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Citrus Heights Messenger

“Written by the people, for the people”

Volume 4 Issue 1

Serving the City of Citrus Heights and Sacramento County

First Edition for January 2014

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Economic Expectations Rising



The majority of HR contacts were positive about Q1 2014, thirteen percent (13%) remain pessimistic the economy would improve in the New Year.

Pacific Staffing Special Report

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Three quarters of Sacramento's top employers are optimistic about the economy in the New Year and those expectations will keep them busy hiring through Quarter 1. When asked directly seventy-six percent (76%) of

human resource contacts were optimistic about economic growth and job markets in the Sacramento region for 2014. Polled directly by telephone, that optimism is reflected in hiring activity as sixty percent (60%) of top companies say they are planning to hire in January, February and March.

This is a slightly more rapid pace of hiring than last year's first quarter when fifty-seven percent (57%) were hiring with thirty-six percent (36%) motivated to hire for growth, or workforce expansion in 2013. Quarter 1 of 2014 finds forty-two percent (42%) hiring for growth, with thirty-eight percent

(38%) hiring for attrition, or replacements among existing workers in the first three months. These are significant improvements in the market from regional employment and economic conditions just four years ago. As Pacific Staffing discovered then, the first three

months of 2009 sent the market crashing with hiring freezes, workforce reductions, furloughs and shortened workweeks, massive layoffs and companies going out of business as the national recession hit the area. That's history as seventy-four percent (74%) of those surveyed also say they expect their companies to grow in 2014. While the majority of HR contacts were positive about Q1 2014, thirteen percent (13%) remain pessimistic the economy would improve in the New Year. Two companies are expecting to reduce their workforce numbers due to seasonal change in the first three months of the year. As the economy improves employers are beginning to share concerns about retention of essential skills, the need for specific technical backgrounds and some entry-level positions. Drivers who can pass DMV, drug and other background checks are in demand among distributors, bottling plants, construction supply and materials firms. Customer service, sales, manufacturing, warehouse and shipping lead hiring demand. Of the top 100 Sacramento Regional Companies, 35% are Service, 36% are Manufacturers, 18% are Construction and 11% are Retail. How does this Quarter compare to last Quarter, or last year? Find out for yourself. For more information, employment blogs & market surveys go to www.pacificstaffing.com. ★

'Santa's Lunch Sack' Brightens Day for County Homeless

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - While many families in Sacramento County were waking up on Christmas morning to breakfast and Christmas presents, one enthusiastic group was waking up and looking forward to preparing and handing out hundreds of bag lunches to the homeless and others in the Sacramento area. Volunteers began gathering at the Sylvan Community Center in Citrus Heights as Channel 13's 'Good Day Sacramento' was filming the story that would bring in even more workers to this labor of love. Over 50 men, women and children of all ages formed two assembly lines making simple lunches of sandwiches, snacks and water to create 500 lunches.

At noon a dozen workers formed a caravan of five vehicles,

working their way through Citrus Heights, Carmichael and continuing into Sacramento, handing out lunches along the way. Beginning at the waterfront in Old Sacramento, Santa's 'elves' combed the area, carrying coolers and thermal bags filled with lunches, looking for those who could use a meal. As volunteers asked, "would you like a lunch", most recipients eagerly accepted with a "thank you" or "God bless you", while a few declined, apparently a bit embarrassed to admit their need. Despite the climbing temperature, which brought out the homeless from under bridges or other shelter protecting them from the cold, it took an eagle eye to spot those in need. Local realtor Michelle Ascue had that

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'Santa's Lunch Sack' volunteers Michelle Ascue, Brad Merriman, (1st and 2nd from left), and David Sears (far right) with lunch recipients Tom Srch, Ed Russell, and Steve Fauzi.



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# Santa Arrives Early

*Santa arrived early at A Community For Peace and brought local Angels from the Citrus Heights Community*



By Donna Van Dolah

**CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG)** - Santa arrived early this year at A Community For Peace and brought with him the spirit of Christmas and his holiday Angels. These Angels live in and near our community of Citrus Heights who reach beyond their immediate circles to demonstrate love and support to others in need.

The little girls and boys who receive free counseling and support at A Community For Peace located in Citrus Heights will wake up on Christmas morning to a brand new bikes donated by The Citrus Heights Women's Club who delivered the gifts to Miss Katie, Director of ACFP's Next Generations Childcare Center. Featured in photo one: Darla Buechner, President, Katie Huemer, ACFP, Claudia Ferguson, Parliamentarian, Valerie Lujan Sunduko, Secretary, Linda Juarez-Griz, Treasurer.

In addition to these angels Pastor Andre of Twin Oaks Baptist Church presented ACFP with food and toys. Jan from the LakeView Ladies Club of Citrus Heights dropped by to see Miss. Katie Director of ACFP, Next

Generations Childcare Center, and Sandy H. also with Next Generations to give Teddy Bears and \$2200 so that our babies will have something warm to snuggle with as they drift off to sleep every night for the next year. Featured in photo two: Sandy, Miss Katie and Jan of LakeView Ladies Club of Citrus Heights.

Angels from Adventist Health, whose employees collected over \$2000 also arrived early for the holiday, and InterState Oil, who's CEO and employees adopted 24 trauma impacted children providing the children with specific therapeutic toys which will intervene on the impact and help them develop skills, provide comfort and allow them to have FUN... at the same time! Featured in photo three: Miss Katie, Brent Andrews, President and Greg Andrews, Vice President of Interstate Oil Company and the Interstate Oil team of angels, Elaine Whitefeather, Executive Director of ACFP shared that "our children and families are already burdened with the challenges of escaping from an everyday nightmare of fear and abuse. That often public holiday giving programs are challenged with giving to our children because of the need to protect their identities

and confidentiality. This creates a barrier and makes many giving programs inaccessible. In spite of these barriers our kids cling to hope for a better tomorrow.

The generosity of our community who continues to care and support our neighbors brings more than a holiday moment—our community gives hope where there is fear, joy when there is sadness and compassion from strangers that make them know that there is more than just Christmas Spirit in Citrus Heights – there is a prayer for a better tomorrow, a prayer for a peaceful tomorrow for each person and that true kindness does exist.

A community that cares can transform lives! ★

*A Community For Peace mission is to end all forms of violence to women and girls, men and boys, and to promote Peace in our homes, schools and communities. We seek to reduce the impact of domestic/family violence on children. ACFP is located at 6060 Sunrise Vista Dr., Ste. 2340, Citrus Heights, CA 95610, 916-728-5613, is a 501(c) 3 non-profit. For more information visit: www.ACommunityForPeace.org*

# Small Business Wish List for 2014



Commentary by John Kabateck, NFIB/CA Executive Director

To say that 2013 was challenging for small business is really an understatement. Coming off of 2012 saddled with additional taxes with the passage of Prop. 30 and more regulations with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, many small business owners certainly thought that some restraint might be shown this year.

That turned out to be too good to be true – our elected representatives were able to get a 25% increase in the minimum wage passed, which means that small business owners will be paying \$10 an hour in 2016. And there are some who are proposing \$15 an hour in the future!

While legislators opted to heed the call of Big Labor instead of their constituents to get the minimum wage bill passed, NFIB was able to stop a slew of other bills that would have lowered the threshold for increasing parcel taxes and raised upwards of \$6 billion in taxes on a host of other things including property, plastic bags, sweetened beverages and oil. But make no mistake – these bills will be back in 2014 as legislators try once again to tax and fee small businesses out of existence.

So as we look forward to 2014, what is it that small business wants – no, needs – in order to survive and thrive in California?

First, small business owners call on the Governor and

Legislature to rein in the out-of-control California Air Resources Board. CARB has never taken the time to talk to and hear from small business about the devastating impacts that AB 32, cap and trade, and diesel regulations are having on Main Street. If those regulations continue to be rammed through without small business – our number one job creators – in mind, there will be unintended consequences for small employers, including job loss and business closures. And while we are on the topic of state agencies, our state leaders need to match actions with rhetoric to stop state agencies from shaking down mom and pops. There are too many agency representatives out there acting like bounty hunters, instead of finding ways to help – there is no incentive to help businesses when the fines go into agency budgets. We don't think this is what the Governor had in mind as a way to keep and attract business here.

