



## Cruising the Mexican Riviera Takes a Miracle

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# Gold River Messenger

“Written by the people, for the people”

Volume 3 • Issue 2

Serving Gold River and Sacramento County

February, 2015

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Local  
Postal Customer

\*\*\*\*\*ECRWSS\*\*\*\*\*

## Chamber Welcomes Standards of Excellence



The Rancho Cordova Chamber of Commerce recently welcomed Standards of Excellence to their newest location at 11340 White Rock Road in Rancho Cordova. Standards of Excellence hosts a new massive showroom filled with unique vignettes showing the various ways to design a truly one-of-a-kind kitchen. Pictured here (left to right) at the ribbon cutting are (front row) Jerry Cantvelli, territory manager, Placer and Nevada counties; Chris Clark, Rancho Cordova Chamber of Commerce; Douglas Brewer, Rancho Cordova Chamber of Commerce; Shane Baker, general manager; Steve Gant, inside sales associate; Jameason Wieler, inside sales associate; Jason Dillon, director of sales; (back row) Lori Gross, showroom designer; Nick Kress, territory manager, Sacramento and Yolo counties; Steve Reynolds, inside sales associate; a member of the Rancho Chamber of Commerce; Matt Hernandez, director of operations; Rusty Tomer, director of merchandising; and Russ Erwin, territory manager, San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties. Photo by Bill Martin

By Kathy Hedicke

#### GOLD RIVER/RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG)

- The Rancho Cordova Chamber of Commerce recently welcomed Standards of Excellence to their newest location at 11340 White Rock Road in Rancho Cordova. Standards of Excellence hosts a new massive showroom filled with unique vignettes showing the various ways to design a truly one-of-a-kind kitchen.

At Standards of Excellence, they strive to make every customer's kitchen as unique as your own individual taste and style. Standards of Excellence are best known as the premier supplier of home

appliances in Northern California. They offer many hard-to-find brands as well as high-end brand like Wolf, Viking, Miele, and Bosch.

Anyone who has ever remodeled their home, or even just one room, knows it can be a challenging and arduous task. It can also be extremely time consuming and expensive. This is why the Mitchell family of Land Park in Sacramento decided to use Standards of Excellence. Although their contractor highly recommended that the Mitchells use Standards of Excellence, the couple performed even more due diligence in selecting Standards of Excellence for their appliances. They wanted to ensure

that they would not receive shoddy work on any part of their home remodeling project and wanted to check out each possible supplier on their own.

To this end, the Mitchells checked out multiple appliance stores, including the big box stores and other well-known local area appliance suppliers. They wanted appliances that would best suit their family's needs and their very busy lifestyle. Since both Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell each worked full time and had two small children, having everything located in one place like Standards of Excellence was also an important factor in making their final decision.

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## New Owners, New Developments at Amador Foothill Winery

#### SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

- Perched on top of one of the highest points in Amador's Shenandoah Valley for more than three decades, Amador Foothill Winery has a simple charm all its own. That's what drove winemaker Tom Jones and his wife, Beth, to purchase the winery and vineyards in the fall of 2014 and allow a new leaf to develop in the Amador Foothill Winery story.

Founded in 1980, Amador Foothill Winery is one the oldest and most decorated wineries in the Shenandoah Valley, receiving a variety of accolades for its wine over the past 34 years. Located in the picturesque foothills east of Sacramento with a spectacular view of the Sierras, Amador Foothill Winery

produces three classic vineyard-designated Zinfandels and is among the pioneers of Sangiovese and Aglianico in California. Current production of Amador Foothill Winery's estate bottled wines is approximately 4,000 cases each year.

Tom and Beth bring a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to this beautiful location. Early on, Tom completed his master's degree in enology and viticulture at UC Davis, and he put his education to work crafting wine at his family's winery, Lava Cap, in Placerville, CA. He developed Lava Cap's reputation for award-winning wines from 1986 to 2013. Tom is a consummate professional, dedicated to handcrafting

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Winemaker Tom Jones, regarded as one of the most decorated winemakers in the Sierra Foothills, is ready to make his mark in Amador County by crafting three classic vineyard-designated Zinfandels for the 2014 vintage. Photo courtesy of Amador Foothill Winery

## Melinda Martel to Be Sworn in as Rancho Cordova Postmaster

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - On Friday, January 30th, Melinda Martel will follow a proud tradition that dates back to 1955 when Beryl E. Carroll first took office as the first Rancho Cordova Postmaster. Martel will raise her right hand to take the official oath of office as the new Rancho Cordova Postmaster at a 10 a.m. ceremony at the Rancho Cordova Post Office, 10923 Progress Ct., Rancho Cordova, CA 95670. In her last official act as the Sacramento District Manager, Barbara Plunkett will administer the oath of office.



As the new Rancho Cordova Postmaster, Martel oversees 87 employees who process and deliver a daily volume of more than 125,000 pieces to 30,631 delivery points (addresses) on 49 city routes and to 1,699 Post Office boxes. Photo courtesy of United States Postal Service

Martel began her postal career in 1979 as a city letter carrier in New York, one of the first females to carry mail there. In 1982, she began her management career as a supervisor in Novato, CA. She held numerous management positions in mail processing, customer service, and marketing.

"I feel honored to be an integral part of this community," said Martel. "Serving the community of Rancho Cordova and providing the best possible mail service will be my focus."

Martel enjoys cycling, cooking, traveling, reading and skiing. She and her husband, Mike, reside in Rancho Murieta. They have two sons, Michael and Marc.

Active in community affairs, Martel participates in Rancho Murieta events, the annual Christmas tree lighting, and the 4th of July Carnival. She is a member of the Optimists International and is actively involved in Summerfest.

As Rancho Cordova Postmaster, Martel oversees 87 employees who process and deliver a daily volume of more than 125,000 pieces to 30,631 delivery points (addresses) on 49 city routes and to 1,699 Post Office boxes.

Source: United States Postal Service ★

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## Gold River Welcomes First U.S. Community Credit Union

**GOLD RIVER, CA (MPG)** - Big Valley Federal Credit Union has decided to partner with First U.S. Community Credit Union. The two organizations will combine assets effective February 1st, 2015. Both credit unions are, and will remain, federally insured by the National Credit Union Association (NCUA).



“After extensive research and consideration, Big Valley management chose First U.S. Community Credit Union to continue offering excellent cooperative financial services to the Big Valley family,” said Linda Sweet, president and CEO of Big Valley. “The combination will deliver additional products and services, better rates, and enhanced financial strength as part of our nearly 80-year commitment to members as owners of the credit union.”

The combined credit union will have more than \$320 million in assets and will serve more than 23,000 member-owners; the credit union will be focused on serving the business and personal needs of the communities in 12 Northern California counties, including the Gold River and Sun River Communities.

