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Season's Greetings: See special holiday insert How the season changes Sacramento

By **RYAN ROSE**
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It's chilly out, and temperatures have reached record lows. At dusk, as the malls and shopping centers fill, the streets of Sacramento are bare and empty – residents scurry about to fireplaces, blankets and warmth. The sun, too, seems timid in the winter weather, dipping below the horizon earlier each day. Sometimes gray, often freezing, the region has undergone its winter transformation, slowly becoming a refrigerator that chills its warm-weather-loving denizens to the bone.

Yet, this season offers a space and time for connection and interaction; bundled-up for warmth and huddled together around heater vents, we are all more likely to stay inside than go out, spending more time socializing with friends and family members. As noted author (and one-time Sacramento news reporter) Mark Twain once said, "The Xmas holi-

days have this high value: that they remind Forgetters of the Forgotten, & repair damaged relationships."

Twain was as correct then as he is now: The holidays are a prime opportunity (if not an excuse) to connect with those around us.

In an effort to drum-up some Christmas cheer in the midst of these cold days, the Valley Community Newspaper group has developed a special "Holiday Greetings" section featuring members of the community wishing well their fellow Sacramentans. This special eight-page insert can be found with this paper.

In that "season's greetings" spirit, allow me to wish all of you readers out there a very special (and safe) holiday season; we here hope that all of you receive those things that are the most important: peace, love and goodwill.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Happy Holidays.



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We appreciate your comments on these developments. Send your thoughts, comments and news tips to ryanrose@valcomnews.com.



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Gift of music and encouragement

El Camino High School students support rival district campus

By MELISSA CRONIN-BROWN
Arden-Carmichael News Writer
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Many local high schools take advantage of what their schools offer in terms of sports teams, drama programs, academic courses, or other extra curricular activities. Most are fortunate to have all of these fundamental essentials, but some high schools do not.

New San Juan High School in Citrus Heights does not have a band program since they are currently in the process of changing their school's overall curriculum from being a public school to becoming a trade school, hence making their school name *New San Juan High*. This means that students learn a particular job-related skill rather than focus on academic rigor.

During New San Juan High School's homecoming game, they played against Marysville and though they lost, El Camino High School's

"I think we made a really good impression on their school and the NSJ students made us feel really welcome and made us want to come back sometime in the future."

band came to support the team and performed in the bleachers during the cold night of October 9.

Julia Ayeni, a junior at El Camino, explained the situation by saying, "NSJ doesn't have a band and we thought it'd be nice to give them a special homecoming this year."

El Camino's band was able to do so since the principal of New San Juan High, Tony Oddo, has a daughter, Sam Oddo, who attends El Camino. He then talked to the El Camino band director, Kevin Glaser, and asked about two weeks prior to the game, if his band would play for his high school. Glaser gladly accepted the offer to do something nice for the community and to support a fellow high school.

Since New San Juan High was so appreciative that El Camino could play for them, Oddo offered El Camino a free bus ride to New San Juan and were later given free food during the game.

"It was so nice," said Ayeni. "I think we made a really good impression on their school and the NSJ students made us feel really welcome and made us want to come back sometime in the future."

El Camino junior Michael Slater said that playing for New San Juan High "made me feel proud to be a part of the band and to be sharing music with a group of people."

Fellow student Angela Powell, also a junior, said she was glad the NSJ football players, students, staff, and

students' parents were all so appreciative of them for supporting NSJ and liked how the cheerleaders smiled and greeted the band as they walked in and enjoyed the "friendly atmosphere."

Powell also enjoyed the free hotdogs and drinks, which she said the entire band "completely devoured." She concluded, "It would have been just as fun if they had won but the scores never make a difference for me."

Ayeni agreed since she commented that it was fun to play for New San Juan High and that even though they lost, she thought the El Camino band definitely made the game more spirited and entertaining.

As Glaser put it at the end of the game, the EC band might have been the last group of people to play music at New San Juan High's stadium. This is a strong but also very true statement, which is why both schools were fortunate to have music played at the homecoming game, albeit by another rival high school.

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Know your neighbor

From film crew worker to Piatti's new executive chef

By ELIZABETH KALFSBEEK
Arden-Carmichael News Writer
reporter@valcomnews.com

Ryan O'Malley graduated with a degree in film and video studies from the University of Michigan. So how did this self-taught cook become Piatti's executive chef in Arden Arcade?

Since the age of 16, O'Malley has worked various restaurant jobs from washing dishes to waiting tables. After college, he landed a job as a cook in a Mexican restaurant in Ann Arbor, Mich.

"The owner of the restaurant was open to my suggestions, and without any formal training I started experimenting there," O'Malley said. "I fell in love with cooking for cooking."

The chef moved to Los Angeles to put his film and video studies degree to work and spent four years as a freelance crew worker. He told himself that if he should ever switch careers, he would become a chef.

"As a parent you look and want the world to be a better place for your kid," O'Malley said. "With a love of cooking and a love of food, that was a way I saw I could make a difference in my son and family's life, and now in other people's lives."

Switching stages

Through various twists and turns, O'Malley ended up in the Sacramento area and landed a position at La Provence in Roseville. Within six months, he worked his way up to lead cook at dinner.

Following his stint at La Provence, O'Malley went to Spataro in downtown Sacramento for a different experience, "where I was really introduced to Italian cooking."

O'Malley served as the sous chef at Hawks in Granite Bay and helped open The Grange restaurant at The Citizen Hotel in downtown Sacramento before landing at Piatti, located at 571 Pavilions Ln., in April 2009.

"The hallmark of what I do is simplicity," O'Malley said.

"The thing with simplicity is the simpler it is, the more you have to nail it."

O'Malley believes in treating ingredients minimally, using their essence and letting the quality shine through. But don't confuse "simple" with "boring." The ingredients of Italian fare may not have a lot of complexity to them, but creating and refining the dishes is about technique.

"If there's not a lot of stuff to hide behind, then everything has to be right on point," O'Malley said. "And that's one of the beautiful things about Italian food, is that it's focused on the ingredients."

Going local in the kitchen

Piatti's dishes are designed around the seasons, O'Malley said, and he makes a point of buying as local as possible.

"When I took over, one dish that was almost always sold was the Scottish farmed salmon," said O'Malley. "I wanted to get away from that. Even if the fish was sustainably raised, flying it in from Scotland everyday isn't very sustainable. I look for items closer to home."

In accordance with traditional Italian cooking, O'Malley knows the concept of "locavore" goes beyond the latest trend. Europeans, he said, have been eating that way for centuries and the same way of thinking has only recently become a hallmark of American cooking.

Europeans eat what's in the market, in town, that day, O'Malley said. There are no supermarkets per say, no one-stop shops.

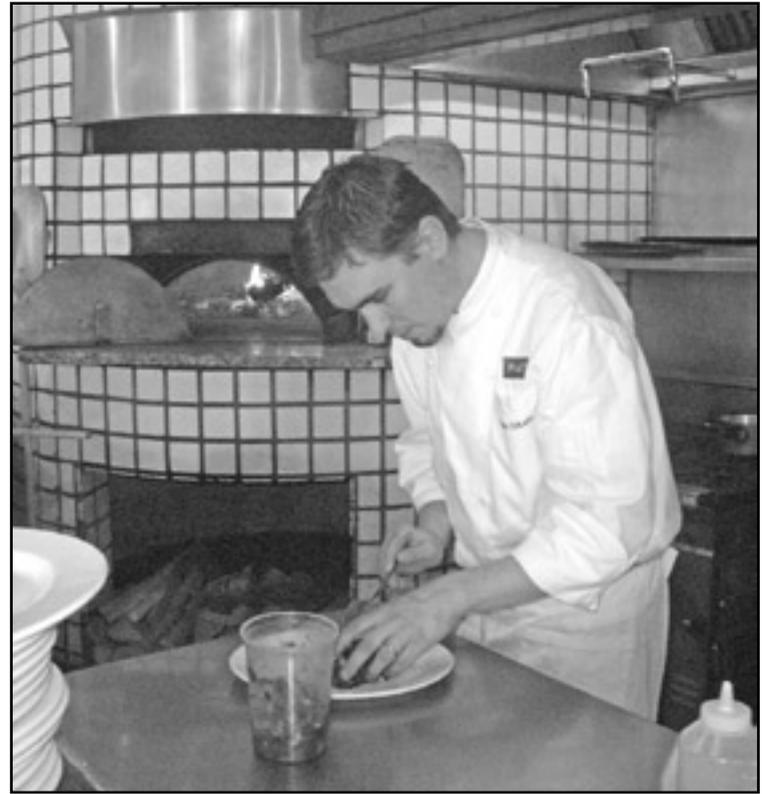
"They seem to have a closer connection with the earth, the farmer, what's there and readily available," he said. "I think that's the way people should eat. It makes sense."

