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Citrus Heights Messenger

VOLUME 10 • ISSUE 08 Serving the City of Citrus Heights & Sacramento County FEBRUARY 21, 2020

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Transforming Sunrise



More than 300 people attended the Sunrise Mall Community Vision Workshop to share their ideas for transforming the property into a thriving center for shopping, dining, and entertainment.

Story and photos by Shaunna Boyd

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - The City of Citrus Heights is drafting a Sunrise Mall Specific Plan that will help guide redevelopment of the property. To create this new vision for the space, the City hosted a Community Vision Workshop on February 11, to get public input about the revitalization.

The workshop was held in the old Sears building at the mall, transforming a vacant retail space into a busy

and bustling community center for an evening of high public engagement. Citrus Heights communications officer Nichole Baxter said, “We had about 300 people in attendance, which exceeded RSVP expectations and was truly exciting.” So many people attended that the City was scrambling to find more chairs to accommodate the crowd.

Councilmember Jeannie Bruins said that the Sunrise Mall means a lot to the Citrus Heights community and

to those in surrounding communities. She was excited to see how many Citrus Heights residents attended the workshop, stating, “I shouldn’t be surprised because probably the number one question I get is, ‘What’s going to happen to the mall?’ So, I’m very happy to see the community engaging at this level.”

The workshop opened with a detailed information session explaining the need for the Sunrise Mall

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Student Ridership Doubles on SacRT

By Jessica Gonzalez,
SacRT

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) announced that student ridership has doubled since implementing the fare-free program for youth/students in grades transitional kindergarten (TK) to 12th. SacRT launched the RydeFreeRT program in October 2019, which offers youth/students access to the entire SacRT network, including buses, light rail and Smart Ride on-demand microtransit service, for free.

Last month, SacRT experienced record ridership increases with 176,500 student trips taken on bus, which is a 106% increase from January 2019 student ridership.

“One of our top priorities at the City of Sacramento is offering more opportunities for young people,” said City of Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg. “Having a free transit pass makes it easier to get to that paid internship, to that sports practice or that afterschool program. It’s amazing to see so many students take advantage of their new freedom to move around the Sacramento region and take advantage of all the opportunities it offers.”

The City of Sacramento provided SacRT with \$1 million, as well as additional funds from other cities and school districts to counter revenue loss for the year-long RydeFreeRT program.

“Young people have told us the number one reason for chronic absence is lack of transportation. By eliminating transportation barriers, we’re increasing chances for more young people to succeed in school, career and in life,” said SacRT Board Director and City Council Member Jay Schenirer.

“SacRT is setting a new standard that will be emulated across the nation.”

“This program is the first in the nation to offer students free transit seven days a week, anywhere, any time,” said SacRT Board Chair and

Continued on page 3

Coronavirus Update and Reminder About the Flu

By Brenda Bongiorno,
Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County Public Health is closely monitoring the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) that originated in Wuhan, China and has spread to other parts of the world, including the U.S. Currently, there are no confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV in Sacramento County, and exposure risk of 2019-nCoV remains low in Northern California.

Working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the California Department of Public Health and the local medical community, Sacramento County Public Health has a plan in place to identify, isolate, test and investigate any potential cases of 2019-nCoV in Sacramento County.

Sacramento County Health Officer, Dr. Olivia Kasirye, reminds residents, “Currently the risk of exposure to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is low. Community healthcare providers are monitoring for acute respiratory illness cases and gathering recent travel information for specimen testing per CDC guidance. Like we do for other reportable communicable diseases, we are prepared and are conducting surveillance on this new virus strain.”

Symptoms of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) are very similar to the flu, including: runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat, fever and shortness of breath.

To help prevent the spread of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV), practice every day preventative actions:

- Wash your hands often

- with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Stay home when you are sick;
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces;
- People experiencing worsening flu symptoms should seek medical attention – call ahead if recently traveled to China or have had contact with a person with confirmed 2019-nCoV while they were ill.

While the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is concerning, what poses a much greater and more

imminent risk in our community is the flu virus. According to the CDC, the flu virus caused roughly 61,000 flu deaths in the U.S. in the 2017-18 season.

You can protect yourself, your family and the community from getting the flu, simply by getting the flu shot. It’s quick, it’s easy, it’s not too late and the shot provides the best protection against getting the flu. For immunization services, contact the Sacramento County Public Health (SCPH) Immunization Assistance Program at 916-875-SHOT (7468) or use the HealthMap Flu Vaccine Finder.

The CDC website shares updated travel health information and frequent updates on the outbreak. To stay up-to-date on what is happening in Sacramento County, sign up for email and text updates or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.★



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Constitution Specialist to Speak at SRWF Luncheon



Member Mariluz Bucannan meeting with Candidates Tamika Hamilton for US CD3, Lt. Col. Buzz Patterson for US CD7 and Chris Bish for US CD6. Photo Provided by SRWF

By Janet Gardner,
Sacramento Republican Women Federated

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Republican Women Federated once again provided an excellent opportunity for Republicans to share their Platforms in our “Whistle Stop” Candidate Forum at last month’s luncheon. With close to 100 in attendance everyone was still able to meet their candidates.

Our next luncheon meeting will feature Guest Speaker Douglas V. Gibbs, United States Constitution Specialist. Doug is a Radio Host, Author, Public Speaker and outspoken proponent for the spread of constitutional literacy and patriotic advocacy. He is an award winning blogger and free-lance newspaper columnist whose articles appear in both print and online. You can learn more about him on his website page and Facebook page:

<http://www.douglasvgibbs.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/douglasvgibbs>

The upcoming luncheon will be on March 4, 2020 at North Ridge Country Club, 7600 Madison Avenue, Fair Oaks, CA.

Make your reservations early 916 733-1623 or online reservations www.sacramentorwf.org

Reservation Deadline is Friday, February 28, 2020 at noon

Lunch is Beef Ravioli with Housemade Marinara (includes coffee, tea and Cheesecake for dessert) \$29

Registration begins at 11 am-12 noon with Lunch at 12 noon.

Save April 1st for our April luncheon meeting when we will feature a consistent favorite, the Executive Director of Gun Owners of California, Sam Paredes.

Sacramento Republican Women Federated is an affiliate of the National Federation of Republican Women and is dedicated to educating women in Republican principles, increasing the effectiveness of women in the political cause and to introducing the platforms of candidates of the Republican Party in all elections. If you are interested in joining the club, you can contact our Membership Chair: Membership@sacramentorwf.org or go to www.sacramentorwf.org and join online.

