



Citrus Heights Messenger

“Written by the people, for the people”

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Serving the City of Citrus Heights and Sacramento County

Second Edition for December 2012

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Year-End Holiday Travel Grows



Over 11.7 Million Californians are planning to travel over Christmas & New Year's Day, reports AAA.

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA – (MPG) – Consumer optimism is offsetting unresolved financial issues as millions of Californians help propel this year's holiday travel season into the second highest number of travelers seen in the past decade, according to the latest travel survey from AAA Northern California.

AAA predicts an estimated 11.7 million Californians will travel during the end-of-the-year holiday season, representing an overall increase of 1.8 percent compared to 2011.

“For the fourth consecutive year, California has seen a slow to steady increase in travel volume,” said AAA Northern California spokesperson Cynthia Harris. “This season we are experiencing the highest number of travelers since

the 2006-2007 travel peak as Californians kick-start the New Year with a holiday vacation.”

AAA estimates that more than 10 million Californians traveling during Christmas and New Year's will choose to drive to reach their holiday destinations, representing a 1.4 percent increase compared to last year. The air travel industry will also experience an increase of 4.4 percent this year as more than 950,000 Californians are expected to fly. Approximately 398,000 state residents are expected to travel by other modes of transportation, such as boats or trains. This represents an increase of 7.4 percent compared to last year.

Nationally, AAA projects that more than 93 million people will travel 50 miles or more during the holiday festivities. That's a 1.6 percent

increase compared to last year.

Family travel constitutes 32 percent of total travelers during the year-end holidays. An average West Coast family of four will save money by staying with friends and family, spending an average of \$1,048 on their trip. An average West Coast road trip will consist of approximately 838 miles.

Californians who take to the skies during this holiday season will pay an average price of \$203 per round trip ticket for the top U.S. air routes. This represents a decrease of three percent from last year. On a national level, air travel is expected to increase 4.5 percent as 5.6 million travelers will take to the skies.

According to AAA's latest travel survey, the most popular activities for West Coast families this holiday season will

be dining, visiting family and friends, sightseeing, nightlife, and going to beach/waterfront areas.

AAA Winter Travel Survival Tips

- Pack a cellular phone and car charger. Have emergency numbers available. Carry your AAA card for help in an emergency. For members who become stranded, AAA can be reached by calling 1-800-AAA-HELP (1-800-222-4357).
- If you become snowbound, stay with your vehicle. It is an excellent shelter and makes it easier for rescuers to find you.
- Stay focused. Avoid distractions such as texting, talking on the phone and adjusting the radio or other electronic devices.

Continued on Page 5

SMUD Thanks Those Who Help the Needy

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA – (MPG) As the local economy continues to struggle, many folks find that making ends meet is especially challenging during the holiday season. Though times are tough, Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) customers continue to deliver for those in need. Fellow customers who are in need can get assistance paying their electric bill thanks to the EnergyHELP program. EnergyHELP provides an easy way to contribute funds to help struggling customers.

The program has been going nine years now and in that time, SMUD customers have contributed nearly \$3 million to EnergyHELP. More than 13,000 customers now voluntarily donate monthly to help struggling low-income SMUD customers keep the lights on.

Here's how EnergyHELP works: Customers can contribute automatically in their monthly bill payment to any of four partner charity agencies. The donation is tax-deductible, and SMUD sends 100 percent of the proceeds directly to the charity. Those charities then provide as much as \$200 in one-time bill assistance to low-income customers whose electric power has been, or is about to be, disconnected for non-payment. While typical monthly donations are between \$1 and \$10 per month, some customers contribute \$20 to \$100 per month.

Since EnergyHELP's start in 2004, a total of \$2,926,611 in assistance has been distributed to more than 19,000 local households in crisis through all four EnergyHELP partner charity agencies: Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services, the Salvation Army, Travelers Aid Emergency Assistance Agency, and the Folsom Cordova Community Partnership.

Based on customers' stepping up to help their neighbors, SMUD will surpass \$543,000 in annual pledged EnergyHELP contributions by this year's end.

For more information about SMUD, contributing to EnergyHELP or SMUD's low-income programs, or to inquire about qualification guidelines for assistance, visit smud.orgor call SMUD at 1- 888-742-7683.

Source: SMUD Newsroom

Citrus Heights Christmas Tree Lighting Takes on New Dimension



The Carriage Elementary Dance Team perform at the Christmas Tree Lighting. Photo by Amberlee Prosser.

By Elise Spleiss

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) – When Thanks to the new Community Center at Fountain Square in Citrus Heights, the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony in the

cold, crisp December night will from now on continue with festivities inside the warm, dry Community Center.

Attendees will continue to enjoy the outdoor tree lighting with music, dance, speeches and of course the arrival of Santa

in his sleigh, but will then follow Santa and the Citrus Heights Community Marching band across the street to the Center to enjoy cookies, hot cocoa, more music and dance, and hands-on family activities afterwards.

Over 700 Citrus Heights' moms, dads, children, grandmas, grandpas and friends enjoyed this new dimension of community interaction and connectedness on December 6. The Citrus Heights Community Marching Band (CHCMB) kicked off the festivities outside with 'Winter Wonderland' and 'Jingle Bells'.

Mayor Jeff Slowey and Councilmembers greeted all, and local Pageant winners introduced themselves. Dancing elves and Christmas trees from the Carriage Elementary Dance Team delighted on-lookers. Julie Anchor led the audience in Christmas songs. Santa arrived in his horse drawn sleigh, the Christmas tree was lit and a

police escort led Santa and the Band and eager guests to the Community Center for warm fun and entertainment.

Inside the ballroom area, the feeling was more like a summer outdoor festival, with more music, dance, hands-on activities and the buzz of cheerful conversation. Everyone was happy to finally be warm as they enjoyed a full concert by CHCMB, highlighted by a rousing medley of traditional Christmas songs. Older dance students from the KM Dance Studio performed. Young participants were treated to face painting by Pageant Ambassadors, and to balloon animals created by 'Grama V'. Everything was free!

In the 'cookie and cocoa' room, children and even big kids tried their icing spattered hands at cookie decorating compliments of Randy Peters Catering. Of course the favorite and sure to be a long-lasting tradition, was

the lavish Santa Room featuring the customary Santa throne, and a perfect colorful background for those traditional photos with Santa. Waiting children received stuffed animal compliments of the City.

