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PAGE 10



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SEPTEMBER 6, 2024

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NATURE SAVERS REEL IN LINE



PAGE 2

KINDNESS, CHARACTER, FLAG FOOTBALL



PAGE 3

SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH



PAGE 3

Recreation and Park District Offers Fall Fun



The Rio Linda Lions Club will have no shortage of fall fun. Photo courtesy of Yanni Lagge

By Annie Kerr

RIO LINDA, CA (MPG) - Fall in Rio Linda is about to be busy.

In addition to the fall football excitement, Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District has a packed schedule for the upcoming months, offering Rio Linda residents of all ages a plethora of activities and events.

“Our organization offers a fantastic lineup of ongoing classes for adults, designed to enrich your life and connect you with others in the

community. Whether you're a pickleball enthusiast, an aspiring artist in our Adult Painting Club or looking to find balance and tranquility through Tai Chi, there's something for everyone,” said Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District recreation supervisor Yanni Lagge.

“These events and activities are designed to bring our community together, create everlasting memories and offer fun for all ages,” Lagge added.

A fun fall event that the entire family will enjoy is at 8 p.m. Sept. 27,

when the Parks District hosts a free Movie in the Park Night. The movie “If” will be shown at 810 Oak Lane, Rio Linda and all ages are welcome and encouraged to bring blankets, lawn chairs and snacks.

Adults seeking to improve their pickleball skills and meet others can participate in the Parks District’s Adult Pickleball Club. Starting at 8 a.m. Mondays through Saturdays, players of all skill levels are encouraged to participate. Adult Pickleball Club is at the tennis courts at the

Continued on page 9

‘Team Hope Walk’ Raises Needed Funds

Weston Greene Communications News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Northern California Chapter of the Huntington's Disease Society of America will host the Sacramento Team Hope Walk on Sept. 21 at River Walk Park, 651 2nd St. in West Sacramento.

Team Hope is Huntington's Disease Society of America's largest national grassroots fundraising event, which takes place in more than 100 cities throughout the U.S. and has raised more than \$28 million for Huntington's Disease since its inception in 2007. Thousands of families, friends, co-workers, neighbors and communities walk together each year to support Huntington's Disease Society of America's mission to improve the lives of people affected by Huntington's Disease and their families.

Huntington's disease is a fatal genetic disorder that causes the progressive breakdown of nerve cells in the brain. It deteriorates a person's physical and mental abilities during their prime working years and has no cure. Every child of a parent with Huntington's Disease has a 50/50 chance of inheriting the faulty gene. Today, there are approximately 41,000 symptomatic Americans and more than 200,000 at risk of inheriting the disease. The symptoms of Huntington's Disease are described as simultaneously having Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

The Huntington's Disease Society of America is dedicated to improving the lives of everyone affected by Huntington's Disease through community services and education to advocacy and research. Huntington's Disease Society of America was founded in 1967 by Marjorie Guthrie, the wife of legendary folk singer Woody Guthrie. The singer died from Huntington's Disease complications when he was only 55 years old but the Guthrie family legacy lives on at Huntington's Disease Society of America.

Registration starts at 9 a.m. and the event starts at 10 a.m. Sept. 21. All proceeds support Huntington's Disease Society of America's mission to improve the lives of people affected by Huntington's disease and their families.

Team Hope is Huntington's Disease Society of America's largest national grassroots fundraising event and has raised

Continued on page 9

Twin Rivers Unified Educator is a 2025 Sacramento County Teacher of the Year

Twin Rivers Unified School District News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)

- Twin Rivers Unified is proud to announce that Marc Vankeuren, Ph.D., has been named a 2025 Sacramento County Teacher of the Year. This is the third time in recent years (2020, 2021 and 2025) that an educator from Twin Rivers Unified has received this prestigious honor. The Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) made the announcement at its Aug. 23 countywide teacher recognition and awards ceremony.

Vankeuren teaches AP Physics, AP Environmental Science and Physics of the Universe at Grant Union High School. This distinguished award highlights Vankeuren's relentless passion for education, his innovative and dynamic teaching methods, and his extraordinary ability to inspire and transform his students' lives. He has been at Grant for eight years. This past school

year, three of his students were featured in a three-part video series on how sea levels and our future may be impacted by climate change and Thwaites “Doomsday” Glacier in Antarctica. The glacier is closely monitored for its potential to elevate sea levels. The students assisted in scientific investigations alongside renowned climate scientists, including a Nobel Prize winner. Some of the filming took place at Grant.

“It was an honor being recognized as a Teacher of the Year with all of the other fantastic educators from different districts,” said Vankeuren. “Even more unbelievable—to be named a Sacramento County Teacher of the Year. It is evident that every teacher at that event has made a substantial impact on the lives of their students, and that their talent spans classrooms all around Sacramento. I hope to continue my goal of bringing outside resources, programs, and opportunities into my classroom so that students can view



Marc Vankeuren of Twin Rivers Unified School District has been named a 2025 Sacramento County Teacher of the Year. Photo courtesy of Twin Rivers Unified School District

their work as meaningful. They will continue to monitor our local water quality, participate in scientific outreach collaborations, and create science education

videos that reach learners of all ages. Their passion to look beyond the classroom will contribute to the betterment of their community

Continued on page 9



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Nature Savers Reel in Line



Project Pick Up Fishing Line volunteers join activist Jann Nichols (center, in black) at Mather Lake in Rancho Cordova. In one year on the job, they have bundled and bagged many miles of discarded line.

Story and photos by Susan Maxwell Skinner

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

- A volunteer team has taken on a mission to clear miles of abandoned fishing line from local rivers and waterways.

Calling themselves “Project Pick Up Fishing Line,” 10 nature lovers are leading other helpers to comb riverbanks for an almost invisible danger.

“Fishing line causes suffering and death to birds and a host of other river inhabitants,” explained Jann Nichols,

the group founder. Nichols, a photographer, has documented many situations of animal entanglement.