The Tibetan Monks of Gaden Shartse Monastery Tour



The Tibetan Buddhist Monks from the Gaden Shartse Monastery's Sacred Arts of Tibet. Photo credit Gaden Shartse Cultural Foundation

By Jesse Gilliam,
Sierra Friends of Tibet Auburn

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Sierra Friends of Tibet Auburn, in conjunction with the General Gomez Arts and Events center, is pleased to announce the return of the Tibetan Monks from Gaden Shartse Monastery's Sacred Earth and Healing Arts Tour February 24 - March 4 2020 presented at the General Gomez Arts and Event Center.

This much anticipated event (beginning Feb 24 at 6pm) will provide a variety of Tibetan cultural presentations for 10 days giving area residents and visitors a chance to experience first-hand the unique culture of the Tibetan people and the rich traditions of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism. This will include the creation of a beautiful Sand Mandala, carefully constructed over the course of their 10 day visit, following ancient Buddhist symbolic designs. Each grain of sand will be carefully laid down by hand using techniques unchanged for millennia. The public will be able to observe and enjoy this moving and meditative process as the monks work. Come throughout the 10 days to fully experience the ever changing work in process. The Gomez Arts and Events Center will be open daily for Mandala viewing from 10:00 am until 6:00pm.

When the mandala is finished, there will be a special ritual to bless the mandala and mark its completion. Following



Completed Sand Mandala. Photo credit Tripp Mikich

the blessing the mandala will be ritually dissolved (always a ‘standing room only’ event), highlighting by example the Buddhist view of impermanence. The sand is then swept up into a pile with small portions of the sand being offered as gifts to members of the audience. The rest of the sand is taken to a body of water where, after a short ceremony, it will be poured into the water as a blessing to purify the environment and all the beings that inhabit it.

- Other events will include:
 - Dharma Teachings
 - Public Talks
 - Group and Individual Healings
 - Workshops and Family Events
 - Land - Home - Business Blessings

The General Gomez Arts and Event Center
808 Lincoln Way, Auburn CA 95603

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(Chinese: 11:30am - 8:30pm)

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Pork Loin Chops Boneless
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\$1.99 /lb

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Pork Loin Roast Boneless
Lomo de Cerdo Asado sin Hueso
\$1.59 /lb

Pork Loin Chops Boneless
Chuletas de Cerdo sin Hueso
\$1.99 /lb

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1.99 /ea

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2.99 /ea

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City Honors Winners of Annual Poster Contest



Above: The City Council recognized the winners of Republic Services' annual poster contest for K-8 students in Citrus Heights. Right: Image of the grand prize winning poster awarded to Sophia Hammon, a 5th grade student from Woodside K-8 school, for her submission on the theme "Know Before You Throw."

Story and photos by Shaunna Boyd

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - At the Citrus Heights City Council meeting on February 13, the Council recognized the winners of the annual poster contest held by Republic Services, the residential garbage and recycling services provider for Citrus Heights. Republic Services hosts the contest each year in partnership with the San Juan Unified School District (SJUSD) and Citrus Heights schools, teachers, and students.

The contest is for students living in Citrus Heights or for SJUSD students in Citrus Heights schools. Students are eligible to participate in the contest in kindergarten through 8th grade.

This year's poster prompt

was "Know Before You Throw." The theme encouraged students to think about the importance of knowing what items can be recycled and which are trash. By knowing the proper bins for discarded items, students can do their part to keep our environment clean.

The Citrus Heights City Council and City staff members helped select the winners. The winning artwork is featured in a 2020 calendar that was mailed to all Citrus Heights' residents.

The winners received a certificate award and a \$25 gift card. The grand prize

winner — Sophia Hammon, a 5th grade student from Woodside K-8 school — was awarded a \$50 gift card.

Participating schools were Grand Oaks Elementary, Carriage Elementary, Mariposa Elementary, Woodside K-8, Kingswood K-8, Lichen K-8, and Sylvan Middle School. Sylvan Middle School had the highest level of student participation and received a \$500 gift card. ★



Theatre In The Heights Presents *The Dinner Party*



The Dinner Party features, Jason Markiewitz, Jason Titus, Jim Last, Judy Merrick, Deborah Bromley, and Toody Lawrence. Photo Theatre In The Heights

By Vanessa Voetsch, Theatre In The Heights

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - Here is a decidedly French dinner party served up in a chaotic mode that only a master of comedy could create. Five people are invited to dine at a first rate restaurant in Paris. They do not know who the other guests will be or why they have been invited. Tossed together in a private dining room, they have a sneaking suspicion that this unorthodox dinner party will forever change their lives. John Ritter and Henry Winkler starred in the wildly successful Kennedy Center production and on Broadway.

Featuring, Jason Markiewitz, Jason

Titus, Jim Last, Judy Merrick, Deborah Bromley, and Toody Lawrence

Written by Neil Simon; Directed by Blake Flores

Performance dates are Fridays and Saturdays at 8p.m. March 6-29, 2020 and Sundays, 3/15, 3/22 and 3/29 at 4p.m.

All tickets are \$15 for all ages (no infants please)

For more information or to make a reservation please call the theater at (916) 509-3445. Also see our website at www.theatreintheheights.com for more information and directions to the theater.

Theatre In The Heights is located at 8215 Auburn Blvd., Suite G Citrus Heights, CA 95610 and seats 50. ★

Freeway Stabbing on Business 80

By John Harris, California Highway Patrol

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - On February 13, 2020, at approximately 11:45 A.M., there was a physical altercation between two females on westbound Business 80 near the Arden Way off ramp. The altercation resulted in one of the parties being stabbed. The suspect fled the scene and the stabbing victim transported herself to the hospital with

non-life-threatening injuries.

The suspect is described as a white female adult approximately 5'5, 140 pounds with long brown hair. The suspect vehicle is a possible 2000's white compact sedan with discoloration to the rear bumper. The victim's vehicle is a green Toyota SUV.

The CHP is looking for anyone with information related to this incident. Anyone who witnessed the incident or has any information is asked to contact CHP Dispatch at 916-861-1300. ★

Student Ridership Doubles on SacRT

Continued from page 1

City Council Member Steve Hansen. "We are seeing a spike in students riding SacRT after school and on weekends, which confirms that there is a strong need for students to get to jobs, internships and extracurricular activities — Exactly what we hoped would happen with the implementation of this program."

"Free fares for youth not only opens the door to opportunity, it creates lifelong public transit riders by instilling the habit at a young age," said SacRT General Manager/CEO Henry Li. "Research shows that people who ride public transportation at a young age are more likely to use it as adults, which could have a tremendous impact on traffic congestion and air quality."

