish people would take a lamb and sacrifice it, then take its blood and sprinkle it on the altar for their prayers to be answered. When God

accept His death and resurrection.

Therefore we can find "victory and freedom" from every sin we every committed or are presently doing! Pray and plead the Precious Blood of Jesus over the "Bondage" that is enslaving you. Almighty Father/God will answer patiently but expectantly to find the happiness you desire from God. Marlys Johnsen Norris

Christian Author of 7 Books,

Columnist since 2006 for American River Messenger Marlysjn@gmail.com *

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Seasonal Affective Disorder

By Evelyn Hill, The Jason Foundation

HENDERSONVILLE, TN (MPG) - Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is characterized as a type of depression that is related to changes in seasons, typically tied to the start of fall and persisting into the winter months. We know that depressive disorders don't take holidays and this time of year can be stressful. For individuals who suffer from or are at risk for depression, though, the impact of holiday stresses and pressures can be much more severe than the momentary frustrations that almost everyone experiences. Typical symptoms of SAD, sometimes referred to as winter depression, may include the following (Mayo Clinic): Feeling depressed most of the day, nearly every day; A lack of energy; Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed; Feeling sluggish or agitated; Oversleeping or having problems with sleeping; Social withdrawal; Feeling hopeless, worthless or guilty; Substance abuse.

Recently, more people are willing to engage in more meaningful conversations regarding mental health, but that has not always been the case. Many of the same symptoms listed above are commonly associated with warning signs of suicidal thoughts or behavior, the second leading cause of death for ages 10 – 24 in California. The Jason Foundation, a nationally recognized leader in youth suicide awareness and prevention, has developed a program designed to help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and suicide. #IWONTBESILENT is an awareness campaign to raise the conversation on suicide prevention and mental illness, allowing open conversation regarding these serious subjects. Visit www.iwontbesilent.com to learn how you can become involved and make a difference within your community. Creating an environment where people of all ages feel comfortable to talk about their struggles is an important step in preventing unnecessary tragedies.

Contrary to a prevalent myth, suicide rates do not peak during the holiday season. However, depressed individuals are hardly immune from either depressive episodes or suicidal ideation during this time. If you or someone you love is struggling with depression and/or thinking about suicide, get help now. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), is a free resource that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for anyone who is in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.



Publisher, Paul V. Scholl

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and Special Cash Bonuses

By Kimberly Ericksen, **Elevate Public Affairs**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) -Walmart announced an additional \$700 million in cash bonuses to its U.S.based associates bringing its total 2020 quarterly and special cash bonuses for its U.S.-based associates to more than \$2.8 billion.

The company's latest bonus announcement includes \$22,500,000 in quarterly bonuses paid to California associates in their Nov. 25 paychecks following strong third-quarter business performance and an estimated \$23,000,000 in special cash bonuses to be paid to California associates on Dec. 24 in recognition of associates' sustained commitment to customers during the pandemic. Full and parttime associates are eligible for both bonuses.

"As we come to a close on this historic year, I'm filled with gratitude for how our associates have led through one of the most trying periods for our company and country," said John Furner, President and CEO - Walmart U.S. "Our associates have stepped up to

munities and each other when it was truly needed most, and we're pleased to recognize their efforts with a quarterly bonus for strong store performance and a fourth special cash bonus."

serve our customers, com-

Approximately 1.5 million full- and part-time Walmart and Sam's Club associates working in the company's stores, clubs, distribution centers and fulfillment centers will receive the special cash bonus on Dec. 24. It will be Walmart's fourth special cash bonus paid to U.S. associates since the start of the pandemic.

"This has been an extraordinary year and we're so proud of how our associates have continued to make a meaningful difference in our communities," said Kath McLay, President and CEO - Sam's Club. "Today's bonus reflects our appreciation for our associates, who show up to work each day to serve and provide relief for millions of members across the country."

All U.S.-based hourly associates are eligible for the latest special cash bonus. The bonus amounts

will be similar to the previous three special cash bonuses Walmart has provided its associates during the pandemic; part-time and temporary hourly associates will receive \$150 and full-time hourly associates will receive \$300. More than 60% of Walmart's hourly associates are fulltime. Drivers, Managers and Assistant Managers will also receive a special cash bonus. **Extension of Walmart's COVID-19 Leave Policy**

Earlier this year, Walmart announced a first-of-itskind COVID-19 Emergency Leave policy for part-time and full-time associates. which provides associates with up to two weeks of pay should they need to stay home for COVID-related reasons, including mandated quarantines, symptoms or illness. If they're not able to return to work after that time, additional pay replacement may be provided for up to 26 weeks. Absences associated with an approved COVID-19 leave will not be counted against associates. Given the ongoing pandemic, the company is extending the leave policy through July 5, 2021.

