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Pocket News

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Pocket resident's dream bell tower has holiday visitor

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Pocket resident's dream bell tower has holiday visitor: Santa Claus

By LANCE ARMSTRONG
lance@valcomnews.com



Photo by Lance Armstrong
Greenhaven resident Bernard Kitt's dream of building a bell tower on his home has come true, and this year, Santa has made a special visit.

Among the more unusual scenes in the Pocket area this holiday season is a 4-foot tall, plastic Santa Claus waving from the interior of a bell tower.

Perhaps even more unusual is that the bell tower does not rise above a church.

It is instead part of the residence of Bernard and Anne Kitt, whose Keel Court home is bordered on one side by Lake Greenhaven.

At sundown every evening through at least Christmas Eve, a timer turns on a light inside this vintage, hollow Santa Claus and a colored string of lights above him. But by 10 p.m. each night, the timer shuts the lights off to abide by a homeowners' association regulation.

Once again abiding by a regulation, the bell tower rises not an inch above 33 feet from the ground.

Because the roof of the Kitts' home is 22 feet from the ground, the bell tower was constructed as an 11-foot-tall landmark.

The Kitts' bell tower, which measures about 5 and a half feet wide, is a fully functioning bell tower, Bernard explained.

"I have it set so you can sit down up there and eat lunch or whatever you want to do," he said. "There's a bell in there with rope and everything, but it's not connected to the front porch. I tried to connect it, but there were just ropes all over the place. It was a little crazy. But (the bell works). You can get up there and (ring it). It's really loud."

In continuing to comment on his bell tower, Bernard said that he is well aware of his unique status of owning the only home with a bell tower in the Pocket.

But being unique in that regard made no difference to Bernard when he made the decision to add a bell tower to his home. Instead, he noted that he simply wanted to fulfill one of his childhood dreams.

"(For many years), I wanted to put a bell tower on my house," he said. "When I was in grammar school, we lived a few blocks away from (the University of California), Berkeley, and they had what they call the Campanile. It's like a giant bell tower.

"You used to go in there and go up in an elevator and go up to the top and see all the bells, and walk around up there and everything. And I said, 'God, I've got to get a bell tower.'"

Bernard said that he finally made arrangements to have his own bell tower constructed at his residence about two years ago.

"I had a handyman do it for me," he said. "He was kind of a local guy. It took maybe a month (to build). The base is real stone – not imitation stone – and then there's these four columns that are between 5 and 6 feet tall. Then there's this copper roof that goes

See Santa, page 3

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Bernard Kitt

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What's New in December?

Identity Theft - Tuesday, December 12, 2:30-3:30pm; Free

Family Caregiver Support Group – Wednesday, December 13, 12:00-1:30pm; Free

Estate Planning for Grandchildren - Friday, December 15, 1:00-2:00pm; Free

Japanese Flower Arranging - Monday, December 18, 2:00-3:00pm; $30 pre-paid

Acrylic Painting - Tuesday, December 19, 1:00-2:00pm; $5 pre-paid

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Santa:

Continued from page 2

into a point, and then there's a weather vane on the top."

As for the bell tower's sturdiness atop his home, Bernard said that it is very strong.

"It's tied into the structure of the house," he said. "It's not just sitting there. Structurally, it's sound. And the homeowners' association approved it. You have to go through the homeowners' association, if you make a change that's a visible thing (to neighbors). And they gave the OK on it. If you had some nutty looking thing, they're not going to say, 'OK.'"

Bernard added that, to date, the bell tower has only received one complaint.

"This guy who was on the (homeowners' association) board told me somebody across on the other side of the lake (complained about a glare caused by the tower)," he said. "When I first put it up, there was the new copper, and it was shiny. The sun was hitting it somehow, and shined it into their living room. But one week later, it was not shiny anymore."

Bernard mentioned that he was able to get rid of the glare through a very inexpensive process.

"I looked into spraying it to make it antique green, like it's 100 years old," he said. "(The research) went on and on and on, and (there were) all these formulas and you mix these things up. They were really pretty complicated.

"And then I ran across this lady who wrote in on some discussion group, and she says, 'I don't know anything about this, but I read somewhere if you put on Miracle-Gro – a garden fertilizer – it turns to green.' I had some, so I put it in a little bottle and sprayed it. It looked like it was 100 years old and (that appearance) hasn't gone away."

Bernard recalled that upon its completion, the bell tower drew curious looks from neighbors.

"We had the Keel Crawl, where all these people (in the neighborhood) go from house to house and have drinks or lunch or dinner," he said. "And so, they came up to (the Kitts' house) and I had just finished the bell tower.

"People were just a gasp. They were standing out there in the front just staring. I mean, they were not saying a word. They were just standing there, just immobilized, and just trying to take it in. They had never seen anything like that."

Although Bernard generally does not spend more than an hour inside the bell tower when he takes on projects such as cleaning and caulking, because of his love for the tower, he said that he is considering an addition that could keep him in there longer.

"If there's a TV (in the tower), I'll sit for hours and hours and hours," he said. "I think (placing a TV there) is an idea."

Bernard, who has visited bell towers throughout the world, said that he has a fascination with bells that extends beyond bell towers.

Located at his residence are at least 20 bells of various sizes that he has accumulated throughout the years.

One of Bernard's favorite bells of his collection is larger than the bell he had installed inside his bell tower, he said.

"I've got a way bigger bell in the (backyard) and it says U.S. Navy on it," he said. "It's really cool. It's off of a battleship."

In further pondering the realization of his childhood dream to have his own bell tower, Bernard said, "The one I've got in my house is really great. It really feels good to be in a bell tower. It really feels good."



Photo by Bernard Kitt

Santa has made a special visit this year to Bernard Kitt's bell tower that sits atop his Lake Greenhaven home.

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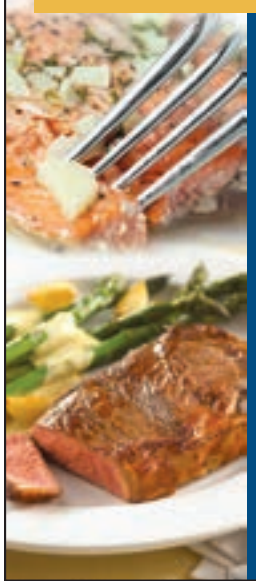

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Annual winter faire to feature student performances with "Camellia's Got Talent" showcase

By MONICA STARK
editor@valcomnews.com

The Camellia Waldorf School welcomes you to experience the warmth and wonder of the season at the 29th Annual Winter Faire on Dec. 9, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. From puppet shows to candle dipping, gingerbread-house making, delicious food and drink, artisan vendors, a children's store stocked with treasures for young shoppers, the event will also feature musical entertainment with the "Camellia's Got Talent" showcase.

As the school maintains many beloved traditions, including candle dipping and the children's store where young children get to shop for treasures for family and friends, there will be great coffee and homemade baked goods, delicious hot comfort food prepared by the parent of a Camellia alumnus who's a professional caterer, and an array of artisan vendors selling handmade goods. But rather than having a gingerbread-house display, as the school has had in years past, this year they're making gingerbread houses as a craft that everyone can enjoy. Fairegoers can purchase a simple kit full of everything they need to make their own "home sweet gnome homes," an activity for families to do together.

While clearly referencing "America's Got Talent" with the title, "Camellia's Got Talent", this show isn't a competition, event spokesperson Kari L. Rose Parsell said. Rather the showcase will be just that – a showcase of the wonderful talent among Camellia's students from grades 4 through 8. "To honor the school's rich musical curriculum, music is the show's focus. Students can perform a solo, duet or group. Faculty, alumni and parents also will be sharing their musical gifts. It'll be a special show," she said.