Regulatory reform also needs to continue to be a priority for the Governor and those in the Capitol. We were able to achieve some Prop. 65 reform this year, with Assembly Bill 227 (Gatto), which will allow certain businesses, including restaurants, fourteen days to fix any Prop. 65 warning problems before they can be sued. This is important and welcome because Prop. 65 lawsuits generate twice the revenue for attorneys that ADA lawsuits do. We need to bring honest science to "green chemistry" and need to stop paying the way for plaintiff's attorneys to sue small businesses. Much more needs to be done to hold greedy lawyers accountable and give small business owners more certainty in the midst of all the permits and rules they have to comply with.

Finally, on the legal front, we are hopeful that next year the California Supreme Court will review and overturn precedent in the lower courts that says that business owners must compensate employees at a minimum hourly rate for non-productive time, even if those employees

make an annual salary far in excess of what they could possibly make working at minimum wage. It is time for some level-headed decisions to be made in favor of small business owners, who treat their employees like family and want what is best for them.

If all else fails and we don't get what we need from those already in office, small business owners want to see more of their own serving in the Legislature. NFIB/CA and our members certainly appreciate those currently in office who support small business, but there aren't nearly enough in the Capitol building. We need leaders who have had direct experience in signing the front of a check – and who will put Main Street's interests above unions, trial lawyers, or big corporations. This is a huge priority for NFIB and is the only way that small business owners will truly be heard and given opportunities for success in this state.

We don't think hard working, uncertain mom and pops are asking too much of our leaders in Sacramento these days – simple common sense will go a long way in fixing a lot of the challenges that small businesses face. Perhaps if our politicians make it a practice to stop and ask themselves, "What would a small business owner do?" we all might find a greater spirit of hope on Main Street - not just during the holiday season but every day of the year.

For more than 70 years, the National Federation of Independent Business has been the Voice of Small Business, taking the message from Main Street to the halls of Congress and all 50 state legislatures. NFIB annually surveys its members on state and federal issues vital to their survival as America's economic engine and biggest creator of jobs. NFIB's educational mission is to remind policymakers that small businesses are not smaller versions of bigger businesses; they have very different challenges and priorities. Learn more at [www.NFIB.com/ca](http://www.NFIB.com/ca). ★

# AARP Tax-Aide Program Requests Volunteer Phone Bank Assistance

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)**

- The AARP Tax-Aide program requests volunteers who will schedule tax appointments for AARP tax preparation locations. Volunteers work at the 2-1-1 call center phone bank, located at 2020 Hurley Way, near Cal-Expo. Volunteers are requested

to work a minimum of two four-hour (half day) shifts, Monday - Friday.

Calls would be taken January 15 through April 15. Volunteers would be given a 3 hour orientation session by 2-1-1 staff. Please contact Norm Losk at [norm.losk@comcast.net](mailto:norm.losk@comcast.net).

AARP Tax-Aide is a program of the AARP Foundation, offered in conjunction with the IRS. This volunteer position provides an opportunity to learn new skills and provide valuable, fulfilling service to the community. AARP membership is not a requirement. ★

# IN MEMORIAM Bernard Elwood Falls

Bernard Elwood Falls, 88, of Lynchburg, passed away, Sunday, December 22, 2013, at Lynchburg General Hospital. Husband of the late Rose Lee Hunley Falls. Born February 27, 1925, in Bedford County, the son of the late Floyd Lohmo Falls and the late Ruth Roop Falls.

Bernard was a cement contractor for Murchison Construction Company for 30 years. A member of Twin Oaks Southern Baptist Church, Citrus Heights, CA. Bernard

was a member for 60 years in the Cement Masons Union (OPCMIA). He served our country in the U.S. Army during World War II.

In addition to his wife, Bernard was preceded in death by seven siblings, Carl Falls, Alton Falls, Shirley Falls, Elaine Abbott, Muriel Lindsay, Faye Massie and Mae Massie.

Bernard is survived by two daughters, Lynette Falls Holly (Bill) of Concord, CA and Patricia Falls Du Mont

(Dolph) of Fort Lauderdale, FL; two siblings, James Falls of Lynchburg and Christine Falls of Lynchburg; one granddaughter, Diane Lynn Holly of Concord, CA; numerous nieces and nephews; and his special canine companion, Rocky.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society, 2050 Langhorne Rd, Lynchburg, VA 24501.

Online condolences to [bfalls-family@aol.com](mailto:bfalls-family@aol.com). ★

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# Citrus Heights Messenger

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# ‘Santa’s Lunch Sack’ Brightens the Day for County Homeless

Continued from page 1

eye and quickly got the rhythm down, alerting “runners” handing out the meals with, “curb, bench, doorway, right, left, alley, bus stop,” etc. Those riding bicycles were offered and most accepted the meal.

The group swept the river-front, Old Town, downtown Sacramento, Cesar Chavez Park, and Loaves and Fishes before reaching the North C and 16th Street homeless encampment. There the remaining 300 lunches disappeared in thirty minutes. Spread out along both sides of the street in this mostly industrial area were hundreds of men, women and even families sheltered only by what they brought with them. One family was living in their vehicle, another two-year-old girl in a stroller sat by her mother on a curb. As word got out about the free meals, dozens appeared for food, some asking for other supplies they needed including backpacks and blankets.

It was estimated that, even though there were other charity groups offering free meals from their vehicles, an additional 1,000 lunches could have easily been distributed on this street alone, and in the areas of the Salvation Army and the Union Gospel Mission.

Santa’s Lunch Sack is the inspiration of Brad Merriman, a former restaurateur, paramedic, and a fire fighter for over 20 years. His Facebook page explains how he woke up on Christmas morning in 2009 alone for the first time in his life. He made the decision that instead of spending the day feeling sorry for himself, he would figure out how to make a difference to others. He went to the restaurant he owned at the time, made 40 bag lunches and began handing them out to the homeless in Sacramento.

Friends and family encouraged him to continue, and in 2010, with the help of his military friends and others, 80 bag lunches were distributed in Sacramento. Despite the pouring

rain, they forged on and “put smiles on many faces”.

Now president and CEO of TACD Media, a one-stop multimedia company, Merriam is able to call upon his contacts through word of mouth and on through multimedia to create interest in the project and recruit volunteers.

Realizing that the homeless and other poor are hungry every day of the year, the group is looking into the feasibility of duplicating this project with the hopes of distributing 1,000 lunches on Easter Sunday.

The last count of homeless in Sacramento County in January of 2013 showed more than 2,500 on the street, and in shelters and transitional facilities in Sacramento County. Homeless families are up 32 percent. Source: “sacramentostepsforward.org”.

For more information and photos, go to ‘Santa’s Lunch Sack on Face Book. If you are interested in helping in the future email: bradtacdmedia@gmail.com; phone: 916-778-7973. ★

# Citrus Heights Police Department Wins Award



**CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG)** - The California Peace Officers Association (CPOA) Award of Distinction is presented for an outstanding act or accomplishment by a law enforcement individual or unit for an ongoing operational activity that performs a great service to the community. This year, the Citrus Heights Police Department’s Communications Center dispatchers earned this top honor by winning this year’s CPOA Award of Distinction.

The Citrus Heights Police Department’s dispatchers were recognized for their implementation of a unique “Community Oriented Policing” model that includes community outreach, programs and responsibilities that assist both the officers and the public.

More specifically, the Citrus Heights Police Department’s Communication Center dispatchers implemented a COPS model into the scope of their workday.

Dispatchers have individually implemented projects that allow

police officers to work on proactive policing.

The dispatchers understand the importance of handling the smaller details of police work, including community outreach and programs that assist both the officers and the public.

One example of the Communication Center’s “COPS model” projects includes bringing the Project Lifesaver Program to the department. This program helps families and caregivers with locating their loved ones who have wandered away because of Alzheimer’s, Dementia, Autism, Down syndrome and other cognitive conditions.

The CHPD dispatch team fully managed the implementation, oversight, donation outreach, client monitoring/monthly site visits, and training to its police officers.

Additionally, the center has its own NHTSA-certified dispatcher who attends local health and community events to provide car seat safety checks throughout the community.