“In some cases, rescuers have freed birds from hooks and line,” she reported. “In tragic cases, animals don’t survive. Pets can also come to grief on trails through similar accidents.”

Nichols acknowledged that lines get snagged and accidents happen.

“But usually, our volunteers are easily able to free and dispose of fishing gear,” she said. “If we can do this, so could anglers. We’re also collecting hundreds of items

of trash left in fishing spots. Litter is not abandoned by accident.”

Project Pick-Up has successfully lobbied for county agencies to place receptacles and signage in fishing spots.

“We want people to be aware that a careless act can endanger lives,” Nichols said. “We also want them to know there are people you can call to save a trapped or injured creature.”

Nichols and friends were recently on hand when a swan died after ingesting fishing line at Cameron Park Lake in El Dorado County. Its organs were so damaged and the bird in such distress that euthanasia was the rescuers’ only resort.

“He’d swallowed so much line that his intestines were accor-dioned,” explained rescue expert and Project Pick-Up volunteer Leslie Ackerman. “It was heart-breaking. A beautiful bird’s agony is something you never forget. The incident inspired us even more to continue our cleanup efforts and to educate people.”

In their spare time, the volunteers address areas that they say

are most abused. Mather Lake in Rancho Cordova, the American River at Watt Avenue, Cameron Park Lake and Willow Creek in Folsom are top trouble spots.

“We come back from these places with grocery bags filled,” Nichols said. “Fishing lines, hooks and lures from the ground or from trees and grasses,” Nichols added. “Honestly, the stuff is all over the place. For many people, it’s invisible. To our eyes, line catches the light like spider webs. Often, we need long grabbers to reach it. Sometimes, divers find line tangled underwater. They help us dispose of it. Fishermen sometimes help us, too. Along with the careless culprits, many responsible people use the river.”

The volunteers keep their harvest as evidence of how pervasive the problem is. They assembled more than 2,000 hooks and sinkers for a recent Mather Lake display. The haul also included dozens of bulging bags of lines.

“Aquatic birds are often drawn to anglers in the hope of a feed,” Nichols noted. “They can swallow a lure or get snagged. If a hook is lodged on their body, feeding and mobility is threatened. Suffering and death often follow.”

“I started this project last year when I saw a young osprey

tethered to the nest,” she recalled. “Its parents had brought in a branch entangled with fishing line. The baby was snarled for a week, close to fledging time. I couldn’t sleep for worrying. It took some time for rescuers to access the nest but the baby was saved.”

“Around that time, several cygnets died from line entanglement at Cameron Park Lake,” Nichols continued. “I decided to do whatever I could to prevent this from happening again. I started picking up line wherever I saw it.”

Nichols was soon joined by friends who wanted to help.

“They’d also seen injured wildlife in situations they could not forget,” Nichols said. “Seeing animal suffering is a powerful motivation.”

The volunteers fund their own activities. Equipment includes gloves, clippers and long-handled retrievers. Sunscreen is another essential.

“It’s hard work but it’s nice to be out in nature,” Nichols said. “You know you’re helping wildlife and pets have a safer environment.”

Visit Project Pick up Fishing Line on Facebook or visit www.tanglefreewildlife.com.

To report wild animals in need of rescue, contact Wildlife Care Association at 916-965-9453. ★



Thousands of discarded lures and hooks are among dangerous items retrieved by Project Pick Up Fishing Line volunteers.



Exhausted and near drowned by a hook and line encounter, a gull is rescued at Sailor Bar in Fair Oaks.

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Suicide Prevention Month Can Save Lives

By MPG Staff

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (MPG) - September is Suicide Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness and discuss this urgently increasing crisis, according to NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness).

NAMI has somber statistics: suicide is the second leading cause of death among those aged 10 to 14, the third leading cause of death among those aged 15 to 24 and the 12th leading cause of death overall in the U.S.

Or, as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports, more than 49,000 people in the United States died by suicide in 2022. That's one death every 11 minutes.

And millions more experience suicidal thoughts.

Suicidal thoughts can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background, according to the NAMI website at nami.org. While suicidal thoughts are common, however, they should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues.

Many events and activities promoting suicide prevention awareness will be held locally, regionally and nationally throughout September.

During Suicide Prevention Month, NAMI and numerous other mental health organizations stress that all of us can help prevent suicide by reaching out to those who need help.

The National Institute of Mental Health lists

five action steps to help someone having suicidal thoughts.

The first step is **Ask** "Are you thinking about suicide?" It's not an easy question to ask but it can help start a conversation.

The second step is **Be there**: Listening without judgment is key to learning what the person is thinking and feeling.

The third step is **Help keep them safe**: Reducing access to highly lethal items or places can help prevent suicide.

The fourth step is **Help them connect**: Connecting the person with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (call or text 988) and other community resources can give them a safety net. You can also assist by reaching out to a trusted family member, friend, spiritual advisor or mental health professional.

The fifth National Institute of Mental Health step is **Follow up**:



Calling or texting the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at any time of the day, any day of the week, could help save someone's life. Suicide is the 12th leading cause of death overall in the U.S. Graphic courtesy of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Staying in touch with the person after they have experienced a crisis or been discharged from care can make a difference. Studies show that supportive, ongoing contact can play an important role in suicide prevention.

How You Can Help

The advocacy groups say to educate yourself and others about suicide prevention by checking out the 988

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988.

And visit the Suicide Prevention Resource Center at <https://sprc.org>. Each year, the resource center creates many ways to get involved in Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

The U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration invites residents throughout the country to

participate in 988 Day on Sept. 8. 988 Day is a national initiative dedicated to raising awareness about the federal agency's 988 resource and emphasizing the importance of mental health and suicide prevention.

According to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline website at 988lifeline.org, "We can all help prevent suicide. The 988 Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States."