Under the First U.S. name, Big Valley’s Wissemann Avenue and Gold River branches will continue to serve members with extended hours. Beginning April 1st, 2015, the Gold River branch will add Saturday hours. Through CO-OP ATMs and Shared Branching, members have access to more than 6,900 full-service branch locations and a network of more than 30,000 free ATMs. The Gold River ATM does not charge a surcharge.

Credit unions, as not-for-profit institutions, return their profits to their member-owners in the form of better rates, lower fees, and superior service.

Stop by the new facility and say hello to the friendly staff during the changeover to First U.S Community Credit Union. ★

# New Owners, New Developments at Amador Foothill Winery

Continued from page 1

wines with full favors, intense varietal character, and complexity.

Amador Foothill isn’t any ordinary winemaking estate; its setting provides ideal growing conditions and its undulating hills and valleys provide a variety of microclimates to grow a range of grape varieties—Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, Sangiovese, Grenache, Barbera, and Aglianico. Tom said, “For a winemaker, there is no substitution for walking the vineyards, observing the conditions, and—most importantly—tasting the ripening grapes to determine when they are bursting with flavor. Our new estate affords me control from the vine to the bottle for all of my wines.”

Tasting room guests are invited to settle back at a picnic table to appreciate their favorite wine, savor the quaint bucolic setting, and take in the

panoramic Sierra view. Tom plans to add unique wines and varietals to their existing repertoire, offering new and different tasting experiences for visitors.

Amador Foothill Winery is located in Plymouth, CA, one hour east of Sacramento and just 10 minutes off Highway 16. Visit the winery Friday through Monday between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. for a complimentary wine tasting, a chance to chat with the new owners, and to learn about their exciting plans for this beautiful hilltop location. To learn more, please visit [www.amadorfoothill.com](http://www.amadorfoothill.com).

Zinfandel Reigns Supreme in Amador County

Zinfandel has a proud heritage in Amador County, with some vines harkening back to the Gold Rush era, and it remains the varietal of choice for the area. Why is Zinfandel so popular in Amador County? It’s a combination of



Amador Foothill isn’t any ordinary winemaking estate; its setting provides ideal growing conditions and its undulating hills and valleys provide a variety of microclimates to grow a range of grape varieties—Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, Sangiovese, Grenache, Barbera, and Aglianico. Photo courtesy of Amador Foothill Winery



Founded in 1980, Amador Foothill Winery is one of the oldest and most decorated wineries in the Shenandoah Valley, receiving a variety of accolades for its wine over the past 34 years. Photo courtesy of Amador Foothill Winery

soil and climate that provide an optimal growing environment for Zinfandels.

Amador’s vineyards are planted on hillsides ranging between 500 and 2,300 feet, with most between 1,200 and 2,000. The vines are planted in well-drained, volcanic, decomposed granite soils, which limit vegetative growth and result in small crops of intensely flavored grapes.

The region’s high degree of solar luminosity also ensures the grapes ripen fully and slowly, producing well-developed fruit with that great intensity of flavor and the soft, developed tannins with none of the harsh, green flavors that can come from grapes grown in a cool

climate.

Winemaker Tom Jones, regarded as one of the most decorated winemakers in the Sierra Foothills, is ready to make his mark in Amador County by crafting three classic vineyard-designated Zinfandels for the 2014 vintage. The grapes were handpicked at their peak of ripeness, yielding fruit with clean, soft pulp; brown seeds (indicative of gentle tannins); and pure fresh flavors. Tom said, “My goal is to produce Zinfandels full of character, with rich and elegant structure, complex flavors, and great balance.”

Source: Amador Foothill Winery ★

# Chamber Welcomes Standards of Excellence

Continued from page 1

The company’s sparkling new showroom features hundreds of brands of home and kitchen appliances, including dishwashers, refrigerators, cook-tops, ranges, wall ovens, outdoor cooking appliances, ice makers, washers and dryers, and so much more. The Mitchells recalled that from

the very first phone call to Standards of Excellence they were treated as if they were their most important customers.

The Mitchells were assigned an associate to personally work with them and guide them through every step in selecting all their appliances. Since they were buying all new appliances for the entire house, the

Mitchells knew how important attention to detail would be. They made sure their associate knew and understood their expectations, and their personal tastes, along with the new home design in choosing their appliances.

This level of customer service was especially important to the Mitchells in the kitchen.

Both of the Mitchells are gourmet cooks who entertain a lot. This factor, along with both of them working and two small children at home, made the kitchen the hub of the home where they would spend a great deal of time. Time and convenience for the family was important but so was the presentation of the kitchen

to family and friends when entertaining. They were most pleased with the outcome.

Check out the Standards of Excellence showroom online at [www.StandardsOfExcellence.com](http://www.StandardsOfExcellence.com) or visit the beautiful new showroom at 11340 White Rock Road, Suite #150 in Rancho Cordova. If you have any questions, call (916) 515-2424. ★

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**Publisher,**  
**Paul V. Scholl**

# Gold River Messenger

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# Join the 2015 Gold River Stingrays Swim Team



Coach Jeff Float with Gold River Stingrays for a pre-meet cheer. Photo courtesy of Gold River Racquet Club

**GOLD RIVER, CA (MPG)** - Mark your calendars to join the 2015 Gold River Stingrays spring and summer swim season! This team is for children ages 5 to 18. Swim team experience is not necessary; however, it is required that your child be able to swim 25 yards unassisted. Practice starts on April 6th with meets starting on May 2nd. The season culminates on Championship Weekend, July 18th-19th. The Gold River

Stingrays compete in the top conference of the 26-team, 5-conference NorCal Swim League. The Gold River Stingrays are proud to have Head Coach Jeff Float, Olympic gold medalist and Sacramento Sport Hall of Fame member, coaching their team. Information/registration days are scheduled for Saturday, February 7th from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and again on Saturday, March 7th from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sign up so you

don't miss the fun and excitement as the winning tradition continues with the Gold River Stingrays! More information is available online at the team website at [www.goldriverstingrays.org](http://www.goldriverstingrays.org). Coach Jeff looks forward to all new and returning swimmers and their families joining the Stingrays for another exciting year of fast swimming and great times! *Source: Gold River Racquet Club* ★

# Spay It Forward 2015 Campaign

*Animal Spay and Neuter Offers Free Cat Spays and Neuters*

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - Animal Spay and Neuter, a non-profit clinic, is partnering with Sacramento animal care agencies and rescue groups to provide FREE cat spays and neuters through March 2015 or until funding runs out for this program. This program is for all cats,

owned or homeless, tame or feral, that reside anywhere in the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Sacramento County. Surgery is by appointment only. Call to make your appointment as the schedule will fill up quickly. This free service is being offered at two locations. The

Sacramento location is at 3839 Bradshaw Road; call them at (916) 368-7314. The Auburn location is at 3524 KOA Way; call them at (530) 889-8800. All Donations toward the Spay and Neuter are welcome to keep the fund alive. *Source: City of Rancho Cordova* ★





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## Raley's Launches Commitment to Sustainable Seafood

By Kat Maudru

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Raley's family of fine stores has begun showcasing its dedication to sustainable seafood—a commitment to choices that are better for their customers and the planet.