The dispatchers also identify citizens who played an integral part in assisting law enforcement with the apprehension or arrest of someone caught in the commission of a crime and sends a letter of appreciation on behalf of the Chief of Police to recognize their good deed.

And lastly, upon SWAT call-outs, the dispatchers immediately collect intelligence, site maps, suspect profiles, criminal histories, and response equipment to quickly assist with SWAT team deployment.

This is just a small sampling of the high quality work this highly motivated team accomplishes in addition to their regular daily responsibilities.

The Citrus Heights Police Department’s Communication Center team truly believes in its policing role and is committed to the betterment of the Citrus Heights Police Department and the community as a whole. ★

Source: City of Citrus Heights

# Optimist Club Holding E-Waste Event

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**WHEN:** Saturday, January 11th from 9 am to 5 pm. for E-Waste & Clothing, 9 am to 12

pm for Document Shredding.

**COST:** Donations Accepted: E-Waste-\$5/car & Document Shredding-\$5/box

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# Navigating Change

## 56th Annual Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce

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- ★ *Community Awards*
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**Join the Citrus Heights Regional Chamber of Commerce on January 24th for the 56th Annual Installation Dinner.**

**Incoming Chair Evan Jacobs’ theme is Navigating Change as he and the Chamber’s Board of Directors are installed for a new term.**

Outstanding businesses and individuals will be honored as the **2013 Best of Citrus Heights Awards** are presented in several categories, and the overall outstanding business with the most votes is announced as the **Best of the Best** award winner. Community awards will also be given in several categories including Police Officer of the Year and Firefighter of the Year. The Master of Ceremonies for the evening is former Sheriff and KFBK afternoon talk show host John McGinnis.

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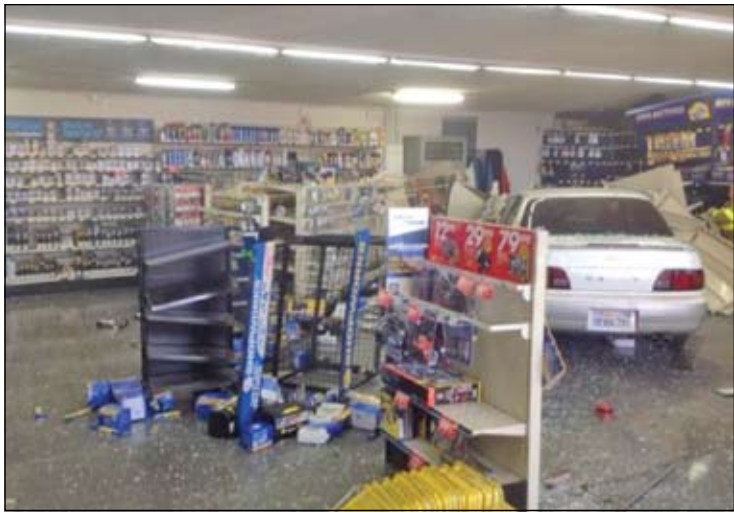
**[www. BestofCitrusHeights.org](http://www.BestofCitrusHeights.org) – Voting ends Friday, January 10th.**



# Vehicle Crashes Into Auto Parts Store

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - Metro Fire units were dispatched to a single vehicle crash into a Napa Auto Parts store at 6831 Watt Avenue. Crews arrived to find the vehicle completely in the store and one customer with minor injuries.

Though CHP is conducting the investigation, it appears the driver mistakenly applied the gas pedal instead of the brake. Due to the building and inventory damage, the store will be closed for an unknown amount of time.



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## Sacramento County DA Reports


*Recent cases of interest*

**CASE: Ramces Orellana (01/03/14)**  
**PROSECUTOR: Deputy District Attorney Timothy Carr, Special Assault & Child Abuse Unit**  
District Attorney Jan Scully announced today that 40-year-old Ramces Orellana was sentenced by the Honorable Trena Burger-Plavan to 32 years in state prison. On April 10, 2013, a jury convicted Orellana of 13 counts of committing lewd and lascivious acts on a child under 14.  
Orellana was the live-in boyfriend of the victim’s mother. He molested the young girl when she was between the ages of 11 and 12.

**CASE: Angelique Jones (01/03/14)**  
**PROSECUTOR: Deputy District Attorney Alan Hengel, Insurance Fraud Unit**  
District Attorney Jan Scully announced today that 21-year-old Angelique Jones was sentenced to 300 days in the county jail and placed on 5 years formal probation after pleading to a felony violation of insurance fraud. Jones and co-defendants Susan Lee, Kristel Marquez, and Angela Medeiros decided to stage an accident using a rented U-Haul truck in order to fraudulently collect insurance monies from UHaul’s vehicle insurance carrier.  
On December 12, 2011, Medeiros rented a U-Haul truck and purposely collided with Lee’s car that was also occupied by Jones and Marquez. Shortly after, all the defendants filed bodily injury claims with U-Haul’s insurance company. When questioned by the insurance company, Medeiros denied knowing any of the occupants in the car and all of the occupants denied knowing Medeiros.  
The California Department of Insurance investigated this matter and discovered through the defendants’ Facebook listings that Medeiros was Jones’ mother and Lee’s and Marquez’s mother-in-law. Jones’ co-defendants previously pled to a felony violation of insurance fraud and each was sentenced to 180 days in the county jail and placed on 5 years felony probation.

**CASE: Daniel Weddle (12/20/13)**  
**PROSECUTOR: Deputy District Attorney Aaron Miller, Career Criminal Prosecution Unit**  
District Attorney Jan Scully announced today that the Honorable Cheryl Chun Meegan sentenced 50-year-old Daniel Weddle to 60 years to life in prison. On November 20, 2013, a jury convicted Weddle for the first degree murder of his wife and it was found true that he personally discharged a firearm during the commission of the murder causing death to the victim. Weddle was also convicted of assault with a semiautomatic firearm on the victim’s roommate and it was found true that he personally used the same firearm during the commission of the assault.  
Roughly six weeks before the December 1, 2011 murder, Weddle moved out of the apartment he shared with his wife because she told him she wanted to end the marriage. Weddle moved back home with his parents. On the day of the murder, he came to the apartment at his wife’s request because she had found some belongings were missing. The wife’s roommate was also home.  
When Weddle saw some of the family law divorce paperwork that his wife had been working on, he became enraged. He retrieved a handgun from the bedroom, returned to the room where his wife was and pointed the gun at the roommate as leverage to force his wife to sit down. He then shot his wife six times, killing her.

**CASE: Daniel Hegwood (12/23/13)**  
**PROSECUTOR: Deputy District Attorney Tate Davis, Career Criminal Prosecution Unit**  
District Attorney Jan Scully announced that the Honorable Richard Sueyoshi sentenced Daniel Hegwood to 22 years and 4 months in state prison. On November 26, 2013, Hegwood pled no contest to felony charges of robbery and terrorist threats.  
On February 4, 2012, Hegwood entered a downtown Wells Fargo Bank, approached a teller and an assistant manager, and demanded money from two tills. He claimed that he had a bomb and that innocent people would be hurt unless they gave him the money. After they handed over the money, Hegwood exited the bank and left a bag inside. He was caught several minutes later by Sacramento police officers. After the building was evacuated, the bomb squad determined that Hegwood did not possess an actual bomb.  
Hegwood has a criminal history dating back to 2001, including six prior felony convictions of possession of a controlled substance, assault, first degree residential burglary, first degree robbery, and reckless evasion of law enforcement. He has been sent to prison on two prior occasions.



# DMV Reminds Motorists of New 2014 Laws

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - With 2014 just around the corner, the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is reminding motorists of some of the new laws that will become effective in the new year. The following laws go into effect on January 1, 2014, unless otherwise noted.

**Bicycles: Passing Distance.** AB 1371 (Bradford), known as the Three Feet for Safety Act, will require a motor vehicle driver passing a bicycle that is proceeding in the same direction to pass with no less than 3 feet between any part of the vehicle and any part of the bicycle or driver. When three feet is not possible, the motor vehicle must slow to a reasonable and prudent speed and only pass when no danger is present to the bicyclist. Failing to do so can incur a fine, regardless of a collision or not. This law will take effect September 16, 2014.