The National Institute of Mental Health website at <https://www.nimh.nih.gov> lists warning signs that indicate someone might be considering suicide. During National Suicide Prevention Month, the institute reminds residents that warning signs include the following:

Talking about wanting to die or wanting to kill themselves, talking about feeling empty or hopeless or having no reason to live, talking about feeling trapped or feeling that there are no solutions, feeling unbearable emotional or physical pain, talking about being a burden to others, withdrawing from family and friends, giving away important possessions, saying goodbye to friends and family, putting affairs in order, such as making a will, taking great risks that could lead to death, such as driving extremely fast, or talking or thinking about death often.

Other serious warning signs that someone might be at risk for attempting suicide include:

Displaying extreme mood swings, suddenly changing from very sad to very calm or happy, making a plan or looking for ways to kill themselves, such as searching for lethal methods online, stockpiling pills or buying a gun, talking about feeling great guilt or shame, using alcohol or drugs more often, acting anxious or agitated, changing eating or sleeping habits, and showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, suicidal thoughts or actions are a sign of extreme distress and should not be ignored. If these warning signs apply to you or someone you know, the institute urges you to get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behavior is new or has recently increased. ★

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Calling or texting the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at any time of the day, any day of the week, could help save someone's life. Suicide is the 12th leading cause of death overall in the U.S. Graphic courtesy of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Teaching Kindness, Character Through Flag Football

By Shaunna Boyd

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The Playmakers organization is a nonprofit that works with local youth to build character through free sports programs throughout the year.

By promoting kindness and social inclusion, Playmakers supports all youth and their families, with a particular focus on those with developmental differences and special needs. This year, for the first time, Playmakers founder Greg Roeszler (known as Coach Roz) is excited to announce an NFL FLAG football league for local youth.

The eight-game season will kick off on Sept. 28, running from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for eight consecutive Saturdays. The league will play at Mesa Verde High School's new state-of-the-art stadium at 7501 Carriage Drive in Citrus Heights. Each day will begin with athletic practice and skills development, followed by a flag football game. The league will split into two groups, one for youth between the ages of 6 and 14, and the other with a more flexible age range for youth with special needs.

The coaches are volunteer student athletes from local high schools, Mesa Verde and San Juan. These two rival schools will be "working together under the Playmakers' umbrella on character building and inclusiveness," Coach Roeszler said.

"There are a lot of families that can't afford the fees to play flag football" or other organized sports, the coach said, which is why Playmakers programs are always completely free to kids and their families. The funding for this NFL FLAG football league comes from The Optimists of Country Club, a local civic

group based out of Citrus Heights, and Verde Design, which built the new stadium at Mesa Verde.

Playmakers is facilitating the league, with Roeszler running the program and providing coaching training and inclusivity awareness to the student athletes.

Roeszler acknowledged the dedication of "two unbelievable volunteers who pulled this together," Rick Johnson and Jim Szymanski, who worked so quickly to implement this new league: negotiating with the NFL for official inclusion as an NFL FLAG football league region (with all the associated uniforms, equipment, and gear), working with the San Juan Unified School District to secure the stadium location, and coordinating with the high schools to recruit student volunteers.

"The fact that rival schools are working together for inclusiveness and character building is amazing. The administration is so supportive, and it can change the culture of a campus," Roeszler said, "and our NFL players are extremely pleased that this is being done at the grassroots level."

He added that it was "incredible and so encouraging" to have local civic groups getting involved, because it is so important to provide opportunities for all kids to enjoy the benefits of sports and athletics, while having fun, learning to kind to each other, and striving to be the best they can be."

Visit www.ThePlaymakers.org to sign up for this free event. For more information, call 916-220-1284 or email Coachroz@playmakers.com. ★



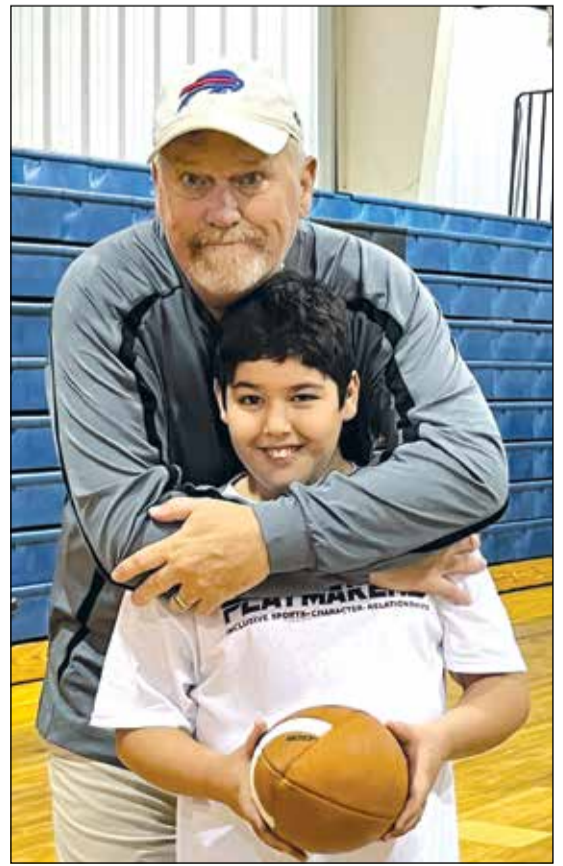
Playmakers supports youth with developmental differences and promote kindness and social inclusion. Photo courtesy of Playmakers



Playmakers' coaches are volunteer student athletes from local high schools. Photo courtesy of Playmakers



For the first time, Playmakers will participate in an NFL FLAG football league for local youth. Photo courtesy of Playmakers



Playmakers offers free programs to youth and their families. Photo courtesy of Playmakers

Social Security Matters

For Advice on When to Claim Social Security



By Russell Gloor,
AMAC Certified Social
Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I could use some advice on whether or not I should start collecting my Social Security benefits now. I am 67 and 3 months old, and plan to continue working for at least for the next year or two. **Signed: Seeking Answers**

Dear Seeking: Deciding when to claim Social Security is, indeed, an important decision, as it will affect you for the rest of your life. Mainly, deciding when to claim your SS retirement benefit should consider your financial needs, but your life expectancy and marital status are equally important.