O'Malley knew when he became the executive chef that it would be hard to walk into a restaurant with a large staple of regulars and change things. His goal is for patrons – both regulars and new alike – to not only expect quality,

well-prepared, flavorful food, but also have the confidence to order something new and find that the dish exceeds their expectations.

"Everyday when I walk through the kitchen doors I want to find a way to make the food better than I did the day before," said O'Malley. "I think it's that passion that truly fuels a good cook."

Piatti Restaurant and Catering is located at 571 Pavilions Lane in Sacramento. For more information, visit piatti.com or call (916) 649-8885 for reservations.



Arden-Carmichael News Photo/Elizabeth Kalfsbeek
Hard at work: Ryan O'Malley is the executive chef at Piatti, located at 571 Pavilions Ln.

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Arden, Carmichael residents share favorite holiday memories

By LANCE ARMSTRONG
Arden-Carmichael News Writer
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With Turkey Day behind us and Black Friday having kicked off the holiday shopping season, many people around the Arden-Carmichael area are feeling nostalgic as they get into the holiday spirit.

Lisa Holloway, the cashier/receptionist at Niello Mini on Fulton Avenue, said that one of her favorite Christmas memories is how her mother would take a second job during the holidays in order to purchase gifts for her family.

"I always remember my mom working two jobs around Christmas time and we always had presents throughout the entire living room," said Holloway, who grew up as one of four children. "She was also very crafty, so sometimes she would make snowmen or little baskets and would sell them at her regular job for extra money."

Holloway said that another one of her favorite Christmas memories is gathering with her family to exchange "white elephant" gifts.

"You just go out and buy something for \$10 or whatever it is and you play the white elephant game," Holloway said. "So, (a white elephant gift) is not for a specific person, it's just a fun game to play, but everyone still gets a little something."

Holloway, who this year plans to visit with her parents and other members of her family for Christmas dinner and a white elephant gift exchange, said that the most important part of Christmas is spending time with her family.

"I always look forward to Christmas, because throughout the year you get so busy and with the holidays you know you're going to be with your family," Holloway said.

A special time

David Byrd, who grew up in North Sacramento and works in the Arden area, said that despite being raised in a financially struggling family, he nonetheless has many fond childhood Christmas memories.

"I have fond memories of Christmas, but we didn't always have presents or anything like that, so it was kind of sad," said David, who was one of the two children of the late Sam and Minnetta Byrd. "My father was a house painter, so during the winter, he didn't have any work. We still had the feeling of Christmas with lots of love and good food."

David added that it has always been important for his family to remember the real meaning of Christmas.

"We were devout Christians, so the real meaning of Christmas was always there," David said. "We celebrated it to its fullest. I was in Sunday school plays and I was once one of the three kings. I now sing in the choir, so Christmas Eve is always special. We have a candlelight service at midnight at (St. John's Lutheran Church in downtown Sacramento)."

David added that his home's interior and exterior is extensively decorated during the Christmas season.

"My partner is very talented (at decorating)," David said. "We keep up (the decorations) until January 6, because that's the end of Christmas. Most people don't know the 12 days of Christmas."

Festive and celebratory

Kimberly Wells, a 17-year Arden-Arcade resident and mother of two children, said that she also has a fond Christmas decorating tradition.

"One of our family's traditions is to go up to a tree farm in Loomis and cut down a fresh Christmas tree and then come home and decorate it," Wells said.



Arden-Carmichael News Photo/Lance Armstrong
Ace Ferma, an employee at Cheezer's Pizza in the Arden area, looks forward to continuing his family's Christmas traditions, which began during his childhood in the Philippines.

Riley Kilo, a former Carmichael resident who attended Barrett Middle School, also shared a Christmas decorating memory.

"When I was living in Carmichael in (the zip code boundary of) 95608, one of my favorite things was the fact that there were evergreens everywhere," Kilo said. "We used to have a giant evergreen in our front yard and every year, we would wrap it in Christmas lights like up to 20 feet up in the air. And I guess that's my favorite thing about Carmichael is the fact that it's like tree town, U.S.A. and the fact that you can do that kind of thing and people appreciate it."

Best gift ever

It has often been said that it is better to give than to receive, but for 12-year-old Willie Dean Mnichowicz, he is not afraid to admit that receiving a long desired Christmas gift can sometimes be about as satisfying of an experience as giving a gift to someone.

Willie, who is a student at John Barrett Middle School in Carmichael, said that he remembers one Christmas in particular when he was surprised with a much desired, yet unexpected gift.

"The best (Christmas) gift I ever got was an Xbox 360 (video game console)," Willie said. "I had been wanting it for about two years since it first came out. My parents surprised me, because it wasn't wrapped up, but they had a scavenger hunt for me and different pieces (of the console) were hidden in (different parts of the Dean residence)."

Willie's father, Andrew Mnichowicz, said that it was a very entertaining experience presenting Willie with the gift.

"(Willie's) birthday is the 21st of January, so we were just trying to get him to think, 'Oh, you're getting all your gifts now, you've got to wait another month to get your Xbox,'" Andrew said.

Arden-Arcade resident Chelsea Jones, 18, said that she also received

See Christmas, page 7

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Christmas: 'Every year I go back to that Christmas with wonderful memories'

Continued from page 6

a much-desired gift during her childhood.

"When I was little, I got an Easy Bake oven for my birthday, but it didn't come with any pans and we couldn't find pans for it anywhere," Jones said. "(About three years later) when I was 11 (years old), my mom and dad bought me a brand new Easy Bake oven (for Christmas). I was so freakin' excited. I like cried over it and everything. I was like the happiest kid in the world."

Joe Carrino, a 2005 graduate of Rio Americano High School and an employee at an Arden area deli, said that one of his favorite Christmas gifts that he received was a high quality skateboard.

"The skateboard that I had before was a phoney baloney with plastic stuff, but this was an Elements skateboard, so it was the real deal and very nice," Carrino said. "I also got some guitars on Christmases."

A special memory

Susan Miller, an 8-year resident of Arden-Arcade, said that she will always remember her special Christmas memory when she saw her son for the last time.

"My stepfather drove my son (Alan Lewis) and his girlfriend and my granddaughter and mother all the way

from Alabama for Christmas," Miller said. "I hadn't seen my son in at least three years. We had such a wonderful Christmas and three years later (on Aug. 8, 2003), he died. That was a very special Christmas, because it was the last time I saw him, because unfortunately he had died from a heart attack. It's bittersweet every Christmas, but I know every year he is still with me and every year I go back to that Christmas with wonderful memories."

Ace Ferma, an employee at Cheezer's Pizza in the Arden area, said that he always looks forward to having Christmas dinner with his family.

"I like staying home for (Christmas) dinner and eating good," Ferma said. "In my family, there is my dad, my mom and I have three brothers. We always exchange gifts. My family also got together (for Christmas) when I was growing up in the Philippines and I remember that (in the Philippines) we would have a really big meal with a lot of food. There would be ham, other things and we would have a special Christmas cake. I always enjoy spending time with my family at Christmas."

With the many memories created in the Arden-Carmichael area and another Christmas drawing near, it is once again time to create a variety of new Christmas memories to last a lifetime.



Arden-Carmichael News Photo/Lance Armstrong

(above) Willie Dean Mnichowicz, a student at John Barrett Middle School in Carmichael, said that he once participated in a scavenger hunt to obtain a cherished Christmas gift.



left: Shown in this Christmas 2003 photograph, Susan Miller stands alongside her children, Jessica Miller and Alan Lewis. Susan and Jessica cherish the final Christmastime moments that they spent with Alan prior to his death. (Photo courtesy of Susan Miller)



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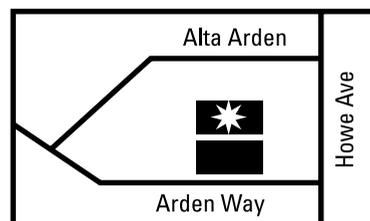
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Out and about

From dreams to reality: How one local artist brings his world to ours

By **BENN HODAPP**
Arden-Carmichael News Writer
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"I like to think that I'm walking down a dream path, taking pictures of what I see."

That is how local artist Mark Niemeyer describes his creations. His ability to create these dreamlike scenarios has just always been there, he said.

"My interest in art wasn't taught," he said. "It just poured out of me."

Niemeyer, a native of Nebraska, moved to northern California 25 years ago. "Friends told me that my art was strange enough to sell in California," he chuckled.

His first stop was Marysville and then Woodland. He realized quickly that if he was going to make a dent in the art world that he needed to make his way to Sacramento. Within a month of moving here, he had some works in a gallery.

Many of his paintings are surrealistic, taking real-life images and warping them in some way.

"I'm proud that I don't get stuck on one form," he said. "I'm doing a series of birds right now and when I'm done with that I'll move on to something else."