CLG NEWS UPDATES

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Forensic audit finds that security log files were deleted from all Dominion machines to hide vote-switching | 15 Dec 2020 | After election officials identified "glitches" that switched 6,000 Trump votes to Biden, the courts in Antrim County Michigan ordered an audit of Dominion voting machines. The forensic audit was carried out by the Allied Security Operations Group (ASOG). This group conducted a forensic duplication on the county's election management server. They investigated compact flash cards used by local precincts in their Dominion ImageCast system, and they audited the memory sticks used by Dominion Voter Assist Terminals and the memory sticks used for the poll book. This forensic audit found blatant evidence of a coordinated attack on the 2020 Presidential election. The Federal Election Commission allows an error rate of .0008 percent for all voting machines used in US elections. The Dominion machines in Antrim county had an error rate of 68.05 percent! Even more shocking: The ballot-adjudication logs and the security logs for the November 3 general election were removed. All log files for previous elections were still contained on the machines, but someone on the inside was able to erase the all-important log files for the 2020 election. Mitch McConnell received donations from Dominion Voting Systems and shut down two election integrity bills in 2020 | 18 Dec 2020 | The Senate Majority Leader, Mitch McConnell (R-KY) (who Trump should have jettisoned day one along w. Paul Ryan), is urging Senate Republicans to accept the Biden electors without objection when they are presented to Congress on January 6... A closer examination of Mitch McConnell finds he took donations from lobbyists who work for Dominion Voting Systems. Dominion lobbyists, David Cohen and Brian Wild both donated to the McConnell campaign funds in March of 2020. McConnell also received thousands of dollars from Emily Kirlin and Jen Olson, lobbyists for ES&S, another voting system company. Both Dominion and ES&S represent about 80 percent of all voting machines in the country. Both systems rely on a software developed by Microsoft called "Election Guard." McConnell also helped suppress election integrity efforts earlier in 2020. In July, McConnell blocked two bills that would "bolster election security." One of the bills would have required a physical paper trail of every single ballot cast in the country. Money From Facebook's Zuckerberg Used to Undermine Election, Violate Law - Report | 16 Dec 2020 | Hundreds of millions of dollars from Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg was used to violate election laws, according to a new report. The Amistad Project of the Thomas More Society, a national constitutional litigation organization, released the 39-page report, alleging that Zuckerberg's \$500 million given to election officials was used to treat voters unequally and improperly influence the election for Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden. The bulk of the funds went to the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL), a nonprofit started by former managers and staff at the New Organizing Institute, a progressive nonprofit. According to the report, the nonprofit earlier this year "began sending agents into states to recruit certain Democrat strongholds to prepare grants requesting monies from" it.

Walmart Issues \$45.5M in Quarterly California May be Losing its Business Mojo



By Dan Walters **CALMatters**

The timing could not have been more ironic.

As veteran Democratic operative Dee Dee Myers she was Bill Clinton's press secretary at one point in her lengthy career – became Gov. Gavin Newsom's new ambassador to business this month, three of California's biggest and best-known corporate entities announced moves to arch-rival Texas.

The splashiest émigré is Elon Musk, founder of the Tesla electric car company and other high-technology firms, who had already chosen Texas for expansions of his automobile and space businesses.

Musk revealed his personal move at a business conference and compared California to a sports team with a long winning streak, saying, "they do tend to get a little complacent, a little entitled, and then they don't win the championship anymore." California, he said, "has been winning for a long time. And I think they're taking them for granted a little bit."

Very quickly, two other stalwarts of the San Francisco Bay Area's high-tech community also announced departures to Texas, Hewlett-Packard Enterprise Co. and software giant Oracle.

Hewlett Packard Enterprise is building a "state-of-the-art" campus near Houston for 2,600 workers and said, "HPE's largest U.S. employment hub, Houston, is an attractive market to recruit and retain future diverse talent." Oracle, which is moving

its headquarters to Austin, said, "We believe these moves best position Oracle for growth and provide our personnel with more flexibility about where and how they work."