At your current age (past your full retirement age of 66 years & six months) you are already earning Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) at the rate of .677% higher benefit for each month you continue to delay. That adds up to an additional 8% benefit for each full year you

wait beyond your FRA to claim, and that growth will continue until you are 70 years old. At that point, your benefit will be 28% higher than it would have been at your full retirement age (FRA). If you expect to achieve about "average" life expectancy (about 84 for a man your current age), then waiting until 70 to claim will get you both a higher monthly amount and the most you can get in cumulative lifetime benefits. Waiting, however, only makes sense if you expect at least average longevity. If your health is poor and you have reason to believe you won't live to the "average," then claiming earlier makes more sense. FYI, you may find this tool helpful to determine your potential life expectancy: <https://socialsecurityreport.org/tools/life-expectancy-calculator/>.

You can, of course, simply delay claiming for as long as you are still working, and then file for benefits at that time. When your paychecks stop is frequently the best time to start your SS benefits (to supplement the lost work income). And, if you are married and your wife will be entitled to a survivor benefit from you, then waiting longer to claim enhances the benefit your surviving spouse receives

at your death (your surviving spouse would get your benefit amount, instead of her own smaller amount). If that is a consideration, then waiting – at least until you stop working (or age 70 if feasible) is often a prudent choice.

So, the choice is yours to make, considering your financial needs, life expectancy, and marital status. You no longer need to worry about Social Security's annual earnings test (for those collecting benefits before their FRA) but, if it is financially feasible, waiting still longer will mean a higher monthly benefit for the rest of your life.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. ★

Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



It's well known that the Sacramento Kings have gotten little love over the years from the NBA pundits, and almost everyone outside of the city of Sacramento for literally decades. We can argue the merits, but imagine my surprise when of all people, I hear Stephen A. Smith recently come to the Kings defense.

Stephen A. was asked the question, "are there any surprises that we can look for in the upcoming season?" His response was, "the sleeper team in the NBA this year is the Sacramento Kings."

Now as elated as I was to hear something positive about our hometown team, Stephen A. didn't go on and on about the merits of the team. He simply believed that a lot of people have it wrong, and that with the recent addition of DeMar DeRozan, the Kings are going to surprise a lot of people.

No surprise to Kings fans I can assure you. Sacramento embraces their team with a fervor that most cities could only hope for and is rarely seen. I think of the Seattle SuperSonics and realize that many cities don't appreciate what they have, but I have never seen that behavior in the city of Sacramento.

Yes, we are proud of our Kings team, and the expectations for the upcoming season are reaching a fever pitch. If you have a seat for opening night, you're holding a valuable commodity, and whatever you do, don't sell it.

I believe that the introductions alone for the starting lineup are worth the price of admission, and this team will undoubtedly get a standing ovation that is well deserved.

Excluding the Sacramento River Cats, and the offing of the Oakland A's coming to town next year, the Kings have been the sole representative of major league sports for Sacramento and the surrounding region for over 35 years.

For many years the hope of a season ticket was a pipe dream, and you could count on waiting 3-5 years. Sold out crowds every night would eventually translate into the Kings setting attendance records, and that with teams with a subpar winning record.

DeMar DeRozan cannot come to town

and do it alone, and he isn't expecting to!

De'Aaron Fox and Domantas Sabonis are not the only Kings that will vie for a spot on the all-star team this year, and I look for former NCAA scoring champ and three-point specialist Keegan Murray to put a stamp on his lofty #4 pick by the Kings two seasons ago.

Many were critical of Murray's selection, but a credible rookie season silenced most critics. Last season was a bit of a mixed bag, but I saw a young NBA player adding to his repertoire by developing his mid-range game and interior play significantly. Add to that rebounding at a higher clip and becoming more defensive minded, it makes me think Keegan is about to put it all together.

Everyone knows what we have in De'Aaron Fox and Domantas Sabonis, so while they consistently live up to expectations, have they reached their ceiling yet? I don't think so, but let's wait and see how much Mr. DeRozan can tip those scales.

Is there a number of wins that Kings fans are wanting, or even expecting? I hear the number 50 all the time and if that number is right, Sacramento fans are in for a real treat this year.

Recent acquisitions and trades have been tepid at best, but I am excited about the team assembled right now.

Little has been said about Orlando Robinson since he was acquired as a free agent, but at 6'10" and 235 lbs., I'll be watching intently as he interns under Mr. double-double Domantas Sabonis, and at the ripe old age of 24, Orlando has plenty of time to show Sacramento fans what his upside looks like.

Many players, some future hall-of-famers such as Kawhi Leonard, came into the league but took several seasons to find their stride, so I am hopeful that Orlando's time in Miami has been well spent, and what he needs now is a team that will give him the floor time he's looking for.

As always, stay tuned Kings fans. Training camp is less than 30 days away and the action is about to begin.

All the best!

Your thoughts are always welcome at vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com

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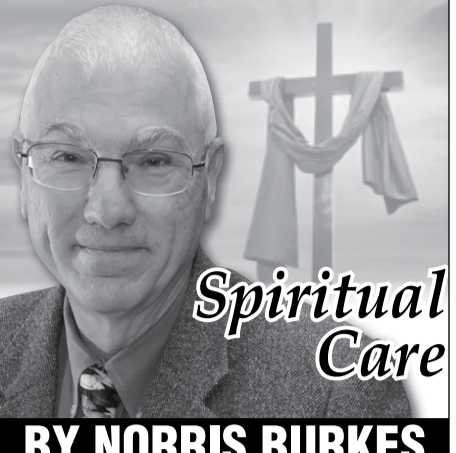
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Labor Day Reading Needn't be Laborious



BY NORRIS BURKES

Early September, just after Labor day, I share my annual book recommendations as well as shamelessly plug my own four books. So if you read only one book this year, read all four of mine.