Along with his many works that include people and animals, Niemeyer has developed a fascination with parts of California that Nebraska simply didn't have to offer.

"Being in Nebraska you don't really see any rocks," he said.



Photo courtesy Mark Niemeyer
Artist Mark Niemeyer, a native of Nebraska, moved to northern California 25 years ago.

This created his motivation to start doing some landscape paintings of rock formations in the area. Also not present in Nebraska is a certain type of tree.

"I did a series of paintings called 'Midtown Palms' and ended up with about 10 or 12 of them," he said. "Those sold pretty well, actually. I sold half of them."

Nearly all of his paintings are done using oil pastels, which he refers to as "adult crayons." He discovered them nearly 30 years ago and he remains an avid user.

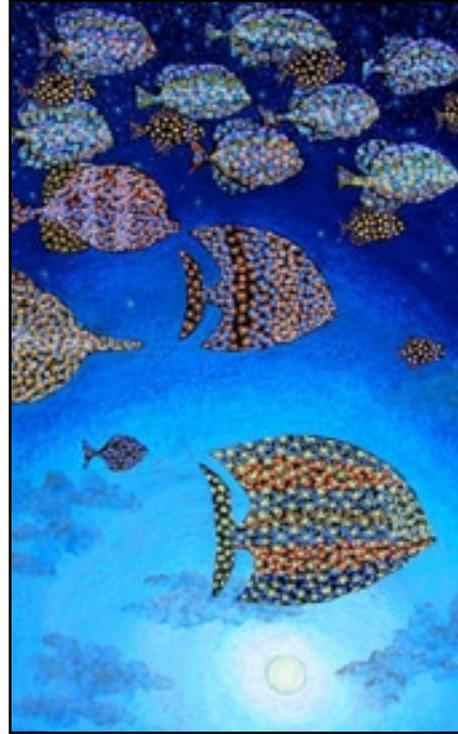


Photo courtesy Mark Niemeyer
This piece is part of Mark Niemeyer's Fishboy and Flowergirl series.

Prominently displayed

Niemeyer's works can be seen all over the Sacramento area. He has pieces in The Supper Club on Del Paso Boulevard; Crepeville at 18th and L streets; Burgers and Brew at 15th and R streets; and Matteo's at Arden Way and Fair Oaks Boulevard.

As far as how he was able to get his art featured at these locations, he said he was largely in the right place at the right time.

Niemeyer works at The Supper Club as a cook. He describes him-



Photo courtesy Mark Niemeyer
This piece is Mark Niemeyer's "Hiding behind his music."

self as "a chopping and cutting machine" and he assists the chefs in preparation for their creations. The owners, Matt and Yvette Woolston, took notice of his art and decided

See Artist, page 9

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Artist: 'I always try to put some humor in my art, especially in the titles'

Continued from page 8

to put some of his work up. At first Niemeyer thought they put them up just to be nice, but with the opening of Matteo's in Carmichael, he knew that they really enjoyed his work.

"Yvette asked me if I could do three flower paintings for the opening of Matteo's," he said. "The problem was that it was opening in three weeks."

The 15 feet of flowers that adorn the walls at Matteo's is one of his proudest works.

"I didn't have time to go back and measure out what I wanted to do, I just had to do it and I think it turned out really well."

The title of the paintings is "Bee's Dream." He described it as what a bee would dream about, a vast expanse of flowers.

Conversely, there is also a painting of a rooster and hen in the restaurant entitled "Bee's Nightmare."

"I always try to put some humor in my art, especially in the titles," he said.

To find out more about Mark Niemeyer's work, e-mail him at elzoharm@att.net or see some of his pieces at www.myspace.com/markharmart.

The pieces that hang in Crepeville and Burgers and Brew can be purchased. Each has a card accompanying the piece with his number on it.

"There are plenty of ways to get a hold of me if you need to," he said.

Most of his pieces range in price from \$400-\$700.

He is also featured at the new Maiya Gallery at 2220 J St. As of now, he has four pieces hanging inside and he has been penciled in to be a featured artist sometime in 2010. Some of his newest creations include a series of warped faces. One of the most striking is a

piece titled "Yellow Nose Man."

"I like the human face," he said. "People are instantly drawn in by the eyes. 'Yellow Nose Man' was one of the first times I cut down the face into sections using different colors."

To find out more about Niemeyer's

work, e-mail him at elzoharm@att.net or see some of his pieces at www.myspace.com/markharmart. Or, for a live encounter, perhaps just look up the next time you're out to eat. You might just find yourself staring into a dream.



Photo courtesy Mark Niemeyer

This piece is Mark Niemeyer's Big Kob Buck in the "5 Bucks" series.



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Arden Arcade resident part of winning team at Drexel-Sacramento

Special to the Arden-Carmichael News

There is nothing easy about assuming leadership in a company that has no clear direction, is failing to meet customer demands, and is experiencing financial difficulties.

Yet that was the theoretical challenge facing four first-year MBA students in Drexel University's Center for Graduate Studies in Sacramento – and their handling of the challenge won them a third-place finish among 185 teams from around the world.

The team of Samuel Applebaum, Robert Dodge, Scott Freeman and Steven Pon earned the recognition in the Capsim Foundation Challenge, an international competition for business students. Applebaum is an Arden Arcade resident.

The Sacramento-based students had the highest score among Drexel's 15 teams, 14 of which were from Drexel's campus in Philadelphia. A University of Iowa team finished first with 756 points, followed by Baylor University (738) and Drexel (713). Drexel's part-time MBA program was recently ranked No. 1 in the country by BusinessWeek magazine for academic quality.

"MBA students are typically competitive, so just being the No. 1 team from Drexel was a great achievement," said Freeman, a Budget/Forecasting consultant with ConnectPoint Search

Group. "How our team, which had four people with four different perspectives, made its decisions was pretty interesting. We really worked well together."

The diverse skills of Applebaum (doctor), Dodge (information technology director), Freeman (accountant) and Pon (IT project manager) were melded into one, helping the group reach the six-team finals.

"Each of us brought different things to the table and we had different perspectives," said Pon, an IT project manager for PASCO scientific in Roseville. "We didn't always agree during our strategy discussions, but we worked together as a team which enabled us to perform really well overall."

The Capsim Foundation Challenge

The popular game, established by Capsim Management Simulations Inc., is held twice annually and provides students a way to experience success and failure in a risk-free business environment. The overall competition included teams from Dartmouth, Oregon, Texas Christian, and Brigham Young universities, and countries as diverse as Taiwan, Canada, Poland, Australia and Austria.

The Capsim Challenge requires students to compete against both a computer and other teams by winning the most market share with a comput-

er-simulated business. During the first round, the teams competed against a computer. In the finals, the surviving teams competed against each other.

During the qualifying round, the Drexel team met eight nights over a two-week period to make decisions concerning their mythical \$40 million electronic sensor company, which has one product but can develop a portfolio of up to five additional ones. At the end of the round, Drexel was in second place.

"It was absolutely a great experience for any MBA student," said Arden Arcade resident Applebaum, a family physician with Sutter Medical Group in Roseville.

"If you did something like overproduce a product, thinking you could sell more, and you didn't, you would be penalized and have to take out an emergency loan the following year to make up for that mistake."

Drexel University

Opening in Sacramento less than one year ago, Drexel has had over 175 students enroll in its graduate courses. The completely wireless facility is de-



Photo courtesy Drexel's Center for Graduate Studies in Sacramento. From left to right, Robert Dodge, Sam Applebaum, Steve Pon and Scott Freeman teamed up for a third-place finish in the recent Capsim Foundation Challenge, an international competition for business students that featured 185 teams from around the world. The MBA students from Drexel's Center for Graduate Studies in Sacramento finished second in the qualifying round, which put them in the six-team finals.

signed for working professionals pursuing graduate degrees in the evenings as well as businesses and associations seeking high-tech meeting space during the days and on weekends. Information Sessions are held every other week at the Graduate Center. For more information on the Center for Graduate Studies visit www.drexel.edu/sacramento or call (888) 389-3781 or (916) 325-4600.

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Connecting need and generosity

Local man helps bring Thanksgiving to the homeless

By **BENN HODAPP**

Arden-Carmichael News Writer
benn@valcomnews.com

Call it a hand up, not a hand out.

Faith and Homeless Families is an organization that works to get homeless families into a home of their own. During the Thanksgiving Holiday week, some of the families involved in the Faith and Homeless Families program were invited to take part in a good old-fashioned Thanksgiving meal thanks to the generosity of a local restaurant owner.

Joey Madrid, owner of Hangar 17, opened up his restaurant's doors to some 40 homeless people who might not have had the chance to enjoy the holiday the way the rest of us do.

"He did such a wonderful thing for our families," said Nora Benavides, director of the organization. "It was very festive and the families were waited on hand and foot."