Michele Saario, the City's Community Events Director shared that their goal was to "make it different this year", and to have more of a connectedness and interaction between the community and City staff. From this writer's point of view, they succeeded! Even knowing they still had hours of clean up ahead of them, all staff was more than happy to be doing so, especially after seeing the happy faces of children of all ages throughout the evening.

Vice Mayor Steve Miller, no doubt speaks for all who attended this year's Christmas tree lighting and festivities when he said, "The little kid in me had a lot of fun".

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One family’s Tragedy: Hope for the Other

By Elise Spleiss

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) – When George Becker died, it meant Alfonso Garcia would live. The two young men had never met, but their lives intersected when each one came down with rare ailments at about the same time. Becker died of a rare brain infection and Garcia would die within 48 hours without a new liver. With modern transplant technology and a generous spirit, one family’s tragedy led to hope for the other.

When he was applying for his driver’s license at 16, Becker answered ‘yes’ to the question: “Do you wish to register to be an organ and tissue donor? He told his mother, Connie Mays, “That makes sense, if I’m not going to be here anymore, someone else might as well use my body parts.” That resulting little pink dot on his license would mean life for Alfonso Garcia.

It also led to an unlikely bond between their two families, which will come full circle at the Pasadena Rose Bowl Parade on January 1, 2013. Garcia will be one of 32 riders who are recipients of organ and tissue transplants on the ‘Donate Life California’s *Journeys of the Heart* float, celebrating new life organ transplantation can bring. The 200-foot long float will be lined with 72 Floragraph portraits of donors. Garcia will ride next to Becker’s portrait. This year’s parade theme, “Oh, the Places You’ll Go!” is the title of a favorite Dr. Seuss children’s book.

The sudden symptoms of an apparent bad sinus infection brought 21-year-old Becker of Lincoln, California to Mercy San Juan Hospital in Carmichael on the morning of January 28, 2010. His symptoms worsened so quickly that within hours of arriving at ER he was declared brain dead. What was thought to be a sinus infection turned out to be a rare bacterial brain infection. It had gone to Becker’s brain, formed an abscess and burst. Both neurologists on the case had said that in all their years they had read about and studied the condition but had never seen it.

While this was happening Becker’s family had no way of knowing a similar chain of events was taking place for Alfonso Garcia of Pinole and his family, only 100 miles away at UCSF in San Francisco. The next 48 hours would join the two families together for life.



Team George – friends and family of George Becker at 2012 Fremont Donate Life run



At Alfonso Garcia’s high school graduation with donor’s parents, Rick & Connie Mays.

Before Becker’s parents, Rick Becker and Connie Mays, could recover from the shock of what was happening to their recently active and healthy son, and wrap their minds around this unthinkable turn of events; they would have to make a decision. Knowing Becker was on the California Donor Registry, his doctor told them there was a 15-year-old boy in the Bay Area who has two days to live, and George was a perfect match for a liver transplant. Would they agree to their son’s liver going to this young man?

From this moment Mays says, she felt an immediate connection with Garcia. Without hesitation Becker’s parents said ‘yes’. They said their goodbyes quickly so tests and preparations could be made for the harvesting of their son’s liver and other recoverable organs. Becker’s pancreas and both kidneys would also save two more lives.

The young man in the Bay Area doctors spoke about was

Alfonso Garcia. He was only 15 years old when he too was taken ill suddenly. He was diagnosed with Wilson’s disease, a rare genetic disorder that prevents copper from being eliminated from the body. Copper accumulates in the body, damaging the liver and nervous system.

Garcia’s liver was failing fast, and he was given 48 hours to live if he did not receive an immediate transplant. As soon as this diagnosis was made, he was quickly transferred from Kaiser in Santa Clara to Benioff Children’s Hospital at the University of California in San Francisco.

Benioff is internationally renowned for the care of children with liver disease and the care of patients who undergo liver transplants. Garcia could not have been at a better hospital for his condition especially as his father, Oscar Garcia is employed at UCSF where he has been a respiratory therapist since 1989.

A transplant team from UCSF immediately made their way to Santa Clara to do the testing and carry out the procedures to bring Becker’s liver back to the hospital and to Garcia. Before they left the hospital, one of the team members found Mays to fulfill a promise made to Garcia’s mother, Marta. It was of great importance to her for the doctor to give Mays a hug in her stead and express her profound gratitude for the gift Becker was giving their son.

On January 30, 2010 these two young man’s lives became intertwined forever when George Becker was taken off of life support and the successful liver transplant took place that would save Alfonso Garcia.

It is not common for donor and recipient families to meet and form friendships, but another series of events would lead to the families meeting and becoming a force to honor Becker’s life as advocates for the cause of saving lives through organ donations.



Donor’s mother Connie Mays at Donate Life walk in 2012.

Their meeting after 18 months was the result of a letter Mays received from Garcia about a year after the transplant. Garcia thanked her warmly for her son’s gift and told her he hoped they could meet someday. Mays shared this letter with a close

friend. In July of 2011, her friend was watching a Giant’s game on television when she saw a young man being interviewed after throwing out the first pitch. The California Transplant Donor Network sponsored the appearance. Garcia was their ambassador. Mays’ friend noted some facts the young man recounted about his case during the interview corresponded exactly with what had been in the letter. Phone calls were made and Becker’s sister, Richelle, immediately conducted a search for Garcia and found him on Facebook. Following their connection a tearful meeting took place only a few days later.

From the moment Garcia opened the door to their home, the bittersweet meeting played out like a dramatic Lifetime movie. It felt like a homecoming for Mays and her family as they were greeted by a receiving line of dozens of grateful friends and family. Their meeting was a celebration of Becker’s life, and the start of a new partnership, joining young Garcia in spreading the word on organ donation. Mays says she has found peace knowing that, “George was a gift the day he was born. His life was a gift and his life continues to be a gift and to touch so many.”

Garcia has become a major force in changing the perception of the public’s feelings regarding organ donations. As an Ambassador for the California Transplant Donor Network (CTDN) donor program, he visits high schools and community groups where he speaks to students to inspire them to register as donors when they apply for their driver’s license. Being Hispanic himself he considers it a privilege to help debunk the

while he isn’t planning beyond school and his work with CTDN, a career in the media and sports is not out of the question. He will need to take anti-rejection medication for the rest of his life and must avoid activities that could harm his liver, but otherwise can lead a normal, fulfilling life.

Garcia’s passion to give back to his community for his gift of life recently moved to a new level when he appeared twice before the California State Assembly to testify in favor of the passing of AB1967. The legislation, which passed in September mandates 15 minutes of education on organ and tissues donations for every 9th and 10th grader in their health and science classes. This will be crucial in helping students and their parents make an informed decision when faced with the organ donation question on their application.