But after that, please read "The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory: American Evangelicals in an Age of Extremism" by Tim Alberta. (Harper Books, 2024.)

The title may sound a bit like a political argument, but it recounts the heartfelt struggle by a journalist who suddenly loses his beloved pastor dad. He's honored to preach his father's funeral, but he's soon lambasted by family friends for his journalistic coverage of the political machinery that has crept into the church.

The situation sends Alberta on a journey to understand the tension between his professional responsibilities as a journalist and his deeply personal, conservative, Christian faith.

The book's main strength is Alberta's storytelling. Each chapter employs biblical insight and shares stories of everyday pastors who struggle to understand their role in contemporary politics.

Spoiler alert: Alberta deeply believes that God calls his followers to obey Jesus, not politicians. His conclusions are so biblically-based that I read the last chapter aloud as my sermon a few months back.

Also mentioned in some of my past sermons is the book "An Immense World," by Pulitzer Prize-winning science journalist, Ed Yong.

The book challenged my human-centric perspective, the tendency to limit my views to only what I personally can make out with my own eyes.

Yong bases his book on the Umwelt Concept, a theory that differentiates how creatures perceive their environs in ways that are often unimaginable to humans.

For example, bats use echolocation to navigate in complete darkness, while certain fish can detect electric fields in the water. These abilities demonstrate the vast diversity of sensory experiences across the animal kingdom.

By simplifying complex scientific concepts, Yong makes them understandable for readers of all backgrounds. Anecdotes and interviews with researchers bring the science to life, highlighting the astonishing diversity of perception in the animal kingdom.

Whether you're a science enthusiast or simply curious about the natural world, "An Immense World" is a must-read that will leave you marveling at the unseen wonders of God's world.

The next book on my list, "The Demon of Unrest," by Erik Larson, may evoke images of the Jan. 6 attack on the nation's capital and those who sought to circumvent the certification of the electoral college.

Well, not quite. But almost. This insurrection began 164 years ago, November 6, 1860, after congress peacefully certified the election results for Abraham Lincoln.

Drawing on diaries, secret communiques, slave ledgers and plantation records, the book focuses on a lonely federal fortress in Charleston Harbor: Fort Sumter.

The fort becomes a helpless pawn, as South Carolina leads one state after another to secede from the Union. Within six months of the election, the Confederacy opens the Civil War by shelling the U.S. garrison of Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861.

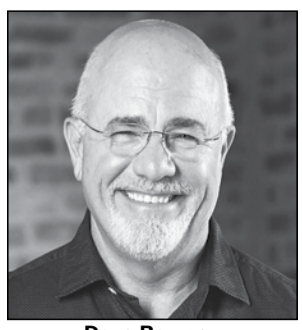
At the heart of this battle is Major Robert Anderson, Sumter's commander and a former slave owner sympathetic to the South but loyal to the Union.

In the middle of it all, the overwhelmed Lincoln must deal with his double-dealing Secretary of State, William Seward, as he tries to avoid a war that will eventually kill 750,000 Americans.

Erik Larson's sharp prose and keen insights have caused me to read all his books. But "Demons of Unrest" is a definite read for anyone interested in how history can repeat itself.

After reading these, I hope you'll consider reading one of my books: "Tell it to the Chaplain," "Thriving Beyond Surviving," "Hero's Highway" and "No Small Miracles."

Finally, if you happen to be the romantic type, check out Davalynn Spencer's books. This award-winning Christian romance writer has edited my column for 15 years and is clearly a good judge of great writing. ★



Dave Ramsey

Dave Ramsey Says Don't Crack the Foundation

Dear Dave,

Do you think it's a good idea for a small business, one that's very young but growing, to seek out investors?.

- Trey

Dear Trey,

My advice to someone in this position is to grow their business with organic cash. That may sound like a fancy phrase, but it just means you earn the money with which you'll grow. This may mean growing a little bit slower, and it might even mean passing on a few "big deals" you thought were going to be the best things ever to happen to you and your business. But you want to know something? That's okay. I've turned down plenty of deals like that over the years, and

it's left me firmly convinced it's better to be the tortoise than the hare.

Think about this. When you sell a piece of your ownership to people who are looking for a return, instead of caring about your dream, you're creating the potential for a big mess. A lot of times, these folks will seem like silent partners—which is an oxymoron in small business. They might even present themselves that way in the beginning. But the truth is most people who've put money into your business won't keep silent. They're all going to have different opinions and ideas, and there's a strong possibility these are going to clash at some point with the vision you have for your company.

In short, I would not recommend a fledgling small business, even one that's doing well, to seek out investors. Period. Cash flow your growth, Trey. Cash flow your equipment purchases, and

the markets you enter, also. Does this mean you might miss a good opportunity here and there? Sure, it does. But it also means you'll be missing opportunities to fail. Too much success too soon is one of the biggest reasons why small businesses shut down. When you grow too quickly, you run the risk of outgrowing your financial resources, your infrastructure and your human resources.

Do what you can to ensure growth is steady, but play it smart. Don't grow so fast that you crack the foundation of your company.

- Dave
Dave Ramsey is a national best-selling author, personal finance expert and host of The Ramsey Show, heard by more than 20 million listeners each week. Since 1992, Dave has helped people regain control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for the company, Ramsey Solutions. ★