The idea to open up for the community stemmed from a tradition that Madrid used to take part in years ago.

"We used to do a friends and family Thanksgiving dinner at the restaurant every year," Madrid said. "The last year that we did it there weren't many people there, so I thought it would be nice to do something different."

Madrid has a friend who works for Sacramento City Councilmember Rob Fong, who alerted Madrid to the homeless organization.

"I just thought it was the right thing to do," he said. "They are going through

"We used to do a friends and family Thanksgiving dinner at the restaurant every year. The last year that we did it there weren't many people there, so I thought it would be nice to do something different."

Joey Madrid, owner of Hangar 17

some tough times and they might not have the chance to have the restaurant experience."

The feast featured all the standard Thanksgiving fare: turkey, ham, stuffing, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie.

To explain the nature of the tough times these families are indeed facing, Benavides provided some information on the organization and its goals.

"The program is based on a new approach called 'Rapid Re-Housing' where families are quickly found homes of their own after leaving a shelter," she said. "We ask the families what area they would like to live in and what school district they would like to put their kids into and then we try to find vacant apartments in those areas for the families."

The program is funded by Lutheran Social Services, which recently received



Hangar 17, located at 1630 S St., opened up its doors to some 40 homeless people who might not have had the chance to enjoy Thanksgiving.

money to support it. According to Benavides, the Obama Administration is trying to expand the rapid re-housing program. She explained that there are approximately 18 programs nationwide that are working to get families without homes into their own places.

After a family leaves a homeless shelter they are evaluated and have a background check performed. Then they are matched with appropriate mentors who help them to find jobs and manage finances.

"Every family has unique challenges," Benavides said.

She spoke of a family with a child afflicted with Down syndrome. The family was paired with a mentor who had experience working with special education children, and now the child and family are thriving. Another mentor is helping to build a resume so the father can hopefully find a full-time job.

The organization is working hard to grant a normal life to those without a home. Thanks to the generosity of Madrid, several families got to forget their hardships and enjoy some good food with family.

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The delicious ride up to El Dorado County's Apple Hill

By **BENN HODAPP**
Arden-Carmichael News Writer
benn@valcomnews.com

I recently took my yearly pilgrimage to Placerville to see what was going on at Apple Hill. Much to my delight, not a whole lot had changed since 2008. That is part of its charm, really. It's a place to see and to be appreciated for what it is rather than what it isn't.

But first: breakfast.



Arden-Carmichael News Photo/Benn Hodapp

The Buttercup Pantry – a nice little restaurant packed with delicious delights.

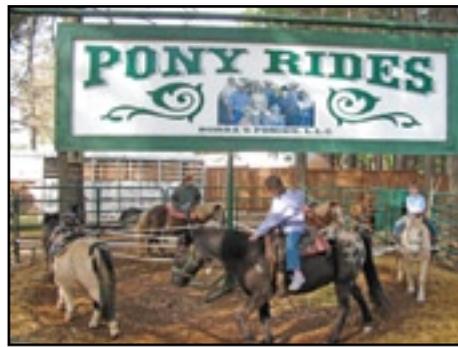
Buttercup Pantry
222 Main St., Placerville
(530) 621-1320

As is tradition, a pit stop was in order to indulge in a meal that I had nearly forgotten. The Buttercup Pantry was the destination. It is a nice little restaurant packed with all manner of things from the 1930s. (Actually, I don't know if it's from the 1930s, but that's what it looks like to a child of the 1980s.)

My usual hasty bowl of Corn Flakes was not on the menu this day. No, no. This was a chance to reconnect with an old friend called French toast. And it was good. I don't know what they

did to the bread to make it crispy like that, but it is probably best that I remain in the dark lest I demand it daily.

Stopping off at the Buttercup Pantry has become tradition and the food is excellent, but it serves a second purpose just as important: filling me up so I don't eat every apple creation under the sun when I reach Apple Hill.



Arden-Carmichael News Photo/Benn Hodapp

Pony rides and fresh air – an experience with nature within driving distance.

High Hill Ranch
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Stop number one was High Hill Ranch. The parking lot, though just seconds from the freeway, is a reminder of how awesome nature can be. Parking your car in a pine forest is not something you get to do a lot in the concrete expanse of every day life. Looking up, it was hard to tell if I was in Placerville or the woods of Oregon.

I took the familiar walk towards the display tents that housed handmade art for sale from vendors from all over the area. Woodcrafts, paintings and a vast array of little knick-knacks encased the area. I certainly would have taken pictures

of some of the more bizarre pieces were it not for the many "No Photography" signs posted around the tents.

Afterwards, I walked past the fishing pond, complete with the two biggest white ducks I had ever seen. They could be mistaken for those paddleboats for two at first glance. I avoided the enormous pie shop (for obvious reasons) and made my way past the pony rides towards the dreaded candy shop. I submit that it was not my fault that I was drawn into its midst. It pretty much taunts you with its small-town appeal and promises of unimaginable sweetness.

I made it out alive. The only thing I bought was a little container of chocolate-covered gummy bears. (I know, I know. But when one sees something so ruthlessly absurd, curiosity overwhelms the senses). And if you're wondering, yes, they tasted about as odd as you'd expect. I'm just happy I resisted the urge to buy a caramel apple dipped in Oreo cookie pieces. I was this close to committing grand theft pastry.

Boa Vista Orchards
2952 Carson Rd., Placerville
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As you might expect, Apple Hill is mostly about apples. For miles around there are apple orchards, most of which have signs pointing you towards where you can purchase their produce. I stopped off at Boa Vista Orchards and counted 14 different kinds of apples. I thought there were roughly three in existence.

There was simply too much interesting stuff at that marketplace and



Arden-Carmichael News Photo/Benn Hodapp

Delicious and decadent: The many varieties of apples available at Apple Hill.

they finally got me. I got some apple-raspberry cider, a caramel apple (sans Oreo crumbs), peanut brittle and some of those totally unnecessary but ultimately intriguing flavored honey straws. That may sound like a lot of things that are terrible for me, but if and when you go, you too will understand the power of the apple.

Before heading home, I rode through a long, winding stretch of road perfectly set between forests on either side. It was the kind of road that seems utterly impossible based on what we see as "city folk." I even passed the picnic area where I was viciously attacked by a flock of stupid geese as a child. I suppose "viciously attacked" is a bit strong, but I distinctly remember them pecking at me to share my chips. Horrible animals.

Destination and journey

There are no seven-foot-tall mascots, thrilling rollercoaster or depressingly long lines, but you could do a lot worse than a day at Apple Hill. Take the kids and enjoy the scenery. Eat the apples, of course. Just watch out for the bloodthirsty geese.

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Sacramento State University gallery unveils Thiebaud collection

Special to the Arden-Carmichael News

All 150 items in Sacramento State's Wayne Thiebaud collection will be exhibited publicly for the first time from Dec. 3 through March 6 in the Sacramento State University Library Gallery. Gallery hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. The exhibit is free.

A Sacramento State alumnus, Thiebaud is one of the most respected contemporary artists in the world, said gallery Director Phil Hitchcock.

The collection, from a pair of anonymous donors, covers Thiebaud's works from 1948 to 2004, when the collection was donated to the university. The project was inspired by the Destination 2010

initiative launched by university President Alexander Gonzalez, Hitchcock said.

Thiebaud is most often associated with the pop art and photo realism movements, but Hitchcock said the artist's work goes beyond that.

"Wayne has always, in my opinion, kind of floated in his own category," Hitchcock said.

The exhibit also shows the process Thiebaud used. One finished painting will be accompanied by 16 preliminary drawings leading up to the finished piece.

The exhibit will be something of a family affair. Thiebaud's son, Matt Bult, will exhibit his paintings in the adjoining annex gallery Dec. 3-Jan. 23.

For more information, call (916) 278-4189.



Photo courtesy Sacramento State University

Wayne Thiebaud (pictured) is one of the most respected contemporary artists in the world, said Sacramento State University Library Gallery Director Phil Hitchcock.



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Gang wars on Janey Way



By **MARTY RELLES**
Arden-Carmichael News Columnist
marty@valcomnews.com

One warm fall night in 1963, I sat alone in the living room of my family's house watching television. Mom and dad had gone out with my little brother John. My brother Terry loitered on the front porch with our friend Bob Pesce, chattering away. As my eyes wandered over toward the big bay window in front of the house, something caught my eye. A car drove slowly down the street in front of the house and someone yelled something from it. The car then proceeded forward toward the dead end of the street. This seemed unusual, so I focused my attention out the window. Sure enough, when the car came back up the street, it stopped in front of our house and three young men got out of the car and moved quickly toward the front porch.