The DMV also celebrated reaching their goal of 100 million registered donors in the United States in October of 2011. Still, the number of patients awaiting donations continues to far outnumber registered donors.

Donate Life California administers the California Donor Registry which consists of four organ recovery agencies. While there are many registered donors, not all will be able to donate. For many reasons, only 3 in 1,000 deaths result in an actual donation. Currently there are over 110,000 people on UNOS National Organ Transplant waiting list. 21,000 or 20% of this total are waiting in California. Of those waiting nationally, a staggering 1 in 3 will die because of a shortage of organs. In the U.S. 18 patients drop off the waiting list due to death each day, but that number goes right back up with a new name being added to the national list every 13 minutes.

On the positive side, one donor can save up to 8 lives, and one tissue donor can improve the lives of up to 50 recipients. Becker’s case falls into the category of the 70% of 13,500 cases each year where patients declared brain dead patients are still medically able to be organ donors.

Alfonso Garcia’s knows George Becker will always be a part of his life, literally. No matter what path he chooses he knows he has been entrusted with a special gift to care for and protect. A profound reminder of this came in the words of his transplant surgeon, Dr. Hyutaro Hirose. When Connie Mays put her hand on Garcia’s chest over her son’s liver, Hirose reminded Garcia, “George’s DNA is in you”. The story continues.

Resources:
Donate Life California: <http://www.donatelife.org>
DMV online: <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/about/donatelife>
CA Transplant Donor Network: www.ctdn.org
UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital : <http://www.ucsfbenioffchildrens.org>
Donate Life Rose Parade Float: www.donatelifefloat.org

All Photos courtesy of Becker and Garcia Families



Publisher, Paul V. Scholl

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Citrus Heights Messenger

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- Jack T., Citrus Heights, CA



Assemblymember Ken Cooley Sworn into Office *Introduces First Bill Increasing Accountability of the Regulatory Impact of Governmental Agencies*

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) – Ken Cooley was sworn in on December 3rd, 2012 as the California State Assemblymember for the new 8th Assembly District which includes the communities of Arden-Arcade, Carmichael, Citrus Heights, Rancho Cordova, Rancho Murieta, Rosemont, Wilton, and other portions of unincorporated Sacramento County.

As a longtime community leader in Rancho Cordova and a founding member of the City, Mr. Cooley will hit the ground running as an experienced leader. "As an Assemblymember, I will continue my work representing the people of the 8th District. My door is open, and I look forward to partnering actively with the community and representing them in both my capitol and district offices," said Ken Cooley.

Immediately after the swearing-in proceedings concluded, Assemblymember Cooley introduced AB 12, increasing the accountability of the regulatory impact of governmental agencies, where they are issuing major regulations that can burden the economy.



Assemblymember Ken Cooley

Under current law, when state agencies create or modify regulations that have an economic impact of \$50 million dollars or more they must issue a standardized regulatory impact analysis which explains the potential adverse impact on California businesses, including whether the regulation encourages the creation or elimination of jobs and industry. The Department of Finance and the Office of Administrative Law are to review those regulatory impact analysis reports to ensure they are being properly created and compiled but there is no specific reporting

timeframe and no public notification requirements.

This bill requires the Department of Finance and the Office of Administrative Law to review those regulatory impact analysis reports and report annually to the Legislature to promote state agencies' compliance. It further instructs the Office of Administrative Law to make public notice on its website of any state agency failing to issue a standardized regulatory impact report and the reason for the agency's noncompliance creating a mechanism for accountability and transparency.

"I understand the sacred trust placed in elected officials to be good stewards of the people's money. To that end, I will use the full power of this office, and the power of the Assembly, to shed light on government programs to ensure that regulations are not unduly burdensome, to create cost-savings and higher accountability. A more streamlined and efficient government means a higher performing government," said Cooley.

What's Coming Up in Citrus Heights

Compiled by Leslie Carrara

December 19, 2012–Birdcage Heights Neighborhood Meeting, Area 11, 5641 Mariposa Ave., Library, 7 p.m. Third Wednesday each month.

December 20, 2012–Rusch Park Neighborhood Meeting, Area 2, 7607 Garden Gate Dr., 7 p.m. Third Thursday each month.

December 20, 2012–Park Oaks Neighborhood Meeting, Area 5, 5901 San Juan Ave., 7 p.m. Third Thursday each month.

December 24, 2012–Sylvan Old Auburn Road Neighborhood Meeting, Area 10, 6921

Sylvan Rd., 7 p.m. Fourth Monday each month.

December 24 & 25, 2012–City Offices Closed.

December 25, 2012–Sunrise Ranch Neighborhood Meeting, Area 6, 7690 Twin Oaks Ave., 7 p.m. Fourth Tuesday each month.

December 26, 2012–Citrus Heights Planning Commission Meeting, CANCELLED.

December 27, 2012–Citrus Heights City Council Meeting, 7117 Greenback Lane, 7 p.m.

December 31, 2012–City Offices Closed.

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Flooding: Precautionary Measures and Whom to Call When Problems Arise



By County Supervisor, Roberta MacGlashan

As winter is upon us, we must all take steps to prepare for the wind and rain that we know is coming over the next several months. Recent storm activity certainly gave us all a reminder that we can never do too much to be prepared, and that it is essential to take both precautionary measures and to know whom to call when various problems arise.

First, and foremost, is advanced preparedness. Much of the flooding experienced in the recent storms was due to localized street flooding caused by clogged storm drains. You can help the County and your neighbors prevent flooding by doing two things: first, please keep your streets, sidewalks, and driveways free of fallen leaves that can get washed into and clog storm drains. Second, if there is large debris in your street, perhaps caused by illegal dumping, please call 875-5171 to report it. The County is

continually responding to complaints about illegal dumping, and will respond as quickly as possible, depending on the work load.

You can take additional precautions if you know that your property has a tendency to flood sooner than most, particularly by buying your own sand bags and preparing for possible flooding on your own property that is not caused by clogged storm drains. While the County will open sand bag locations during extreme weather events to assist with creek and river flooding, we cannot predict all local flooding that may occur, and I urge you to take precautionary steps if you have experienced flooding before.

You can also help the county to respond to flooding and other storm-related problems by helping be our eyes and ears in the community. Depending on the situation, we have several numbers to call during a storm event to obtain a response to various situations.

First, if you are experiencing flooding for any reason due to rain, please contact (916)875-RAIN. It is essential that you report things that are occurring, both to receive a response and to help us keep track of flooding events as they are occurring. The more real-time data we receive, the better.