**Clean Air Vehicle Decals / “HOV Stickers.”** AB 266 (Yee) and SB 286 (Blumefeld), together extend sunset dates for low emission, zero emission vehicles to operate in high occupancy vehicle lanes (HOV) without meeting occupancy requirements to January 1, 2019.

**Commercial Driver’s License.** AB 1047 (Linder) will allow the DMV to conduct the commercial drive test for the holder of an out-of-state commercial learner’s permit. The department would electronically transfer the information to the motor vehicle department in the applicant’s state of residence. AB 1047 also modifies the license class definitions to require a driver operating a bus weighing more than 26,000 pounds to hold a commercial Class B license and a driver operating a bus weighing 26,000 pounds or less to hold a commercial Class C license.

**DMV Vehicle Registration Pilot Program.** SB 806 (Hueso)



current Honoring Veterans design of the Veteran’s Organization Plate, a new program to reissue the Veteran design that was issued prior to January 1, 2010. These plates are available to all vehicle owners. The Department of Veterans Affairs must secure 7,500 pre-paid applications in order for the department to implement this plate program.

Additionally, the Department of Motor Vehicles will begin the process of implementing AB 60 (Alejo)—the new law requiring DMV to issue a driver license to an applicant who is unable to submit satisfactory proof that he/she is legally present in the United States —by drafting new regulations and preparing field offices to process new applications. The new law becomes operative by January 1, 2015. The applicant will be required to meet all other driver license qualifications.

For complete information on chaptered bills enacted in 2013, please refer to the Legislative Counsel website at [www.LegInfo.ca.gov](http://www.LegInfo.ca.gov).

**Save Time, Go Online!** Doing business with the DMV has never been easier. The DMV offers an array of services to customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through its Website including online advance appointments for written and drive tests; vehicle registration and driver license renewals, selection of personalized license plates, changes of address and payment of fees via secure debit transactions. Customers can also effect transactions by calling DMV customer service at (800) 777-0133. DMV is a department under the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA). ★



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ACROSS

1. Kenyan warrior
6. That male
9. \* \_\_\_\_ down snow pile to build fort
13. Graven images
14. E in B.C.E.
15. Coveted publicity spot
16. Flooring choice, pl.
17. Bag in Paris
18. Get up
19. \*Ice fisherman's gear, pl.
21. \*Christmas, e.g.
23. Of a female
24. Farmer's joy
25. Nile viper
28. Famous bus rider
30. Comes clean
35. Denials
37. "National Velvet" author Bagnold
39. Like 1950s style, today
40. Put one over
41. Paisley in paisley fabric, e.g.
43. Large aquatic tetrapod
44. Impede
46. Lush
47. \*\*I flew like a flash, tore open the shutters, and threw up the \_\_\_\_
48. Sci-fi weaponry
50. Snaky swimmers
52. Yellow river tributary
53. "Twelve \_\_\_\_" of "Gone with the Wind"
55. Feverish
57. \*Cozy fabric
61. Dough
64. Sanctioned by law
65. Boiling blood
67. Pontifical

DOWN

1. Technology school
2. Mine entrance
3. Solo activities
4. First in Hebrew alphabet
5. Federal Reserve in relation to U.S. currency
6. Hitler's deputy
7. George Gershwin's brother
8. " \_\_\_\_ Man" (Village People)
9. Reality TV actress Spelling
10. Full of enthusiasm
11. \_\_\_\_ Verde National Park
12. Mouse to a snake
15. Less agitated
20. Intro
22. Stupid person
24. Groups of lay people
25. \*Winged impression

26. Composer of U.S. military marches
27. "Hides or skins used for hats and gloves
29. \*From above in winter
31. Shorter than seconds
32. Scarecrow stuffing
33. Jagged, as a leaf's edge
34. \*2014 Olympic site
36. \_\_\_\_ gin fizz
38. Can be done in our out
42. Manuscript sheet
45. Quick, to Dora
49. Ed.'s request
51. \*To be hit in winter?
54. "A Fish Called Wanda" star
56. Andean animal
57. Move like lava
58. Bulgarian money
59. All excited
60. Cairo's waterway
61. Maître d's list
62. Copycat
63. Fabled racer
66. \*Hot buttered \_\_\_\_
68. Caustic chemical

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

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**Sudoku Puzzle on Page 6**

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

**Crossword Puzzle on Page 6**

M	A	S	A	I		H	I	M		T	A	M	P			
I	D	O	L	S		E	R	A		C	O	V	E	R		
T	I	L	E	S		S	A	C		A	R	I	S	E		
T	I	P	U	P	S		H	O	L	I	D	A	Y			
						H	E	R		L	O	A	M			
A	S	P				R	O	S	A		F	E	S	S	E	S
N	O	E	S			E	N	I	D		R	E	T	R	O	
G	U	L	L			M	O	T	I	F		C	R	O	C	
E	S	T	O	P		W	I	N	O		S	A	S	H		
L	A	S	E	R	S		E	E	L	S		W	E	I		
						O	A	K	S		I	L	L			
F	L	A	N	N	E	L				M	O	O	L	A	H	
L	E	G	I	T				I	R	E		P	A	P	A	L
O	V	O	L	O				N	U	N		E	M	E	R	Y
W	A	G	E					E	M	U		S	A	R	E	E

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By Ronnie McBrayer

I chuckle every time I hear this story. It seems a poor fellow’s vehicle had conked out on the side of the road. After waving about like a banshee for more than an hour, he finally convinced a speeding motorist to stop and help. “If you could just push my car at a speed of 40 miles per hour,” the stranded motorist said to his newly arrived partner, “I’m convinced it will start, and I will be on my way.”

Sliding back behind the wheel of his car, the driver was relieved. The ordeal of being stuck in the middle of nowhere was finally over. He would be rolling again in a matter of seconds, all his worries behind him. Sadly, that exactly where his worries were: Right behind him.

As he waited for that gentle nudge on the rear bumper that would move him down the road, it never came. Looking around he discovered that his Good Samaritan had disappeared. What a cruel joke! Where could he have gone?

It was then that he saw his rescuer in the rearview mirror. He was a quarter of a mile away and bearing down on the broken down car at 40 miles per hour – just as he had been instructed. But the driver had not communicated as clearly as he had intended.

We Christians tend to bumble

## Clear Communication is Compassionate Communication

our communication a little more than most. In these harrowing days when fewer and fewer people seem to stop and listen to what we have to say, we sometimes think the answer is to scream a little louder. Picket signs. Demonstrations. Boycotts. Petitions. Displays of righteous indignation accompanied by red faces and bulging carotids. The result is indeed clearer communication. It’s clear that we are mad as hell about something.

Without a doubt most Christians want to see serious change in the world. I do too. I would love to see less violence, greater compassion, a moratorium on our limitless consumerism, and fewer public displays of vulgarity, just to name a few. But the solution is not to meet what we regard as societal inadequacies with the equal inadequacies of being judgmental, taking revenge, waging cultural warfare, and condemning every person who doesn’t agree with us.

If, in our passion to communicate something we feel very strongly about, said communication becomes hateful, as Christians we have betrayed our message. The path of Christ is to love those whom we consider our opponents. The way of Jesus is to engage and pray for our enemies, not to kill them. And don’t be fooled; our words can be as murderous (or more so) than flying bullets and hand grenades.

Mahatma Gandhi was a man that the world – including the Christian universe of which I am a part – could learn a great deal from. He revolutionized India with his leadership of the Indian Independence Movement, and

he perfected the philosophy of non-violent resistance. He met the injustice and oppression of his day with peace, integrity, and resolve.

Gandhi famously said, “We must become the change we wish to see in the world.” That is, if I want a less violent society, I must become less violent. If I want to experience more compassion, I must become compassionate. If I want less consumerism, I should pull my own leg out of the commercialistic trap. If I want to protect my children from overt sensuality, then I should teach them respect for others, the value of a person and the human body, and I should probably turn the TV off earlier in the evening.

So, if you are one who loves a good boycott, why not take a different tactic: A little grace, a truce, a lowering of the weapons might be a necessary change of pace. And if you have been on the receiving end of a few displays of virtuous disapproval, cut some slack for your accusers as well. We’re all just trying to get the car rolling again, but without clear communication, it is nothing but a wreck waiting to happen.