Researchers at University of Texas, Austin who recently completed a study with three Sacramento City Unified School District schools to assess the barriers students face in traveling to school and other activities, are conducting a study on the impact of fare-free transportation on these students' lives in areas including, but not limited to, school attendance, engagement in out-of-school time enrichment activities, participation in work-based learning, and attitudes towards SacRT

in general. The study is expected to be complete this summer.

More than 300 schools in the Sacramento region are enrolled in the program. Most students automatically received a RydeFreeRT sticker with their student ID. For students and youth not attending a participating school, stickers and cards are available for free at local Sacramento County public libraries and SacRT's Customer Service and Sales Center.

Partners and participating school districts include Sacramento Public Library, Center Unified School District, Elk Grove Unified School District, Folsom Cordova Unified School District, Natomas Unified School District, Robla School District, Sacramento City Unified School District, Sacramento County Office of Education, San Juan Unified School District, Twin Rivers Unified School District, City of Citrus Heights, City of Folsom and City of Rancho Cordova. The RydeFreeRT program runs until September 30, 2020. SacRT is working to secure funding to continue the program in future years.

Within fiscal year 2020, SacRT has seen an estimated 6% increase in ridership system-wide. More information on the program is available at RydeFreeRT.com. ★

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Did I Just Call Myself?

Dr. James L. Snyder

I am old enough to remember those days when there was nothing like cell phones. Oh, those quiet, golden silent days. At the time, I did not realize just how wonderful that time was.

I well remember the day I bought my first cell phone. I hesitated because I enjoyed my quiet time. However, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage was enthusiastic about getting cell phones.

All went well for the first couple of years. Then, a new phenomenon developed. My cell phone was ringing all the time. Most of the time, from some silly old telemarketer trying to sell me something I didn't need and certainly didn't want.

I then had an idea. I know it is not often I have an idea, but when I do, boy, is it an idea. When they asked me how I am, I tell them in all the monotonous detail I can think of at the time. I go on and on how bad my day is and how terrible life feels. Then there is that familiar "click," and they've hung up on me.

After all, they asked how I was doing, and I was simply responding to their question.

I am not multilingual,

but I can speak gibberish better than anybody I know. At least, that's what my wife tells me. So, if I have this talent, why not use it?

The first time I used this gibberish language, the person on the other end said, "Speak English, please." To which I continued with my gibberish. They repeat their request, and I continue with my gibberish. Finally, there comes that familiar sound I look forward to, "Click." One call was for pain in my body. Someone sent in my name, reporting that I had pain in my body, and they had a medicine that could help me with all my pain.

"Where do you have pain in your body?"

"Well," I said as seriously as possible, "I have this terrific pain in my neck."

This information excited the telemarketer, and he wanted to know how I got this pain and where it came from. To which I said, "My pain in the neck comes from people like you calling me every day."

"Click."

I look forward to those calls.

Then, the other day I got a strange call on my cell phone. I looked to see who was calling, and to my surprise, it was me. It was my

name and phone number that showed up on my cell phone screen. I was calling myself.

I cannot tell you how anxious I was to talk to myself. I was going to give myself a piece of my mind. Of course, it would be good to talk to myself about certain things.


So, I answered the phone. "Hello, Pastor Snyder, how in the world are you?"

To my great disappointment, it was not me calling me. Rather, it was some telemarketer wanting to know how much my electric bill was each month.


I remember what David said, and he did not have a cell phone. "Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live" (Psalm 116:2).

I do not need a cell phone to call God because I have put my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I now am connected with God.

Dr. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, PO Box 831313, Ocala, FL 34483. He lives with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 1-866-552-2543 or e-mail jamesnsnyder2@att.net. His web site is www.jamesnsnyderministries.com. ★



Dare to Live Without Limits
by Bryan Golden
You Can't Replace Your Good Reputation



Do you have a good reputation? Are you considered honest and trustworthy? Can you be counted on to keep your commitments? When you give someone your word, do you honor it? Are you dependable? Are you courteous, polite, and respectful of others?

Your reputation is based on what you do, not just what you say. Not only do you want to say the right things, you must back up your words with positive actions. A solid reputation is built by doing what you say you will do. A great reputation is priceless. A great reputation is built over a lifetime. Yet, you can destroy your reputation instantly. There are constant headlines about people who have reached the pinnacle of success and then irreparably ruined their reputation by their aberrant behavior.

Once sullied, your reputation can never be fully restored. It can't be replenished like a savings account. This may not be fair, but it's the way it is. Therefore, your reputation must be protected and guarded as an irreplaceable asset. Since every action you take has consequences, either good or bad, you must always think before you act.

Excuses will not fix a broken reputation. You can't blame other people or circumstances. You are responsible for your actions. Always ask yourself if the actions you

want to take will enhance, or detract from the quality of your life.

Building and maintaining a great reputation isn't complicated. Think before you act or speak. Always be considerate, honest, and trustworthy. Keep all of your commitments. Honor your word. Be dependable. Treat others with respect and courtesy. You will have a great reputation by engaging in these behaviors.

What is the value of your reputation? A good, solid reputation will serve you for a lifetime. It will enhance virtually every aspect of your life. A sullied reputation will haunt you. You won't be trusted. Your motives will always be suspect. You will attract negative people and circumstances.

It's easy to destroy your reputation. All it takes is one destructive action. Here are some of the many ways you can ruin your reputation. Act unethically. Harm others physically or mentally. Repeatedly use bad judgement by continuously behaving in a way which produces negative consequences.

Have a price. This is an amount of money for which you will abandon your principles in order to act unethically. Having a price means you are willing to throw away your reputation if you are paid enough. As an added impact, you are forever vulnerable to

blackmail and additional manipulation.

Take advantage of others by acting in a way which cases them any type of harm. Badmouth others. Create or spread rumors. Physically or psychologically bully someone. Any type of rude, nasty, or inconsiderate behavior harms you. Engage in any type of behavior you would not want to see on a newspaper's front page.

As is readily apparent, it's easy to permanently damage your reputation. Protecting it requires constant vigilance and awareness. Engaging in any ethical shortcuts takes you down a dead-end road, which leads off a cliff. There is no effortless path to success. Having unbendable principles protects your reputation.

Knowing what you will, and won't do ahead of time, makes your decision making easy. You won't have to worry about what to do, or be caught off guard. Having this solid foundation protects your reputation.

Treat your reputation as the invaluable asset it is. Say "no" to any activity which has the potential to damage your reputation. Don't give in to peer pressure. Have solid ethics and morals which you won't compromise.