As for trees that have fallen and blocked the road, please call (916)875-5171. The County Department of Transportation works very hard during storms to remove trees that have fallen into

the roadway, to keep the streets and sidewalks clear for traffic to flow.

Of course, some situations are much more urgent, and require a call to 911. Please, please do not call 911 with non-emergency situations like the ones previously mentioned. The 911 operators are not equipped to handle such requests, and you may be preventing someone with a true emergency from getting through.

Life-threatening emergencies should, of course, be called in to 911 immediately. Additionally, serious, life-endangering hazards such as downed power lines should be called in to 911. Please be responsible and use your best judgment when deciding to call 911. If it's not an emergency, please use the numbers mentioned above.

As we go through the winter months, we will also be starting a new year. With the new year, I will begin my regular community meetings once again. In Citrus Heights, we will be meeting on Friday, January 25 at 7:30am at Denny's at Sunrise Blvd and Greenback Ln. We will be hearing from the new Director of Community Development, Lori Moss, who will be discussing the ways in which the County is working to make the development and business approval process more business friendly. In the meantime, if you have questions please do not hesitate to email me at macglashan@saccounty.net, or call my office at (916)874-5491.

Local Women Give 197 Foster Youth Gifts and Stockings



Members of United Way's Women in Philanthropy and community volunteers stuff stockings for local foster youth.

SACRAMENTO, CA – (MPG)

One hundred twelve women donated 147 stockings and 132 gifts through United Way's Women in Philanthropy so 197 local foster youth would have holiday wishes fulfilled. Fifty foster youth in Sacramento County's Gifts From The Heart program received the holiday gifts they requested. United Way's Women in Philanthropy and community members also filled stockings for 147 foster youth with United Way's SenSe-Ability project funded partners: Amador-Tuolumne Community Resources, Child Abuse Prevention Council of Sacramento, Koinonia Family Services and New Morning Youth and Family Services.

"Some of these kids are scared, suddenly removed from their homes during what is supposed to be the happiest season of the year," said Lisa Watts, chair of United Way's Women in Philanthropy. "Others have

experienced years of pain as they bounce from one foster home to another and now prepare to live on their own. United Way's Women in Philanthropy gives women across the region a tangible way to touch these kids' hearts during the holidays."

Dozens of volunteers wrapped gifts, stuffed stockings and wrote personal notes to foster youth, including United Way's Women in Philanthropy members, community volunteers, representatives of nonprofits supporting foster youth, members of Girl Scouts Heart of Central California Junior Troop 1841 and two foster youth who received stockings in previous years. The gifts and stockings will be distributed through United Way's SenSe-Ability project nonprofit partners and the County of Sacramento.

United Way's Women in Philanthropy brings women together to foster the future, preparing foster youth for a

successful adulthood. A dynamic group of businesswomen, homemakers and community leaders, Women in Philanthropy members raise funds, hold drives and provide trainings focused on helping foster youth rise to their dreams. The group also is a partner in United Way's SenSe-Ability project, helping foster youth become financially self-sufficient through financial literacy courses and individual development accounts that provide a matched savings program. For more information, visit www.yourlocalunitedway.org/wip.

Sacramento County's Gifts from the Heart is an annual holiday gift-giving program that operates on donations and benefits children and seniors who are in the Department of Health and Human Services' system of care. For more information, call (916) 875-2027.

Source: Kristin Thébaud Communications

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SMUD Board of Directors Approves 2013 Budget

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA – (MPG) Despite continued economic challenges, budget maintains low rates and reliable service

The Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) Board of Directors has approved a \$1.35 billion budget. The 2013 budget is designed to keep SMUD positioned as a progressive leader in the utility sector without any new rate increases next year.

The budget reflects a balanced approach that will keep SMUD on track to meet its long-term goals and continue to meet challenges presented by an increasingly complex business and regulatory environment. The budget provides funding for all programs, projects and initiatives needed to meet the strategic targets set by the Board of Directors. The budget continues to contain costs while enhancing customer service.

Despite the prolonged economic downturn, SMUD is managing its finances well. The budget is balanced without having to raise rates. SMUD is keeping a close eye on spending and continuing to improve operating efficiencies while investing in long-term projects that provide value for customers. While previous financial forecasts had envisioned economic growth by 2013, that now appears doubtful. New-service connections will likely be minimal, and electricity sales are expected to decline slightly.

Some major projects highlighted in the spending plan for next year include:

- Completion of the corporate yard, the East Campus – Operations Center (EC-OC);
- Completion of the construction portion of the smart-grid grant project;
- Continued enhancement of customer service;
- Continuation of smart-grid development following successful completion of smart meter deployment and;
- Continued research into compressed-air energy storage and a 25-megawatt system of modular, natural gas-fired reciprocating engines for a pilot project to help manage the variability of wind and solar power to meet SMUD's Integrated Resource Plan goals.

Although SMUD continues to feel the effects from the slow-growth economy, SMUD starts 2013 with a strong cash balance. When combined with cash generated from operations, capital spending will be covered without the need to borrow.

To address reliability, the budget includes funds to purchase property for a new location for the North City Substation and to overhaul a combustion-turbine at the 500-megawatt Cosumnes Power Plant, SMUD's

largest. For customers, the budget includes the introduction of a new My Account online service that will utilize smart meters and give customers access to far more energy-management information. Also, the Customer Experience Excellence initiative will commence and be utilized to evaluate customer needs and determine how to meet those needs with technology, programs and services.

SMUD customers continue to pay significantly less for electricity than most Californians and as of January 2013, about 26 percent less than residential customers who are supplied by neighboring PG&E. As the nation's sixth largest community-owned electric service provider, SMUD has been providing low-cost, reliable electricity for more than 65 years to Sacramento County (and a small portion of Placer County). SMUD is a recognized industry leader and award winner for its innovative energy efficiency programs, renewable power technologies, and for its sustainable solutions for a healthier environment. SMUD is the first large California utility to receive more than 20 percent of its energy from renewable resources. For more information, visit smud.org.

Source: SMUD Newsroom

Sacramento County DA Reports

Recent cases of interest

CASE: Weili Kao (12/13/12)
PROSECUTOR: Deputy District Attorney Valerie Brown

District Attorney Jan Scully announced that the Honorable Patrick Marlette sentenced Weili Kao to 15 years to life in prison for the murder of Truly Lo.