Ronnie McBrayer is a syndicated columnist, pastor, and author. His newest book is “The Gospel According to Waffle House.” You can read more at [www.ronniemcbrayer.me](http://www.ronniemcbrayer.me). ★

*Ronnie McBrayer is a syndicated columnist, pastor, and author of multiple books. You can read more and receive regular e-columns in your inbox at [www.ronniemcbrayer.me](http://www.ronniemcbrayer.me).*



By Marlys Johnsen Norris, Christian Author

Believers need to realize some interesting facts about their personal relationship with God. When one sincerely invites Jesus into their heart and life, He never leaves regardless what kind of life one determines to live. His promise is never violated even if the person decides to ignore His teaching and facts. God knows the heart of every person. Their name is written in indelible ink in God’s Book of Life and God does not erase it when a person strays

## Sin Separates Us from the Family

from Him.

However, some people will refer to one who walks away as not being sincere when they accepted Christ as their Savior. And they fail to follow the precepts of God as written in the Bible. They say they are using God as an insurance policy to avoid Hell; thereby dishonoring God. Believers need to stop judging. It is God’s job not ours! We are not God!

Our job is to be a vessel of His love to restore that person back into God’s grace. They listen, read and examine your happier life, they will desire the same thing for themselves. Ultimately because of a loving witness they will return.

We went to church where a man was unfaithful in his marriage. Everyone knew about it!. I was shocked when for the first time our church followed the precepts taught in Scriptures about such a

situation. The elders made a decision and ex-communicated him publicly in front of the congregation. He left for a couple years and He was no longer a part of the church. Then, he humbled himself and came back after asking his wife to forgive him and she did. He repented publicly before the congregation and was restored. This was a powerful witness of God’s saving grace and mercy in operation within the church as they also forgave him.

When someone is a part of the kingdom of God in any church, Scripture tells us in John 17 -- we become “One in Him” so it is like a family. When one sins and falls away it affects the whole body of Christ. I know only how deeply it affected me! ★

*Marlys Johnsen Norris Christian Author of 7 books “God Moves Mountains, It was a Miracle!” [Marlysjn@gmail.com](mailto:Marlysjn@gmail.com)*

## Cold is as Cold Feels and I Don’t Like Feeling Cold

Dr. James L. Snyder

I was sitting on the back porch sipping an ice-cold tea with a splash of lemon when I received a text from a relative up north. I was enjoying a pleasant afternoon basking in the winter sun of Florida.

I am not sure what God was thinking of when He created the north with all that bad weather and snow and such, but I know what He was thinking of when He created the South especially Florida. He was thinking in particular of me and my insatiable love of the sun. Basking in the Florida sun is the great reward of being smart and moving to Florida.—

I have some friends who were born in Florida and think they are a little bit better than me. I remind them that they had no choice of being born in Florida but I, on the other hand, moved to Florida on my own volition. I think I have the upper hand on that one.

I may be old but I certainly do delight in the modern technology. It used to be that when you got a call from a relative you had to answer the telephone and talk to the person on the other end for as long as they hung on. Today, thanks to modern gadgetry; when a relative wants to contact me, they usually do it by text. I love it.

Getting a text is a strange thing, or it can be. If I do not respond right away, I can always claim that there is “something wrong with my cell phone and my texting isn’t working right today.” Then I can get back to that relative whenever it suits me. Or, as the case with some relatives, and you know who I mean, I can ignore it.

If you are a relative of mine and have not heard from me or had any of your text answered the simple answer is, I am not really ignoring you (ha ha ha) my cell phone is not working correctly.

This relative that text me was complaining about how cold it was up north and even had the courtesy to send me a picture of their backyard just chock-full of some white substance known as snow.

The text read, “I bet you wish you were here to enjoy this?”

I think that relative would have lost that bet for sure. I love those snow scenes on postcards or in text messages like this one, but as to be personally involved with all of the frigid snow, do not bet on me!

Years ago, Cold and I experienced a deep disagreement and we have been separated ever since. As far as I am concerned, the separation is final! I really do not want anything more to do with Cold. We are not even on speaking terms.

Cold, after all, is a relative thing especially when the relatives are up north in the winter.

Up north, they complain when the temperature falls below 30.

Here in Florida I complain when the temperature falls below 70.

Whenever the temperature dips below that magical 70, I have to break out one of my sweaters. What an inconvenience for me to have to put on a sweater because it is just a little bit cool on the outside.

Then my relative sent me a picture of her standing in the snow looking like the abominable snowman. She had more clothes on than I actually own and have in my closet. I wonder how she walks around wearing all those clothes? How in the world does she ever sit down wearing all those clothes?

And what about that thing wrapped around her head? We have hats here in Florida but not quite like the one she was wearing. It looked like she was wearing some igloo.

At this point in my life, I could not afford, for a variety of reasons, to move back north.

I do not think my relatives up north could put up with me at this point. They offer me a friendly invitation to come and spend some time with them during the winter season. I really could not handle it. As soon as the temperature dropped below 70, I would be complaining, grouching and working on everybody’s nerves.

I would be such a nuisance that they would have to get together and buy me a plane ticket back to sunny Florida. My relatives should thank me for not moving up north to “enjoy the snow” with them. See how much I am saving my relatives? Do they appreciate it?

No relationship is quite like that relationship that spans several hundred miles. You know the old saying, “Absence makes the heart grow fonder.” So, if you add distance to that absence you have the epitome of a wonderfully fond heart.

Many things separate us from one another. Sometimes that separation is voluntary and sometimes it isn’t.

The apostle Paul understood that nothing could separate him from God. “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

It does not matter how cold it is outside as long as inside there is a warm relationship with God bordering on fiery expectation. ★

*Rev. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, P.O. Box 831313, Ocala, FL 34483. He lives with his wife, Martha, in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 866-552-2543 or e-mail [jamesnsnyder2@att.net](mailto:jamesnsnyder2@att.net). His website is [www.jamesnsnyderministries.com](http://www.jamesnsnyderministries.com).*

## SCOE Operation Recognition Seeks Eligible Veterans to Receive High School Diplomas

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) is again awarding high school diplomas to qualifying U.S. Veterans and Japanese American citizens through its popular “Operation Recognition” program.

The Operation Recognition program was adopted in October 2001 by the Sacramento County Board of Education to honor the contributions and sacrifices of individuals who missed completing high school to serve in the U.S. military (specifically World War II or the Korean War) or relocated to a World War II internment camp for Japanese American citizens. In 2005, the County Board of Education expanded the program to include veterans of the Vietnam War.

The Sacramento County Board of Education has provided diplomas to 171 veterans and Japanese American citizens through Operation Recognition since 2001. Eight of the diplomas have

been awarded posthumously.

Residents of Sacramento County are encouraged to request diplomas on behalf of themselves or qualifying family members, including persons who are now deceased. April 30, 2014 is the deadline to submit applications. The Sacramento County Board of Education is scheduled to hold its next Operation Recognition diploma ceremony on Tuesday, May 20, 2014.

Operation Recognition applications are available online at [www.scoe.net/or](http://www.scoe.net/or) or by mail from: Operation Recognition, P.O. Box 269003, Sacramento, CA 95826-9003. To request that an application be mailed, phone (916) 228-2416. Applications are also available from the Sacramento County Veterans Service Office, located in midtown Sacramento at 2007-19th Street. There is no charge to participate in the program.

Qualifications for an Operation Recognition diploma include:

- Applicant or recipient is a Sacramento County resident;
  - Veterans—show proof of Honorable Discharge from U.S. military service occurring during WW II, the Korean War or the Vietnam War
  - Japanese American citizens — show proof of internment in a WW II relocation camp; and
  - Veterans and Japanese American citizens — give name of high school applicant was attending at time of induction into military service or internment.
- An application may be submitted by a family member of a qualifying individual, living or deceased. Persons who meet the qualifications, but earned a GED, also are eligible. Diploma recipients and/or survivors should be current or former Sacramento County residents. Those living outside Sacramento County may be referred to their local county office of education. ★

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# Resolution Revolution



By Gold River Resident  
Jodie Barringer Myers

The holidays of 2013 are so...last year. I, like you, hit the *PAUSE* button during Thanksgiving and Christmas. I reflected and relaxed and enjoyed the family fun and holiday hoopla.