Immediately, I took action. I hurried to the back bedroom, went into the closet and picked up a toy wooden military rifle. Then, I returned to the front of the house and opened the front door half way. The three young men stood threateningly at the foot of the porch and taunted Terry and Bob. I recognized all three of them: Pennisi and Puglesi from 55th street and another boy named Leitrich from River Park. Showing them the silhouette of the toy rifle, I yelled out, "Get out of here, now!"

They must have believed I had a real gun because they turned and walked away quickly. However, when they reached the sidewalk, Pennisi said, "This isn't over, we'll be back."

After they left, I spent the rest of the evening on the front porch keeping an eye on Terry and Bob. Nothing happened.

The next day, a Saturday, passed quietly. On Sunday night, my family went over to my Grandma Petta's house as usual for cake and coffee. When we returned, we went into our house to watch "The Ed Sullivan Show." A few minutes later, I heard a knock at the door and went over to answer it. Bob Pesce stood on the porch and said that Pennisi and the 55th street boys wanted to see me right away. On the street, two gangs of boys faced each other: the Janey Way group on my side and the 55th Street boys on the other.

I walked through the group of boys into the center of the melee.

"What's going on here?" I asked.

"I'm here to settle up for the other night," said Pennisi. "And how do you propose to do that?" I asked.

Before Pennisi could answer, my dad, a Sacramento police officer, walked over and stood beside me.

"What is going on here?" dad asked.

"These boys started a fight," said Pennisi. My dad responded, "Well it's over now, you boys take a hike." He then turned to the Janey Way gang and said, "You boys go on home." The 55th Street boys got into their cars and left. As I walked back to the house with my dad, he didn't say a word, but I think he was proud of me that night for keeping my cool and not starting the fight.

In school at Sacramento High the next day, I heard some rumblings about a fight on Janey Way. That was all. The 55th street boys never returned. Now the great gang war on Janey Way is only a memory.

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A little slice of Italy and Czechoslovakia with a Yankee twist: La Trattoria Bohemia is gem of East Sacramento

By SUSAN LAIRD
Arden-Carmichael News Writer
susan@valcomnews.com

Tucked into the side of J Street in midtown Sacramento is one of the little-known restaurant gems that make living in this region such a delight.

Featuring simple, authentic Italian and Czechoslovakian dishes, La Trattoria Bohemia has developed a loyal following. Despite the international flavor and flair, however, there is a timeless American tale here also.

"It's been a roller coaster ride, that's for sure," said Mark Lastuvka, who owns the restaurant with his wife, Romana. "I am originally from Prague; my wife is also from Czechoslovakia. When the Berlin

Wall came down in '89, I went through that whole revolution thing. That was fun."

Fun? Lastuvka means it. "Imagine being a part of changing history," he said. "You're scared, but you want to do it. Those were great times."

This desire to make a better future is what fueled the passions of those who founded the United States, and all those who immigrated here. Lastuvka found himself caught up in the energy of the time.

"We had the revolution in '89. We married in '89. Then, in September of 1990, we came over here," he said. "We came to Sacramento because Romana's father lived here after he escaped the communists years before. I came with

no English and only \$10 in my pocket."

Lastuvka's father-in-law helped the couple out in the beginning.

"My father-in-law got me a bike, and I signed up at the Winterstein Adult School to learn English," he said. "While I was at the Winterstein School, I met some Italian kids. They worked at the Roma Pizzeria. They wanted to play soccer on Wednesday nights, so they asked if I wanted a job."

The dish-washing job grew to be an every night affair. Lastuvka learned how to make pizzas, as he continued to learn English. He pursued every opportunity to "make it" in this country.



Arden-Carmichael News Photos/Tom Paniagua

Tucked into the side of J Street in East Sacramento is La Trattoria Bohemia, one of the little-known restaurant gems that make living in this region such a delight.

"My degree is in building fine furniture," he said. "I worked on remodeling homes for 10 years, and I continued to work at Roma's. In the be-

ginning I worked every day. My wife worked for Raley's and cleaned houses. She eventually became a flight attendant for Continental."

Lastuvka credits his mandatory military service in the Czechoslovakian army for developing his work ethic.

"At the time, I didn't want to do it," he said. "But you become independent. You learn to make your own decisions. I think (military service) should be mandatory for everyone."

Eventually, the Lastuvkas were able to save enough to take the next steps in the American dream. They purchased a home in Carmichael. The birth of their daughter,

See Trattoria, page 17



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Trattoria: 'We tell our friends that this place has the best pizza in Sacramento'

Continued from page 16

Nicola, also spurred changes in their lives.

"I was working my ass off," he said. "I decided to take a risk. I saw an empty pork store on J Street and decided to open a restaurant. We partnered with Maria Gurrera, the owner of Roma's Pizzeria. We had become friends when I was working at Roma's. That's why the food here is Czech food and Italian. We were eventually able to buy her out, but she helped us to get our start and we are good friends to this day."

The effort to build the restaurant was literally from the ground up.

"It's a good thing I had been doing remodels all those years," Lastuvka said. "I redid the plumbing, the electrical, everything needed replacement."

La Trattoria Bohemia opened in 2000. The little restaurant will celebrate 10 years on June 21.

The menu at La Trattoria is simple and delicious. Make that simply delicious. It offers over 50 items, plus an impressive selection of Italian pizzas.

Favorite Czech specialties include Bavarian Goulash, in which tender pork is stewed in sauerkraut to a thick broth. This is served with swirls of sour cream and Czech dumplings (\$17); and Schnitzel, where the customer's choice of

fresh breaded chicken breasts or pork are served with European-style potato salad or roasted rosemary potatoes (\$17).

All pastas and breads are made from scratch at La Trattoria. With the same devotion he dedicated to fine furniture, Lastuvka crafts fine meals with particular attention to detail. His Spinach Ricotta Gnocchi is crafted by hand, and is served with fresh creamy gorgonzola sauce with prosciutto and mushrooms (\$16.50). Colorful red tomatoes garnish this beautiful entrée. Portions are filling and delicious.

A meal at La Trattoria cannot be considered complete without something from the dessert menu. Try a Gelati Celesti, which is an ice cream truffle (\$4.50), or an Artisan Trio Sorbetto, which is three scoops of delicious Italian sorbet (\$5). The Apple Strudel is a generously sized flaky pastry stuffed with a mixture of apples, raisins, walnuts, cinnamon – all sweetened with vanilla sugar (\$4.50). The Tiramisu is a dream. Layers of lady finger cookies are drenched in coffee and liquor, alternated with layers of mascarpone cream cheese (\$5).

There is a generous wine list and the beer list is known for its international selections.

In Italy, a trattoria is a family-run institution. Food and service are casual, warm and personal. Clients become regulars at trattorie because the staff learns their preferences. It's all about family.

"My mom walks here often," said Vivian Johnston, who grew up in East Sacramento and now lives in Bend, Ore. "I love to come here every time I come home. There is a warm atmosphere, the prices are reasonable and it's a good neighborhood place."

The draw of "la famiglia" brings regulars from throughout the region. "My wife and I come here once a week, and have done so for the last two years," said John Lindgren, a former East Sacramento resident who now resides in the Pocket area. "We eat out about five times a week. We come to La Trattoria Bohemia because there's no turn over in staff, it's very consistent. We know everybody and they know us. The food is excellent."

In addition to the regular menu, the Lastuvkas offer weekly specials. Regulars often call ahead to learn of the specials, and to order an additional loaf of handcrafted artisan bread to take home.

"I just make another for the oven," Lastuvka said.



Arden-Carmichael News Photos/Tom Paniagua



Delicious deserts available at East Sacramento's La Trattoria Bohemia: Tiramisu and (inset) Apple Strudel.

Those who love traditional Czech cookies are known to place orders for these specialty items a year in advance, because it takes three weeks to craft these wonderful treats.

"Some people come only for the cookies," he said. "These are made only once a year. The dough takes a week to make, and the baking process takes days. Some will be filled with creams, others powdered with sugar. They all sell out."

Lindgren enjoys introducing his "foodie friends" to this little restaurant. He raves about the excellence of the menu.

"We have certain favorites, but we tell our friends that

this place has the best pizza in Sacramento," he said. "The crust is phenomenal and the sauce is wonderful. Our foodie friends go crazy over some of the beers. It's a cozy place. You never have a bad experience here."

La Trattoria Bohemia is located at 3649 J Street in Sacramento. Hours are Tuesday through Thursday and Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday from 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Closed Monday. For catering options and private party reservations, call (916) 455-7803. Also visit www.latrattoriaboheemia.com.

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Local students get a magical preview of 'The Nutcracker'

By SUSAN LAIRD
Arden-Carmichael News Writer
susan@valcomnews.com

Students at Hollywood Park and at Crocker Riverside elementary schools got an advanced peek at the "theatrical magic" of "The Nutcracker" when Ron Cunningham, artistic director of Sacramento Ballet, visited the schools on Nov. 30.