On May 11, 2004, Kao was at home with her 16-month-old baby and six-year-old stepdaughter, Truly Lo, while Truly's father was at work in the Bay Area. Kao became angry at Truly and slapped her, pinched her ears and sent her to the bathroom for a timeout. One hour later, Kao found Truly sitting rather than standing as ordered. She grabbed Truly around the neck and dragged her to a closet where she beat her with a hanger, lifted her up by her neck and violently knocked her to the floor twice. Although Truly was unresponsive, Kao put her in bed and waited until the next morning to take her to the hospital. As a result of the assault, Truly suffered severe brain damage and had been in a coma since 2004. In 2005, Kao was convicted by jury of several counts of child abuse and was sentenced to 16 years in prison.

Truly never regained consciousness and remained in a persistent vegetative state until her death on December 21, 2010. Kao was then charged with murder and subsequently pled no contest to second degree murder and waived three years of credits for time she has already served on the child abuse charge.

At sentencing, Truly's father, Thomas Lo, spoke about Truly's "tender heart" and how, even at six years of age, she showed immense compassion and interest in caring for others. Mr. Lo stated that despite his hope she would one day wake, "Truly decided to leave us to reunite with her mom in Heaven. There is no fear, no tears and no suffering."

CASE: Walgreen Co. (12/13/12)
PROSECUTOR: Deputy District Attorney Doug Whaley, Consumer/Environmental Protection Unit

District Attorney Jan Scully, together with 42 other California district attorneys and two city attorneys, announced today that a judge in Alameda Superior Court has ordered the Illinois-based Walgreen Co. to pay \$16.57 million as part of a settlement of a civil environmental prosecution.

In June 2012, a civil enforcement lawsuit was filed in Alameda claiming that more than 600 Walgreens stores in California unlawfully handled and disposed of hazardous wastes and materials, including pesticides, bleach, paint, aerosols, automotive products and solvents, pharmaceutical, and bio hazardous wastes. The settlement also resolves allegations that customer records were unlawfully disposed of without preserving confidential medical information.

In 2011, inspectors from the Alameda County District Attorney's Office Environmental Protection Division, along with district attorney investigators and environmental regulators throughout the state, conducted a series of waste inspections of dumpsters belonging to Walgreens stores. The inspections revealed that the stores were routinely and systematically sending hazardous wastes to local landfills, and failed to take measures to protect the privacy of their pharmacy customers' confidential medical information. During the statewide inspections, 34 out of 37 Walgreens stores were found to be in violation of state law.

Under the final judgment, Walgreen Co. must pay \$16.57 million in civil penalties and costs, which also funds supplemental environmental projects furthering consumer protection and environmental enforcement in California. Stores are required to retain their hazardous waste in segregated, labeled containers to minimize the risk of exposure to employees and customers. Walgreens is also required to take proper steps to preserve the confidentiality of their pharmacy customers' medical information. Hazardous waste produced by California Walgreens stores is now being collected by state registered haulers for proper disposal and documentation. The retailer will be bound under the terms of a permanent injunction prohibiting similar future alleged violations of law.

The Sacramento County District Attorney's Office will receive \$40,000 in civil penalties and cost recovery.

Year-End Holiday Travel Grows

Continued from Page 1


AAA Air Travel Tips

- Hit the web before the airport. Check in online up to 24 hours before flying and print your boarding pass at home. Many airlines offer discounts for pre-paying during online check-in.
- Pack light. Avoid checked bag fees and bring carry-on luggage only. Check with your airline on the maximum size of bags allowed in overhead bins. TSA regulations require the name on your airline ticket/boarding pass to exactly match your name as it is printed on your government-issued identification.
- Make reservations for accommodations and rental cars ahead of time so prices can be locked in. Air fares are typically cheaper if arrangements are made early.
- Liquids and gel carry-ons will only be allowed in containers no larger than 3 ounces and must be placed in a quart-size Ziploc clear plastic bag.

AAA's projections are based on research conducted by IHS Global Insight. AAA has been reporting on holiday travel trends for more than two decades.

AAA has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers since it was founded or the safety and security of all travelers since it was founded more than 100 years ago.

Source: AAA



Kidney Dialysis Safety Warning

Reports of heart attack and death led the FDA to recall Granuflo Concentrate and Naturalyte Liquid, which are commonly used drugs during dialysis.

These products have been shown to increase levels of sodium bicarbonate in the blood which can lead to:

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Newcomer's Buffet & Social
Any and all widows or widowers may attend

Third Monday evening at 5:30 pm
In the private dining room at the Plaza Hoff Brau, corner of El Camino and Watt Avenues; cost varies as the choice is from a no-host buffet menu.

This is a public service to all widows and widowers and there is no charge to attend the social other than the meal they chose.

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Any and all widows or widowers are invited

Every Sunday from 3 pm-5 pm
In the meeting room of the WPAC office. Enter from the back parking lot at 2628 El Camino Ave, Ste D-18.

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While in Central America earlier this year, I visited the Mayan ruins at Tazumal, El Salvador. Tazumal is one of the best preserved ruins in that country, and I learned from my guide, that it was a central religious site. Tazumal was a place where the ancients gathered to ceremonially soothe their cruel, bloodthirsty deities. If a severe drought struck the region, then the gods were angry; shed some blood. If the rainy season was monsoonal, the gods were perturbed; shed some blood. If the spring corn crop refused to grow, the gods were against the people; shed some blood. Sickness, plague, earthquakes, tidal waves, floods, or accidents; these all had the same explanation. The fickle and nefarious gods had to be appeased.

All ancient religions were built on a similar foundation: God is angry and humanity stands in constant danger, thus someone has to pay. Much of current religion is anchored to this mooring as well. Is it no wonder then, that the world is filled with hate, bloodshed, panic, and terror when religious people, the vast majority of the world's population, expect the same from their gods?



It's time to take stock of your life...look closely, don't miss anything. Can you actually see the hand of God working in your life? If not, why not? I have said this before; you need to first have that wonderful relationship with God's Son, Jesus Christ. Now, if that relationship is where it should be, then why are you not seeing the "Hand of God" working in your life? God's Word says, "With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all..." I know this verse is talking about that Jesus Christ has risen but I want you to take notice the phrase "And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all." You need to identify

God loves us, not because we are good; not because we are loveable; not because of what we can do for him or for others; and not because of the way we make him feel. He loves us because he is actually, truly, really that good. And what we and our world need more than anything – a world up to its collective ears in fear and bloodshed – is that kind of real, unconditional, healing love.