As a new year dawns, it is now time to hit *REFRESH* and *RESET*. But I'll take a pass on that *RESOLUTION* thing.

Look up "resolve" or "resolution" in your Webster's. It's a hoity-toity, weighty word that means *I hereby declare and promise to the world, and myself, with firmness of mind and purpose, that I will attain each and every goal upon which I set forth.*

Or something like that. And I'm just not doing it anymore.

I started a one-woman Resolution Revolution more than a decade ago.

It used to be that, starting around December 27, I'd vow to myself and anyone within earshot that I'd no longer contribute to the fast-moving, ever-changing, exhilarating rumor mill that seems to run on high gear when amongst friends; that I'd floss every single night – even those hard-to-reach back teeth; that I'd *keep* clean and organized all drawers and cabinets, especially in my bathroom; that I'd volunteer my time at least weekly at Bayside Church or St. John's Shelter or the Crocker. Oh, and of course I'd lose two inches off of each thigh and run a marathon by year's end.

*(Cue the shattered glass.)*

By March of each year, my dental hygienist would reprimand me for my lackadaisical flossing skills. (*"Oh, ya gotta be sure and get way back in there, Jodie."*) And speaking of mouths, by April I would realize that I opened mine way too often when discussing who-did-what-to-whom-where-and-when, thus being a major contributor to the rumor mill. By June my drawers were more "clutterful" than

ever, and the bathroom cabinets became even more discolored from smeared lipstick and blush residue. Volunteering? I didn't do much. And, of course, the marathon was never run, and my thighs were not one whit smaller in circumference.

So you see, I grew tired of unfulfilled promises to myself. I deemed myself an epic failure. And *that* is why I started the Resolution Revolution.

But back to those *REFRESH* and *RESET* buttons...

There is a wonderful "new car smell" to every January. It's a great time to trade in the woe-ful, ugly and unsavory parts of the previous year for a shiny new replacement, and to look forward to all the doors, rife with potential and possibility, that will open. Makes me wish there were an *OPEN* button.

So here's to you, and to the brand new baby that is 2014, and to all of us becoming the better, new and improved model of our former selves...and to confidently knocking, peeking in, tiptoeing, walking or barging through those doors. ★

Jodie Barringer Myers writes a blog, *cottagecheeseandcrepepaper.com*, and can be reached at *jbthinmint@hotmail.com*.



By Pastor Ray Dare

What are you expecting out of life? When you look into your future, what do you see? Do you look at your future with the eyes of faith or with fear? If you're not expecting the best, if you're not facing your future with faith, if you're not expecting God to do something significant in your life, then God wants to change your perspective.

When I say, "Expect the best," I'm not talking about wishful thinking. You know, "I hope I don't have any problems in life." Right! You will have problems in life! You've already lost that one. You will have difficulties – count on it. Expecting the best, is not denying reality; it's not denying the facts, the circumstances. The Psalmist writes in Psalm 125:1, "Those who trust in the Lord are steady as Mount Zion, unmoved by any circumstance." Faith is not denying the circumstances, faith is being unmoved by the circumstances. Faith is moving ahead in spite of the circumstances. Faith is facing

## How to Expect The Best

the facts without getting discouraged by them.

You may be thinking, "Pastor, how can I expect the best, when everything in my life seems so wrong? You don't know what I'm going through! My problems are too big! Why should I expect the best?" The answer to that is found in a very famous Bible story. The story of David verses Goliath, found in 1 Samuel 17. It's a story about faith, about expecting the best in the face of over-whelming circumstances. The Bible says that Goliath was over nine feet tall! He was buff, a skilled warrior and a fighting champion. Goliath had everything that the world said he needed to be successful. He had the size, he had skill, he had the right education and training, he had the right equipment. But David had something that Goliath didn't have. David had faith! David had a relationship with God and he expected the best. Notice what he said to Goliath, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord...This day the Lord will hand you over to me... for the battle is the Lord's..." 1 Samuel 17:45-57 (NIV). David expected the best; he expected God to slay the giant.

You may have some giant problems in your life right now. Today you may be facing a financial Goliath. You may be facing a health Goliath. You may be facing a relational Goliath. I don't know what you've been through or what you're going through right now, but I do know this – God is bigger than your Giant and He wants to help you. He will help you, as you place your hope and trust in Him. Not in your own ability or reasoning or resources, but in Him.

God wants you to enjoy life! He doesn't want you to go through life in fear and doubt and dread. He wants you to face your future with faith, to expect the best. But that begins by taking the first step of faith – turning control of your life over to Him, relying upon Him. I'm not talking about religion or joining a church. I'm talking about a genuine, day-by-day relationship with God, a daily reliance upon God through his son Jesus Christ. That's what gave David the confidence to face his giant and it will give you confidence to face the giants in your life.

So, never let another person or people or giant problem intimidate you, because with God on your side, you can expect the best. Today's impossibility is tomorrow's miracle.

Pastor Ray. ★

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## Root Cellar Genealogical Society Membership Meeting

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Thursday, February 13; 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm - Christ Community Church, 5025 Manzanita Avenue, Carmichael

- Program TBA by Glenda Lloyd. Plus Genealogical "Show & Tell" - Root Cellar Members share their family heirlooms and family history displays.
- 6:15 – 7:00 Pre-meeting Open discussion on "Documenting, Preserving and Displaying your Family Treasures". Visitors always welcome! ★

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## New Law to "Zap" Tax Evasion Among State Tax Laws to Take Effect January 1, 2014

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - New laws that take effect Jan. 1, 2014 give the California State Board of Equalization (BOE) new resources to fight the underground economy and protect taxpayers.

BOE-sponsored Assembly Bill 781 makes it a crime to buy, sell, install, or use "zappers." This technology is used to hide or remove sales transactions and evade paying tax. Additionally, it defrauds the state and provides users an unfair advantage over taxpayers who comply with the law.

Another weapon against tax evasion is BOE-supported Assembly Bill 576, which creates the Revenue Recovery and Collaborative Enforcement (RRACE) Team, composed of the BOE, Franchise Tax Board (FTB), Employment Development Department (EDD), and the Department of Justice (DOJ). The bill authorizes the team and other agencies to exchange information and investigate underground operations.

The BOE also sponsored Senate Bill 442 which helps protect taxpayers' rights by assuring taxpayers are notified timely of bank charges they may incur due to a BOE processing error. Taxpayers may file a reimbursement claim 90 days from the date a bank or third-party incurred the charge, and the BOE must respond within 30 days of the claim.

Other notable bills that affect taxpayers include:

- Senate Bill 90 grants a sales and use tax exemption for manufacturing and research and development equipment from July 1, 2014 – July, 1 2022. Manufacturers, researchers and developers of biotechnology, engineering, and life science will receive a 4.1875% sales and use tax exemption for qualifying purchases.
- Assembly Bill 551 allows cities and counties to create Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones and offers landowners preferential property tax assessments if they use this land within a zone for "small-scale" agriculture.
- For a complete list of BOE-sponsored legislation enacted in 2013, visit <http://www.boe.ca.gov/legdiv/leg2013cont.htm> ★

Source: BOE Newsroom

## River Cats Now Hiring for 2014 Season

**WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento River Cats are in the midst of filling between 150-200 seasonal positions for the upcoming 2014 baseball season at Raley Field.

The club — which is entering its 15th season in Sacramento — is hiring clean team members, emergency medical technicians, ushers, Kids Corner representatives, Merlino's Freeze workers, and several other seasonal positions. In addition to the seasonal positions, the River Cats are also looking to fill full-time positions in several departments including ticket sales and corporate partnerships.

The first River Cats home game of the season is set for April 11 when the Salt Lake Bees — Triple-A affiliate of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim — come to town.