Meanwhile, Camellia's puppet shows are quiet and reverent, using beautiful puppets that are handmade by the early childhood educators, who regularly perform puppet shows in preschool and kindergarten. This year's all-ages puppet show, "The Silver Hoof", a Russian tale, references the natural world and the seasons, Parsell explained. Thoughtful and delightful, the shows start at 11.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m.



Certainly, dozens of volunteers are coming together to create this community event. Parsell said everyone, within the Camellia Waldorf community, is asked to pitch in. "Parents donate items to the children's store and baked goods to the bake sale, at a minimum, but many do much more to make it come together and feel magical. The campus is decorated in simple, tasteful and natural materials — perhaps with a dash of faerie lights!"

Summing up the merry feel of the event, Parsell said, "Winter Faire is a joyous festival where we gather together to socialize and celebrate the wonder of season.It has a warm country village faire feel to it that we all cherish. In fact, several current Camellia families first visited the school by attending the faire and say it was one factor in convincing them that this was their school. It's a wonderful time to come experience Camellia."

If you go:

What: Camellia Waldorf School's 29th Annual Winter Faire
When: Dec. 9, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
Where: Camellia Waldorf School, 7450 Pocket Road, Sacramento
Cost: Free admission, nominal fee for some activities
Contact: (916) 427-5022; www.camelliawaldorf.org; frontdesk@camellliawaldorf.org

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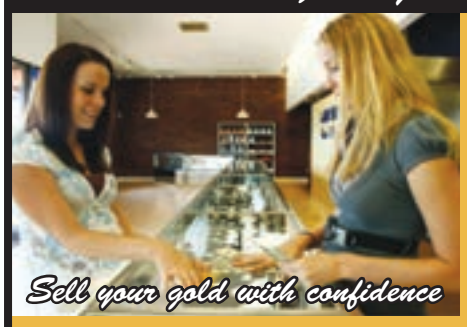

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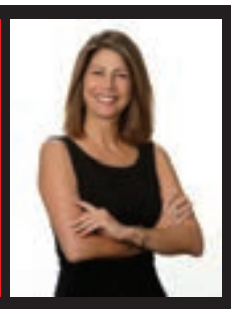

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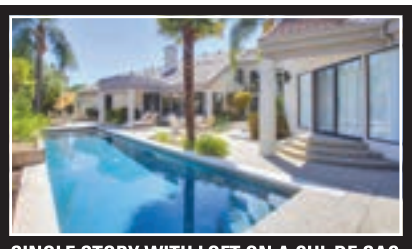
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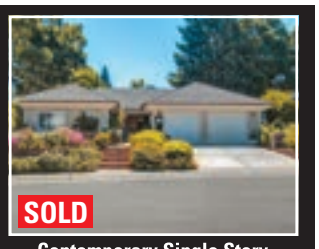
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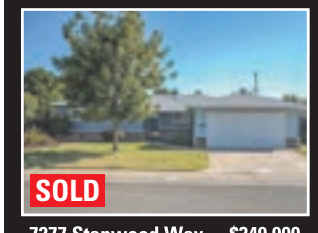
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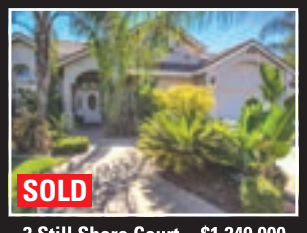
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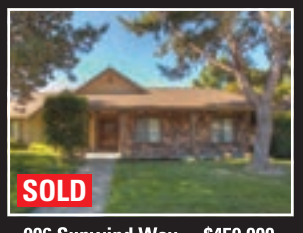
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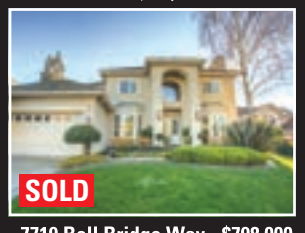
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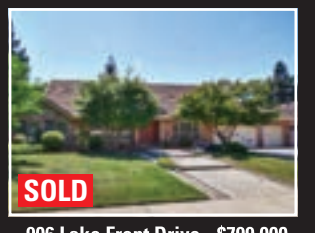
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Pocket resident, author of TigerFish, releases children's book

By MONICA STARK
editor@valcomnews.com

During the great flood of 1997 in Northern California, pumpkins from the Sacramento farms floated down the river past the bucolic town of Clarksburg on their way to the San Francisco Bay. Whole pumpkins of various sizes bobbed among the debris, branches, logs, tree trunks, garbage, and critters in the fast and muddy current. Children spotted them while riding in the car on the River Road near home and it caused quite a stir that afternoon.

This unique event inspired Pocket author Hoàng Chi Truong Smith to write "No Ordinary Sue" for her children. While working on publishing her book "TigerFish" in 2017, California experienced yet another high-water year, so she decided to share this historical fiction children's book with other families.

"No Ordinary Sue" is a flood refugee who started her journey as a timid pumpkin. Her neighbor, Lulu later joined her, and their exodus turns into an exciting and rewarding journey while helping others in need along the way. In the end, she finds her dream life because she acts courageously with generosity and compassion.

In an interview with the author, Hoàng Chi explains that "No Ordinary Sue" discovers the strengths and confidence she didn't know she had from selflessly serving those who looked for help. "It's a story of self-discovery, compassion, and the willingness to go out of one's comfort zone to achieve their goals and dreams. It highlights the roles of each individual within a of community to work toward the resiliency of its community during a natural or man-made disasters," she said.

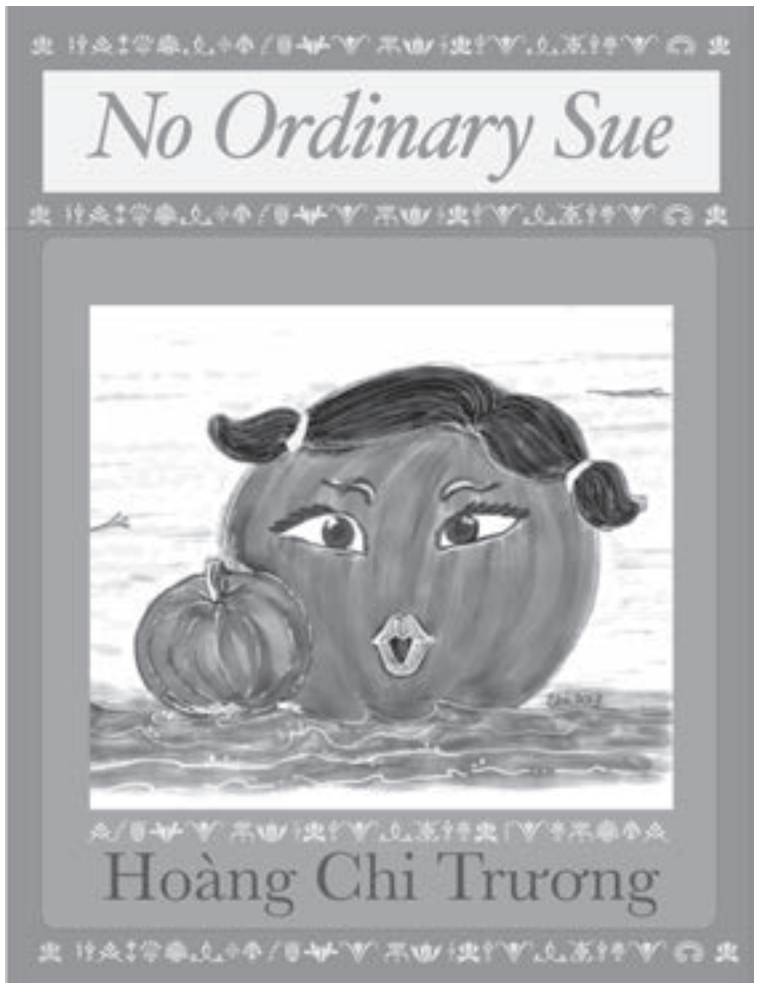
During the 1997 flood, Hoàng Chi's young children, who were 7 and 4 years old, spotted the pumpkins floating down the Sacramento River while she drove them to their then-home in Clarksburg. "It was such a peculiar sight of many whole pumpkins of various sizes rushing out to sea. I wrote this story that afternoon for the children but never named nor published it," she said.