Ronnie McBrayer is a syndicated columnist, speaker, and author of multiple books. You can read more and receive regular e-columns in your inbox at www.ronniemcbrayer.net.

Karen Anderson is an accomplished speaker, author, and chaplain. Leave a message or questions for Karen through her website www.doablesteps.com/contact.

If I were president of the United States, I would enact a law that would set aside one year to be a year of celebrating Christmas all 365 days. I think I would only have to

I sighed quite deeply as I

I do not mind a "red" Christmas because everyone in my family is worth it. As Tiny Tim said, "God bless us all, everyone."

The Rev. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, PO Box 831313, Ocala, FL 34483. He lives with his wife, Martha, in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at (352) 687-4240 or e-mail jamesnsnyder2@att.net. The church web site is www.whatafellowship.com.

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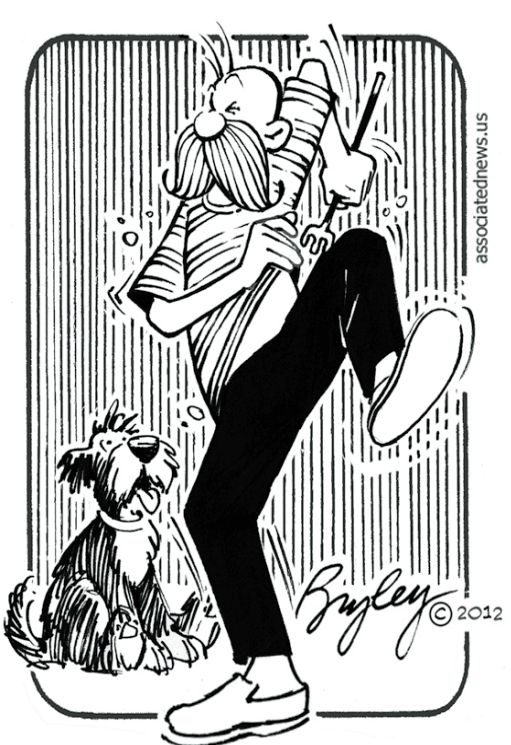
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By Pastor Ray Dare

Home is where you belong. Home is where your heart is. This Christmas, I'd like you to consider a different kind of homecoming. A coming home to the One who made you, knows everything about you and loves you. This is the very first reason for Christmas. God came to earth so He could say to you, "I love you and want a relationship with you."

What could keep you from coming home to God this Christmas? Fear. Fear of rejection. Guilt. Guilt over things from your past, mistakes that you've made. You may think, "Maybe God wouldn't want me now. I'm too far away. I've been away from Him too long. I've done too many things He probably doesn't approve of. I'm too far away to return now." You're wrong.

Jesus often told stories to

Home for Christmas

teach truths about God. In Luke 15, Jesus tells a story about one of the greatest homecomings of all. He said a man had two sons and one of the sons comes to him one day and says, "Dad, I want my share of the inheritance. I'm out of here! I'm splitting town!" So, the father gives him his half of the inheritance, and the kid takes off to a foreign country and blows it all! He squanders it all on wine, women and song. He's messed up, he's on the streets, he hits bottom. He winds up feeding pigs in a pigsty. Finally, he comes to his senses, "What am I doing? My father's hired servants have it better than this!" So, he begins to return home to his father.

As he's coming home, his father sees him a far way off (no doubt the father was eagerly watching, waiting for his son's return). His father sees him, runs out to meet him and before the kid could hardly get a word out, the father opens wide his arms and hugs him, he kisses him on the cheeks. He tells his servants, "Go get my best robe and put it on him! And place shoes on his feet!" Then he places his ring of authority on his finger and says, "My son was lost, but now he's home!"

This is a picture of God's love for you. This is a picture of how much you matter to God no matter what you've done or how many times you've done it. No matter where you've been or how long you've been there—God still loves you! He wants a relationship with you.

This is what Christmas is all about. God came to earth to say, "I love you and want to forgive you." Sadly, the Bible says that many people miss this. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 6:1, "Some people have missed the most important thing in life. They don't know God." I'm not talking about religion or rituals or rules or regulations. I'm talking about a relationship with God.

On Christmas Eve, I'll be sharing more about the true meaning of Christmas our Candlelight Service, it beings at 5:30 pm. I invite you to join me and the community as we celebrate Christmas together.

Merry Christmas!

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A Film Review by Tim Riley

KILLING THEM SOFTLY (Rated PG-13)

The bleak landscape of small-time gangster thriller “Killing Them Softly” rests not just with urban decay, but with the backdrop of the run-up to the 2008 presidential election. Based on the George V. Higgins novel, “Cogan’s Trade,” this criminal enterprise film involves petty hoods and sleazy losers who are pretty much oblivious to world affairs and the economic meltdown. As if to create a sense of impending doom, “Killing Them Softly” makes plentiful use of radio and TV clips of posturing by various political figures to underscore the gravity of America’s financial crisis. The political chatter is little more than background noise to the crooks and wise-guys who foolishly scheme to rob a high-stakes mob-protected poker game. Even in a bad economy, they just want a quick score for big bucks. A longtime hanger-on in the underworld, Johnny Amato (Vincent Curatola), now in the dry-cleaning business, has come up with a slick plan to rob the card game run by regular dealer Markie Trattman (Ray Liotta). To complete the actual theft, Johnny turns to jittery young crook Frankie (Scoot McNairy), who is fresh out of jail and flat broke. In other words, Frankie is the perfect patsy. For his part, Frankie makes the dubious choice of tapping for a partner his drug-addled friend Russell (Ben Mendelsohn), a gleefully seedy Australian junkie whose latest criminal enterprise involves dog theft. The Markie Trattman card game is a convenient target because Markie once imprudently boasted of his complicity in a robbery of one of his own mob-protected games. Naturally, the conspirators are only too certain that the mob’s suspicion will fall

Riley Reviews TALKY YET VIOLENT THRILLER BLUNTS “KILLING THEM SOFTLY”

immediately upon Markie, the guy most likely to know all the inside information. With more bluster than brains, Frankie and Russell manage to pull off the robbery and escape without being recognized. But only a fool believes in a foolproof plan. And there’s the rub. While the low-rent hoods are congratulating themselves, the mob takes drastic steps to deal with this situation, bringing in the seasoned enforcer Jackie Cogan (Brad Pitt). Dealing through the mob’s buttoned-up middle manager Driver (Richard Jenkins), Jackie is hired to investigate the heist and restore the criminal status quo. It won’t be easy or pretty. While Jackie is cool, cynical and detached, his usually efficient manner is constrained by the bureaucratic mentality of the unseen mob bosses who expect Driver to communicate their instructions. The essential imperative for Jackie is not only to mete out punishment, but to deliver a message to would-be thieves that no one is beyond the reach of a criminal enterprise jealously guarding its turf. Though he’s the consummate professional, Jackie finds it’s frustrating to navigate mounting complications, so he brings in trusted colleague Mickey (James Gandolfini) to assist with the assignment. The once reliable Mickey has now become surprisingly unpredictable, seeing how he’s much more interested in overindulging in alcohol and prostitutes than taking care of business. A gangster thriller that involves contract killers is bound to be violent. “Killing Them Softly” certainly has its share of mayhem, including one of the most brutally grotesque beatings of recent memory. But this crime story plays out to a different tempo than others in the genre. Indeed, the violence is either sadistically brutal or just simmering below the surface, keeping the audience on edge.