The three announcements - and Musk's comments especially - renew a question that has hovered over California for several years: Do the state's high taxes, high operating and living costs and a political drift to the left make it hostile to business? And, parenthetically, does Texas, which has no personal income tax and is a reliably conservative, pro-business state, benefit from that perceived hostility?

"Anyone who doesn't believe that this latest departure isn't a threat to California's economy is a business climate denier," Jim Wunderman, president and CEO of the Bay Area Council, said in a statement. "We are watching the unraveling on one of the world's mightiest economies and the consequences will be devastating. California for too long has willfully ignored our awful business climate, even as we've enjoyed incredible success and prosperity."

Wunderman added, "We can't afford to dither any longer or California will permanently lose hundreds of thousands if not millions of jobs to states like Texas that place value on business

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and investment."

Clearly the COVID-19 pandemic has had an effect on corporate attitudes. Many employers are now embracing workat-home arrangements that make physical location less important and the Bay Area has been seeing an outward migration to communities, such as Sacramento, with less congestion and lower housing costs as a result. In that sense, moving headquarters staff to low-cost Texas buys more bang for the buck and makes perfect sense.

But there are other recent developments that may have a cumulative effect. They include state legislators' calls for higher personal and corporate taxes, political efforts to help unions organize workers in the high-tech sector, legislation to dictate corporate board memberships, and direct slaps such as San Francisco's new tax on corporations whose chief executives are paid over 100 times more than their rank-and-file workers.

We may have reached a tipping point in which the disadvantages of doing business in California outweigh the advantages. We should remember what happened to Detroit, which was the Silicon Valley of its day a century ago, but took its prosperity for granted and paid a heavy financial and social price for its complacency.

Good luck, Dee Dee. You'll need it.

Dan Walters has been a journalist for nearly 60 years, spending all but a few of those years working for California newspapers. *



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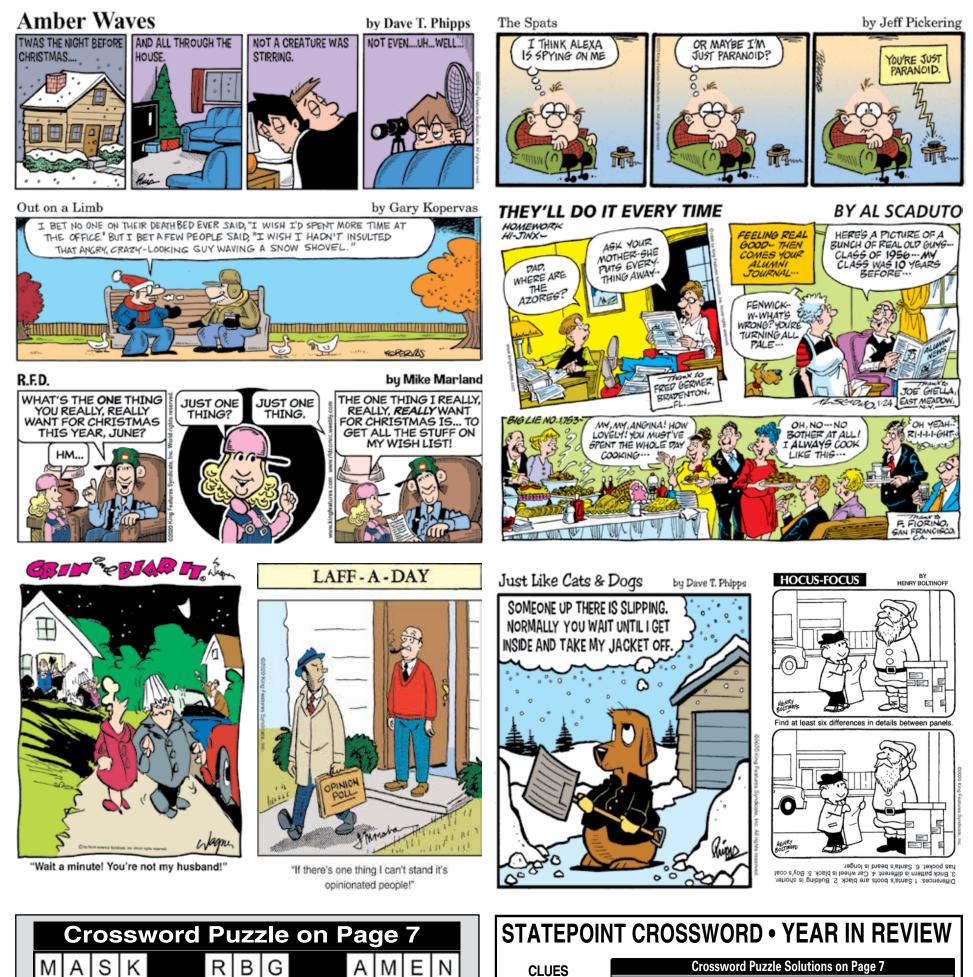