This hobby, writing stories whether fiction or non-fiction of her daily life and experience as a mostly stay-at-home mom when her children were younger, was Hoàng Chi's artistic expression, along with drawings and reading. While the characters in the story are fictional, as they are pumpkins and mice, the family who Sue encounters at the end of her journey is loosely based on Hoàng Chi's own family who sailed in the Sacramento River Delta with the young children and whose young boy has developed an intense love for the seas and sailing at a young age. "He also loved his blanket around this time when he was 3 years old," she said.

As many children's book authors tend to write when their children are young, Hoàng Chi explains it's "because we have a first hand understanding of what our children want and love for us to read, again and again."

"No Ordinary Sue" was written when her children were young, only to be published after the author launched TigerFish for other families to enjoy. It's especially for those who live locally in the Sacramento area and Northern California who remember the 1997 Flood or were disaster refugees themselves, having been evacuated from the affected areas.

"No Ordinary Sue" is adored by parents and non-parents alike who appreciated the bright and adorable illustrations of Sue, the mice, the boy's family, and the scenery – all in



bright and happy colors. Each illustration depicted an important moment in the story, explains Hoàng Chi, who is also the illustrator. "I've been drawing as long as I've been reading and writing, so when I decided to publish No Ordinary Sue, it was an easy decision to do my own illustrations."

Hoàng Chi says she values the freedom that comes with self-publishing and she's using Createspace, a Print on Demand service associated with Amazon to print and publish

See No Ordinary Sue, page 19





From Your Vice Mayor, Rick Jennings





Aesop once said that "no act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." In a world where our sick and elderly are too often pushed aside and forgotten, these words have even greater meaning today.

The Pocket/Greenhaven community is home to 40 residential care facilities that provide 24-hour support for thousands who cannot care for themselves due to injury, illness, or advanced age. Such facilities range in size from only a handful of residents to a few hundred. The residents may be permanent or temporarily housed there. But, what they all have in common are numerous compassionate caregivers who provide the personal love, support and care that is so vital to their wellbeing.

Compassionate caregivers often go unnoticed. They may be a nurse, a driver, a cook, a janitor or all of the above. Often, they work very long, tireless hours – and, for some, for very little pay. But, to those they serve, the care they provide is essential to their quality of life. Such compassionate care deserves to be honored and commended. For this reason, we sponsored the Compassion Awards in 2015 – to celebrate and honor compassionate caregivers and the important service that they provide to so many.

The Compassion Awards began as a local initiative started by retired Superior Court Judge Barry Loncke, former City Attorney Samuel L. Jackson, and John Cimino, owner of Absolute Compassion Hospice & Palliative Care. These gentlemen teamed up with my office to give back to the hard-working men and women that serve the elderly, sick and disabled in District 7. Last year, we expanded this recognition to include caregivers throughout the City.

And, on November 14th, I had the pleasure of presenting to City Council the twelve nominees of the 2017 City of Sacramento Compassion Awards. Out of these 12 nominations, the Compassion Award selection committee identified two honorees and one caregiver-of-the-year that stood out from the rest. Although the committee was very impressed with the excellent care and compassion shown by all the nominees, what made these three stand out is their commitment to go above and beyond to show personal attention to those in their care.

The twelve nominees for this year's City of Sacramento Compassion Awards included: Ian Gillan Calzado of ACC Care Center; Tom Briones, Sanjana Kumar and Harriet Larbi of Eskaton Care Center; Patricia Matias of Golden Girls; Estrella Praz Paramo of Kevinberg Care Home; Emma Bangsil of Love and Serenity IV; Wayne King of Revere Court; MariLou Angels of The Meadows at Country Place. Our honorees were James Ednave of ACC Care Center and Leah Dimaano of the Meadows at Country Place.

And, the 2017 caregiver of the year is Nenita Yap-Diangco of Eskaton Care Center. Nenita was nominated by her unit manager for over 25 years of dedication and commitment to Eskaton residents.

The care provided by these kind, respectful and compassionate caregivers is essential to a positive quality of life for the elderly, sick and disabled. Their compassion impacts the physical and mental well-being of so many. Their distinguished service brings honor and credit to their families and friends, to the facilities where they serve and to the profession as a whole.

I cannot thank these caregivers enough for the compassion and care they bring to profession and the inspiration that they are to so many both within the profession and beyond. Please join me in recognizing, celebrating and honoring these compassionate caregivers.

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Man on the street:
What do you want for Christmas?

By SALLY KING

The question was asked at Belle Coolidge Library, LdV Elementary School playground, Nugget Markets and Sprouts parking lots.

Alexa Orr, a third grader at Leonardo de Vinci Elementary School in Hollywood Park said she would like a photo of Santa's workshop. When asked why she wants the photo, Alexa said, "some people don't believe in him, so maybe if I show them a picture, they will believe more."

Kevin Whitnell, an eighth grader at Leonardo de Vinci Elementary said he would like some trucks for his skateboard.

Susanna Huerta, at Belle Coolidge, said she wants to spend more time with her grandson.

Nehemiah Smiley, an eighth grader at Sam Brannon wants money for Christmas.

Amaiyah Dunn, another eighth grader at Sam Brannon wants Victoria Secret's Pink lip gloss.

Gloria Gilhooly, a shopper in Land Park, wants blending brushes for makeup.

Mark Wilson, shopper at Greenhaven Plaza Shopping Center, said he wants to get rid of speed bumps for Christmas. When asked why, he replied, "because people ask for speed bumps to massage their own self-importance." He added most people ask for speed bumps to be added where they are not needed.

Jonathan Johnson, a shopper in Greenhaven, said he wants a little extra money for Christmas, so he can pay his rent.

Tony Britto wants people to be kind and he would like to see an end to climate change.

Many adults that were asked what they want for Christmas simply looked dumbfounded when asked the question. They replied that no one has asked them what they want for Christmas and they really hadn't given any thought about what they might want.

Deborah Schuman said she wished all her family lived closer, but added her daughter lives nearby and is expecting her first baby. This put a big smile on Schuman's face.

Susan Turley said she enjoys doing good deeds for Christmas, and does a lot of baking so she can give homemade baked goods to those around her.

Other said they wanted to see peace on earth but didn't have much hope in that happening. A number of women said they want to remain healthy and wished good health for their families.

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FARM AND FLAVOR

By KERIN GOULD

The summer crops are all tilled under now with sparrows and finches pecking at leftover seeds and bugs. Winter crops are being planted as soil dries enough to allow walking between rows. Seedlings for greens, snow peas and sweet turnips are getting their starts under gray, fuzzy sky. This means that the season of comfort food and nostalgic indulgences has arrived.

But what if your health and/or sensitivities really *need* you to stay on track? Let's have a few goals: Continue eating fresh produce; Limit sweets and processed foods; Savor every bite mindfully; Share; Love the nostalgia, but let's avoid eating our feelings to the point we create new regrets.

I've been a vegetarian for almost 40 holiday seasons' worth of social awkwardness, challenges and gotcha questions, lack of satisfying foods, etc. I have been at that party where dinner was hours behind schedule, and then the lone "vegetarian" dish had shrimp in it. (What tree do you suppose shrimp grow on!?!?) I'll admit I was cranky, not the most gracious guest. Not proud of it.