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Dare to Live Without Limits, the book. Visit www.BryanGolden.com or your bookstore. Bryan is a management consultant, motivational speaker, author, and adjunct professor. E-mail Bryan at bryan@colum-nist.com or write him c/o this paper. © 2017 Bryan Golden ★



By Marlys Johnsen Norris, Christian Author

Oh yes you are! So, please don't be deceived. Truth is now being twisted and perverted to mean something other than what it actually is. Truth must be tested and tried, plus verified with what the Bible that states is: **Real truth will set you free!**

The Spirit of Anti-Christ prevails everywhere in our culture today. This spirit is against all that is Holy and good and it is diametrically opposed to Jesus Christ. They speak and teach against Christ and bring rebellion against God with their first attack on those who follow Jesus Christ. Their aim is to remove God from our country, from every human heart creating doubt and unbelief at every turn.

It is no longer enough

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to claim we believe, one must actually *know what we believe and why we believe it!* We must be able to discern between truth and error, be fully persuaded with what the Word of God instructs. It is not the beautiful sayings or photo hung on our walls but *what we believe and who is in our heart.*

And what we believe in - is proved by how we live out the instructions and knowledge of God's Word in our daily lives. Actions prove if we are "for or against" God.

We may need to re-evaluate our concept of God. All too often, we equate God as being like man, with the same frailties, likes and dislikes. Because we refer to Him as Father and Son, we equate Him as being human. Yes, in some miraculous way God/Jesus came in human form, but God is actually so-much-more than our finite minds can ever conceive or even understand!

Do we forget He created all that is? Do we forget His magnanimity and His greatness as Creator/God?

Why would the Word of God states *"We only see through a glass darkly?"* and little by little in the past 2,000 years prophecies have been fulfilled as written in the Old Testament? Men inspired by God's own Spirit wrote them down!

If we just examine the names of God in the Bible, we can catch only a glimpse of His greatness and majesty. Creator Heavenly Father – Jesus Christ God's Son – and His Holy Spirit!

One might use one of these names when they pray to find a deeper meaning to their answered prayers. When we think of God, we must enlarge and change our concept of Him. God is love and God is Spirit!

He calls us to honor and revere Him in our lives. When our concept of God lines up with Biblical truth we begin to truly know the true essence of just who God actually IS.

Marlys Johnsen Norris Christian Author, Stephen's Minister Author of 7 Books Marlysjn@gmail.com ★



By Pastor Ray Dare

Faith is like a muscle. That means it develops by being used. The more you use a muscle the stronger it gets. The more you use the little faith that you've got, the more faith you get. And the more faith you have, the more God can do in your life. We call the circumstances that God creates to grow our faith trials. The Bible says in 1 Peter 1:7 *"These trials are only to test your faith to show that it is strong and pure."*

One test that we all go through is the pressure test. "How do I handle stress? Do I depend on myself or do I depend on God? Do I turn to other things or do I turn to God? Psalm 50:15 says *"I want you to trust Me in your times of trouble so I can rescue you and you can give Me glory."* God says, I want you to turn to Me

Pastor Ray's Encouraging Words

What do You Turn to When Under Stress?

when you're in trouble, not to other things.

Do we do that? No. We usually have God about number nine or ten on the list. We turn to everything else first to relieve stress before we turn to God. You may think, "When I get under stress, I know what I need; I need a drink or one of those little pills. I go to my medicine cabinet and get that little pill and then I won't be stressed." God says, I want you to turn to Me. When you're under stress, it's a test.

You have legitimate needs in your life that need to be met. The problem is you get in a hurry. If God doesn't instantly meet that need, you make up your own plan. And you try to meet your own needs yourself. We do this all the time. We short-circuit God's will, God's blessing in our lives by going for the quick fix, the cheap thrill, the quick relief that's temporary. We do it all the time. We don't wait for God to fulfill that need.

Right now, you may be struggling with financial pressure in your life or maybe you're under enormous emotional pressure. But you're not turning to God. You're turning to other things. Maybe a drink, or you go to the medicine cabinet for those little pills. It's a quick fix, a temporary solution, but it doesn't solve the problem.

What's the antidote? *"If you're walking in darkness without a ray of light, trust in the Lord, and rely on your God."* This is a test! God is going to see when you're under stress are you going to turn to Him or are you going to turn to other things? It's a test. Will you trust Him? Wait for His timing, wait for His provision. He loves you more than you'll ever know, and He wants you to turn to Him, not other things that do not ultimately help you.

Pastor Ray New Beginnings Church 10am Sundays, You're invited!
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Waived Dog and Cat Adoption Fees for CA Veterans



Pets for Vets Act – a win for both veterans seeking companion animals and shelter pets in need of a home. Photo courtesy Pixabay

By Allison Harris, Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Veterans interested in adopting a dog or cat from California public animal shelters are now

eligible for waived adoption fees through the Pets for Vets Act – a win for both veterans seeking companion animals and shelter pets in need of a home.

The new law became effective Jan. 1, 2020 and prohibits any California public shelter from charging an adoption fee for a dog or cat to individuals who present eligible identification in the form of a valid driver's license or ID card with the word "VETERAN" printed on its face. Although the bill waives adoption fees, licensing and other fees may apply depending on the shelter. The bill also limits the number of dogs and cats adopted from that public animal shelter by an eligible veteran to one dog and

cat each six month period.

Sacramento County's Bradshaw Animal Shelter currently offers \$25 adoption fees for dogs, cats and rabbits which include spay and neuter surgery, vaccines and microchipping. With the new law in effect, the shelter is honoring the waived adoption fees for veterans with eligible identification.


"Standard adoption counseling is still applied to make sure a good match is made between the animal and the adopter," said David Dickinson, Director of Bradshaw Animal Shelter.

Once the adoption process is complete, the adopter is responsible for paying required licensing fees and obeying local


animal regulations and ordinances.

Those interested in adopting a pet can visit the shelter during open hours Tuesday and Thursday 12:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., Wednesday and Friday 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 3839 Bradshaw Road, Sacramento, CA 95827. The shelter also operates an offsite adoption center inside Petco located at 8840 Madison Ave in Fair Oaks, CA which is open daily 11:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

For a list of available adoptable pets, visit the Bradshaw Animal Shelter's website. Can't adopt? Consider volunteering, fostering a shelter animal or donating to the Bradshaw Animal Shelter today. ★



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Ask Toni

Veterans Late Enrollment
in Medicare Part B is Costly!!