The hour-long presentation to second and third graders is something Cunningham, a Land Park resident, has been doing for the past 20 years. In addition to discovering some theatrical magic, the kids add some large, new words to their vocabularies and learn a little history.

"What's a choreographer?" Cunningham asked the second graders at Hollywood Park. A few hands went up, but no one guessed correctly.

"A choreographer is someone who makes up the dances," he explained. "In a ballet, the dancers don't just improvise on the stage. Someone has to teach them all the steps in the dance."

"The Nutcracker" was composed in Russia by Pyotr Illych Tchaikovsky some 150 years ago, Cunningham told the students.

"What was going on in Sacramento 150 years ago?" he asked the third graders at Crocker Riverside.

"The Gold Rush!" said one student.

"That is correct," Cunningham said. "Sacramento was a brand new, rough and tumble town back then. The people here were very poor, pioneering people for the most part. But Russia was a very elegant, sophisticated place at that time. People had beautiful homes, nice things to eat and beautiful clothes. That's where the story of 'The Nutcracker' takes place."

In addition to producing and creating the choreography for "The Nutcracker," Cunningham also plays a

key character in the ballet: Dr. Drosselmeyer.

"I have to play a really old character," he explained to the students. "I wear an eye patch and a tall top hat. I have to create a special 'face' and a special walk."

Giggles erupted from students as Cunningham "transformed" into Dr. Drosselmeyer before their eyes. The kids learned that a lot of work goes into each role in the production, whether one is a performer onstage, a choreographer, or a technical person working the lighting and special effects. Students were impressed.

"I liked how the choreographer in 'The Nutcracker' is also an actor," commented Natalie Leclerc, age 8. "He just doesn't sit around telling people what to do."

Cunningham went on to show students a few of the magic tricks that his character performs in the ballet, and how some of the special effects in the ballet are accomplished.

"Most magic tricks are actually very simple," he told the kids. "Remember, when you are doing a trick on stage, you need to divert the eye."

Students learned how Dr. Drosselmeyer is able to conjure up flowers from a cane, pull a giant candy cane from his top hat...and how he transforms a wooden nutcracker into a flesh-and-blood dancer. It was exciting and engaging for the students.

"I liked the magic stuff," said Collin Macias, age 7.

"I liked the part when he made his magic cane into flowers," said Rebecca De La Cruz, age 7. "It was a surprise because no one saw when he took the top off of his cane."

"My favorite part was when he pulled the big candy cane out of his hat," said Javarri McDaniel-Wily, age 8.

"I liked how he showed us his magic, because I watch plays and I've always wanted to know how they do that," said Maddie Haggard, age 9. "It will be a fun ballet."



Arden-Carmichael News Photo/Ryan Rose

Students at Crocker Riverside Elementary Schools got an advanced peek at the "theatrical magic" of "The Nutcracker" when Land Park resident Ron Cunningham, artistic director of Sacramento Ballet, visited the schools on Nov. 30.

Students got to see the actual masks that are used for the central character and the Mouse King in the ballet. They learned how the actors see through the masks (not very well), and how hard it can be to keep one's mask in place while dancing.

"I really liked the cool costumes," said Carson Kaye, age 8. "I liked how the colors blended in (so the audience can't see where the actors look out)."

Cunningham explained the technical side of some of the special effects in "The Nutcracker," including the math calculations that are necessary to make a hot air balloon "fly" across the stage with two actors on board.

"It's exciting and cool to see," said Cesar Garcia, age 8. "He showed us the props and stuff that goes on behind the scenes."

"I didn't know how the balloon flew or how the magic box (containing the wooden nutcracker) worked before," said John Laugenour, age 8. "It's amazing how that works. I think everyone should see 'The Nutcracker.'"

The elaborate sets for "The Nutcracker" were designed in France and made in Russia. One special canvas that weighs hundreds of pounds involves a Christmas tree that Cunningham's char-

acter enchants. There is another special canvas that plays a key part in "weather effects" on stage.

"I liked how he showed us how the Christmas tree grew," said Lucie Scantlebury, age 9. "Everyone should come to see how much work goes into this."

"I liked how he showed us how they make it 'snow' on the stage," said Melissa Ng, age 7.

The students who attended Cunningham's presentation at both schools will be attending an upcoming performance of "The Nutcracker." There is tremendous excitement.

"They are so excited," said Suzanne Womack, who teaches second grade at Hollywood Park Elementary School. We've been earning money so they can all go to see "The Nutcracker."

"Each year the third grades attend the Nutcracker matinee performance, and Mr. Cunningham's presentation at our school prior to the trip truly enhances the experience for the children," said Sharon Sommer, who teaches third grade at Crocker Riverside. "We really consider it part of the field trip. He explains what happens behind the scenes so they have a special appreciation for what they are going to see. They get to see the special effects and learn how the scenery and props work, so that when we finally go to the ballet, the children are looking for those things and are

completely engaged throughout the performance."

Cunningham's production of "The Nutcracker" is one of Sacramento's most cherished holiday traditions. Over 200 costumed characters enthrall the audience to the majestic Tchaikovsky score played superbly by the Sacramento Philharmonic Orchestra. Magnificent dancing, sumptuous scenery, and spectacular choreography combine in festive celebration. The production includes nearly 500 children, from Teeny Tiny Mice to swirling Candy Canes, making it the largest cast of children in any "Nutcracker" in the world.

Whether it is sharing the magic of "The Nutcracker" with elementary school students, or teaching youngsters the steps in the actual ballet, this annual production is something Cunningham looks forward to every year. To him, it's all about the kids and the magic they bring to the stage.

"One of my great pleasures of the season is working with the beautiful children that make our 'Nutcracker' alive," he said. "Alive with energy and joy."

The Sacramento Ballet's 22nd season of Ron Cunningham's "The Nutcracker" opens on Dec. 11 and runs through Dec. 23 at the Sacramento Community Center Theater. For tickets, visit the box office or www.tickets.com or call (916) 808-5181.

The Sacramento Ballet's 22nd season of Ron Cunningham's "The Nutcracker" opens on Dec. 11 and runs through Dec. 23 at the Sacramento Community Center Theater. For tickets, visit the box office or www.tickets.com or call (916) 808-5181.

Santa has let the cat out of the bag at the SPCA SPCA reduces/waives adoption fees through December 30

Special to the Arden-Carmichael News

The Sacramento SPCA is looking for 600 happy endings by December 30.

The SPCA's "Home for the Holidays" adoption campaign offers half-off or free adoptions as part of an effort to place hundreds of animals by the end of the year.

During the SPCA's Home for the Holidays campaign, adoption fees on dogs, kittens and small animals have been reduced by half. The adoption fees for cats one year-of-age and older will be waived (no adoption fees) through December 30 as the SPCA works to place hundreds of wonderful adult cats.

"The Sacramento SPCA has placed more than 5,000 homeless animals into new, adoptive homes so far this year," said Rick Johnson, Sacramento SPCA executive director. "Through our Home for the Holidays adoption campaign, we're determined to find a warm lap and a loving home for as many as 600 more animals before the end of the year."

For more information, or to bring a new friend Home for the Holidays, visit the Sacramento SPCA and Gracie's Adoption Center at 6201 Florin-Perkins Road in Sacramento, visit the SPCA's Web site at www.sspca.org or call the SPCA at (916) 383-PETS.

The Sacramento SPCA is open Tuesday through Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. (closed Christmas Eve Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve Day and New Year's Day).

Jesuit High School students make holidays merrier through charity

Special to the Arden-Carmichael News

Jesuit High School students will fill up a trailer with over 55,000 lbs. of donated canned food and pack a van to the roof with winter coats and sleeping bags Thursday, December 10, 7:30-8:30 a.m., as the school culminates its charitable giving drives.

Following the culmination of four holiday charitable activities, Jesuit students, families and community members are expected to donate:

Canned food

55,000-plus lbs. of canned food to Stanford Settlement, which operates programs for children, teens, adults and seniors in Gardenland/Northgate, North Sacramento, and Natomas communities. Every Jesuit student has participated in the canned food drive since the school's founding in 1963, donating more than 1 million lbs. of food in total. The packed freight trailer of donated cans will be unloaded by students at Stanford Settlement in the afternoon, supplying the bulk

of the food provided through the non-profit's Operation Cratchit program.

Jackets and coats

600-plus gently used and new winter coats and jackets for men, as well as sleeping bags, for Loaves and Fishes, which feeds the hungry and shelters the homeless. Jesuit has organized the Winter Coat Drive for the past 16 years.

Gifts for children

100-plus unwrapped gifts for children and their mothers to benefit Wellspring's Christmas Store, through which women select donated gifts and wrap them for their children and themselves. Wellspring operates a drop-in day shelter for low-income women and children in the Oak Park area. Jesuit students organized a giving tree with suggested gift items in the school's Student Life Center. A group of sophomores will also be at Wellspring Thursday, December 10, preparing breakfast burritos for an estimated 300 women and children.