So I have some suggestions to help things stay festive and friendly:

Let people know in advance about your limitations, and tell them, "Don't go to any trouble for me, but I don't want to make you feel bad if I don't eat something." Don't say I "don't do" tomatoes. Explain allergies or long-term food practices (vegetarian, vegan etc.) clearly.

Bring a dish to share that makes *you* happy and full. Feeling *hangry* can spoil any event (see my bad example above). Hit the farmers' market to see what is in season and what appeals to your senses. Save experimental, exotic dishes that scream "hippie health-nut!" for another time. Think "kid-friendly", even among adults. Show-off casseroles like a veggie tamale pie or a vegetable Wellington will satisfy everyone My maple-coconut yams are picky kid-tested. Who needs sugary marshmallows?

Holiday Yams

Ingredients:
3 large sweet potatoes (mix purple and orange colors if you like), sliced into 1/4 inch rounds
1/2 c. finely chopped walnuts
1/2 c. shredded coconut
1/2 c. butter (substitute), melted
1/2 c. orange juice
1/2 c. maple syrup

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees
- Mix melted butter, orange juice and maple syrup and set aside.
- In a casserole dish, layer slices of sweet potato to cover the bottom.
- Sprinkle coconut and nuts over the slices, then add another layer of sweet potatoes, more coconut and nuts, etc until you fill the casserole dish.
- Sprinkle nuts and coconut over the top, the pour the liquid evenly over the whole dish.
- Bake for about 30 minutes, until the liquid is bubbling, sweet potatoes are tender, and the top is a little browned.
- Don't throw the traditional baby out with the bathwater! Small adjustments can save the day! Wild rice blends can make a rice dish richer AND healthier. Green beans can be cooked with a homemade mushroom duxelle rather than canned soup. Pies can be more fruit than sugar and flour, and the crust and sweeteners can be healthier. Try an almond flour crust and maple syrup for sweetening. More cinnamon too!

Hold out for the tastiest indulgences with the most nostalgia-value. Candy canes can just be decorations unless you wait all year for them. Remember the Seinfeld episode about eating a Snickers bar with a fork and knife? Elevate your treat! Savor slowly focusing on the exquisiteness of a treat. A small amount on a big plate – the way the French plate their restaurant food – can encourage mindfulness. Or just the opposite! Take a small plate and load it so it looks like a huge portion, putting healthy stuff on your plate first, the less nutritious stuff around that.

Find an ally! Don't be marginalized in your own family. Invite co-conspirators into the kitchen while you are preparing food or sit with a health-conscious relative at the dinner table. Holidays are no time to feel lonely and left out, munching on twigs and leaves and resentment. Incidentally, celery may help lower blood pressure…just sayin'!

Don't apologize for your choices, and don't debate. Tell people your food choices make you feel good physically and mentally. That's all. And be grateful we can make such choices for ourselves.

Watch out for sugary drinks. Put sparkling water in any juice to reduce sugar and make it bubbly-special. Spicy chai or a low-sugar/non-dairy hot chocolate with a drop of peppermint extract can warm you up. Ginger or peppermint tea works if your stomach feels nasty from the hubbub. Try this fruit-filled Mexican-style punch:

Make 1 quart of strong hibiscus tea

- Add it to 4 more quarts of water in a pot
- Chop and add a couple of guavas, a pear, an apple, an orange and some prunes
- Add 2 sticks of cinnamon and several 4 inch sticks of fresh sugar cane. Add a few slices of ginger and a pinch of clove if you like. Bring to a boil, then let simmer for an hour. Sweeten as needed. Strain and serve hot

Give yourself the gift of some space. Schedule regular walks for your "digestion". Take a breather from stuffy air, germs, and most of all people. I'm going out to walk the dogs around the field right now.

Visit producewithapurpose.wordpress.com for more recipes and resources.

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Extravagant 'Party for Change' held for St. John's shelter

By MONICA STARK
editor@valcomnews.com

Flying through a large hangar at the Sacramento Executive Jet Center, three aerialists thrilled a large audience as about 20 dancers in a sort of "flash-mobesque" fashion entertained at ground level, immersing the crowd from all angles. With excitement in the air and on the floor, guests who were dressed to the nines gathered for the entertainment, surely, but were united in effort to raise money for Saint John's Program for Real Change.

The event, the annual "Party for Change", which this year was held on Nov. 4, raised $460,000 for the program that has changed the lives of more than 30,000 women and children since 1985.

"We are delighted to bring our modern storytelling to the tragic cycle of poverty and homelessness in Sacramento county," said Jacob Gutiérrez-Montoya, the founding artistic director at the Sacramento Contemporary Dance Theatre, whose company's dancers donated their time in service to the women and children at Saint John's. "Through dance, we create a common experience of empowerment, renewal and achievement. We hope to leave everyone feeling the abundance of hope in this one-of-a-kind event, bringing generosity and gratitude together."

Captivating the audience at the onset of the evenings' entertainment, the dancers exited the floor at the end of the first number, leaving the aerialists hanging.

A suspenseful opening for the emcees of the event KVIE's Rob Stewart, host of "Rob on the Road," and KCRA's Kellie DeMarco, that performance was built to entertain and excite the crowd that soon after were in the midst of a live auction with auctioneer David Sobon. Going a mile a minute, raising $10,000 here and there, all of a sudden the mood changed again as the dancers zoned the audience back into the moment. Dressed in all white for the finale, which featured the Mumford and Sons' song "There Will Be Time", the dancers sent an emotional message to the St. John's women, Gutiérrez-Montoya said. "That your life didn't stop here. It's not just starting in a different way... you've made it through and there's time for you to keep living and find the next chapter." Suffice to say, that performance left people in tears.

Founder and director of Rebel Aerial Kat Boston said when SCDT reached out to provide aerial entertainment for the Party of Change it was easy to see why they were so enthusiastic about donating their time. "The program addresses the homelessness in Sacramento in a way that not many others do. I was proud to choreograph a synchronized aerial performance in collaboration with SCDT's opening number to set the tone for a one of a kind event" – one that the "likes of which Sacramento has not seen before," she said. "It is always thrilling to be suspended over your audience. Performing as an aerialist gives you a unique perspective on the flow of a party."

More than just a shelter, Saint John's 12-18 month program combines temporary housing with education, job training with a 96 percent job placement rate, and counseling to permanently escape the cycle of poverty and abuse, moving families experiencing homelessness from dependence to independence, according to a press release. On Oct. 20, Saint John's announced the grand opening of their new facility accommodating an additional 90 homeless women and children daily, 450 annually. However, as of that time, the Saint John's daily waitlist has continued to grow—up from 250 to 430 in the previous three months.

This year's event also featured cuisine by Chef Santana Diaz who has inspired so many, including the women and children in the St. John's program, desserts from Pastry Chef Rod Cuadra, and food and service from Plates Café and Catering team who executed such a wonderful meal for over 600 people. Plates is an employment training program in which women are trained in 17 different restaurant stations and women from the program helped prepare and serve dinner at Party for Change as part of their employment training.



Photo by Stephen Crowley

Additionally, this year's event featured music by Las Vegas DJ E-Noc, and an art show featuring creations by Maren Conrad.

Artist performances include SCDT Dancers Lauren Howell, Laila Wahee, Cameron Lucas Eggers, Samual Fulk, Camryn Young, Kathryn Arellanes, Maggie Maue, Natalie Brumfield, Jordyn Santa-Catalina, Israel Foss, Camille Johnson, Meagan Patterson, Ashton Titus, Baylee Ferrerra, Allie Roe, Grace Taylor, Hannah Bielcik, Brenna Mulligan, Alexis Robards, Leah Feldman, Angela Palumbo, Aleena Palumbo and Madison Hitchcock; Vocalist- Ryan Allan; Rebel Aerial's Monica Padilla, Gabrielle Attisani, and Kat Boston-Lazano; San Francisco's #1 Favorite Magician-Ryan Kane.