Sustainable seafood is either caught wild or farmed in ways that consider the long-term vitality of harvested species and the wellbeing of the oceans. Raley's new sustainable symbol indicates that seafood has been sourced from certified fisheries or farm programs. Raley's does not purchase species that are threatened and have no credible improvement plan such as sharks, tuna from certain nations, and spiny lobsters, to name a few.

“As part of Raley's ongoing efforts to infuse life with health and happiness, our sustainable seafood involves working with trusted fisheries and fishermen, ensuring that seafood is sourced responsibly and ethically,” said Koen Vermeylen, Raley's seafood expert.

Currently, approximately 80% of all seafood sold at Raley's is sustainable, with a goal of December 2017 for all fish to be 100% sustainably sourced. The company's



**Raley's new sustainable symbol indicates that seafood has been sourced from certified fisheries or farm programs.** Image courtesy of Raley's

seafood staff has undergone extensive training to answer customer questions about sustainability.

For more information about where Raley's sources each species and how they choose their suppliers, visit [www.raleys.com/go/seafood](http://www.raleys.com/go/seafood).

Source: Raley's ★

## Taekwondo Championships at Memorial Auditorium

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Sparring circle competitive matches in eight rings featuring the hard-punching, high-flying kicks of Taekwondo martial arts will be the main feature at Sacramento's Memorial Auditorium on February 28th.

Martial artists from schools across the western states, including students from 17 regional Robinson's Taekwondo locations will compete in the event and spectacular special guest are set to demonstrate techniques and weapons.

More than 5,000 spectators from across the region attended the event last year, and organizers plan on the 2015 Sacramento Invitational Championships being bigger, better, and more exciting than ever.

Sacramento's Memorial Auditorium is located at 1515 J Street, Sacramento, CA. Call (888) 249-7853 for information or visit [www.robinsonsktd.com/north-sacramento/sac-invitational/](http://www.robinsonsktd.com/north-sacramento/sac-invitational/). Tickets are also available from the Sacramento Convention Center Box Office.

Source: Rick Reed ★



Martial artists from schools across the western states, including students from 17 regional Robinson's Taekwondo locations will compete in the event and spectacular special guest are set to demonstrate techniques and weapons. Photo courtesy of Rick Reed

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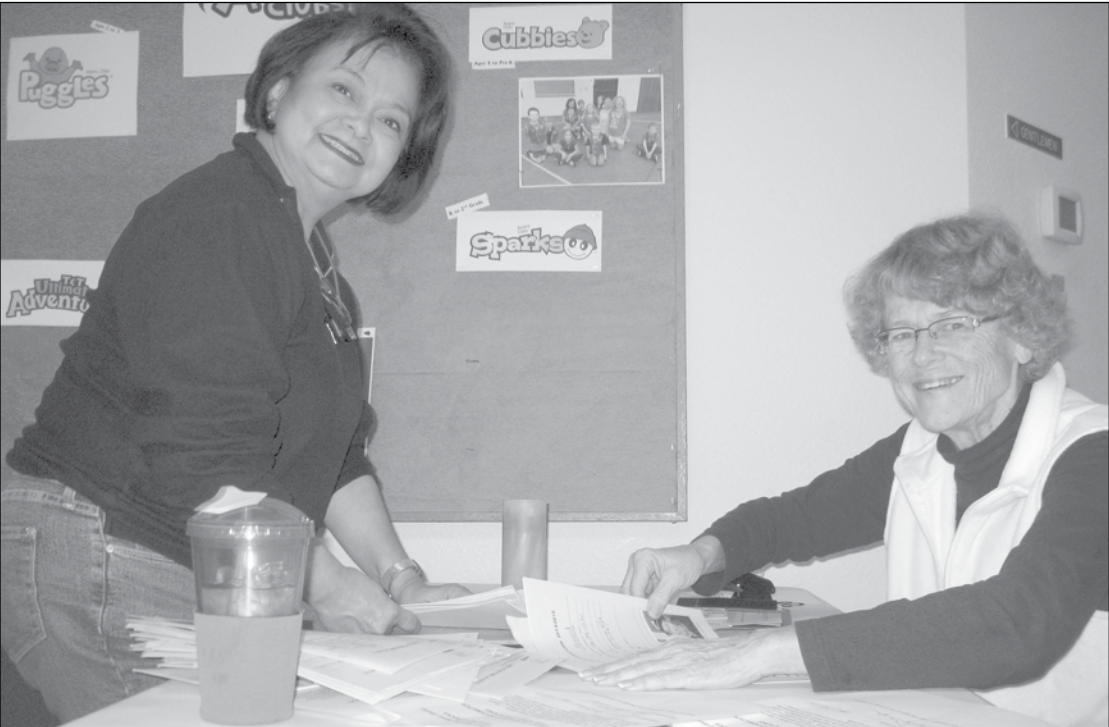
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# Churches Conclude Four-Week Winter Shelter



Inez Reyes of St. John Vianney Catholic Church and Fay Kerekes of United Methodist Church of Rancho Cordova, and others, provided intake processing during the four weeks of shelter at Rancho Cordova host churches.

**Story and photo  
by Margaret Snider**

**RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG)** - The Interfaith Rotating Winter Shelter of Rancho Cordova is all about the people being served. Dono Mitchell (65) is a Vietnam veteran and was a welder for 25 years; he has been homeless for three years. “This is a top-of-the-list program,” Mitchell said. “They get into your spiritual part. They want to know what you’re doing. A lot of places don’t care.”

Mitchell said that it has been difficult for him to stay in one place, but he’s not getting any younger. “Although the program stops tomorrow, it’s not going to get any warmer,” Mitchell said. “It’s just the beginning of winter, so I don’t know what I’m going to do.”

The program began on schedule and ran for four weeks, providing food, comfort, and shelter from the cold for some of the local homeless and overcoming several challenges including being without a central intake site. Undeterred from their goal, the group processed their guests each day at the host sites. Inez Reyes of St. John Vianney Catholic Church and Fay Kerekes of United Methodist Church of Rancho Cordova handled the evening intake every day of the program, helped by Nan Traud of Sun River Church, and others, working at the different sites each week.

Karen Edwards of Sun River Church, one of the main organizers and promoters of the program, said that having a central intake site would have provided a stable location for patrons to gather and a set time for beginning and ending each day’s shelter. It would also have

avoided the confusion of the patrons about where to go each week.

“I really believe we cannot operate next year without an intake site,” said Edwards.

The program was able to cover only four of the eight weeks they had planned, with only four churches volunteering to be host sites: St. John Vianney Catholic Church, Cordova Neighborhood Church, Sun River Church, and Cordova Church of Christ. However, the group hopes to increase the span of time covered next year.

“There are 50-something congregations in the Rancho Cordova area,” said Larry Stafford, associate minister specializing in outreach and involvement for Cordova Church of Christ. “Right here on Coloma Road we have 12, so we should be able to make very good inroads on the problem.”