Household items

Items including socks, toothbrushes and children's gifts toward St. Philomena's "Sharing God's Bounty" program, which was formerly supported by Loretto High School.

More than 30 enthusiastic Student Council members will unload donations from dozens of cars. Groups of students will be greeting arriving cars, unloading donations, providing a receipt, sorting cans into boxes and loading the freight trailer.



ST. IGNATIUS PARISH SCHOOL -

Quality Catholic education for Transitional Kindergarten to Eighth Grade
Committed to helping students grow in Faith, Action, Integrity, Thought and Health

Admissions Information Night: Thursday, January 14, 6:30 p.m.

Catholic Schools Week Mass & Open House: Sunday, January 31, 9:30 a.m. - Noon

3245 Arden Way, Sacramento, CA 95825

916-488-3907

www.stignatiussacschool.org



we believe

Sunday
Dec. 20, 2009

Join us this Christmas Season as our combined choirs present a hope filled celebration of the birth of our LORD!

El Camino
Baptist Church
3:00 P.M.

2805 El Camino Ave. Sacramento
www.elcaminobaptist.org 488-1522

American River
Community Church
6:00 P.M.

3300 Walnut Ave.
Carmichael

www.arconline.org
483-3465

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CALENDAR

For more Calendar entries visit
www.valcomnews.com

GET IN THE CALENDAR

Is your club, group, church, school, or organization having an upcoming event? Let us know. Send information about your event—including date, time, location, a brief description, cost (if any), and contact information—to Calendar, c/o Valley Community Newspapers, 2709 Riverside Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95818, or e-mail ryanrose@valcomnews.com. Deadline is one week before publication. Priority is given to events that are in the community and/or of little or no cost. There is no guarantee that events submitted will appear in the calendar. To ensure placement within the newspaper, please call 429.9901 to place an advertisement.

DECEMBER

Travel to Spain

Ole, Espana! Come to a free informational evening about a fantastic Grand Tour of Spain in June of 2010. From the beaches of the Costa del Sol to the Moorish fortress of La Alhambra in Granada to the royal palace of Madrid we will explore the glories of Spain. Escorted by Spanish instructor Norma Petta. Go to ask_norma@spaineasy.com or call 916-457-1220. Two meetings: Dec. 16 at Oakmont High School in P33 at 6 p.m. and Dec. 17 at Border's on Fair Oaks Blvd at 6 p.m.

Christmas services

Faith Presbyterian Church at 625 Florin Road welcomes you to its Christmas Services: Dec. 6, 13, 20 and 27 – Sunday Services, held at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Dec. 2, 9 and 16 (Wednesday) Advent Dinner at 6 p.m., followed by worship at 6:45 p.m. Christmas Eve service at 7 p.m. and 11 p.m.

Winter Wonderland at Fairytale Town

Winter Wonderland 2009 is here! Fairytale Town has expanded their family-friendly holiday tradition to two consecutive weekends of after-hours music, magic and merchandise. A festive display of holiday lights

and decorations throughout the park will welcome one and all ages to four enjoyable evenings of traditional songs, strolling, shopping and fun. Winter Wonderland at Fairytale Town will be held Saturdays and Sundays, December 5, 6, 12 & 13 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. (this is a special ticketed event and Fairytale Town will close early at 3PM on these dates to prepare). Admission to Winter Wonderland is only \$5 (Children 2 years of age and under will be admitted free). Fairytale Town Members receive 2 for 1 tickets for this event. For more information or to purchase tickets, please call 916-808-7462 or visit our website at www.fairytaletown.org.

Sacramento Opera Carolers

The Sacramento Opera Carolers will perform at Pavilions Shopping Center, 563 Pavilions Lane, Sacramento, CA 95825 on December 5, 12, and 19, 2009 from 1 to 3 p.m.; at The Fountains at Roseville, Roseville Parkway and Galleria Boulevard on December 20, 2009 from 3 to 5 p.m.; and the Town & Country Village, corner of Fulton and Marconi Avenues in Sacramento on December 6 and 13, 2009 from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. The Sacramento Opera Carolers are members of the Sacramento Opera Chorus.

DECEMBER 10

Carmichael's Holiday Tree Lighting

Experience Carmichael's Holiday Tree Lighting on Thursday, Dec. 10 at 6 p.m. in Carmichael Park, 5750 Grant Avenue. Holiday festivities include River City Concert Band, Santa Claus, Sac Metropolitan Fire District, Crafts for the Kids, Hot Cider and Cookies.

Computer club meeting

The Mission Oaks Computer Club will meet on Thursday, December 10, 2009 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Mission Oaks Community Center, 4701 Gibbons Drive, Carmichael. The meeting topic will be "Computer Technology in Today's Automobiles." A problem-solving clinic, led by Adam Lacey of Applications, Etc.



Celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ at St. Michael's Episcopal Church

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

December 24 at 5:00pm & 10:00pm

Choir led Christmas Carols at 9:30pm December 24

December 25 at 10:00am

2140 Mission Avenue, Carmichael
488-3550 • www.stm-ca.org

will follow the meeting. First-time visitors are welcome. For additional information call (916) 366-1687 or visit our Web site at www.missionoakscomputerclub.org.

California Citizens for Health

Freedom, Sacramento Chapter

The California Citizens for Health Freedom, Sacramento Chapter will meet on December 10, 2009, at the SMUD Auditorium (the old SMUD Building) on 6201 S Street, Sacramento. A free lecture, "Bring Health and Happiness - Getting a New Start for 2010" presented by Chaplain Tom Kopko, M.A., B.A. Call 916-635-6724 for information.

DECEMBER 11

"Beginning a Business" seminar

Twin Rivers Adult School will offer a free seminar "Business Concepts for Entrepreneurs." Thinking about starting your own business? Need to jump start your existing business? Considering a virtual online business? This presentation will highlight business structures and operational planning, accounting with Quick Books, and promotional materials development. Join us on Friday, December 11, 2009 at 1:00 p.m., and again at 6:00 p.m. for this and other information as presented in our new Business Concepts course. SCORE counselors are scheduled to be on-site to answer questions regarding SBA loans and other related resources. This seminar will be held at Twin Rivers Adult School, 3220 Winona Way, North Highlands, CA 95660. For more information, call David at (916) 996-7554 or email br4a@live.com.

DECEMBER 11-12

Galena Street East Holiday Tapestry

Galena Street East, a dynamic group of young performers specializing in music and dance, will perform their 37th Annual Holiday Tapestry production, "Wishes". Voted the "Best of Sacramento" in 2008, this lively, entertaining performing ensemble has captivated audiences for over 36 years with their diverse repertoire of music and dances that also includes traditional folk dances from many countries, including Hungary, Ireland, Korea, and the United States. This is a fabulous event for families as our young ambassadors, ages 5-19, dazzle audiences with their fabulous costumes, song, and dance. Shows are Friday, Dec. 11, at 7 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 12, at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. The performances are at Hiram Johnson High School Auditorium; 6879 14th Ave. Tickets are \$15/general admission; \$12/children, students, & seniors; \$10/groups of 10 or more. For more information, call (916) 731-4090; www.galenastreeteast.org.

DECEMBER 12

Military Widows

The Society of Military Widows, Sacramento Chapter No. 5, will meet December 12, 2009, at the Lions Gate at McClellan Park at 11:15 a.m. for a Christmas luncheon and entertainment. Call 916-635-6724 for information.

Caleb Greenwood Flapjack 5K and Short Stack Kids Run

Caleb Greenwood School will host a Pancake Breakfast and 5K and Kids run on Saturday, December 12th from 8:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. Fun runs will begin at 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. Proceeds go to Caleb Greenwood school technology program. For more information, visit www.flapjack5k.com

ARCADE
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SUNDAYS
SERVICE AT 10:30AM

3532 WHITNEY AVE. SACRAMENTO, CA 95821

JOIN US THIS HOLIDAY SEASON...



COMMUNITY MESSIAH SING

Sunday, December 13, 3:30pm
Donations of non-perishable food items requested
Festive Reception Following

**Second Noel Christmas Day
Community Dinner**
December 25, 12 noon - 3pm

Christmas Services

December 24, Christmas Eve

4:00 pm Pageant Service
10:30 pm Carol Sing
11:00 pm Festive Holy Communion
(ASL Interpreted)

December 25, Christmas Day

10:00 am Holy Communion in Chapel



St. Francis Episcopal Church
11430 Fair Oaks Blvd., Fair Oaks • 916-966-2261

Sacramento Preservation Roundtable

The Sacramento Preservation Roundtable will take place on Saturday, December 12, 2009 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at 1200 Front Street in Old Sacramento with a presentation by Regional Transit. For more information visit, www.sacoldcity.org.