*Hello Ms. Toni:
I am a Vet and have always received my healthcare from the Michael DeBakey VA center. I turned 65 last April 2019 and did not sign up for Part B in Medicare.
Now I have a serious heart condition requiring surgery and I would like to go to a heart specialist outside of the VA, but I have been told I will have to pay 100% for doctor care, MRIs, etc. since I do not have Part B. I know I need to enroll in Part B, but really do not know what to do. Can you help me? Sam a Marine from Bellaire*

Sam:
It is my honor to help Veterans understand their Medicare options! I am glad you asked about what you should do because **now** is Medicare’s General Enrollment Period which is from Jan 1- March 31 and your Medicare Part B will begin July 1st .
To qualify for Medicare, one must work and pay taxes for 10 years or 40 quarters

and received Medicare Part A at no cost. If you did not work enough quarters, then one can qualify for Medicare if their working spouse has enough quarters.
First, you need to go to your local office in person to enroll in Part B and tell the Social Security Rep that you need to enroll in Part B under the “General Enrollment Period”. You can call Social Security at 1/800-772-1213 and discuss this issue but I would advise you to visit your local Social Security office and apply ASAP because the enrollment time ends on March 31.

Because you did not enroll in Part B when you were first eligible for Medicare, you may have to pay a “late enrollment” penalty of 10% for each full 12-month period that you could have had Part B, but did not sign up for it.

The most important thing to remember about delaying Part B of Medicare is the **10% penalty** for each full 12-month period. This penalty is for anyone who did not enroll in Medicare Part B properly when first eligible. Let’s says you waited 50 months, which is a 4 full 12-month period, then the Part B penalty is an additional 40% added to the current Part B premium for as long as you have Medicare.

As you are aware Sam, no one ever knows when they will need to receive healthcare outside of the VA Centers anywhere nationwide. Now you know why it is so important to enroll in Medicare Part B whether you are a Veteran who uses to VA or someone who only has Medicare and needs serious medical needs or is healthy.

Medicare Part A covers in patient hospital and skilled nursing care and Medicare Part B covers all outpatient needs, doctor services such as office visits and even surgery, MRIs, chemotherapy and the list can go on. Without Medicare Part B, a person can have to pay 100% out their pocket which could be in the \$1,000s or hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Bottom line...enroll in Part B when you are tuning 65 when not working full-time with true employer benefits or covered under a working spouse’s employer benefits.

For questions regarding the maze of Medicare, call the Toni Says® Medicare hotline at 832-519-8664.

Toni King, author of the Medicare Survival Guide® is giving a \$5 discount on the Medicare Survival Guide® Advanced book to the Toni Says Medicare column readers at www.tonisays.com. ★

By Damian Holbrook

Cheers to
The Good Place

for ending on a great note. Kristen Bell, Ted Danson and the entire Soul Squad finally found the meaning of life and moved on in an hourlong episode so sweet and satisfying, it will forever hold a special *Place* in our hearts.

Jeers to Love is Blind

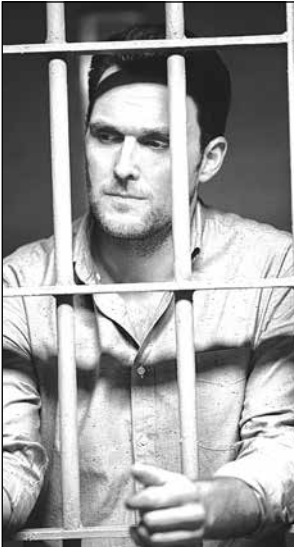
for dashing that hope. The worst thing about Netflix’s head-scratching take on *Married at First Sight*, hosted by Vanessa and Nick Lachey), isn’t that it wants singles to get engaged without ever laying eyes on one another. It’s that some people actually go through with it!

Jeers to Emergence

for pulling the plug on our favorite cyborg. In the ABC freshman drama’s trippy season ender, sexy synthetic life-form Benny (Owain Yeoman, pictured) wound up on the terminal end of nanobot-enhanced baddie Helen (Rowena King) while trying to prevent the destruction of all AIs. Hopefully the show gets renewed ... and Benny gets rebooted.

Cheers to Arrow

for hitting the bull’s-eye with its finale. After eight seasons, the superhero hit that begat The CW’s Arrowverse honored fans of Stephen Amell’s flawed vigilante Oliver Queen with a packed hour of cameos, closure and an even greener



ABC freshman drama’s trippy season ender, sexy synthetic life-form Benny (Owain Yeoman, pictured) wound up on the terminal end of nanobot-enhanced.

pasture for Ollie’s best bud, Diggle (David Ramsey). ★

ASK MATT
BY MATT ROUSH TV Guide Senior Critic

Did You Enjoy The Good Place Series Finale?

Question: What did you think of the finale of The Good Place? I loved it. Also a nice surprise that Shout Factory has announced a Complete Series Blu-ray release for May. (The first 3 seasons were released on DVD only, so I’m glad I never bought those and will get this one.) It’s so satisfying when a series actually gets the ending right. – Jake

Matt Roush: Isn’t it,

though? I tend to be an easy crier, but even so, I had a field day blinking back tears through the finale of this series. It was so wise, so touching, so sweet and spot-on and still funny in its generosity toward its characters. There was also an acknowledgement throughout about “knowing when to leave,” not just as a TV show not overstaying its welcome but in a philosophical understanding that, in Chidi’s (William

Jackson Harper) words, “Mortality adds meaning to our lives,” even in the afterlife. (Spoiler Alert) Watching each of the characters decide, except Tahani (Jameela Jamil), who found a new purpose, to go through the door, not knowing what was on the other side, because “the true joy is in the mystery” as “the wave returns to the ocean” was beyond moving. But I was most enraptured by the “Pinocchio”-like twist for Ted Danson’s Michael, who became so enamored by humanity that of course he had to finally become one. Just perfect.

To submit questions to TV Critic Matt Roush, go to: tvinsider.com ★

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Transforming Sunrise



Residents expressed the need for a community gathering place with a variety of shopping, dining, and entertainment options.

Continued from page 1

Specific Plan. The 100-acre property (approximately the size of 75 football fields) is vital to the city, but it is not currently being used to its full potential. Retail is changing. Many people now shop online, and that change has significantly impacted the mall. Visitors to the mall have declined by 44% since 2008, and 40% of the mall is currently vacant. Revitalizing the mall offers an opportunity for Citrus Heights to move forward with the changing trends, instead of being left behind.

The City wants to transform Sunrise Mall to create a true downtown experience. They asked attendees to work together in groups to design vision boards for the mall property. Baxter said there were common themes that emerged from the vision boards: “We noted a lot of people want to transform the Sunrise Mall site into a place where they can continue to shop, but also gather as a community and live, work, and play.”

Attendees were asked about their favorite place and what makes those places special. Citrus Heights economic development and communications manager Meghan Huber said the City wants to “identify those themes that we want to pull through to a

place like Sunrise Mall. ... Folks have great ideas and we’re really looking forward to see what comes of it.”