Stafford invited other church leaders to visit the host sites and see how smoothly the process actually was. “It’s real easy to just turn the other way,” Stafford said. “But when you’re face to face with somebody, you’ve got to deal with them as a human being.”

Without winter shelter, options are very limited for those on the streets. Howard and Cheryle Hicks of Rancho Cordova are both 57 and have been homeless for around three months; they were grateful for the nights they were able to spend in the shelter. “Without it,” Howard Hicks said, “you just keep moving. Or you freeze like a popsicle.”

Every person’s situation is different. Five years ago, Kim Swope (35) was making \$80,000 a year. “I have a Bachelor’s degree,” Swope said. “I was a normal, functioning member of

society just like everybody else. But my daughter ran away and I had a breakdown, and I lost everything.”

Now she is struggling to get back everything she lost. “It’s been eye opening, and a humbling experience that I needed to go through,” Swope said. “This is my first time in this experience. I’m like a fish out of water.”

Some of the homeless have been able to receive counseling and find resources while at the shelter. “Sacramento Self-Help Housing came to our place one night and they found aid for one person and housing for three others,” said Mike Mitchum, pastor at Cordova Neighborhood Church. “That was a highlight. And to be able to perhaps provide more resources for them, I think I would like to see that happen next year.”

Volunteers responded enthusiastically at every shelter host site. Claudia Beigel, parish coordinator for St. John Vianney host site, said she was pleased with the response. “So many people came forward to volunteer and to give money, to give of their time,” Beigel said. “I’m looking forward to doing it next year.”

With all its challenges and difficulties, organizers, volunteers, and guests all feel the effort was worth it. “I think that we were able to connect with some of the homeless population in Rancho and have conversations, make them feel not invisible,” Edwards said. “We did a little good and we may never know how far it goes. We were one link in their chain back to getting on their feet. So yes, it was, I think, totally, totally worth it.” ★

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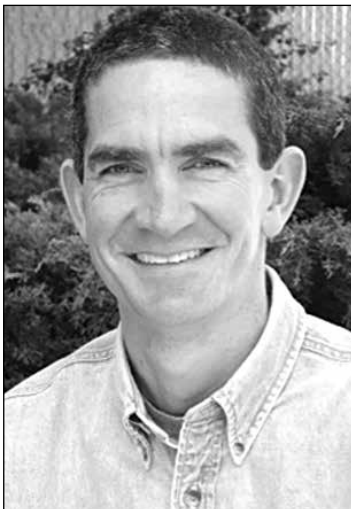


# Is There Such a Thing as Psychedelic-induced Spirituality?

By Eric Nelson

PETALUMA, CA, Dec. 8, 2014 – Asked if they could envision a day when psychedelic drugs could or should be used to heighten an individual’s tendency toward empathy and compassion, both men sitting on a stage in front of a packed auditorium at Stanford University – one a research scientist, the other an accomplished neurosurgeon – responded with a convincing “Yes!”

Times have changed. Beginning in 1970, the Food and Drug Administration banned all research on such drugs as LSD, psilocybin and MDMA or “Ecstasy” after they were embraced and often abused by a burgeoning counter-culture intent on using them for recreational purposes, instead of their originally intended and medically moderated therapeutic applications. But by the mid-1990s, the embargo was lifted and today scientists are again exploring ways in which these compounds can be used to treat a variety of mental illnesses. It’s argued that psychedelics are a great way to reconnect the mentally distressed with their inner self – the spiritual self, the compassionate, caring, confident self – thanks to a still-not-entirely-understood interaction with certain chemicals in the brain. It’s possible, however, that at least part of this uncertainty stems from the continued emphasis on the drugs and chemicals themselves instead of the thought of the individual receiving the drugs. Case in point: Alexander “Sasha” Shulgin, a researcher



from U.C. Berkeley considered by many to be the “Godfather of psychedelics,” discovered following surgery for a bone

*“The mind is the major factor in defining a psychoactive drug’s action.”*

infection that what he thought was a sedative was in fact just some sweetener added to his orange juice. “A fraction of a gram of sugar had rendered me unconscious, because I had truly believed that it could do just that,” he wrote in his autobiography, *PIHKAL: A Chemical Love Story*. “The mind is the major factor in defining a psychoactive drug’s action.” Indeed, there are plenty of studies indicating that were it not for an individual’s mental predisposition to a particular drug’s effectiveness – and, in some cases, the predisposition of the one administering the drug – they would experience little if any reaction. This makes you wonder if there might be other,

more effective means to stimulate such morally and spiritually geared sensibilities as empathy and compassion. Long before psychedelics had been discovered, religious reformer Mary Baker Eddy found that a wholly prayer-based approach to treating mental illness worked best – an approach based on the inspired assumption that mental acuity is not dependent upon human circumstance or material conditions but divine providence. “I visited in his cell the assassin of President Garfield, and found him in the mental state called moral idiocy,” Eddy recounts in her *Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896*. “He had no sense of his crime; but regarded his act as one of simple justice, and himself as the victim. My few words touched him; he sank back in his chair, limp and pale; his flippancy had fled. The jailer thanked me, and said, ‘Other visitors have brought to him bouquets, but you have brought what will do him good.’” It may be years before researchers, doctors or even the broader public adopts such an approach, but it is worth considering. Maybe then we’ll be that much less dependent on drugs and that much more reliant on the spirituality that is innate in all of us. *Eric Nelson’s columns on the link between consciousness and health appear regularly in a number of local and national online publications. He also serves as the media and legislative spokesperson for Christian Science in Northern California. Follow him on Twitter @norcals.* ★

# Game Plots Open Worlds Feeling Crowded

By Noah Howard

One of the greatest experiences only video games can offer is the feeling of exploration. Even the most wondrous worlds in the most imaginative books and movies can only be seen while traveling down the straight path that the author/director has created for the consumer. But video games allow for people to make their own stories, to wander around without sticking to a strict narrative structure. That’s not to say that all video games have open, explorable worlds; many are still strictly linear. In fact, the entire last generation of consoles seems defined by the popularity of linear shooters. Only nearer to the end did open worlds surge. This is especially true on the PS4 and XOne hardware, where games that have traditionally been linear are now becoming fully open worlds. *Metal Gear Solid V* seems like the best example, considering each of its previous entries had little to no exploration. Games whose predecessors had worlds fragmented by loading screens, such as *The Witcher*, are now uniting their environments into one cohesive area. The epitome of this trend will inevitably be *No Man’s Sky*, set to release



Developers, and gamers, need to realize that a huge amount of content doesn’t make a game better. In order for a world to feel convincing, it has to have enough to do to keep people entertained but not so much to make you feel like an overpowered errand runner. Photo courtesy Noah Howard

later this year, which has a universe so big that, in the words of one of the developers, “even if a planet was discovered every second, it would take 585 billion years to find them all.” Of course, this is mostly the result of newer, more powerful hardware allowing for size and detail on a previously unattempted scale. Developers are excited and want to push their games as far as technically possible. However, this isn’t necessarily a good thing. As we’ve seen over the past year, open-world game design has often resorted to lazy quantity-over-quality design to fill up time. An empty open world is a death sentence but an overly full one is just as bad. Every major open-world game of 2014 clogged its world map with dozens upon dozens of tiny icons indicating arbitrary tasks to be done for arbitrary rewards. In Shadow of Mordor,