Surprisingly, the hoodlums are often garrulous, talking at great lengths often to the point of annoyance. This is particular true when the dim-witted Frankie and Russell prattle on like high school stoners. The political context frequently gets in the way of the film’s essentially nihilistic worldview. Quite frankly, it seems unlikely that hoods would hang out in dive bars where C-SPAN is the TV channel of choice. “Killing Them Softly” also goes against the grain by doing unusual things like making Ray Liotta a relatively sympathetic figure and James Gandolfini even more malevolent than his turn on “The Sopranos.” The film’s saving grace is Brad Pitt’s unflappable, subdued performance as the world-weary hired gun. And when his Jackie has a conversation with Mickey or Driver, it’s worth paying attention. “Killing Them Softly” is not effortlessly categorized, and as such, it may not find its audience easy to reach. In short, this film was not made for hardcore action junkies. DVD RELEASE UPDATE

This column space has frequently extolled the virtues of vintage TV series being released on DVD. I am not about to stop the practice now. Once again, it is a pleasure to announce the DVD release of a classic detective show, this time “Mannix: The Final Season,” where Mike Connors still does the hard-boiled, gritty private eye gig. “The Final Season” is the eighth year that Connors’ Joe Mannix defies the rules and protocols while fighting crime on the streets of Los Angeles. The series also prominently featured Gail Fisher, who had the distinction, according to Wikipedia, of being one of the first African-American actresses to have a regular TV series role. Whatever the case, Fisher and Connors made a great team in fighting the bad guys. “The Final Season” demonstrates that the series retained its vitality to the very end. “Mannix: The Final Season” offers nearly 20 hours of high-speed car chases, flying bullets and fistfights. Through it all, Joe Mannix takes a beating and keeps on ticking.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

It’s that time of year when the house gets decorated and the gifts get wrapped, but have you ever thought about some of the traditions we follow year after year and how they came about? I did, and tried to get some info on a few of them at best! Let’s start with ‘ole St Nick. St. Nicholas was born in 280 A.D. in Patara, a city of Lycia, in Asia Minor. He became the gift giver of Myra. His gifts were given late at night, so that the gift giver’s identity would remain a secret. St. Nicholas was eventually named the patron saint of children, sailors, Russia, and Greece. St. Nicholas was a Christian priest, who later became a bishop. He was a rich person, and traveled the country helping people. He did not want to be seen giving the gifts, so the children were told to go to sleep quickly or he would not come. Not much has changed with Santa Claus! Now what about that Christmas star? The stars that appear in the sky today are the same ones that were there two thousand years ago. Was there a nova at the time of Jesus birth? The exact time of his birth is questioned, but astronomers cannot place a new star anywhere near the possible time. But the Wise Men followed a star, so was it a true miracle? Some star gazers suggest if we move the birth of Jesus to the springtime of 6 B.C., we can attribute the star to the time the planets Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn were close together in the heavens. They formed a triangle in the group known as Pisces. The Wise Men were astrologers and studied the stars and the planets and knew, according to Jewish Rabbis, of the triangle and that it appeared before the birth of Moses. Perhaps they interpreted

POPPOFF! with Mary Jane Popp

it as a sign of that great event in the land of the Jewish people. This may have been the star of Bethlehem. Pisces became the special constellation of the Hebrew people. Now on to that gorgeous Christmas tree. Long before the advent of Christianity, plants and trees that remained green all year had a special meaning for people in the winter. In many countries it was believed that evergreens would keep away witches, ghosts, evil spirits, and illness. Germany is credited with starting the first Christmas tree tradition as we know it in the 16th century when devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes. Most 19th century Americans found Christmas trees an oddity. The first record of one being on display was in the 1830s by German settlers of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania German settlements had community trees as early as 1747. But as late as the 1840s Christmas trees were seen as pagan symbols and not accepted by most Americans. My how times have changed, and we do love our trees! Only have time for one more, so how about Rudolph? I used to love that song until I really thought about it, and how that poor Reindeer was bullied to the max. Then I found out Rudolph’s origin. In 1939, Copywriter Robert L. May of the Montgomery Ward Company created a poem about Rudolph, the ninth reindeer. May had been “often taunted as a child for being shy, small, and slight.” He created an ostracized reindeer with a shiny nose who became a hero one foggy Christmas eve. A copy of the poem was given to Montgomery Ward customers. In 1949 Johnny Marks wrote the song and Rudolph was relocated to the North Pole. The rest is history! Of course, much of this is conjecture, and I’m sure you can find lots of reasons for so many of the traditions, but what does it matter? I found all my info on the good ‘ole internet. All we should care about is what the meaning of Christmas is all about. It is about loving and caring. It’s not about big fancy presents, but about sharing yourself with others. So enjoy the mince pies and the turkey, even the fruitcake. But remember that the word love needs to be at the top of the list. It lasts so much longer than all the bright shiny things we get on Christmas Day. Wherever you are, it will be a Merry Christmas just the same. For our troops in Afghanistan, it is “De Christmas Akhtar de Bakhtawar Au Newai Kal de Mubarak Sha.” For those in still in Iraq, it’s “Idah Saidan Wasanah Jadidah.” For our friends south of the border, its “Feliz Navidad.” But for all it’s still MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! GOD BLESS YOU ALL!!! Join Mary Jane for the KAH! Noon News Monday–Friday and then again for POPOFF 10 PM – Midnight.

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.


Come back every week for Sudoku!