Residents expressed the need for a community gathering place with a variety of shopping, dining, and entertainment options. They suggested a bowling alley, movie theaters, kids’ play areas, concerts, and special events. Design and image are also important components of the revitalization, and residents want the mall to feature art, fountains, green spaces, and open pavilions. Many in the crowd cheered at the idea of a hotel at the Sunrise Mall, but suggestions of office and residential spaces got a negative reaction from the crowd.

The City is also engaging with the mall owners on the Specific Plan. The owners are open to various redevelopment possibilities as long as the changes are based on feasibility and public demand. Baxter said that the Specific Plan will be guided by a “deep-dive market analysis” and “analysis of all stakeholder and community feedback.”

Another community workshop is planned for this summer, and residents can always engage in the process and submit ideas through the website, www.SunriseTomorrow.net. ★

River Cats Renew Partnership with FanCompass Seeking to Enhance Fan Engagement

By Daniel Emmons, Sacramento River Cats

WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento River Cats have announced the renewal and expansion of their partnership with FanCompass, a premier digital destination for fan engagement. There will be a host of new ways for fans to interact with the River Cats through rivercats.com, social media, the MiLB First Pitch app, and throughout Sutter Health Park on game days. The platform will also be the latest component of the River Cats’ sustainability circle, with paperless forms and waivers that will cut down on waste at the ballpark.

The FanCompass platform will be integrated with rivercats.com, the First Pitch app, and River Cats social media channels, offering a seamless way for fans to participate in contests, River Cats baseball trivia, voting for players of the homestand or favorite food items, and even trying to predict things like the time the game will end or the total number of pitches thrown. Pushing the frontiers of engagement, FanCompass will further enable the River Cats to use the feedback from the digital platform to improve the overall experience of enjoying River Cats baseball.

“We are thrilled serve as an innovation lab for FanCompass and work alongside them to offer our fans even more ways to connect with the River Cats, both from inside and outside

the ballpark,” said River Cats General Manager Chip



Maxson. “Their interactive platform will help us further execute on making Sutter Health Park a destination for affordable, family fun, while also helping with green initiatives by digitizing many necessary forms and waivers.”

“It has been a pleasure to work with the River Cats, using our technology to continuously push innovation around the way the fanbase interacts with the team,” said FanCompass CEO Jamie Pardi. “A leader in Minor League Baseball, the River Cats have been a perfect partner, sharing our vision of enhancing fan engagement and the overall fan experience.”

FanCompass is a Northern-California based company, currently working with teams across 12 sports leagues globally, and offering unique and interactive campaigns, geared toward fans of every major sport around the world.

The River Cats kick off 2020 by taking on the San Francisco Giants in an Exhibition Game on Sunday, March 22 at Sutter Health Park in West Sacramento. The club’s PCL and Triple-A championship-defense will officially begin on Thursday, April 9 in Reno, with Opening Night at

Sutter Health Park coming on Tuesday, April 14 against the Tacoma Rainiers. Information about season ticket memberships and packages is available now at rivercats.com. Single-game tickets for the 2020 season will go on sale beginning Sunday, March 1 at the annual Preseason Party at Sutter Health Park.

Sutter Health Park is the West Sacramento home of the 2019 Triple-A Champion Sacramento River Cats, and proud affiliate of the three-time World Champion San Francisco Giants. Sutter Health Park is consistently voted one of the top ballparks in America. Season Tickets, Mini-Plans, and Flex Plans can be purchased for the 2020 season by calling the River Cats Ticket Hotline at (916) 371-HITS (4487). The only place to guarantee official River Cats tickets is at www.rivercats.com or by visiting the Tri Counties Bank Ticket Office. For information on other events at Sutter Health Park, visit www.sutterhealthpark.com.

FanCompass is the go-to global digital platform for first-party fan data acquisition, lead generation and measured sponsor activation in the sports industry. The FanCompass platform delivers real-time ROI for marketing, ticketing, and sponsorship. Headquartered in San Rafael, Calif., FanCompass currently works with clubs across international leagues including the NFL, NCAA, MiLB, MLS, USL, and EPL. For more information, visit fancompass.com. ★

California Seeking Volunteers to Help Keep Waterways Clean

California Department of Parks and Recreation

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - California’s Boating Clean and Green Program is looking for individuals to become Dockwalkers and help keep the state’s waterways clean. Dockwalkers raise awareness among the recreational boating community about clean boating practices by distributing educational boater kits at marinas, boat launch ramps and boating events.

Since 2000, more than a thousand Dockwalkers have taught over 20,000 boaters about oil, fuel, sewage, trash and marine debris prevention. California has one of the highest levels of recreational boating activity in the nation. With approximately four million motorized and non-motorized boaters, even a small amount of pollution per vessel can cause serious harm to waterways and marine wildlife.

“We urge any water enthusiast who wants to make a difference in keeping our waterways clean to become a Dockwalker,” said Vivian Matuk, Boating Clean and Green Program Manager. “Educating the public on a one-on-one level can really make a difference for the health of our environment and boaters.”

Anyone who is interested in this effective educational program can view our online Dockwalker videos to learn what we do and see our success stories. Individuals



California has one of the highest levels of recreational boating activity in the nation; Train to keep it clean! Photo by Dockwalker Civicorp

15 years of age and older can become Dockwalkers by simply taking a free, three-hour training class. Training opportunities are available throughout the state from March through May 2020. Pre-registration is required. Participation in the program, including the training sessions qualify as community service.

Dockwalker trainings for this year are:

- Brisbane (Wednesday, March 11)
- San Rafael (Saturday, April 4)
- Vallejo (Saturday, April 11)
- Sacramento (Saturday, May 2)

Marinas and yacht clubs are also encouraged to participate. Participating facilities receive educational materials and tools to operate a clean boating facility and minimize water quality impacts. This program provides marinas with points towards the Clean Marina Designation. Participation in the Dockwalker Program counts towards the nomination of the Club of the Year under the community service category. In addition, yacht clubs and marinas are essential in spreading awareness directly to boaters.

Partnerships with The Bay Foundation, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, U.S. Power Squadrons, Save Our Shores, Lake Berryessa Partnership and many more organizations are integral to this program’s success.