I’m supposed to be a vengeful wraith-possessed ranger. Why am I collecting basket fragments? *Far Cry 4*, *Assassin’s Creed Unity*, *Watchdogs*, and *Dragon Age: Inquisition* are all guilty as well. Developer CD Projekt RED promises that *The Witcher 3* won’t adhere to this trend, but what’s to guarantee it won’t continue in the future? All the above games sold incredibly well, partly because they’re just so jam-packed with things to do. To many, length is the measure of a game’s worth. And when you fill up your game with meaningless side quests, you can proudly sport 100s of hours’ worth of content. However, it makes sense that games would use small-time collecting and busywork as distractions. After all, the whole reason sidequests are sidequests is because you don’t have to do them, and many people won’t. It doesn’t make practical sense from a development perspective to spend time and resources on quests that most people will never play. Developers, and gamers, need to realize that a huge amount of content doesn’t make a game better. In order for a world to feel convincing, it has to have enough to do to keep people entertained but not so much to make you feel like an overpowered errand runner. Right now, the latter side of the scale is heavily tipped. However, some games on the horizon, like *No Man’s Sky* and *Wander*, seem to be rejecting this trend for a more simplistic experience. Hopefully, this is an indicator that clogged-world design will slowly fade during this generation. *To respond to Noah’s articles email him at digitalartsnoah@yahoo.com* ★

# Whatever Happened to an Old-Fashioned Handshake?

Dr. James L. Snyder

I must confess I do have some old-fashioned biases. I would be the first to admit I’m not up to date on the latest fad or trend. I come from that era that believed the well-dressed man is one that doesn’t stand out from everybody else. I’ve tried to keep to that all these years. I certainly don’t want to stand out and have people recognize me or point their finger at me and whispered to each other. For years, I’ve been very careful about that. Now, it seems that because I try to dress like a well-dressed man and not stand out I am in fact standing out. Nobody, except me and two other people, really care about being well-dressed. This has never been an issue with me and it even now is not an issue. But reflecting on the past year and looking forward to the year before me, I have to take some calculations. According to my calculation, I no longer fit into that “well-dressed man” category, because the term “well-dressed man” does not mean what it used to mean. I hate it when something outlasts its definition. To be a well-dressed man today, according to the latest fads and trends I have noticed, I need to throw away my belt and let my trousers drop all the way down to my knees. Let me go on record as saying, never in a million years will that happen. Then there is the issue about a necktie. Am I the last person on planet earth wearing a necktie? Very few people today know how to tie a necktie. Well, I do and I will until they put me in a casket and then I hope I’m still wearing a tie. So if you come to my funeral and look at me in the casket and I’m not wearing a tie, complain to someone for me.

The latest trends and fads have no interest to me whatsoever. This came to my attention recently when I had to sign some legal papers for something to do with the church. I had to sign here, initial there, sign the next page, initial three pages and it went on and on until I ran out of ink. I’m one of those old-fashioned guys that use a fountain pen and all that signing and initialing drained all of the ink out of my fountain pen. Before I finished, I was on the verge of carpal tunnel. I sighed rather deeply, looked at the gentleman (I think he was a gentleman because he was dressed like a gentleman), and said kind of sarcastically, “Do you remember the old-fashioned handshake?” He looked at me without smiling and then said, “Here are some more papers for you to sign.” I thought I was signing my life away, but in reality, I was just signing my ink away. I do remember when a handshake really meant something. Just about everything was sealed with a handshake and both parties were as good as their word. It would take a lot of undoing to undo that handshake. Now, you’re only as good as the word on a piece of paper over your signature. Then, some lawyer can finagle it around to mean something other than what you really meant it in the first place. So what’s the purpose of all this? I know you’re not supposed to say this, but I will, I sure long for the good old days when a handshake was all you needed. I get tired of the rigmarole passing as business these days. I get tired of paperwork that’s piled higher than the tallest tree in the forest. Of course, if we go back to that handshake scenario, it will put many lawyers out of business. What would these people do for a living? I have some ideas, but

I’m going to keep that to myself. Trust has gone out of our culture today because everybody is only after what they can get for themselves and they don’t care how they get it. A handshake met something in “the day.” In fact, I believe it was more binding than all of the paperwork and signed documents and legalese we have today. It’s hard to sue a handshake! What I want to know is simply this. When we replaced the good old-fashioned handshake with all of this legalese stuff, are we better off? Have we simplified everything and covered all of the bases? The answer is a loud no. A man’s word used to be his bond and something he would never go back on. The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I have lived on that marital philosophy all of our married life. I know in the marriage ceremony there is no “handshake.” But the philosophy of that handshake is right there. When I said “I do,” and she responded by another “I do,” we were shaking hands and saying to everybody around us but particularly to one another, “We do.” I think James shook the right hand when he wrote, “But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation” (James 5:12). I’m all for getting back to the good old days when a handshake was all you needed. *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 jamessnyder2@att.net. His website is www.jamessnyderministries.com.* ★

# Girl Scouts About More Than Just Cookies

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Girl Scout Cookie Season is underway and continues through March 22nd! But there’s more to Girl Scout Cookies than what’s in the box—Girl Scouts is about the essential skills a girl gains from interacting with customers and the experience of running her own cookie business and working with others. New this year, Girl Scouts will be able to sell their cookies online through Digital Cookie, adding new skills to the program like online marketing and e-commerce. From its earliest beginnings in 1917 to its current popularity, the Girl Scout Cookie Program has helped girls have fun, develop valuable life skills, and make their communities a better place. Cookie earnings help pay for the leadership activities and field trips Girl Scouts do all year long. Plus, the cookie program benefits more than just the girls selling them. With their earnings, Girl Scouts fund important community projects at the local level. When you buy Girl Scout cookies in your neighborhood, you are keeping your dollars in the community. The five skills girls learn are goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics. There are financial literacy badges girls can earn at each level, from kindergarten through grade 12. In terms of skill building, statistics show the Girl Scout Cookie Program works. According to a survey from the Girl Scout Research Institute, 85% of Girl Scout “cookie entrepreneurs” learn money management through developing budgets, taking cookie orders, and handling customers’ money. Girl Scouts Heart of Central California purchases its cookies from ABC Bakers, one of two licensed Girl Scout cookie bakers.



Girl Scouts Heart of Central California purchases its cookies from ABC Bakers, one of two licensed Girl Scout cookie bakers.