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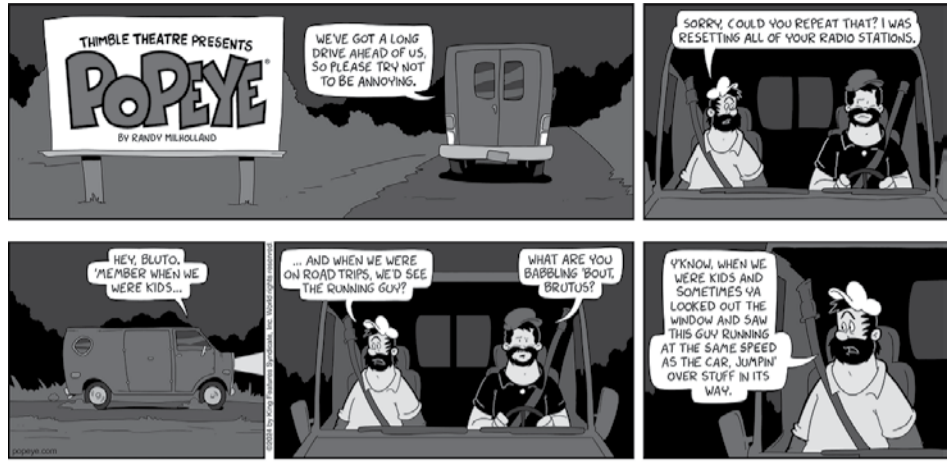
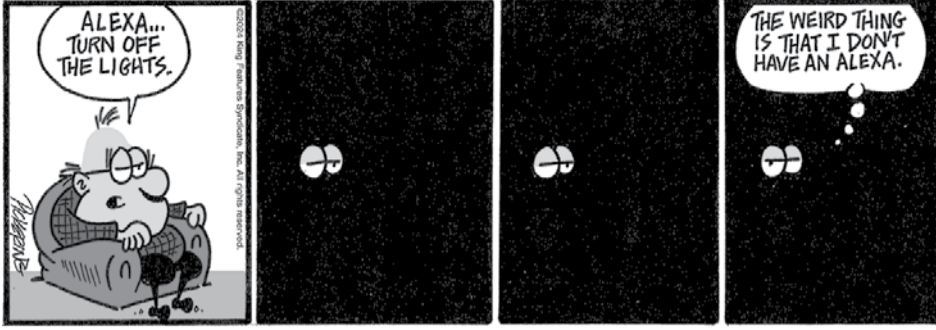
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by Jeff Pickering



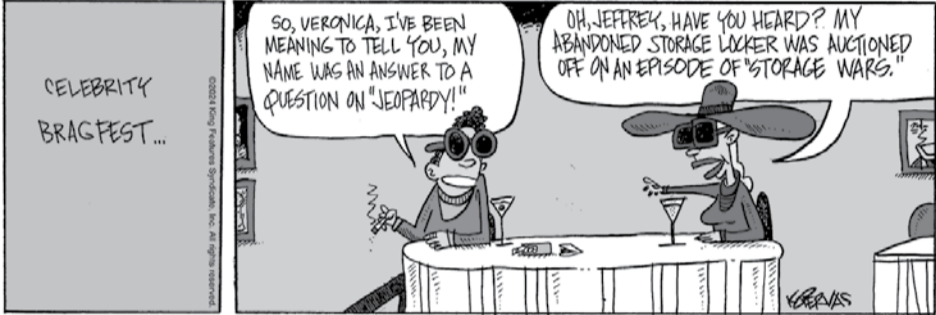
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by Dave T. Phipps



Out on a Limb

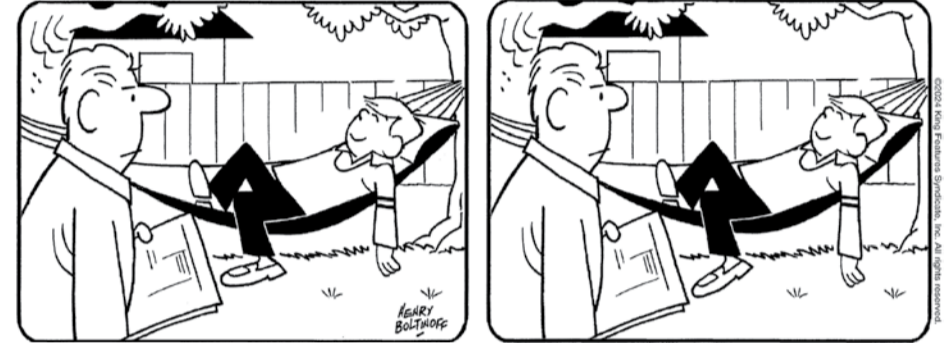
by Gary Kopervas



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

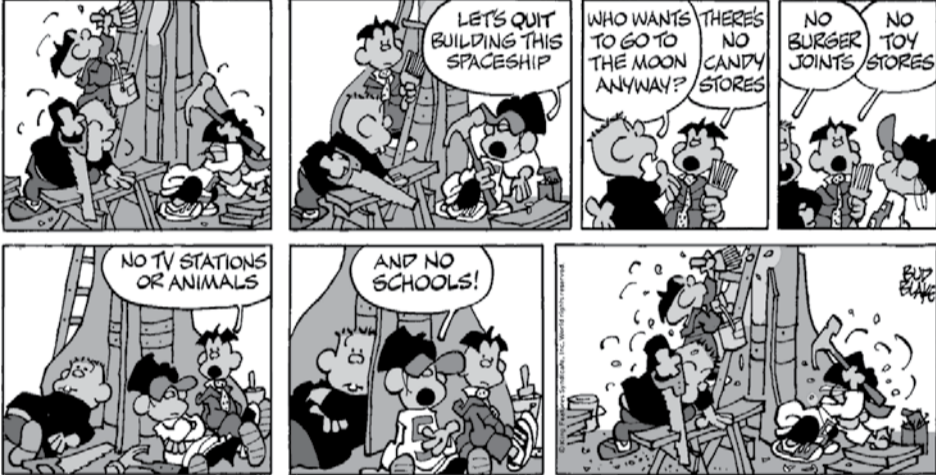
Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Arm is longer. 2. Foot is moved. 3. Nose is smaller. 4. House is not as wide. 5. Leaves are missing. 6. Tree trunk is different.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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 - Tinder user?
 - Distinctive period in history
 - Munchausen's title
 - Likewise
 - Campfire leftover
 - Jason Bateman/Laura Linney TV drama
 - *Traditionally clipped
 - *OS in POS at the supermarket
 - Bro's sibling
 - "... there, done that"
 - T in Greek
 - FBI's cold one
 - Windschield, pl.
 - "The ___ for Red October"
 - Coach of Dallas Mavericks
 - Bow's partner
 - Black and white killer
 - Be in accord
 - First word in fairy tale
 - Formerly known as Pleasant Island
 - Long-lasting Steelers coach
 - TV's "man named Brady"
 - "GO in BOGO
 - French "place"
 - 6th sense
 - Adored one
 - What cruelty and crush have in common
 - *Dairy aisle package
 - *S&H Green ___
 - Non motorized vessel
 - I have
 - NeV.'s neighbor
 - Offspring, collectively
 - Rank above maj.
 - Visual
 - QBR in football, e.g.
 - Will Ferrell's Christmas classic
 - Like a gymnast
- DOWN
- *What registers do
 - Nonclerical
 - Football legend Graham
 - Unborn vertebrate
 - *___ of Cancer
 - *Like freezer aisle "Cuisine"
 - *___ Robinson" by Simon & Garfunkel
 - California/Nevada lake
 - Mediterranean Strip
 - Not written
 - Dull one
 - Pen juice
 - Home to Sarajevo
 - Port city in Japan
 - Like marines in slogan
 - Cowboy's bedding
 - Flip-flop
 - Plural of aura
 - Adam Sandler's "___ Gems"
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Fast Food Workers Got a \$20 Minimum Wage, But Is It Working? It's Debatable