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Sudoku Puzzle on Page 7



*New wardrobe 12 15 16 8. Flock's echo 12. Reply from a tunnel? 13. Feline noise 18 20 14. Edward Teller's "baby' 22 16. Competently 17. Savory jelly 28 18. *Blue vs. red competition 23 24 27 29 20. One third of a three-piece 30 32 33 21. Mailed greetings 22. Long time 23. ____ biloba 35 36 23. ____ biloba 26. Anointing oil 30. Nurses' org 39 42 31. Leafy vegetable __ sum' 43 45 46 35. Mooring spots 37. Bring into play 38. Old Brazilian coins 48 47 49 39. Prefix with 'graph' 40. *Joe's running mate 50 53 42. PGA peg 43. What bees did 56 45. Fixes firmly 47 Summer mo 48. R in NPR 60 61 50. Widespread 52. *WHO's March 63 64 announcement 55. Cliffside dwelling 56. Drop-off spot American Standard FREE! 57. Sonic sound 59. Sports figures, e.g. WALK-IN BATHTUB SALE! SAVE \$1,500 60. Persian backgammon 61. Water carrier ✔ Backed by American Standard's 140 years of ĪV 62. *Late basketball legend experience lightning, cause of ✓ Ultra low entry for easy entering & exiting California wildfires ✔ Patented Quick Drain® Technology 64. X-ray units Lifetime Warranty on the bath AND installation, INCLUDING labor backed by American Standard ✓ 44 Hydrotherapy jets for an invigorating massage Limited Time Offer! Call Today 0 2. Flu symptom 866-612-7490 3. Synagogue 400 Or visit: www.walki =74 4. 1/100th of a ruble © StatePoint Media 6. Western neckwear, pl. SUDOKU 7. Gwyneth, to friends 53. *Caucus state 8. *Like a vote during lockdown 54. Like most universities WALK-IN BATHTUB SALE! SAVE \$1,500 9. What Joy Mangano does on TV 55. Pose a question ** Decised by American Standard's 142 pears of experiments ***Thin law only for easy nations & enting ***Protected data Brain's Technology ***Decised Systematry or the Industry With Standard Standard by Research Standard 10. Do like exhaust pipe 58. Robinson or Doubtfire ī 11. *"Transplant" network ___ of honor 14. It's often wreaked e ji 866-612-7490 19. Zoo enclosures 22. Compass dir. 23. Labored breaths 8 9 5 24. *Jared Kushner to Donald Trump 25. Nigerian money 2 3 7 4 26. Part of an eye 9 27. About to explode 6 5 2 28. Looked at, amorously 29. Smelling organs 3 9 6 32. Two of the same 33. Philosopher's study 36. *Best Picture Oscar-winner 38. China grass 2 8 1 40. Party barrel 41. Having a cover 9 3 4 6 44. *What Zoom host does to guests, sometimes 3 5 4 7 Type of jacket 48. "M*A*Ś*H" character 9 4 49. Ticked off 1 50. *President Trump used this power in 2020 Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every Emirates row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9. 52. Be undecided Solutions on Page 7



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Has the Hospital-Inpatient Medicare Rule **Affected Medicare Advantage Plans?**



Toni: Last week you wrote about how the MOON (Medicare Outpatient Observation Notice) rule affects "Original Medicare". My husband has

Toni Kina

enrolled in a Medicare Advantage HMO and I am wondering how this rule will affect his hospital stay.

~ Thank you, Maria from Cleveland, OH Maria:

The MOON rule only affects those who are enrolled in "Original Medicare" with or without a Medicare Supplement. The rule does not affect those enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan.

A Medicare Advantage HMO plan has its own process on inpatient and outpatient surgery or hospital stay with a referral only system. With a Medicare Advantage PPO plan, there is not a referral process, but the facility or provider must be willing to bill the Medicare Advantage plan.