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25th annual lighted boat parade held on the Sacramento River

Photos by TROY YOUNG

Forty-two boats participated in the 25th annual Lighted Boat Parade on Dec. 2 on the Sacramento River. Thanks to Sacramento Yacht Club for hosting the after-party. Members of the Drowning Accident Rescue Team led the parade, as participants got festive with decorated boats for the season. Boaters lined up outside the Sacramento Marina at approximately 5 p.m. and cruised upriver past The Virgin Sturgeon turning and heading back down river. Viewers watched the parade from Tower Bridge, the docks in Old Sacramento, The Virgin Sturgeon, The Delta King and Crawdads On The River.



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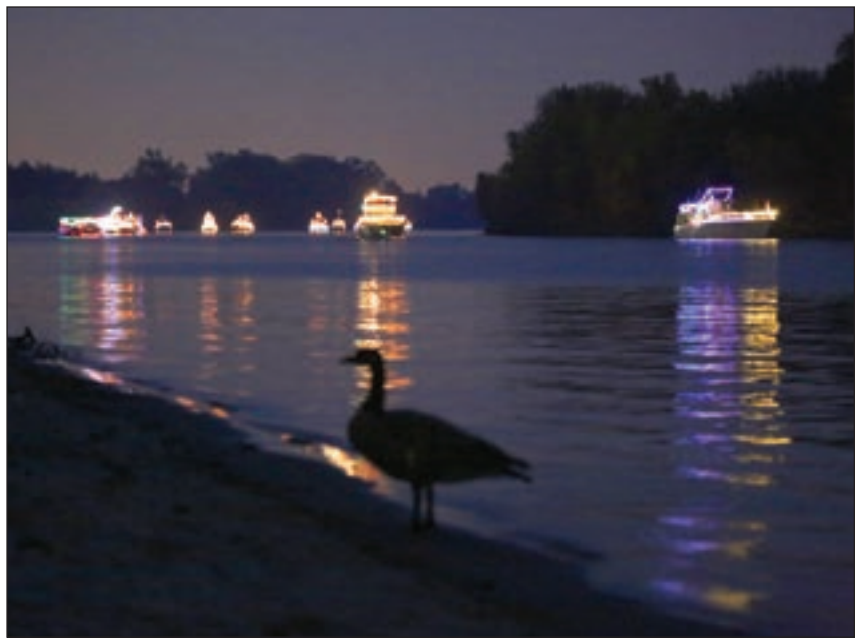

25th annual lighted boat parade

Photos by STEPHEN CROWLEY
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Door to Door

with PAT LYNCH

Most of us have pretty generic ways of handling unwanted phone solicitations. We hang up on the robocalls or politely ask salespeople to put us on their Don't Call List, a famous register that doesn't really exist and we all know it. But the other day I came home to hear Someone saying this: "Steve, you're lying to me, and you're trying to do a terrible thing, and I'm calling the police. You're going to jail, Steve, for a long, long time."

She saw me and hung up. "He told me I owed back taxes to the IRS and if I didn't pay a fine now, in cash, they would confiscate my house and car."

"You were supposed to meet him with cash?"

"No, I was supposed to get a cash card and give him the number. As proof."

"It sounded like you were toying with him. Messing with a poor, stupid swindler.

"Yes,' she said.

This inspired me to call my sister, Eileen, who had not long ago received a recorded message from a Detective O'Brian from the Sacramento Police Department. I wanted to get her facts straight. Anyway, the "detective" spoke about a pending arrest "due to a missed traffic court date." Eileen checked the number; yes, it belonged to the police department. She thought there might be a slight chance her son, who'd borrowed the car, had run a light, and not known it, and maybe one of those traffic cameras had snapped his picture. Or maybe she'd unknowingly run the light. So she called the number and asked for Detective O'Brian. He came gruffly on line. He told her she had a warrant for the missed traffic court date and would have to pledge to go to a hearing room to answer charges. "It sounded fishy," she said. She asked him the name of his superior. "Officer Jones," he said. Even fishier. Since when in police hierarchy is an officer superior to a detective? And what did O'Brian want her to do? He wanted her to "show good faith" and avoid arrest by going to a 7/11, getting a cash card and giving him the number. Of course she didn't do it. Case closed. But she did learn that the cons who run this scam have ways of appropriating police, hospital and government numbers so their calls seem legitimate when you check. Eileen ignored a few more calls from Detective O'Brian. Nothing happened. That was four years ago and the paddy wagon has not yet come for her.

Back to my house. Weeks later I came home to hear another dramatic phone call. "What? Oh no! I can't take it. I can't take the shame. I can't pay and I can't live with the shame of debt. I'll have to kill myself. Oh God. Oh God." She lifted up a large artbook and dropped it flat on the table. It made a big splat.

"Was that supposed to be the gunshot?" I asked.

"Yes." She hung up, returned calmly to her computer. "These people are creeps." She said her father, at 92, had received a call. A young man's voice said, "Grandfather?"

"Alex?" her father responded.

"Yes, it's Alex, Grandfather. I'm in Canada. I've been arrested. I need money for bail. Can you help me?" Fortunately, Grandfather had adult children whom he consulted and Alex didn't get a penny.

The predators who concoct these schemes are what you'd expect—sleazy, dumb lowlife. I think they think they're grifters, clever outlaws who hoodwink the gullible with sophisticated stratagems. Maybe they saw Scorsese's *The Grifters* (with John Cusac, Annete Benning and Angelica Housten) and imagined they were in that league. But they're so not.

Now I wanted to get a phone call too so I could berate or scare the cons. I wanted to say, You're going to jail, Steve, where you'll have to marry a huge, tiny-eyed strangler named Pluggo. But nobody called. Well, a legitimate hearing-aid company repeatedly calls, but the only thrill I got from that was once saying, "I can't hear you. Speak up please." But I did it only once. Who wants to make life more miserable for people who have to make sales calls all day?

I was out of town the night I posted a quick comment on Facebook. I got a little ding from the message center. A message from Carol S. I knew Carol and liked her, but we had never chatted on Facebook before. She was a poet, and a friend of my sister, Kathleen. I checked her message. "Hello," it said. I typed, "Hi Carol." *"how are you doing"* she wrote with no capital letters or punctuation. "Great. How about you?" I answered. *"it was fine"* she wrote, so I assumed the "it" was a typo. *"what are you up to"* she wrote. No question mark.

So I wrote that I was "in San Jose, visiting my recently widowed sister." This was true.

"ok" she responded. So no condolences or sympathy for my sister. That was strange.

In the same message she asked, *"have you heard the good news"* (no question mark, of course).