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

Every session of the California Legislature seems to produce at least one bill that generates high-octane political debate and media attention.

As the 2023-24 session winds down this week, Senate Bill 1047, which would impose rules on artificial intelligence developers, is generating fierce lobbying and drawing global interest.

During the final days of last year's session, the focus was on a very different issue — whether the state should impose a \$20-per-hour minimum wage for fast food workers and create a Fast Food Council to oversee working conditions.

A year before, Assembly Bill 257 created the council and empowered it to set an initial minimum wage of at least \$22 an hour, while assuming that franchised fast food outlets were subsidiaries of the parent company, rather than independently owned.

The fast food industry responded with a referendum that, if ratified by voters, would cancel out the new law, thus renewing the debate in the 2023 session. A last-minute deal repealed AB 257 and substituted another measure, AB 1228, that dictated a \$20 minimum wage and removed what the industry considered to be a threat

to the franchise system. In return, the referendum was dropped.

The \$20 wage took effect last April, but only after a new squabble erupted over which sellers of food would be covered, colored by a Bloomberg article alleging that Newsom had demanded an exemption to benefit a campaign donor who owns two dozen Panera locations in California.

Newsom declared that the story was "absurd" and gave assurances that Panera and other similar businesses would be covered. The businessman, billionaire Greg Flynn, also said he would honor the \$20 wage.

End of fast food angst? Of course not.

Six months after the \$20 wage took effect there's a new debate in political, media and academic circles over its impact.

Fast food prices have been increasing, but how much higher wages are driving the rise and how fast food operations have changed are two new issues.

This month, Newsom declared that California fast food outlets had created 11,000 new jobs since the law was signed.

"What's good for workers is good for business, and as California's fast food industry continues booming every single month our workers are finally getting the pay they deserve," Newsom said. "Despite those who pedaled lies about how this would doom the industry, California's economy and workers are again proving them wrong."

The industry didn't agree.

"Every day you see headlines of restaurant closures, employee job losses and hours cut, and rising food

prices for consumers," the International Franchise Association said in a statement. "Local restaurant owners in California are already struggling to cope with the \$20/hour wage, as the Fast Food Council considers additional wage increases. All the while, workers and consumers are feeling the pinch."

Brooke Armour, president of the California Center for Jobs and the Economy, an adjunct of the Business Roundtable, criticized Newsom's declaration as reflecting just one month of preliminary data and concluding, "Despite what some are saying, the data are clear: newly passed fast food minimum wage laws are leading to job losses in California."

Christopher Thornberg, founding partner of Beacon Economics, also was critical in an analysis of the state's economic trends. "California's well-intended push to reduce income inequality via wage floors is beginning to have a significant negative impact on some of our most vulnerable workers — our youth, particularly those from lower income households," Thornberg wrote.

What California has wrought in the fast food industry could be the harbinger of more direct regulation of other industries, and not just in California, for better or worse. It's not surprising, therefore, that its effects will be debated ad nauseam.

Dan Walters is one of most decorated and widely syndicated columnists in California history, authoring a column four times a week that offers his view and analysis of the state's political, economic, social and demographic trends. ★

Recreation and Park District Offers Fall Fun



At the Community Center, kids' 3D and 2D art classes are provided. Photo courtesy of Yanni Lagge

Continued from page 1
Community Center, 810 Oak Lane, Rio Linda. Equipment is provided by the district and registration is not required.

Although registration is closed for the Co-Ed Adult Softball season, spectators can watch the games from 5 to 9 p.m. Sundays at Westside Park, 66201 W 2nd St., Rio Linda.

Additionally, residents can learn the ancient art of Tai Chi at the Community Center from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. every Monday and Wednesday. This free program is geared toward seniors but all are welcome. The Tai Chi classes teach meditation, relaxation and stress management.

On the other hand, a variety of youth sports clubs are available starting in September, including the Kids Pickleball Club and Kids Volleyball Club. These clubs are available to children aged 4 to 13.

The district will offer a Kids Basketball Club in October and a Kids Dodgeball Club in November.

Parents who want to sign their children up for fall athletic programs or get more information can go to https://rle.activityreg.com/selectactivity_t2.wcs. There is limited availability and each spot is \$78.

An activity for seniors is the Meals on Wheels Senior Lunch Program. At 11 a.m. Monday through Friday at the Community Center, Rio Linda/Elverta seniors can enjoy hot, balanced meals provided by Meals on Wheels. On Wednesdays, Bingo is played.

"Our Senior Lunch Program is the perfect opportunity to enjoy good food and great company," Lagge said.