Those interested in applying are asked to visit [rivercats.com](http://rivercats.com) for more information. ★

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NEW YEAR-  
NEW MESSAGE

It was a hectic holiday. It was fun, but there are always a few strained times with family and friends and especially on a marriage. So I thought it appropriate to begin the New Year with some tips on how to resolve some of those problems and turn them into marriage solutions. So I turned to well-known marriage counselor **Elliott Connie** on my POPPOFF Radio Show for some ideas. He has a fresh approach to resolving love relationship conflict. Most of us hate to hear the words “We need to talk.” It’s like getting punched in the stomach. Why? Because we’re conditioned to expect conversations to be about problems rather than solutions. Enter **Elliott**. He says it only takes a few simple behavioral shifts to flip problem-focused talk into its positive counterpart solution-focused communication. In his book “**The Solutions Focused Marriage**,” Elliott gives us five simple habits that will bring out the best in your relationship. Looking for change? Here you go:

**1) Replace “where we’re at” with “where we want to be.”** For any prickly issue that’s causing conflict in your relationship—whether it’s sex, money, kids, or division of labor—you have a choice when

POPPOFF!

with Mary Jane Popp

discussing challenges. One is to view it as a problem and discuss who is to blame, how it happened, and how it makes you feel. A better choice is to discuss the issue in terms of a goal. When you begin the conversation with goals, it gets both partners thinking about solutions, possibilities, and opportunities for change.

**2) Look beyond flaws and discuss your honeymoon phase instead.** Couples get into a negative state of mind when they start to fixate on pet peeves” their partner’s annoying habits, shortcomings, and flaws. Talking about what you don’t like about each other only does damage—there’s no opportunity for positive feelings to emerge. Instead, try this activity. Retell the story of how you first met. Try to remember everything you loved about each other. What did your partner do to move the relationship forward and how did you keep the passion going? This conversation will stimulate lots of good ideas and feelings.

**3) Notice what’s pleasing about your partner and the relationship. It’s all too common to notice problems and overlook progress.** Think about what your partner did right in the past few days—like a small endearment, pleasant mood, asking about your day etc. Share that information. It makes you aware of the kinds of things that make your partner feel good, and it helps each partner feel noticed, valued, and appreciated. Again, progress, not problems.

**4) Redefine your marriage by continuing to date.** When he asked

married couples to define their marriage, he often hears comments like “it’s a lot of work” or it’s pretty humdrum.” They don’t have to define your marriage. When you first dated, you said and did things to please your partner. He brought you gifts. She wore the dress he loved. You can get out of a marriage rut by doing the same kind of things. The key is to do things regularly—daily--that make your partner happy.

**5) Function as a true partner-ship, and establish new roles.** Couples divide up the responsibilities in different ways. One partner may do more domestic work while the other may take on finances and larger household chores. Couples who recognize and hone their respective skills as partners tend to have fewer problems. Talk about what you are good at and what you are not. It’s just like a business. The partnership is most effective when people’s roles are matched with their strengths.

That’s a good start to a New Year. Remember focusing on problems only

creates negative feelings and creates impasses and conflict. Flip that problem-focused talk into solution-focused talk. Get out of a relationship rut and reignite the passion with your partner. Check out **Elliott Connie’s** tips in detail in “**The Solution Focused Marriage**.” You can also learn more at [www.elliottspeak.com](http://www.elliottspeak.com).

What a way to start out the New Year with a happy marriage! Your marriage can be serene in 2014. HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! ★

Partial Roof Collapse as Crews Fight Fire Early Christmas Morning

**RIO LINDA, CA (MPG)** - Metro Fire units responded to the 6800 block of 22nd Street for a report of a house fire. Responding crews reported a large column of smoke with flames visible from a distance. The first arriving units found a two-story house, at the end of a long driveway, with the second floor fully involved in fire. They immediately started attacking the fire from the second floor, while searching the house for victims.

The heavy fire quickly weakened the roof, to the point of collapse. Knowing roof construction and fire behavior, firefighters were aware that the structural integrity was compromised, and had already started moving off of the second floor. This awareness is what kept crews from being injured, as sections of the roof began falling into the structure. A full evacuation of the second floor was called for, and firefighting operations were relocated to



the first floor and to the outside of the structure.

At the time of the fire, the home was being remodeled and was unoccupied. Thirty-one firefighters worked together to extinguish the fire and protect the first floor from fire damage. This aggressive firefighting saved

the homeowners an estimated \$75,000. No firefighters or civilians were injured, and the cause is currently under investigation.

CHP and Sacramento Sheriff, who were both on scene, were investigating reports of shots fired before the fire. ★

Congressman Ami Bera, M.D. Donates Half of Salary Earned

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)**- Congressman Ami Bera, M.D. visited recently with students at Thomas Edison Elementary School who are participating in the Reading Partners literacy program. While visiting with students, Bera donated \$2,400 to the program, half the amount of money earned during the government shutdown. He is donating the other half of the money earned during that period to the U.C. Davis’ Children’s Miracle Network.

“Reading is one of the most important skills we can teach our children. That is why I support Reading Partners’ excellent work recruiting volunteer tutors to work one-on-one with the kids who need it most,” said

Congressman Bera.

He was joined by the school Principal Todd Lindeman, Reading Partners’ site coordinator Jenny Cauley, and Executive Director for Reading Partners of Sacramento Deanna Berg. “Congressman Bera’s donation and support go a long way in helping to make Reading Partners successful for our community. Third grade is a critical literacy level that shapes the rest of a child’s ability to learn. Up to third grade children are learning how to read. After third grade they are reading to learn,” commented Berg.

Reading Partners is an education nonprofit dedicated to improving students’ reading skills. They recruit and train

community volunteers to work one-on-one with students from low-income communities who are reading 6 months to 2.5 years below grade-level. Tutors and students meet for 45 minutes twice a week and follow a structured, research-based curriculum. In the 2012-2013 school year, nearly nine in ten Reading Partners students accelerated their rate of learning in reading.

Congressman Ami Bera, M.D. represents Sacramento County. For more updates on Rep. Bera follow @RepBera on Twitter, like Congressman Bera on Facebook, or visit [www.bera.house.gov](http://www.bera.house.gov).

Source: Office of Ami Bera

Tax Tips for Charitable Contributions

**CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG)** - When it comes to charitable giving, Americans are very generous. In 2012, charitable giving was up 3.5 percent, with Americans donating \$316.23 billion to charity according to Giving USA: The Annual Report on Philanthropy by the Giving USA Foundation and The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. On average, almost one quarter of charitable donations occur during the holiday season (also known as year-end giving). As we enter the 2013 holiday season, Jackson Hewitt Tax Service® reminds Citrus Heights taxpayers that altruism can give back at tax time.

“While taxes may not be at the top of the mind when it comes to charitable giving, the ability to receive a deduction on taxable income for their generosity is a unique privilege to American taxpayers,” said Frank Schwartz, an Enrolled Agent who operates Jackson Hewitt offices in Citrus Heights and Orangevale. “However, not all charitable contributions are equal under the tax code. To be tax deductible, charitable donations must be made to a qualified organization, and for tax purposes, there is a big difference between giving money, goods and time.”

Schwartz offers four helpful tips about claiming charitable contributions on an income tax return:

•What the IRS considers a charitable contribution – A charitable contribution is tax deductible if the donation or gift is made to a qualified organization. Taxpayers can visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) to view a list of qualified organizations. To be deductible, the donation must be voluntary and made without receiving anything of equal

value in return. Charitable contributions can include money or property given to a qualified organization as well as certain out-of-pocket expenses incurred when serving as a volunteer.

Tax deductible contributions do not include the cost of raffle, bingo or lottery tickets, the value of donated time or services or the value of donated blood, even if given to a qualified organization.

• What documents are required to deduct a charitable contribution – Taxpayers are required to keep records and receipts for all charitable contributions regardless of the amount or value. A bank record or a receipt from the organization is required for all cash contributions, and a separate, written acknowledgement from the qualified organization is also required to claim the deduction when a single cash or property contribution is \$250 or more.

• When charitable contributions can be deducted – Charitable contributions can generally only be deducted for the income year in which they are made. Contributions sent by mail are considered made on the date they are postmarked. Contributions that are not able to be deducted in the current tax year (because of adjusted gross income limits) may be carried over to future years.

• How to deduct noncash charitable contributions – Gently used clothing, toys, furniture or other household items donated to a qualified organization allow taxpayers to deduct the fair market value of the donated items. To qualify for the deduction, all items must be donated in good condition. The IRS does not provide a guide to determine fair market value; instead, taxpayers

must survey thrift and consignment stores for similar items to provide an indication of fair market value. IRS Publication 561, “Determining the Value of Donated Property”, provides general IRS guidelines on non-cash donations.