The "good news" was about a *"cash grant fund donated to randomly selected people by the National Endowment for the Humanities* (Note sudden appearance of capital letters) *financial assistance program to assist financially retired, semi-retired, working and unemployed, it was randomly chosen with our log-in I saw your name on the winners list"* All this, sans periods and commas, from Carol the literate poet. She had already been awarded $90,000, she said. Ninety thou. That's a hefty chunk. And isn't it interesting to know that the NEH randomly spews money upon those who work and those who don't, randomly, boundlessly, madly, irrespective of merit or need? Next Carol the poet said she wanted to give them (the National Endowment for the Humanities) my Facebook link so I could call the woman who gave out the money. Then she added that she had *"paid some money to them for delivery"*

I began to tire of the exchange and said: "Don't give my Facebook link to anybody or I will kill you and set fire to your computer." Then I asked if I could borrow some of her $90,000 to pay them. This I did for sheer recreational spite. She ignored the request and wrote…*"maybe they will ask you for money."*

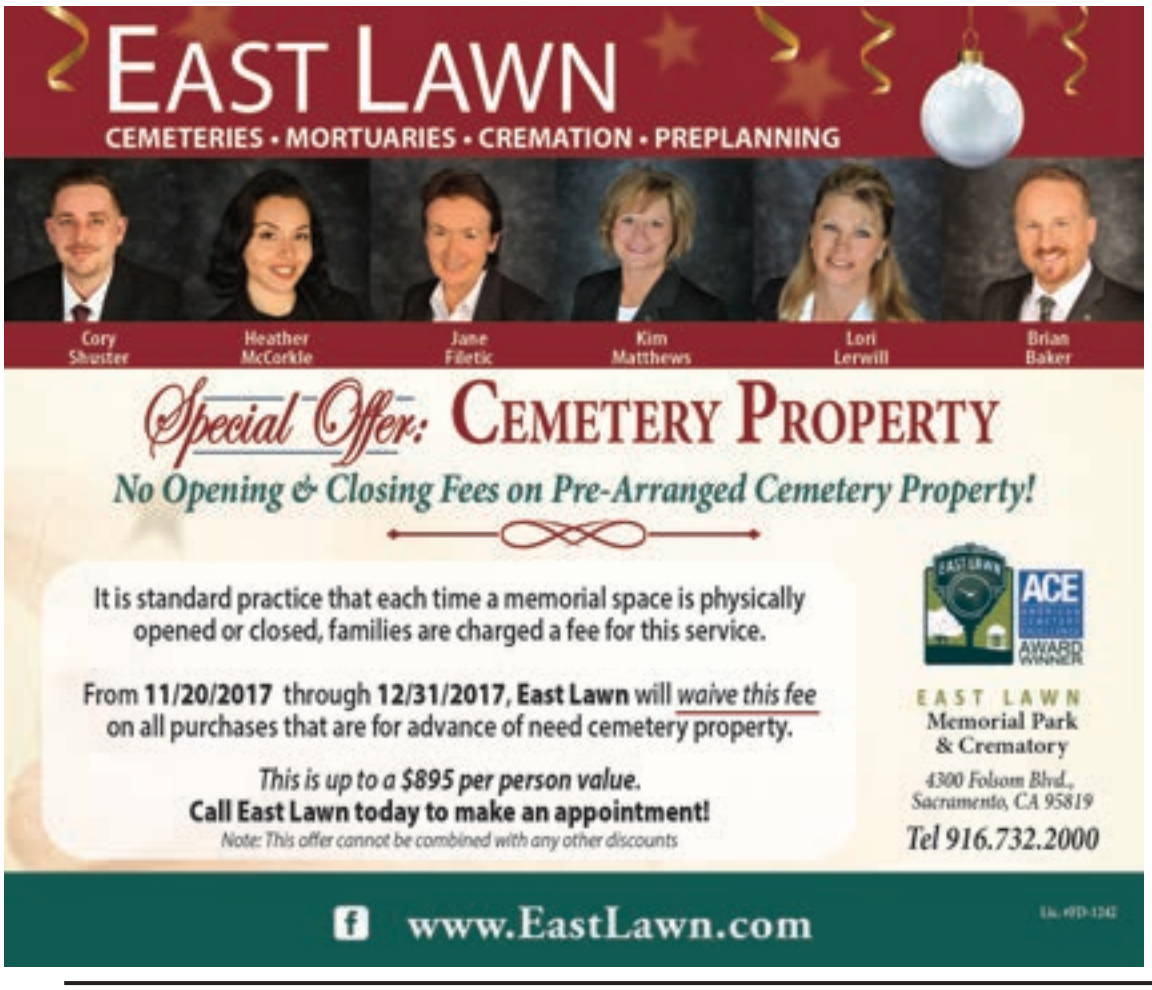
"After I kill you," I replied, "I will take your money and set it on fire too."

Why I said this, I don't know. I have never set fire to anything and have no proclivities that way. I think I wanted to be dramatic, and scary.

I haven't heard from Carol since, which is nice. Maybe I'm on her Psycho Arsonist Don't Call List.

Anyway, here are two quick tips for identifying these scammers. 1) Bad to no grammar. Standard English usage eludes them utterly. But don't get the idea this means they are foreign born. Most are American dropouts. 2) Anyone who wants you to meet him/her with a bag of money. Or wants you to get a card and surrender the number.

I'm going to research how to track down these people and scare them silly. When I find out I'll let you know, for free. You won't have to get a cash card from the 7/11.



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Words Matter. I'm amazed Dr. Boucher didn't shoot Senator Paul. Holidays are anxious times, before you lose it, lash out without thinking, talk to me. I'll listen. G Epstein, MD 916-454-3668

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What's happening Pocket/Greenhaven?

FRIDAY, DEC. 8

CHRISTMAS POTLUCK AT CABRILLO CIVIC CLUB #5 - Cocktails 6 pm & Dinner 7 pm. Please bring a can good item for the Sacramento Food Bank and a raffle prize. The Club will provide the main dish & others are asked to bring a side dish, salad or dessert. The STRS choir will perform. There will be a special appearance from Santa. Potluck is free to members & $10 for guests. RSVP to Marilyn @ 916-421-5769 or Scott @ 559-264-5492 or greenery3@aol.com; 6 to 10 p.m.; Cabrillo Civic Club #5 - Sacramento, 4605 Karbet Way, Sacramento, California 95822

SATURDAY, DEC. 9

TEENAGE WASTELAND AT BARRIO CAFE: Come to Barrio on December 9th for "Teenage Wasteland"! Arrive 6-9 p.m. for local teen art, entertainment, food, and beverages! 1188 35th Ave, Sacramento, CA 95822.

SATURDAY SLEUTHS BOOK CLUB – Belle Cooledge book club that meets the second Saturday of each month to discuss popular and classic mysteries. Club meeting starts at noon at Belle Cooledge Library, 5600 South Land Park Drive.

TUESDAY, DEC. 12

IDENTITY THEFT: December is National Identity Theft Prevention and Awareness month. Identity theft, a serious crime that can harm your finances, credit history and reputation, takes time to resolve. Join us for a free workshop to learn how to protect your personal information and avoid being a victim of crime. You will learn how to identify ID theft and take timely action to clear up the problems and minimize the damage. Free of charge and pre-registration required. Class will be held Tuesday, Dec. 12, from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. at ACC Senior Services, 7334 Park City Drive. For more information, call (916)393-9026 ext 330, www.accsv.orgs.

THURSDAY, DEC. 14

CITY HALL IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD: At 6 p.m. at the Robbie Waters Pocket-Greenhaven Library, get an opportunity to meet the District 7 team at Vice Mayor Rick Jennings' monthly office hours. Stop by with your questions, suggestions for our community, or just to say hello! For more information, call 916-808-7007.