Residents wanting to flex their creative muscles are encouraged to attend the district's free Adult Painting Club, which meets from 9 a.m. to noon every Thursday at 810 Oak Lane, Rio Linda. Registration is not required. Participants need to bring their own supplies.

Another creative outlet for adults is the



The Elder Craftsmen "ECHO" Program meets every Wednesday and members can make quilts such as this quilt. Photo courtesy of Yanni Lagge

Elder Craftsmen "ECHO" Program. From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Wednesday, adult crafters can craft, share stories and build friendships. Some items made by the club include quilts, scarves and hats that are donated to community outreach programs, according to the district. The ECHO program is free and takes place at the Depot Building, 6730 Front St., Rio Linda.

Also offered this fall is the Kids 2D Art Class from October to November, where children ages 8 to 13 can expand their art skills.

The Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District recently shared its official Fall and Winter Activity Guide featuring many more opportunities. For a full list of the upcoming activities provided by the district, visit <https://www.rleparks.com>.

For more information about its programs, the Parks District can be reached at 916-991-5929. To register for any of the programs, visit www.rleparks.com. ★

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Visit www.mowsac.org to find other MoW Community Cafes near you

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Senior lunches are a great opportunity for seniors to mingle and eat a nutritious meal. Photo courtesy of Yanni Lagge

Twin Rivers Unified Educator is a 2025 Sacramento County Teacher of the Year

Continued from page 1
and environment."

As a 2025 Sacramento County Teacher of the Year, Vankeuren is now eligible to advance to the

statewide competition where five teachers will be selected as California Teachers of the Year. This tremendous achievement not only highlights

his exceptional talent and unwavering commitment, but also serves as a proud moment for all of us in Twin Rivers Unified School District. ★

'Team Hope Walk' Raises Needed Funds

Continued from page 1
more than \$28 million for Huntington's Disease since its inception in 2007. Thousands of families, friends, co-workers, neighbors and communities walk together each year to support Huntington's Disease Society of America's mission to improve the lives of people affected by Huntington's Disease and their families.

For more information about the event, go to <https://northernca.hdsa.org/events/2024-team-hope-walk-sacramento> and www.hdsa.org or call 800-345-HDSA. Huntington's Disease Society of America's Team Hope Walk Program is nationally sponsored by Neurocrine Biosciences and Teva Pharmaceuticals. ★

Home Depot Revamps Veterans Home

Story and photos by Omella Rossi

CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG) - In a heartfelt display of community spirit, Home Depot has completed a significant renovation project for David Marcucci, a local veteran whose home in Carmichael was in dire need of repair. This initiative not only revitalized Marcucci's residence but also reaffirmed Home Depot's deep commitment to community support.

The renovation process involved more than just fixing a house; it was about restoring hope and comfort. The team replaced uneven flooring, water damage, painted walls, revamped landscaping and updated fixtures. "About a year and a half ago my wife walked into a part of the house and the drywall had become very mushy due to a water leak and the insurance said they couldn't help us," explained Marcucci. "I walked into Home Depot met Brandon and explained the situation. They took the time to come out, assess the damage and offered to partner with us on the repairs."

Brandon Lopez, operating manager at the Carmichael Home Depot, explained, "We started getting the project going back in December of last year. When we start a project and apply for the grant from the Home Depot



A group of Home Depot employees volunteered their time and efforts to renovate the home of veteran David Marcucci.

Foundation, we ask the veteran what they need done, the scope of work, how many volunteers and then we put a quote in and submit it so we can get it financed."

Marcucci, who served in the 82nd Airborne from 2014 to 2017, faced immense personal challenges since coming home in April 2017, due to an injury sustained during his service. A parachute malfunction caused an injury to his leg leading to numerous surgeries. His home became a source of stress rather than solace.

"We were first time home buyers and had only been here for

four years before all these issues started piling up," Marcucci said. "It was catastrophic to us and wiped out all our savings."

Marcucci's home, once plagued by water damage and tripping hazards, now stands as a testament to the power of community support.

"I am eternally grateful to Home Depot. This renovation means the world to me. It allows me to walk and have mobility through the house without me worrying about a tripping hazard causing another injury to my leg," Marcucci said.

All the materials for the renovation were supplied by the Carmichael Home Depot store, which also coordinated with other companies, such as Romanoff Renovations, that volunteered their labor to restore the house. Additionally, Home Depot stores from across the district sent volunteers to assist with the project, contributing their time and skills to ensure its success.

"My grandfather was a veteran, and that is the reason why I do this, it would be cool if someone could do this for him one day," said Isaac DeLuna, a Home

Depot employee. "It's all about giving back and ensuring veterans feel secure and cared for."

Carol Weber, a Home Depot employee for the past 20 years highlighted the significance of such projects.

"The first 10 years I worked there I did these projects constantly," Weber said. "I like to help our community here in Carmichael because that's where our store is."

Lopez also said, "It's inspiring to work for a company that not only supports its associates and

employees but also gives back to the community. Being able to help a veteran who served us is incredibly rewarding. It's a way for us to support our local community, and that's why I stand by this company."

"This is something every company should do. We need to be here for our people," David Gregory, Pro Department Supervisor at Home Depot said. "Despite all the volunteers being from different stores he highlighted that they are all "one team coming together for the community."

Vince Robles from the Veterans' Community Center of Citrus Heights partnered with Home Depot to get the project done.

"We have worked with Home Depot before and received grants from them. When they needed assistance with a 501(c)(3) project, we were happy to help," said Robles. "Today our crew is serving lunch for the volunteers, and we are also working on a special project for his closet. We also serve meals four days a week at our facility to help veterans as much as we can."

"I want people to know that Home Depot does things like this," said Marcucci. "It's a dream come true. I am ready to start living again." ★



Veteran David Marcucci, center, stands alongside Vince Robles from the Veterans Community Center of Citrus Heights, left, and Brandon Lopez, operating manager at Home Depot, right.



Before beginning the renovation work, the volunteers stood together and performed a Home Depot chant.

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