The Dockwalker Program is part of California’s Boating Green and Clean Program. The program is an education and outreach program conducted through California State Parks and the California Coastal Commission. For more information, please visit BoatingCleanAndGreen.com. ★



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Social Security Matters

Why Did My Social Security Payment Go Down?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: Upon reading a magazine article about the 2020 COLA increase, I thought I'd share the following: Like others, I received the 1.6% raise in my Social Security benefit. However, after their manipulations with Medicare, the net result was a reduction of \$124 in my Social Security payment. I can't afford their "raise." I now pay double for Medicare! **Signed: Disgusted**

Dear Disgusted: Actually, Social Security and Medicare are two totally separate and financially independent programs, but the Social Security Administration handles enrollment and premium payments on behalf of CMS (the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services). For 2020, your gross Social Security benefit went up by 1.6% as a result of the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), but at the same time the standard Medicare Part B premium went up by \$9.10 to \$144.60 per month. Most Medicare beneficiaries pay the standard premium amount.



If your Medicare Part B premium is deducted from your Social Security benefit you would normally be protected by a provision known as "Hold Harmless," which prevents your Social Security payment from decreasing as a result of an increase in the standard Medicare Part B premium. But if you have any change (other than a COLA increase) to your Social Security benefit amount, or if you pay an "IRMAA" surcharge on your Medicare Part B premium, the "hold harmless" provision doesn't apply to you. In either of those cases your net Social Security payment could go down as a result of an increase in your Medicare Part B premium.

"IRMAA" is Medicare's "Income Related Medicare Adjustment Amount" which is a surcharge assessed on Medicare Part B (and Part D) premiums for those with higher incomes (the surcharge varies depending upon your IRS filing status and income level). I suspect that you are suddenly subject to IRMAA because of a sudden increase in your income and the 1.6% COLA increase to your Social Security was applied to your new Medicare premium. That, however, fell short of covering your entire IRMAA Medicare

premium increase and, since you're not protected by the Hold Harmless provision, the remainder was taken from your Social Security benefit.

Most Medicare enrollees pay the standard Part B premium (\$144.60 for 2020) and are protected by the hold harmless provision from a decrease in their Social Security payment. But higher earning Medicare beneficiaries are affected by IRMAA, and I believe that is what happened in your case, especially because you say you suddenly "pay double" for Medicare. This might typically happen if you took a large one-time distribution from a tax-advantage investment, or received some other form of significant, but temporary, income. The good news is that if your premium doubled because you had a temporary increase in your income in one year, the Medicare premium increase will also be temporary, and you will automatically revert back to the lower premium the following year.

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Mike Bloomberg's Offensive Campaign

The rich are different from you and me – they can buy themselves instant presidential campaigns.

Former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg has elbowed himself into the Democratic nomination race solely on the basis of his fortune. His campaign is high-handed as only a billionaire many times over could even contemplate. He entered late, is skipping the early contests and hasn't participated in any of the debates to date (although that will change soon, thanks to the Democratic National Committee retrofitting its rules for Bloomberg).

It's a free country, and with more than \$50 billion to his name, Bloomberg can spend as much money as he likes on whatever suits his fancy. But Bloomberg 2020 is still an affront to small-d democratic sensibilities, a tribute not to his superior political skills or messaging compared with the other candidates, but to his access to an enormous personal bank account.

The level of his spending is truly astonishing – Croesus goes all-in on Super Tuesday. Bloomberg spent more than \$300 million on various forms of advertising. He's single-handedly changed the market for TV ads in many places. He spent \$10 million on a Super Bowl spot, or about half of what Joe Biden raised in the entire fourth quarter.

This is the Bloomberg way. He spent a quarter of a billion dollars to become and stay New York mayor for three terms. He was eligible for his third term only because he got a term-limit law changed, with the support of charities that he happened to make generous donations to.

What's wrong with all this, beyond the cynicism of thinking everything has a price tag? Maybe Bloomberg is right, that trying to go in and convince voters of your appeal at town hall events and meet-and-greets in places like Iowa and New Hampshire is for suckers.

But there is much to be said for grassroots politics. It forces candidates to take account, up close and personal, of what their voters believe and want. As president, Abraham Lincoln devoted serious time to meeting with random people who showed up to see him, in what he

called "public opinion baths."

The candidate who does countless of these early-state events must have the ability to inspire and impress, think on his feet, show endless patience and stamina. If he's not up for it, or is a pretender, he will inevitably be exposed.

In comparison to the other candidates, Bloomberg is a Wizard of Oz candidate, shielded and inflated by his TV ads.

Another advantage of the traditional approach is that anyone can do it. Pete Buttigieg, the unknown mayor of a small Indiana town, finished strong in Iowa through sheer talent, tireless work and clever messaging.

All this said, perhaps Bloomberg will break all the rules and be the last man standing between Bernie Sanders and the cusp of the American presidency. Then, his spending might look to a lot of Democrats like a public service. There is also no denying that Bloomberg is a genuinely talented man.

Yet this style of campaigning shouldn't be the norm. If Bloomberg succeeds, he will enrich many TV stations, consultants, pollsters and campaign workers, but impoverish our politics Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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Crime Reports

Citrus Heights Police Report

February 13th February 16th

Date: 02/13/2020 • Time: 1:26 AM • IR Number: 2020-0051904
Crime: **PC 496(D): Attempt To Commit 496**
Location Type: Vehicle • Public Address: Buena Vista Ave & Madison Ave, Fair Oaks, CA 95628
Agency: Sacramento County Sheriff's Department (CA)

Date: 02/13/2020 • Time: 11:00 PM • IR Number: 12001260
Crime: **10851(A) VC: Vehicle Theft**
Location Type: Parking Lot • Public Address: 80XX SUNRISE EAST WY
Agency: Citrus Heights Police Department

Date: 02/13/2020 • Time: 7:54 AM • IR Number: SA202048303
Crime: **459 PC BURG VEHICLE**
Location Type: Office Building • Public Address: 83XX ROSEVILLE RD
Agency: Sacramento Police Department (CA)

Date: 02/13/2020 • Time: 6:20 PM • IR Number: 2020-0054691
Crime: **PC 487: Theft of Motor Vehicle Parts**
Location Type: Parking lot/garage • Public Address: 65XX Coyle Ave
Agency: Sacramento Police Department (CA)

Date: 02/14/2020 • Time: 9:45 PM • IR Number: 12001294
Crime: **459 PC: Burglary - Vehicle**
Location Type: Theft from Vehicle • Public Address: 79XX ANTELOPE RD
Agency: Citrus Heights Police Department

Date: 02/14/2020 • Time: 10:00 AM • IR Number: 12001265
Crime: **10851(A) VC: Vehicle Theft**
Location Type: Car/Motorcycle Sales • Public Address: 61XX AUBURN
Agency: Citrus Heights Police Department

Date: 02/16/2020 • Time: 10:07 AM • IR Number: 12001340
Crime: **484(A) PC: Petty Theft**
Location Type: Theft from Vehicle • Public Address: 75XX WALNUT DR
Agency: Citrus Heights Police Department