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For Solution See Page 7

CLUES

ACROSS

1. Come from an egg

6. Bad-mouth

9. Cargo

13. Gem state

14. Make a choice

15. Move sideways

16. Chocolate substitute

17. Wade's opponent

18. "The _____" moved to Chicago from NYC

19. "GOP's 2012 choice

21. "Deceased singing legend

23. Pock mark disease

24. Boris Godunov, e.g.

25. Chicken order

28. Vegetative prickle

30. Speed of play, pl.

35. Like decorated cake

37. Luau souvenirs

39. Third rock from the sun

40. Laughing on the inside, in a chatroom

41. Small drum

43. Memorization method

44. Full of pep

46. Russian parliament

47. Farmer's purchase

48. Auteur's art

50. Peacock's pride

52. "Ann to Mitt

53. "Anything ____?"

55. Excessively

57. "PSY's style

61. Bronx Bomber

64. Whippet or Basset, e.g.

65. Bard's before

67. Lifeboat support

69. Elephant trainer's goad

70. Summer mo.

71. "Lohengrin," e.g.

72. In a golfer's pocket

73. Registration, for short

74. One born to Japanese immigrants

DOWN

1. Wino's sound?

2. Month of Purim

3. Tropical tuber

4. Bite

5. Rub elbows

6. Nemo's forgetful friend

7. "Facebook's big move

8. Seethes

9. Dryer fire hazard

10. Scandinavian war god

11. Burn soother

12. Refuse to accept

15. Evening party

20. Jump for joy

22. Pillbox or tricorn, e.g.

24. Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, e.g.

25. Whitman's dooryard bloomer

26. A threat to food safety

27. "_____ on the ground floor"

29. Part of ROM

31. "'Curiosity' landing site

32. Preface

33. Weasel's aquatic cousin

34. Outbuildings

36. "Felix Baumgartner's space _____

38. "Brave New World" drug

42. Indian side dish of yogurt and cucumbers

45. Corrects or edits

49. Chicken ____ king

51. "Where many struck gold

54. _____ campaign

56. Giraffe-like African animal

57. Steps to the river

58. First rate

59. Heat in a microwave

60. African migrants

61. Safecracker

62. December 24 and 31, e.g.

63. Michael Collins's country

66. Parisian way

68. Chi precursor

CHEERS

to a Happy, Healthy Holiday Season



FAMILY FEATURES *Sniffle Snatcher, Sweet Apple Pumpkin Pie, Flu Fighter, Cranbanana Blast, Sweet Potato Pick-Me-Up*

It can be challenging to eat right during the holidays, especially when the entire season seems filled with hearty meals, rich dishes and sweet treats. While it’s okay to moderately splurge before kick-starting the New Year with a healthy diet, it’s important to build momentum prior to January 1 by making smart dietary decisions over the holidays to ensure a healthy immune system during the winter months and increased energy for burning off those extra calories.

Drink to Your Health

A simple way to enjoy a healthy holiday season and New Year is to start each day with a nutrient-rich beverage packed with essential ingredients that produce increased energy levels, decreased cravings for seasonal junk foods, and greater overall wellness. Whether it’s a nourishing morning pick-me-up or a mid-day energy and immunity boost, these nutritious and delicious recipes from NutriBullet will help ensure a healthy holiday season and put you on the right track to wellness in the New Year. The NutriBullet emulsifies healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables and grains into their most easily digestible state. Learn more at www.nutribullet.com.

Nutrient Know-How

- How many times have you read a list of nutrients on a food label, but not really known how each works to benefit your body? Following are some nutrient quick tips so you’re better informed during your next trip to the market.
- Calcium** — Essential for healthy teeth and bones; also important for muscle, nerve and some gland functions.
 - Iron** — Necessary for healthy blood and normal cell functioning.
 - Magnesium** — Needed for healthy bones; also involved in more than 300 enzymes.
 - Potassium** — Helps maintain healthy blood pressure.
 - Vitamin A** — Helps keep eyes and skin healthy; also helps protect against infections.
 - Vitamin C** — Helps heal cuts and wounds; helps keep teeth and gums healthy, and helps iron absorption.
 - Folate** (folic acid) — Helps the body form red blood cells.
 - Fiber** — Helps reduce blood cholesterol and may lower risk of heart disease.

How Much Is a Cup?

To help you gauge how much produce you’re eating, here’s a quick look at what equals a cup:

- 1 small apple
- 1 large banana
- 1 medium grapefruit
- 1 large orange
- 1 medium potato
- 2 large or 3 medium plums
- 12 baby carrots
- 1 small wedge watermelon
- 8 large strawberries
- 2 large stalks celery
- 1 medium pear



Sniffle Snatcher

A tasty combination of vitamin C-rich ingredients, cayenne to reduce congestion, and rosemary to reduce inflammation and soothe a sore throat.

- 1 cup kale
- 1 carrot
- 1 pear (cored and seeds removed)
- 1/2 cup cubed pineapple
- Dash of cayenne pepper
- Dash of fresh rosemary

Add water to the max line of the large cup, and blast.

Sweet Apple Pumpkin Pie

An antioxidant-rich, protein-packed healthy dessert option so you can enjoy the flavors of the season guilt-free.

- 1/4 cup organic silken tofu or organic Greek-style yogurt
- 1/2 cup canned pumpkin or cooked fresh pumpkin
- 1/2 apple (cut, cored, and seeds removed)
- 1 tablespoon raw almond butter
- Pinch of cinnamon
- Pinch of ground cloves
- 1–2 teaspoons pure maple syrup
- 1 cup almond milk

Add ingredients to large cup, and blast.

Flu Fighter

Vitamin C, antioxidants, and anti-bacterial ginger help keep the immune system at its peak during the winter months.

- 1/2 cup spinach
- 1/2 cup Swiss chard
- 1/4 cup parsley
- 1 kiwi (peeled)
- 1 lime (peeled)
- 1 banana (peeled)
- 1/2 bell pepper (seeds and stem removed)
- 1 inch fresh ginger root (peeled)

Add water to the max line of the large cup, and blast.

Cranbanana Blast

Filled with heart-healthy nutrients and anti-viral properties, cranberries blend well with bananas and dates for a tart-sweet treat.

- 1 cup spinach
- 1 ripe banana (peeled)
- 1/2 cup fresh or frozen cranberries
- 2 dates

Add water or almond milk to the max line of the large cup, and blast.

Sweet Potato Pick-Me-Up

Complex carbs from the sweet potato will provide sustained energy, and cinnamon keeps blood sugar balanced.

- 1/2 cooked sweet potato (skin on)
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch cinnamon
- Pinch nutmeg
- 1 cup ice cubes

Add almond or coconut milk to the max line of the large cup, and blast.

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