SACRAMENTO CIVIC BALLET & CROCKETT-DEANE APPRENTICE CO & DEANE DANCE CENTER PRESENT

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Saturday, Dec 16, 2 pm
Sunday, Dec 17, 2 pm 2017

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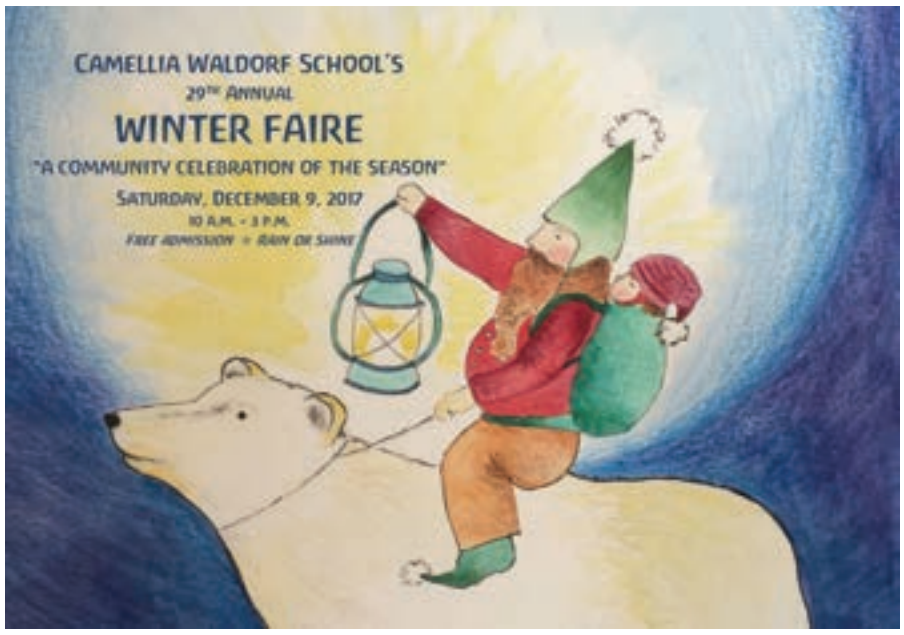
(916) 453-0226 Tickets at door OR
DeaneDanceCenter.com

SATURDAY, DEC. 16

MODEL RAILROAD PARTY – Visit the American River Model Railroad Society to learn about where trains travel. Experience the history of America through the magic of model trains. You may even meet Thomas and Friends! All ages. Dec. 16 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Belle Cooledge Library, 5600 South Land Park Dr., Sacramento.

PUTTING ON CHRISTMAS FOR ESKATON: Would you like to help seniors for Christmas? Starting at 2 p.m., volunteers and staff will be collecting, wrapping and give presents to the Eskaton on Florin Road residents! The collection includes: puzzle books, adult coloring books, socks, hats, scarves, (clean) stuffed animals (new) lotions, specialty soaps with little fragrance. You can buy them and drop them off, you can wrap them yourself or not, and you can come December 16th to the Eskaton on Florin Rd to hand out the presents yourself! We will not be collecting: food or candles. For more information, contact Serene at 916-541-7859. Eskaton Care Center Greenhaven, Florin Road.

13th ANNUAL ROCK FOR TOTS TO BENEFIT JOHN'S PROGRAM FOR REAL CHANGE THIS WINTER: Returning to Sacramento for the 13th year, Rock for Tots is gathering toys for children as part of the annual holiday concert featuring local bands. Music will include Life in 24 Frames, Among the First, Jacob Paul & the Heartbeat, and Paulie Onoff at Holy Diver 1517 21st St. at 7 p.m. Tickets are available for $10 each on Eventbrite. Anyone bringing a toy, or children's pajamas, will be entered into a prize raffle. Local businesses are supporting the raffle with prizes including haircuts, wine, dining, skateboards, apparel, gift cards and even tattoos. This year's event will support Saint John's Program for Real Change, operating Sacramento's largest shelter and the only one exclusively serving homeless women and children in crisis. To learn more about the annual event estimated to help at least 300 children, contact Jake Desrochers at (916) 370-2942. For more information about Saint John's Program for Real Change, contact Rebecca Sloan at (916) 798-0777.



SATURDAY, DEC. 9

CAMELLIA WALDORF SCHOOL WINTER FAIRE: Camellia Waldorf School's 29th Annual Winter Faire will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The free-admission public event will include puppet shows, children's store, artisan vendors, candle dipping, gingerbread house making, hot drinks, delicious food, sweet treats and "Camellia's Got Talent" showcase. There will be a nominal charge for some activities. The event is rain or shine. Camellia Waldorf School is located at 7450 Pocket Road.

SUNDAY, DEC. 17

BAZAAR IN THE BARRIO: From 7 a.m. to 2 p.m., Barrio Cafe will be having local craftsmen & artists selling their arts, crafts, and creations! Just in time for the holidays! Support local businesses while shopping for your loved ones this holiday season. Barrio Cafe is located at 1188 35th Ave.

SUNDAY, DEC. 24

PAJAMA PARTY - FREE DAY: Wear your PJs and celebrate Christmas Eve at the zoo! Invite your friends and neighbors to this free admission day from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (Zoo closes early.)

TUESDAY, DEC. 26

MR. COOPER'S SING ALONG – Preschoolers and their families are invited to enjoy a performance by local children's musician Ken Cooper, which may include such favorites as "Three Little Fishies" and the ever popular "Freeze Dance." Tuesday, December 26, from 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Robbie Waters Pocket-Greenhaven Library, 7335 Gloria Drive, Sacramento.

SATURDAY, JAN. 27

FISHING IN THE CITY: Come out to the newly renovated Florin Creek Park for this free community event on Saturday, January 27, 2018. Southgate Recreation & Park District partners with the Department of Fish and Wildlife to bring fishing to the children in the community who may not have a chance to experience catching a fish. The event is for children up to the age of 16 and children do not need a fishing license to participate. The Department of Fish and Wildlife will have fishing poles and bait available for those who need it. Plan on catching a lot of fish in our newly renovated pond at Florin Creek Park. The event will start at 8:15 a.m. with a free demonstration from DFW volunteers and staff. Fishing will begin at approximately 8:30 a.m. and all fishing poles will be out of the water at 11 a.m. Each registered child will receive an opportunity to win some great donated items and we will give prizes to the first catch, smallest fish and largest fish caught. Please contact Sheila Surritt at 916-422-7610 for more information. Florin Creek Recreation Center, 7460 Persimmon Ave, Sacramento, California 95823.

ONGOING

ROTARY 2ND ANNUAL BLANKET DRIVE: From now until mid-December, the Rotary Club of Pocket/Greenhaven is collecting gently-used and new blankets for the Moral Values Program and Homeless Outreach as well as My Sister's House (women and children's shelter) and other organizations in the community. Donation locations include: Pacific Workplaces (1104 Corporate Way), ACC Senior Services (7334 Park City Drive), Robbie Waters Pocket Greenhaven Public Library (7336 Gloria Drive), Cook Realty (4305 Free-

Continued on page 18

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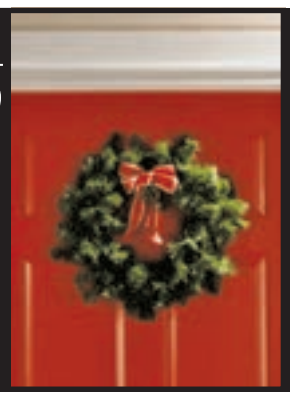

What's happening Pocket/Greenhaven?

Continued from page 17

port Blvd.), State Farm - Bob Smith (7210 Greenhaven Drive, Ste 1); California Bank Trust (7201 South Land Park Drive).

HOLIDAY DRIVE FOR LOAVES & FISHES: Now through Christmas Eve, join the Sacramento Zoo in giving back during the season of thanks. Donate combs and brushes, new gloves, gender neutral adult socks, small toiletries, or toothpaste and toothbrushes to the Holiday Drive for Loaves & Fishes at the zoo when you enter and receive $1 off of admission as a thank you to from the zoo.

ARTISTS' AND CRAFTERS' GROUP – Held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month, this meet-up was started to allow participants from past and current "In Creative Company" classes to continue meeting. Any artists or crafters who are interested in this social group are welcome--just bring whatever you're working on and join us! 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Robbie Waters Pocket-Greenhaven Library, 7335 Gloria Drive, Sacramento.