Date: 02/16/2020 • Time: 10:49 AM • IR Number: 12001320
Crime: **10851(A) VC: Vehicle Theft**
Location Type: Commercial/Office Building • Public Address: 79XX SUNRISE
Agency: Citrus Heights Police Department

Date: 02/16/2020 • Time: 6:30 PM • IR Number: 12001326
Crime: **496d(a) PC: Possession of Stolen Veh**
Location Type: Restaurant • Public Address: 80XX GREENBACK LN
Agency: Citrus Heights Police Department

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Parents Clash with State Senator Over Parental Rights & Sex Ed in Contentious Capitol Hearing

By Greg Burt, CaliforniaFamily.org

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) – (JANUARY 27, 2020) - “I’m not immoral. I’m not a liar... . It’s not condescending,” Senator Connie Leyva said defending herself before a crowd of offended parents gathered in the Senate Education Committee at California’s state capitol earlier this month. Her audience of over 140 were there to advocate for a sex education transparency bill, SB 673, Senator Mike Morrell had introduced for elementary school students.

Leyva’s cries of innocence came after her audience reacted to being told their overblown reaction to sex education lessons, she considered “age-appropriate,” was due to misinformation about what is in the curriculum. Leyva also speculated the controversy generated by the state’s sex education stemmed from parents “afraid” to talk to their children about sex.

Those comments didn’t go over well with parents and organizations who have been monitoring the increasingly graphic sexuality lessons being introduced to younger and younger children since the implementation of California’s comprehensive sex education law, AB 329. One of those parents was Denise Pursche. She testified at the hearing of how Mt. Diablo Unified School District officials stonewalled her attempts to see 11 comprehensive sex education lessons for her twin fifth graders. According to Denise, once she finally got to see the content after a month of asking, she understood why the district was hiding the sexually graphic curriculum. Denise said some of the lessons were definitely not age-appropriate for her 10-year-olds.

To ensure parental oversight and to prevent the sex education curriculum from being hidden from parents, Denise decided to draw up a legislative proposal that turned into SB 673. The bill had two simple provisions: It required school districts that teach elementary-age comprehensive sexual health and HIV prevention to put that curriculum online for easy and convenient parental review. Secondly, it restores the right of parents of elementary-age students (TK-6th grade) to opt their children into comprehensive sexual health and HIV prevention education courses, rather than passively opt their children out.

Over the past several months, Senators on the Senate Education Committee received tens of thousands of letters and phone calls in support of SB 673. On top of this, 47,500 people signed an online change.org petition advocating for the bill.

Then on January 15 parental rights and faith-based organizations, including the California Family Council, gathered supporters at the capitol as the Senate Education Committee, chaired by Senator Leyva, heard testimony for and against SB 673. The hearing remained tame at the beginning.

Witnesses for the bill, like National Center for Law and Policy President Dean Broyles, reiterated how the Supreme Court had repeatedly affirmed that parents have “the fundamental right to direct the care and upbringing of their children, not the state.” He told stories of how his organization had received many complaints from families across California who faced “barriers to accessing and reviewing the sexuality programs in their schools.”

Also speaking in favor of SB 673 was Dr. Ahmed Soboh, a dentist and the chairman of the Islamic Shura Council of Southern California. “Every parent no matter your age, your gender, or your religion cares about the freedom to educate and protect their children,” Soboh testified. “I cannot clean kids’ teeth without a very detailed consent signed by one of the parents... . I’m sure that cleaning the teeth of a 10-year-old boy or girl is much less serious than teaching them about sexuality.”

Testifying in opposition to the bill were representatives from the California State PTA and Equality California. An opt-in “creates a barrier that would result in students being unnecessarily and unintentionally withheld from class and deny many students who are low income, homeless, or in foster care the public education they deserve because of other parents’ views,” argued Tami Martin, Legislative Manager for Equality California.

Marilyn Lucey, speaking on behalf of 700,000 California PTA members, said her organization didn’t like the opt-in parent signature required by the bill, but was favorable to requiring sex education lessons being put online for easy access.

After several legislators asked questions and made statements, the hearing became

tense after Sen. Leyva starting making remarks that upset the audience. It started when Denise testified that her own superintendent wanted to offer an opt-in for sex education lessons, “but the law prohibited it.” Leyva piped up immediately speaking directly to Denise. “I would say to your superintendent, below seventh grade, K-6, every elementary school district in the state has the opt-in right.” This was a false statement, and the parents in the crowd knew it. Leyva’s own legislative analysis states existing law “prohibits a school district from requiring active parental consent (“opt-in”) for sexual health education for pupils of any grade.”

Senator Morrell tried to correct her, but she doubled down. “It’s already there, Senator Morrell,” Leyva insisted.

“I’m not immoral. I’m not a liar... . It’s not condescending,” Senator Connie Leyva responding to comments from parents during a capitol hearing for SB 673.

The trouble escalated near the end of the hearing when Leyva took the opportunity to give parents a “lecture,” as Senator Morrell called it, about parenting. After telling parents how she allowed her twin daughters to receive sex education in school, she questioned whether parents in the audience had even looked at the curriculum.

Leyva then proceeding to say there are rumors out there saying that California’s sex education curriculum includes teaching about anal sex, kinky sex, phone sex, etc. “If you look at the curriculum it is not there,” she insisted. Many of her audience members knew this wasn’t true. For

example here is a high school sex education lesson from a popular California publisher called “Be Real. Be Ready.” that encourages students to review in class a website called Scarleteen: Sex Ed for the Real World. The website includes graphic details about all the sexual practices, and then some, Leyva said wasn’t “there.”

At this point, sensing she was losing control of her hearing, Leyva turned to Senator Morrell for help. “Senator Morrell, maybe you can ask your witnesses to be respectful of the process,” she said.

Turning to the crowd Morrell tried to settle them down. “I would ask you to be respectful,” he said. Then turning back to Leyva Morrell said, “but also they’re parents you are lecturing, so...”

“I’m not lecturing,” Leyva shot back. “I’m giving my opinion. You know what, but we’re done. I’m recommending a no vote on the bill.” And with that statement, the debate was over. Morrell gave closing remarks and then the committee voted. Democrat senators Maria Elena Durazo, Steven M. Glazer, Connie Leyva, Mike McGuire, Richard Pan voted no, while Republican senators Scott Wilk and Ling Ling Chang voted yes.

Despite the defeat on this bill, the issue of sex education transparency and the rights of parents to oversee and supervise what children learn in public school continues. There is talk of splitting SB 673 into several bills and reintroducing them this legislative session. Details of that plan will be released in the next several weeks.

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