The Medicare and You Handbook explains what is a Medicare Advantage plan or what a Medicare Supplement/ Medigap "Original/ Traditional Medicare" is? The Medicare and You Handbook does not compare the differences between the plans as listed below:

Medicare Supplement:

- 1. A Medicare Supplement/Medigap Plan works directly with Original/Traditional Medicare. Medicare will pay its share of the Medicare-approved amount for "medically necessary" covered healthcare costs. Then, your Medicare Supplement/Medigap will pay its share.
- 2. You chose which doctor, hospital, home health agency, skilled nursing facility, etc. that accepts Medicare assignment. You and your healthcare provider are in control of your healthcare.
- 3. With a Medicare Supplement/Medigap, you have a monthly premium that may increase the premium rate each year.

4. You may enroll in and will pay separately for a "Stand alone" Medicare (Part D) Prescription drug plan. If you don't enroll in a Part D prescription drug plan at the right time, be aware that there is a Part D penalty assessed when you do finally enroll and that penalty will last as long as you are enrolled in a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan.

Medicare Advantage Plan:

- a. To qualify for the plan: a. You must be enrolled in both
 - Medicare Parts A & B
 - b. Live in the service area 6 months out of a year
- b.When you choose a Medicare Advantage Plan, then Medicare pays the insurance company a certain amount every month for your care if you are on the plan. Your Part B must always be in effect.
- c. When you go to the doctor or visit your pharmacist, you must only use your Medicare Advantage insurance card, not your Medicare (red, white, and blue) card.
- d. A Medicare Advantage Plan must provide all your Part A and Part B benefits and some Medicare Advantage Plans have Part D prescription drug plans included.
- e. With a Medicare Advantage plan, you may have different co-pays, co-insurances, or deductibles to pay and have maximum out of pocket expenses to meet.
- f. Some Healthcare facilities like MD Anderson accept few Medicare Advantage plans.

Talk to your provider or facility and make sure they accept the Medicare Advantage plan you want to enroll in.

Is the maze of Medicare confusing you? Call the Toni Says[®] Medicare hotline at 832-519-8664 or visit the Toni Says® Medicare webinars because it is what you don't know that will hurt you!

Toni King, author of the Medicare Survival Guide[®] is giving a \$5 discount on the Medicare Survival Guide® Advanced book. ×

Mackenzie Scott Donates \$10 Million to United Way Capital Region

By Kristin Thebaud Communications

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - MacKenzie Scott announced that she has made a donation to United Way California Capital Region. The philanthropist chose the local United Way chapter to receive a \$10 million gift because of the group's work to fill basic needs while also addressing long-term systemic inequities that have deepened during the pandemic.

"This is a game-changer for our local United Way and our community as a whole," said Stephanie Bray, president and CEO, United Way California Capital Region. "With a gift like this, we can expand our work to end poverty through our Square One Project so kids can succeed in school. This gift also will help us and our nonprofit partners provide more relief and forge a path toward recovery and resilience for our community. There truly are no words to express our gratitude to Ms. Scott. We are humbled and honored that she chose to invest in our work in the greater Sacramento area."

Scott's gift to United Way California Capital Region is part of the Giving Pledge she signed in 2019 to donate the majority of her wealth. Her donations to organizations across the country have focused in part on promoting economic parity, racial equity, public health and education. Scott is the former wife of Jeff Bezos, founder and CEO of Amazon.

"Last year I pledged to give the majority of my wealth back to the society that helped generate it, to do it thoughtfully, to get started soon, and to keep at it until the safe is empty," Scott said in a Medium article she published in July. "There's no question in my mind that anyone's personal wealth is the product of a collective effort, and of social structures which present opportunities to some people, and obstacles to countless others.'

United Way California Capital Region has invested more heavily in addressing inequities this year with the onset of the pandemic. The group raised \$572,000 in three months through the United Way COVID-19 Local Relief Fund to provide 1,145 families in need across the region with a one-time \$500 distribution to help offset costs of rent, bills YourLocalUnitedWay.org

and other basic needs. Through a partnership with the City of Sacramento, United Way is working to bridge the digital divide that has widened during the pandemic, with a focus on low-income children and senior citizens. Through this Digital Equity Program, the partnership is providing free broadband access for up to 10,000 low-income Sacramento households, and free computers and digital literacy training for up to 1,000 Sacramento households. United Way also joined a partnership with the County of Sacramento to provide financial assistance to individuals and families in Sacramento County who are quarantined due to a positive COVID-19 test or are in isolation from being exposed to someone who has tested positive.