THE CLARKSBURG COMMUNITY BAND INVITES YOU TO JOIN: How about dusting off that horn and getting involved! The band is a group of musicians that enjoys sharing a love of music with each other and our communities. The band is looking to expand the ensemble and wants to welcome those who are interested and who play a standard concert band instrument. The band meets Tuesday evenings from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at Delta High School, 52810 Netherlands Ave., Clarksburg. For more information contact Randall Veirs, Delta High School Band Director at rveirs@rdusd.org

FREE LINE DANCE CLASS: Every Thursday from 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. "Two Left Feet" dance class for beginners. If you think you have "two left feet" this class is for you. Anyone can participate in this fun activity. Friendly group of people. Drop-ins welcome. Sponsored by ACC Senior Services. Class held every Thursday at ACC Greenhaven Terrace, 1180 Corporate Way. First class is always free. For more information call (916) 393-9026 ext 330. www.accsv.org

BELLE COOLEDGE LIBRARY VIDEO GAMES AND VIDEO GAME SYSTEMS DRIVE: The Belle Cooledge Library is looking for video games and working game systems for our afterschool teen space program for next year. If you have any video games or working game systems that you would like to donate please bring them to the Belle Cooledge Library and we will provide a tax receipt. What is Teen Space? Join other area teens in our community room for our afterschool Teen Space! Hang out, geek out and mess around with friends and snacks! Seriously, what could be better? Teen Space occurs weekdays from 3 - 5 PM (except Thursdays 1:30 - 5 p.m.), is free, and open to teens between the ages of 12 - 18. (During the school year) All Library programs are free and open to the public a library card is not required! Belle Cooledge Library is located at 5600 South Land Park Dive. Library hours are Tuesdays noon to 8 p.m.; Wednesdays and Thursdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Fridays 1 to 6 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR "SUNDAY JAZZ": Come and join our Sunday Jazz event committee for events held the Second Sunday of every month at the Elks Lodge. If any of you would like to volunteer and enjoy listening to good music at the same time, please let organizers know. Hours to volunteer would be 11:30 a.m. to approximately 4:30 p.m. Please contact Clayton Hablitz at: Clayton39.ch@gmail.com Cell number 916 706-9837 or email Lori548@yahoo.com. Cell number 650-200-8570. Come on down & enjoy the fun!

WEDNESDAY COFFEE AND CONVERSATION GATHERING: Every Wednesday morning from 7 to 10 am., join neighbors at Cafe Latte, 7600 Greenhaven Drive, for conversation and fun. Find the group back near the piano.

"ALL IN" SENIOR SOCIAL HOUR – The Pocket Library will provide games, refreshments, conversation, and fun on the last Wednesday of each month from 1 to 3 p.m.! Games available to play include poker, chess, Scrabble, checkers, Dominos, Mahjong, cribbage, and more! Robbie Waters Pocket-Greenhaven Library, 7335 Gloria Drive, Sacramento.

ROTARY CLUB OF SOUTH SACRAMENTO: The friendliest club in Sacramento, the Rotary Club of South Sacramento meets every Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. at the Casa Garden, 2760 Sutterville Road.

SUNDAY BREAKFAST BUFFET AT THE ELKS LODGE, NO. 6: From 8:30 to 11 a.m., enjoy eggs, omelets, corn beef hash, bacon or sausage. 6446 Riverside Blvd.

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF SACRAMENTO SOUTH: Meetings on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at Aviators Restaurant, Executive Airport, 6151 Freeport Blvd. For more information, call Dee at 341-7852.

JOB COACH APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE AT POCKET LIBRARY – Make an appointment to meet one-on-one with a volunteer job coach and get help with online job searching, using library databases, interviewing tips, resume writing, and more. For questions or to schedule an appointment, please ask at the library service desk or call 916-264-2920 during open hours. Appointment times are available for most Wednesdays between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. at Robbie Waters Pocket-Greenhaven Library, 7335 Gloria Drive, Sacramento.

TECH HELP APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE AT POCKET LIBRARY – Have a technology question or problem? Sign up for a one-on-one technology help session with our staff. We can help with basic computer, Internet or e-mail questions, and/or get you started with library services like e-books or e-magazines! Stop by the service desk or call 916-264-2920 during open hours to make an appointment. Appointment times are available for most Wednesdays between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., Thursdays between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., and Saturdays between 10 a.m. and noon, at Robbie Waters Pocket-Greenhaven Library, 7335 Gloria Drive, Sacramento.

BABY/TODDLER STORYTIME AT POCKET LIBRARY – Babies and toddlers (ages 0 to 3 years) and their caretakers are invited to join us for songs and rhymes. Arrive extra early or stay later for extra social time with other children and parents. Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 11 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. at Robbie Waters Pocket-Greenhaven Library, 7335 Gloria Drive, Sacramento.

KNIT TOGETHER AT POCKET LIBRARY – Love to knit? Want to learn? Join us for expert advice, great conversation and more. All crafters are welcome, not just knitters! Every Friday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Robbie Waters Pocket-Greenhaven Library, 7335 Gloria Drive, Sacramento.

BABY STORYTIME AT BELLE COOLEDGE LIBRARY –Nursery rhymes, fingerplays, simple stories, and songs designed to encourage a range of early literacy skills. For children up to about 18 months old. Each child must be accompanied by a participating adult. Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m. at Belle Cooledge Library, 5600 South Land Park Drive.

TODDLER STORYTIME BELLE COOLEDGE LIBRARY – Toddlers ages one to three and their caregivers will enjoy fun songs, stories, and fingerplays. After the storytime, there will be a stay and play group. Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. at Belle Cooledge Library, 5600 South Land Park Drive, Sacramento.

PRESCHOOL STORYTIME AT BELLE COOLEDGE LIBRARY – Preschoolers ages three and older and their caregivers are invited for fun songs, stories, fingerplays and a play activity. Thursdays at 11 a.m. at Belle Cooledge Library, 5600 South Land Park Drive, Sacramento.

SING ALONG WITH MISTER COOPER - Join neighborhood favorite Mister Cooper for 30 minutes of music time and freeze dancing for families. Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Belle Cooledge Library, 5600 South Land Park Drive, Sacramento.

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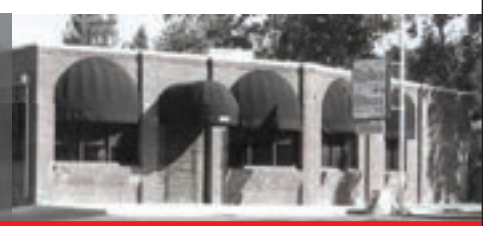

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No Ordinary Sue:

Continued from page 5

both of her books, "TigerFish" and this new children's book, "No Ordinary Sue."

"No Ordinary Sue" is now available on Kindle. The paperback edition will be available after Dec. 16 on Amazon and soon after at Blumoon Books & Vinyls and Davis Avid Reader.

A bilingual version in both Vietnamese and English will be published in early 2018 "to fill the gaping hole of the underrepresented and underserved segment of readers whose first language is Vietnamese, or wish to raise their children in a bilingual household," Hoàng Chi says. "I didn't have baby or young readers' books in Vietnamese for my children and this hindered my ability to teach them both languages."

Incredibly grateful for those who rallied around her the month before she launched TigerFish, Hoàng Chi says she can safely say that "it's one of the most spiritual times of my life when I'm astounded by the kindness of friends, families, bloggers and authors who selflessly supported me because they believed in my book's message and want to see it shared with the world.

"Last April proved to me that what seemed to be a herculean effort to get TigerFish published could only happen because my support group and community wanted to see me successful in sharing my message and advocacy for refugees, immigrants and the marginalized population. My first published book is an example of collective power of the many, of years in the making since it was written in 1992 and left fallowed until 2016, when I believed that it was no longer mine to keep privately. I had the privilege to realize my American Dream and felt the moral obligation to speak up for the voiceless as I once was a teenage refugee."

On the web:
Website: www.ChiBeingChi.com
Twitter: https://twitter.com/ChiBeingChi
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