Butter Sandwiches, Shortbread, Lemonades, Thanks-A-Lot, and Cranberry Citrus Crisps. Select troops will also be selling a limited supply of the new gluten-free Trios, made with real peanut butter, chocolate chips, and whole grain oats. Becoming a national holiday for Girl Scout Cookie fans, National Girl Scout Cookie Weekend will take place February 27th through March 1st. In honor of this nearly 100-year-old American tradition, Girl Scout members, volunteers, alumnae, and supporters across the country will celebrate the world’s largest girl-led business. Girl Scouts Heart of Central California will also continue its partnership with the American Red Cross for Project Thank

You. Through Project Thank You, customers can purchase Girl Scout Cookies, which are distributed by the American Red Cross to local service men and women, VA hospitals, and food banks. At booth sales, customers just need to tell the girls that they’d like to purchase cookies for Project Thank You and they will put the cookies aside. Local Girl Scouts are currently taking cookie pre-orders. After pre-orders, Girl Scouts will sell cookies at booths outside of local storefronts from February 27th to March 22nd. Cookies are \$5 per package. More information can be found at [www.girlscoutcookies.org](http://www.girlscoutcookies.org). *Source: Girl Scouts Heart of Central California* ★





By Alona Thomas

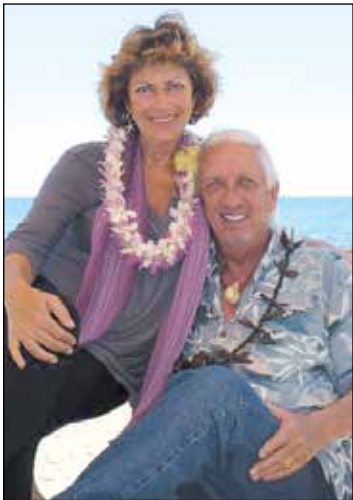
My recent visit to Hawaii was experienced through new eyes when I watched my grandchildren snorkel; endure a long, boring trip to the volcano; and see a whale breach five feet from our boat. But it was mandatory that I peruse the farmers markets and seek a cooking experience. Once again, my horizons were broadened.

Tai Shan means “Peaceful Mountain,” which perfectly describes Don and Malia McNabb’s organic farm located 50 miles south of Kailua-Kona at 3,000 ft. on the Mauna Loa volcano. They were visitors to the Big Island and decided they would retire here. They

## Bite of the Big Island

is sweet and crunchy with a flavor that is a cross between kiwi and pear. The McNabbs added bee hives to their farm and concentrated on producing rare Dragon Fruit honey.

The smooth Reserve Honey is



Don and Malia McNabb own an organic farm located 50 miles south of Kailua-Kona at 3,000 ft. on the Mauna Loa volcano. The McNabb’s farm is called Tai Shan, which means “Peaceful Mountain.” Photo courtesy of the McNabbs

only collected when the Dragon Fruit is in full bloom and the bees are in the field. My choice

and love to give honey tastings.

A Google search before we departed for the Big Island revealed that a vanilla farm offered a cooking demonstration, lunch, and tour. That could not be ignored. I shanghaied my friends and off we went to the other side of the island. The Vanilla Planifolia is an orchid and the primary source for vanilla extract. This was another one of those “REALLY?” moments. The first commercial vanilla growers in the United States were the Reddekopp family who own Hawaiian Vanilla Farm, located on the Hamakua Coast in Paauilo. Jim Reddekopp, born in Hawaii, and his wife Tracy decided to raise their family in a rural, family-oriented environment and purchased their farm in 1998. Through trial and error, the family has succeeded in presenting a wonderful experience on their farm, which includes a cooking lesson, a terrific lunch, and a tour to learn about one of the most prized flavorings in the world.

At the farm, Jim greeted us and seated us in a lanai; there was a breeze and just a bit of a cloud cover. He began by demonstrating Garam Masala Shrimp. It was prepared by melting butter and adding a scraped vanilla bean, Garam Masala spice, vanilla extract, and the shrimp. This was served on a crostini with pineapple chutney and volcano black salt. DELICIOUS! We were advised that you can never overdo vanilla in any recipe. Each dish featured vanilla or one of the products including Vanilla Raspberry Balsamic Vinaigrette. Jim led us on a tour of the farm with a discussion of how the vanilla is harvested. The orchid blooms once a year and lasts only a day, and it must be pollinated manually during the morning hours (for about four hours). Now we know why it is so expensive.

Alona’s hobby is food and delicious times. Contact Alona at [alonathomas@gmail.com](mailto:alonathomas@gmail.com). ★



Dragon Fruit, a member of the cactus family, is sweet and crunchy with a flavor that is a cross between kiwi and pear. The McNabbs added bee hives to their farm and concentrated on producing rare Dragon Fruit honey.

purchased their dream three acres—“site” unseen—on the internet. Don envisioned himself as Juan Valdez amongst the coffee trees. In a short time, they realized that coffee was not their cup of tea. Clearing the land, the couple put in a drip system for their new crop of Dragon Fruit, a member of the cactus family. It

is the Dragon Fruit and Coffee Honey. Fact, newly learned, is that the coffee tree is in the gardenia family and has a very fragrant, flowery bloom. The McNabb bees forage in the coffee trees when in bloom, producing a darker, more robust honey. The personable Don and Malia are present at their booth at the farmers markets in Keahou

## EDMT Presents the Classic Musical *Singin’ in the Rain*

Young, Talented Actors Make a Splash on the Big Stage



EDMT cast members (left to right) Andrew Wilson and Laura Metzinger in the filmed production scenes for *Singin’ in the Rain*. Photo courtesy of El Dorado Musical Theatre

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - El Dorado Musical Theatre (EDMT) is proud to present *Singin’ in the Rain*, which will run February 20th through March 1st at the Harris Center (formerly Three Stages at Folsom Lake College), 10 College Parkway, Folsom, CA.

You remember the plot. You love the characters. You know “the song.” It’s no less than the stage adaptation of one of the most celebrated and beloved movie musicals of all time. 1920s Hollywood is the setting for this zany, lighthearted romantic comedy about the early days of sound film, when many a movie studio found itself scrambling to salvage the careers of its less-than-perfect-voiced silent picture stars.

The film *Singin’ in the Rain* endures as America’s best movie musical (according to the American Film Institute) because, among other things, it tells a story of hope, resilience, and the power of friendship and love to see us through tough times. It’s the ultimate feel-good show, accompanied by a hit parade of songs including

“Singin’ in the Rain,” “Good Morning,” and “Make ‘Em Laugh.”

The MGM classic movie has been faithfully and lovingly adapted by Broadway legends Betty Comden and Adolph



Evan Martorana (left) and Connor Ricketts pause in their duel to pose for a photo while filming the production scenes for El Dorado Musical Theatre’s *Singin’ in the Rain*. Photo courtesy of El Dorado Musical Theatre

Green from their original award-winning screenplay. Each unforgettable scene, song, and dance is accounted for, including the show-stopping title number. Hilarious situations, snappy dialogue, and a hit-parade score

of Hollywood standards make *Singin’ in the Rain* the perfect entertainment for any fan of the golden age of movie musicals.