Generally, the deduction for property contributed is equal to the fair market value of the property at the time of the contribution. However, different rules may apply if the value of the property has increased or for vehicle donations.

“There are many rules and regulations surrounding tax deductions for charitable contributions,” continued Schwartz. “A conversation with a trusted tax preparer knowledgeable of the current tax code is the best way to maximize the deduction amount for charitable contributions made during the year.”

The Citrus Heights Jackson Hewitt office is open year round to assist taxpayers in identifying the best tax strategy for their individual situation and circumstances. To learn more about deducting charitable contributions, please visit [www.JacksonHewitt.com](http://www.JacksonHewitt.com). To speak with a tax preparer or make an appointment at the Citrus Heights Jackson Hewitt office, please call: (916) 721-0200. ★

*Jackson Hewitt Tax Service Inc. is an industry-leading provider of full service individual federal and state income tax preparation, with approximately 6,500 franchised and company-owned locations throughout the United States, including locations in Walmart and Sears stores nationwide in the 2014 tax season.*

Book of Dreams: Sacramento Bee Readers Fulfill \$5,000 Dream for Soldiers Project/Sacramento Office Furniture

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - For the second consecutive year, readers of the Sacramento Bee have made dreams come true for the staff at The Soldiers Project/Sacramento.

The local non-profit organization, which provides free, confidential mental health services to active-duty military and veterans of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and their loved ones, recently received a check for \$5,000 to fund the purchase of new office furniture.

The grant was made possible by the Sacramento Bee’s annual “Book of Dreams” series which gives front-page publicity to yuletide wishes expressed by local non-profit agencies and individuals in need. This year, 13 dreams appeared in print, all of which were realized.

The Soldiers Project’s wish for new office furniture to replace a room full of mismatched, worn-out hand-me-down desks, chairs and bookcases was one of 26

additional dreams that were also funded through donations made by generous Sacramento Bee readers.

“We feel so fortunate to have the support of the Sacramento Bee for the second year in a row,” said Becca Bettis, program director for The Soldiers Project/Sacramento. “This grant will allow us to make our office more functional and provide a private space for therapists to see clients when the need arises.”

The grant was awarded through the Sacramento Region Community Foundation which administers the Sacramento Bee Book of Dreams Fund.

According to the Bee’s website, The Book of Dreams raised \$192,000 in 2012, an amount the organization hopes to meet or exceed this year. The Soldiers Project/Sacramento was one of 16 organizations or individuals profiled on the newspaper’s front page during the 2012 campaign. TSP’s dream for \$5,000

to purchase a commercial grade copy machine was one of the 16 fulfilled last year.

The Soldiers Project/Sacramento, named in 2012 by the White House as one of the nation’s top 20 non-profit military service organizations, is comprised of about 45 volunteer therapists who last year gave nearly 1,000 hours of free treatment to soldiers and their families. Its unlimited services go beyond those provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs medical system. ★

*For more information about The Soldiers Project/Sacramento and its programs, visit [www.tspsacramento.org](http://www.tspsacramento.org) or visit the Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/tsp-sacramento](http://www.facebook.com/tsp-sacramento). To be connected with a therapist, call locally 916-792-3728 or toll-free 877-557-5888 or e-mail [Sacramento@TheSoldiersProject.org](mailto:Sacramento@TheSoldiersProject.org).*

Two Alarm Residential Fire

**ANTELOPE, CA (MPG)** - Just before 4 this morning, Metro Fire units responded to 5321 Glenleigh Ct. in the City in the community of Antelope for a report of a structure fire.

When the first Metro fire units arrived they found the two story home completely involved in fire and the homes on both sides threatened. Metro Fire Crews began an immediate initial attack

on the main fire and began to protect the homes on both sides. Due to the heavy volume of fire, a second alarm was called for additional resources. No one was home at the time of the fire and there are no reported injuries to civilians or firefighters.

Eight engines, four trucks, three Battalion Chiefs and two ambulance worked together to put this fire out and keep

firefighters safe from injury. Metro Fire’s Fire Investigation Unit was called to the scene and they are conducting a cause and origin investigation. Damage was estimated to be approximately \$300,000 to the structure and \$250,000 to the contents. However, do to the aggressive nature of the fire attack it is estimated that the operation saved the two homes on both sides. ★

Military Retiree/Spouse Meeting

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Our first meeting for 2014 will be held on Jan 14 at the North Highlands Park and Recreation District on 6040 Watt Ave. We

are pleased that Suzi Vinci, the new Sacramento County Veterans Service Officer, will be our guest Speaker. She is one of the best VSOs around and is completely

dedicated to serving our veterans. If you have any questions, please contact our volunteers at 916-640-8446, Mon thru Thurs, 0900 to 1500 hrs. ★

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**By Elise Spleiss**

Excitement grew and did not dissipate until the afternoon when the Marines had loaded eight overflowing bins into their truck for the children of Sacramento County.

For entertainment, fifth and sixth grade students from Carmichael's Mary Deterding

Adding to the festivities, children and attendees were able to have their photo taken with Santa in his special sleigh, a UH-1 Huey helicopter parked in front of the center.

*Source: Office of Congressman  
Ami Bera, M.D.*



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**SATURDAY**

**Sacramento Midtown Farmers Market**

2020 J Street (Between the STANF Native American Health and Bioware buildings)

Every Saturday from 8 am to 1 pm - all year round, rain or shine



**SATURDAY**

**Sunrise Mall Farmers Market**

6190 Sunrise Boulevard, Citrus Heights (behind Sears located in SE Parking Lot)

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# The Flu is on the Rise

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Following the normal seasonal pattern, influenza activity is on the rise in California. Many California counties are reporting patients who are critically ill with influenza, including healthy young adults.

The H1N1 strain appears to be the predominant strain circulating so far in California this flu season. It causes more illness in children and young adults, compared to older adults. This year's influenza vaccine protects against the strains circulating in the state, including H1N1.

"It is not too late to get the flu vaccine," urged Dr. Ron Chapman, director of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and state health officer. "A yearly flu vaccine is the most important step in preventing influenza. It's important to remember that unlike other vaccine preventable diseases, it is necessary to get a flu shot every year."

The vaccine is available now. Once vaccinated, it takes approximately two weeks before you are fully protected against the flu. An influenza vaccine is especially important for pregnant women and other people at

higher risk for severe influenza.

In addition to getting vaccinated, it's crucial to practice good health habits. If you become ill, you should take actions to stop the spread of germs, including: Stay home when you are sick, Cover your coughs and sneezes, Wash your hands with soap/water, Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

You can also protect your health by eating a nutritious diet and getting enough sleep. If you think you have influenza, contact your physician.

Visit a flu vaccine location near you to get immunized. Some local health departments may also offer free or low-cost immunizations. ★

# Tax Guide Helps With 2013 Taxes

**WASHINGTON, DC (MPG)** - Taxpayers can get the most out of various tax benefits and get a jump on preparing their 2013 federal income tax returns by consulting a newly revised comprehensive tax guide now available on IRS.gov.

Publication 17, Your Federal Income Tax, features details on taking advantage of a wide range of tax-saving opportunities, such as the American Opportunity Tax Credit for parents and college students, and the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit for low- and moderate-income workers. It also features a run-down on tax changes for 2013 including information on revised tax rates and new limits on various tax benefits for some taxpayers. This useful 292-page guide also provides thousands of interactive links to help taxpayers quickly get answers to their questions.

Publication 17 has been published annually by the IRS since the 1940s and has been available on the IRS web site since 1996. As in prior years, this publication is packed with basic tax-filing information and tips on what income to report and how to report it, figuring capital gains and losses, claiming dependents, choosing the standard deduction versus itemizing deductions, and using IRAs to save for retirement.

Besides Publication 17, IRS.gov offers many other helpful resources for those doing year-end tax planning. Many 2013 forms are already posted, and updated versions of other forms, instructions and publications are being posted almost every day. Forms already available include Form 1040 and short Forms 1040A and 1040EZ. ★



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