"Our team has been working tirelessly to stretch our resources as far as possible to help families in our community through this difficult year," Bray said. "We cannot thank our staff, donors and volunteers enough for their investment in our work that is now being recognized on a national stage. This gift has brought us to the next level, and we are grateful to have our community of supporters by our side as we expand our Square One Project to create stronger, healthier and more compassionate communities across the greater Sacramento region."

United Way's current work includes removing barriers to success in school for low-income students, helping families achieve financial stability and self-sufficiency, and providing support to youth who are transitioning out of foster care.

For nearly 100 years, United Way California Capital Region has brought local people together to make community change happen. Today, the nonprofit is bringing people together across Amador, El Dorado, Sacramento, Placer and Yolo counties for its Square One Project, a 20-year promise to significantly increase the number of students in our region who graduate from high school ready for success in college and beyond. United Way believes ending poverty starts in school and is working to ensure kids meet important milestones and their families receive support and resources. To learn more and make a donation, visit ★



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Covid-19 Testing Available at Sacramento International Airport

By Samantha Mott, Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Sacramento International Airport has partnered with City Health Urgent Care to offer on-site COVID-19 testing beginning Wednesday, Dec. 16.

Testing is by appointment only and will be conducted in the parking lot between AMPM and the East Economy Lot (formerly the taxi waiting area). Participants must make an appointment 48 hours in advance and anyone with a valid travel itinerary will receive priority booking. Testing appointments can be made via the City Health website. Passengers can book appointments through the passenger portal. Nontraveling community



Sacramento International Airport has partnered with City Health Urgent Care to offer on-site COVID-19 testing beginning December 16. Photo credit Sacrame

members wishing to be Health to provide conve- community," says Airport the lab. There is no outtested can book appointments through the testing for passengers, community portal. Proof of identity is required as well as the appointment layer of health safety for confirmation.

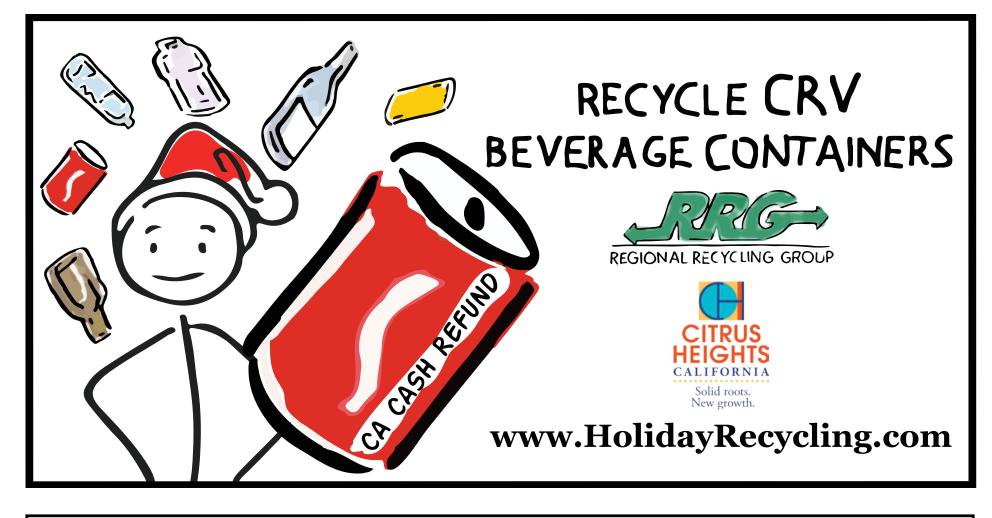
nient no-cost COVID-19 airport employees and community members is another those traveling through "Partnering with City SMF and the Sacramento

Director Cindy Nichol.

will conduct PCR testing, which has a projected turnaround time for results of 48-72 hours after the sample has been received by

of-pocket cost for testing. City Health Urgent Care Those being tested for travel to Hawaii will be required to pay an administration fee of \$20 as part of Hawaii's pre-travel testing program.

Hawaii's pre-travel testing program requires passengers five and older to take a Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT) from a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certified laboratory within 72 hours from the final leg of departure and produce a negative result in order to avoid the state's 14-day mandatory quarantine. A trained professional must observe all tests. Only test results from trusted testing partners approved by the Hawaii State Department of Health, such as City Health, will be accepted. The full details of the program along with answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) can be found on the State of Hawaii's COVID-19 website.



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