*Singin’ in the Rain* is an EDMT Encore production, which features their very best performers in a showcase vehicle. Audiences will see elaborate choreography along with colorful costumes and state-of-the-art digital projection scenery. And, of course, it will rain on stage for the title number.

Just a couple months ago, EDMT acquired new set/shop space in Rancho Cordova. They moved from a 500-square-foot space in El Dorado Hills to a 1,500-square-foot space in Rancho Cordova. In this new space, EDMT was able to film some of the scenes for *Singin’ in the Rain* as well as test the mechanics of the “rain-on-stage” water feature.

“The technical aspects of this show have been complex and exciting. We’ve had to film movie scenes, engineer the capability for it to rain on stage, and design some beautiful projections using the same front and rear screen technology seen on Broadway, which we don’t see much of within local regional musical theatre,” said EDMT CEO Rick Wilson.

Don’t miss your chance to see this technically complex production featuring extremely talented local youth! Ticket prices range from \$14.75-\$36 and can be purchased online at [www.harriscenter.net](http://www.harriscenter.net) or by calling the Harris Center Ticket Office at (916) 608-6888.

EDMT’s production of *Singin’ in the Rain* is sponsored in part by US Bank and Parker Development Company.

Source: El Dorado Musical Theatre ★



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By Gold River resident David Dickstein

If our one year of renting in Gold Station counts, this month marks the 16th anniversary of my family moving to Gold River. Fortunate we are to be afforded with a great place to raise the family, job proximity, terrific schools, an enviable lifestyle, and so much more. It's been a sweet 16, all right, even if our welcome wasn't.

"That's not where garbage cans go!" were the first and only words a man across the street said to my wife, and before move-in day I might add (a lecture instead of a neighborly introduction?). Shame on my wife, I guess, for assuming that trash containers are placed on the sidewalk as opposed to a few inches forward on the curb. That sour taste from our new street clearly followed us from our new gym.

I recall our first day as members of the Gold River Racquet Club. Our unfamiliar faces caught the eye of a woman whose kids were swimming in the pool with mine. She gave my wife and me an enthusiastic "hello" and asked if we were new. Our friendly nods prompted the woman to ask, "Which village?" We told her "Gold Station," at which her smile instantly dropped along with her interest in us.

We heard about elitism with Gold River but didn't know how prevalent it was, let alone that we'd be subjected to it right out the gate. Regrettably, I felt the need to please this snobby stranger, so as she walked away I hollered, "But we're just renting there. My company gives a year before you

# “Fool’s Gold”

## Can We All Get Along?

lose the home assistance package. We're looking to buy in Gold Spike Village." I figured that if we were fellow dues payers she would accept us. I know—how pathetic, how childish, and I've been ashamed about this for 16 years.

But here's the kicker, and now looking back, I clearly deserved the way our conversation ended with this woman: When she heard where we were looking to buy, she responded, "Gold Spike Village? That's where you start your Gold River experience." I know, gross.

We wound up not buying on Newcastle Gap because of a negligent seller, not due to pressure from this or any other neighborhood snot. Instead, we got a steal on a Powell village home, and what a lovely abode it has been, save for the dearth of families on our streets and a clash or two in the distant past with board members bent on following the Gestapo edition of "Robert's Rules of Order." Sigh.

\* \* \*

The late Sacramento-born philosopher and serial troublemaker Rodney King once asked, "Can we all get along?" For the most part, we as a community do. I think we can all agree that 99.3% of the time Gold River is as peaceful as an evening stroll through Hesperian Village—or any village, actually.

Oh, sure, every once in a while you hear about a feud between neighbors, an outbreak of vandalism, a fight over court time at the racquet club, and fireworks erupting out of an association meeting (or around midnight on the nature trails). By and large, however, serenity prevails in Gold River. You'd just never know it going on [www.goldriver.com](http://www.goldriver.com), where even the most innocent of topics can get testy.

Case in point: One of the more popular posts of late originated from a Gold River Online member who wondered if the new Smart & Final store offered anything unique

to Bel Air Supermarket—certainly a worthy query of widespread local interest. Initial responses were helpful and on-topic, ranging from some noticing lower prices and others citing a lack of quality brands, among other comments. But then, like so many conversations on the website, this one went south and quickly. Once someone shared criticism in a strong tone, the helpful exchange got unhelpful and unpleasant.

"... My biggest issue was the customers themselves," wrote one poster, "... loud, rude, pushy, etc. AND, lest any of you think I am being a snob ... I sent my sister over there, and she doesn't live in Gold River ... she came away with a bad feeling, the same as I did."

It didn't take long for someone to throw the above responder's words back in his or her face, calling that person a snob and sharing that "loud, rude, and pushy people" exist at Bel Air, too. "Stop being a pessimist with your posts," this person concluded before suggesting that if people is this person's problem, perhaps having groceries delivered curbside or to the house is the solution.

The chat got more personal and persnickety from there. One poster was chastised for spelling MacFrugals "McFrugals," and another respondent attached the mugshot of a brutish man with cuts on his head. I'm guessing this dude is supposed to represent the typical Smart & Final customer, clearly implying that a Gold River resident he isn't

While the venting and rants may be therapeutic for the poster, the wise reader will see the less congenial banter on Gold River Online as entertainment, like shtick from the acerbic Kathy Griffin or Don Rickles. For those who get riled up by the trolls and haters, as I have at times, perhaps the best advice comes from singer Taylor Swift: "Shake it off." ★



By Kay Burton

Barney Boel is a one-year-old West Highland Terrier belonging to Gold River residents, Hal and Jan Boel. The Boels have been long-time Westie owners, and last year, when their 15-year-old dog Shamus was listless and depressed after they lost their second dog, Stanley, the Boels decided to bring a new puppy into the family. The addition of Barney last Christmas re-energized Shamus. Shamus waited each morning by Barney's kennel for him to wake up so he could teach him the ropes, important things like how to keep the squirrels out of the yard and how to keep the pool sweep from attacking! Shamus only lived a few more months and then Barney had to take over all these important tasks.

Barney is a typical Westie: high energy, independent, and occasionally stubborn. He still loves squirrel and pool sweep chasing and has now added

## Meet Barney Boel



Puppy or adult, the Bolognese will steal your heart. Photo courtesy Kay Burton.

playing at the dog park and going out on rides with Hal on his new electric scooter. Scooter riding is his very favorite. He loves looking down at all those dogs walking around Pioneer Village. Fortunately, the scooter doesn't go very fast and mom usually runs alongside in case he wants to get off. All this

exercise means Jan has lost 10 pounds since Barney came to join their family!

Kay Burton is a longtime columnist and supporter of the SSPCA and other rescue groups.

To share your family pet story with our readers, Email: Kay.Burton1@comcast.net ★

## For the Love of Books

Book Review by Amy Shane  
amy-shane@att.net



MAKE IT AHEAD:  
A BAREFOOT CONTESSA COOKBOOK  
by Ina Garten

◆ Publisher: Clarkson Potter  
◆ Release date: October 28, 2014 ◆ hardcover, 272 pages



**On the Book Jacket:** For the first time, trusted and beloved cookbook author Ina Garten, the Barefoot Contessa, answers the number one question she receives from cooks: Can I make it ahead?

If you've ever found yourself stuck in front of the stove at your own party, scrambling to get everything to the table at just the right moment, Ina is here to let you in on her secrets! Thanks to twenty years of running a specialty food store and fifteen years writing cookbooks, she has learned exactly which dishes you can prep, assemble, or cook ahead of time. Whether you're hosting a party or simply making dinner on a hectic weeknight, Ina gives you lots of amazing recipes that taste just as good—or even better!—when they're made in advance.

In *Make It Ahead*, each recipe includes clear instructions for what you can do ahead of time, and how far in advance, so you can cook with confidence and eliminate last-minute surprises. Make a pitcher of Summer Rosé Sangria filled with red berries, let it chill overnight for the flavors to develop, and you have a delicious drink to offer your friends the minute they arrive. Simmer a pot of Wild Mushroom & Farro Soup, enjoy a bowl for lunch, and freeze the rest for a chilly evening. You can prep the kale, Brussels sprouts, and lemon vinaigrette for Winter Slaw ahead of time and simply toss them together before serving. Assemble French Chicken Pot Pies filled with artichokes and fresh tarragon a day in advance and then pop them in the oven half an hour before dinner. And for dessert, everyone needs the recipe for Ina's Decadent (gluten-free!) Chocolate Cake topped with Make-Ahead Whipped Cream. Ina also includes recipes for the biggest cooking day of the year—Thanksgiving! Her Ultimate Make-Ahead Roast Turkey and Gravy with Onions & Sage may just change your life.

With beautiful photographs and hundreds of invaluable make-ahead tips, this is your new go-to guide for preparing meals that are stress-free yet filled with those fabulously satisfying flavors that you have come to expect from the Barefoot Contessa.

**Amy's Review:** Once again, I am thrilled by a cookbook prepared by *The Barefoot Contessa* - Ina Garten, dedicated to meals that can be prepared ahead. Changing lives and kitchens everywhere, Ina Garten answers the call, giving readers a cookbook dedicated entirely to, make it ahead meal planning and recipes. Everything you need to be successful is included, from the number of servings yielded, ingredients, detailed instructions, personal sentiments, as well as helpful tips and techniques.

The Barefoot Contessa explores everything from baking ahead, cooking ahead, food storage, and even Thanksgiving preparation. No one is left out, with even a recipe included for the family dog. Best of all the beautiful mouthwatering photographs that accompany each recipe, bring life to the meal. Every meal is encompassed, with a wide range of recipes from breakfast to dessert. Recipes flank every page of the book, with instructions to make items such as:

asparagus and prosciutto bundles, goat cheese mashed potatoes and savory French chicken pot pie, to tri-berry crumbles and chocolate cake with mocha frosting. *Make It Ahead* explores not only the world of recipes, but tips for party planning, meal planning and even drink recipes for those drop in guests, making this book a valuable addition to any kitchen.

While, this book is described as make ahead meals, it is not a book that will stock up your freezer, it primarily focuses on preparing meals from one day to seven days in advance. The moment I received this book, I instantly flagged numerous recipes I wanted to try, which is always the number one sign of a spectacular cookbook. Once again, showing readers how easy it is to make sophisticated food simple. Truly a remarkable cookbook and a definite recommendation for fans of, *The Barefoot Contessa* cookbook line and would be a great gift for the foodie at heart.

Jim Miller  
Answers  
Your  
Senior  
Questions



Check Out This  
Week's Topic!

## Getting Around When You No Longer Drive

Dear Savvy Senior,

Where can I find out about alternative transportation options for my elderly mother? She needs to give up driving, but before she does, we need to figure out how she'll get around. - Searching Daughter

Dear Searching,

Alternative transportation services vary widely by community, so what's available to your mom will depend on where she lives. Here's what you should know.

### Transportation Options

For starters it's important to know that while most urban areas offer seniors a variety of transportation services, the options may be few to none for those living in the suburbs, small towns and rural areas. Alternative transportation is an essential link in helping seniors who no longer drive get to their doctor's appointments, stores, social activities and more.

Depending on where your mom lives, here's a rundown of possible solutions that can help her get around, along with some resources to help you locate them.

**Family and friends:** This is by far the most often used and favorite option among seniors. So make a list of all possible candidates your mom can call on, along with their availability and contact information.

**Local transportation programs:** These are usually sponsored by nonprofit organizations that serve seniors. These services may charge a nominal fee or accept donations and often

operate with the help of volunteer drivers.

Also check out the Independent Transportation Network ([itna-america.org](http://itna-america.org)), which is a national nonprofit that has 27 affiliate transportation programs in 23 states. With this program, seniors pay membership dues and fees based on mileage. And, most programs will let your mom donate her car in return for credits toward future rides.

**Demand response services:** Often referred to as "dial-a-ride" or "elderly and disabled transportation service," these are typically government-funded programs that provide door-to-door transportation services by appointment and usually charge a small fee or donation on a per ride basis. Many use vans and offer accessible services for riders with special needs.

**Taxi or car service:** These private services offer flexible scheduling but can be expensive, however, they're cheaper than owning a car. Some taxi/car services may be willing to set up accounts that allow other family members to pay for services and some may offer senior discounts. Be sure to ask.

Another option to look into is ride-sharing services, which connects people with cars, with people who need rides. Uber ([uber.com](http://uber.com)), Lyft ([lyft.com](http://lyft.com)) and Sidecar ([sidecar.com](http://sidecar.com)) are three of the largest companies offering services in dozens of cities across the U.S.

**Private program services:** Some hospitals, health clinics,

senior centers, adult day centers, malls or other businesses may offer transportation for program participants or customers. And some nonmedical home-care agencies that bill themselves as providing companionship and running errands or doing chores may also provide transportation.

**Mass transit:** Public transportation (buses, trains, subways, etc.) where available, can also be an affordable option and may offer senior reduced rates.

**Hire someone:** If your mom lives in an area where there are limited or no transportation services available, another option to consider is to pay someone in the community to drive her. Consider hiring a neighbor, retiree, high school or college student that has a flexible schedule and wouldn't mind making a few extra bucks.

### Where to Look

To find out what transportation services are available in your mom's community, contact the Rides in Sight national toll-free call center at 855-607-4337 (or see [ridesinsight.org](http://ridesinsight.org)), and the Eldercare Locator (800-677-1116), which will direct you to her area agency on aging for assistance.

Also contact local senior centers, places of worship and retirement communities for other possible options. And check with her state department of transportation at [www.fhwa.dot.gov/webstate.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/webstate.htm), and the American Public Transportation Association at [publictransportation.org](http://publictransportation.org). ★

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit [www.savvysenior.org](http://www.savvysenior.org). Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.



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