Capitol Ballet Co.'s "Nutcracker"

Come and enjoy the wonder of Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" performed by Capitol Ballet Company with guest dancers from Stockton Ballet School. Attending this classical ballet has become a holiday tradition for audiences in Northern California's Central Valley. The Nutcracker performances are Saturday, December 12 at 2 p.m. at the Sheldon High School Performing Arts Center, 8333 Kingsbridge Drive, Sacramento and Saturday, December 19 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at the San Joaquin Delta College Warren Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, California. Tickets are \$18 for adults, \$12 for children, seniors, students and military with ID. Tickets may be purchased at www.capitolballet.com, or by calling Capitol Ballet Company (916) 484-1188.

ARRL honoring Sheriff John McGinnis

The American River Republican Women Federated are honored to welcome Sheriff John McGinness Sheriff to their luncheon on Dec. 12. John McGinness Sheriff has announced that he will not be seeking re-election in 2010. His service in Sacramento County will be missed by those who know him and appreciated his dedication to his position and community. Luncheon will be held at Lake Natoma Inn, 702 Gold Lake Drive, Folsom, CA 95630. Republican Women and men are welcome. Membership is open to all Republican Women and Men. Sign in at 11:30 A.M. Luncheon at 12 Noon. Cost is \$27.00. RSVP to 916-482-6069 by December 9, 2009.

DECEMBER 12-13

Fremont Presbyterian Church

Glorious Sounds of Christmas, a Christmas Concert is at Fremont Presbyterian Church, 5770 Carlson Dr. The free event begins at 7 p.m.

DECEMBER 13

Special concert in Carmichael

Bring the entire family to this holiday concert entitled "Symphonies and Sing-Along!" the second concert in our "Command Performance!" season, December 13, 3 p.m. at the La Sierra Community Center, 5325 Engle Rd. in Carmichael. The Sacramento Symphonic Winds is a 60-piece adult community band conducted by Dr. Les Lehr. Tickets: Child/ Student/ Senior (60+) free; others \$5, sold at the door. For more information, call (916) 489-2576 or visit www.sacwinds.org.

DECEMBER 15

Business and Career Expo

Sacramento's Business & Career Expo is on Tuesday, December 15th from NOON-4PM at the Sacramento Convention Center. At his FREE community event, attendees will learn about alternatives to traditional employment, including franchise & business opportunities. There will also be educational opportunities from a number of respected institutions. Franchise seminars @ 1:00, 2:00 & 3:00 include "How to find and finance a business that's right for you". Executives from three of the hottest Recession Resistant franchise companies com-

ing to Northern California will be on hand to explain their business models and to answer questions. For more information about FranNet West, or about the EXPO, please contact Cari Lyn Vinci at 916.517.1612.

DECEMBER 16-17

Travel to Spain

Ole, Espana! Come to a free informational evening about a fantastic Grand Tour of Spain in June of 2010. From the beaches of the Costa del Sol to the Moorish fortress of La Alhambra in Granada to the royal palace of Madrid we will explore the glories of Spain. Escorted by Spanish instructor Norma Petta. Go to ask_norma@spaineasy.com or call 916-457-1220. Two meetings: Dec.16 at Oakmont High School in P33 at 6 p.m. and Dec. 17 at Border's on Fair Oaks Blvd at 6 p.m.

DECEMBER 17

Latino Dance and Culture Group

Come dance to the beat of all types of Latino music! Featured DJ music and delicious Mexican food! Held at the Ethel Hart Community Center, 915 27th St., from 6:15-8:45 p.m. Suggested donation: \$3. For more information, call Barbara Alarcon 400-4514.

DECEMBER 18-20

Christmas celebration

Everyone is invited to enjoy St. Joseph Catholic Church's celebration of the birth of Jesus. This 45-minute non-denominational event is celebrated through the use of real animals and people in a "live nativity scene." Local bell ringers, musicians, and choirs add their talents to each performance. Dec. 18, 7 p.m.; Dec. 19, 7 p.m. and Dec. 20, 4:30 p.m. are the dates to mark on your calendars. St. Joseph's is located about 2 blocks north of the Freeport bridge on the west side of the river. The performances, lighted parking, and goodies after each performance are free. Merry Christmas. Although not required, non-perishable food items for the less fortunate in the area would be greatly appreciated.

DECEMBER 20

Christmas Concert

The Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation Choir invites you to our Christmas Concert Sunday, December 20, 2009, 7:00 p.m. at the Annunciation Church, Alhambra & F Street. A holiday reception will follow in the Hellenic Center.

DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve service

You are invited to experience God's love and peace - Christmas Eve Service, 6:00 p.m. Faith United Methodist Church, 3600 J Street, 452-7637

DECEMBER 27

River Park Blood Drive

The next River Park Blood Drive will take place on Sunday, December 27, 2009 from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at 5458 Carlson Drive across from the school. Coffee Donuts and BBQ.

Computer Gardening Class

Class is 10:15 - 11:45 a.m. at 828 I St. Dig It! - A guide to gardening information on the Internet. Join us for this free class as we look at Web sites that provide information on plants, soils, climate and garden design. We will explore sources such as newsletters and weblogs, as well as information from plant and garden societies and educational and governmental sources. At the Central Library, 828 I Street. Free parking on Saturdays in the lots of Sacramento Public garages at Tenth & I streets and Tenth & L streets. To reserve a space, call 264-2920.

JANUARY 5

Alzheimer's Support group

Are you looking for someone to talk to - someone who understands what it is like to deal with Alzheimer's disease? Join an Alzheimer's Support group hosted by Carmichael Oaks Senior Living. Ongoing sessions provide families and caregivers guidance and training to assist them in caring for a person with the disease. Our program will offer tips, resources, and the ability to connect with fellow caregivers. The free event starts at 6 p.m. at Carmichael Oaks Senior Living, 8350 Fair Oaks Blvd. Information: Refreshments served. RSVP at 944-2323. For more information, visit www.carmichaeloaks.com.

JANUARY 9

Free Electronic-waste Collection Fundraiser

Proceeds to benefit Kit Carson Middle School's 8th Grade G.A.T.E. Class. Students are planning a 4 day-three-night trip to Washington, D.C. Drop off on: Saturday, January 9, 2010, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Kit Carson Middle School parking lot, 5301 N St. You won't even need to get out of your car, we will unload for you! We will accept: monitors, televisions, desktop and notebook PCs, VCRs, stereo equipment, speakers, keyboards, mice, PDAs, digital cameras, zip drives, telephones, cell phones, printers, copiers, laser and multifunction scanners and fax machines. We cannot accept: Household appliances (i.e. refrigerators, washers/dryers, etc), furniture, hazardous household waste, including fluorescent light bulbs, paint, pesticides, used oil, cleaning supplies, tires, etc. If you need something picked up, or have additional questions, please contact Shawn D'Alesandro at 658-2701 ext. 12#.

Senior Ball

Hart Senior Center cordially invites people 50 and older to attend our semi-formal Senior Ball on Saturday, January 9 at 2 p.m.

This event is sponsored by the U.C. Davis Health System with all proceeds benefitting the Ethel Hart Senior Center. Please join us for 3 hours of catered appetizers and desserts, 50's and 60's music, free Senior Ball portrait, ballroom dancing and much, much more. Tickets are limited. No door sales of tickets. No refunds. Tickets cost \$5. Event at Ethel Hart Senior Center, 915 27th St. Call 808-5462 for more information.

JANUARY 12

Gray Panthers meeting

The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Northern California will conduct the Tuesday, January 12, meeting of the Gray Panthers of Sacramento. The Funeral Consumers Alliance is a nonprofit organization whose objective is to protect a consumer's right to choose a meaningful, dignified, affordable funeral. The meeting will be held at 1 PM at the Hart Senior Center, 915 - 27th Street, Sacramento, between I and J Streets. Further information can be obtained by calling 916-921-5008.

JANUARY 14

Computer club meeting

The Mission Oaks Computer Club will meet on Thursday, January 14, 2010 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Mission Oaks Community Center, 4701 Gibbons Drive, Carmichael. The meeting topic will be "Digital Photography." A problem-solving clinic, led by Adam Lacey of Applications, Etc, will follow the meeting. First-time visitors are welcome. For additional information call (916) 366-1687 or visit our website at www.missionoakscomputerclub.org.

JANUARY 22

Annual hot crab feed

Annual HOT Crab Feed & Auction Benefitting Courtyard School. Featuring the Captain Bob's famous HOT CRAB! Delivered live to the event, prepared onsite and served HOT to your table. All you can eat

HOT crab, pasta, bread and salad! No to go bags, please. Tickets are \$50 per person; limited seating at 300. \$450 if you order a table of 10. The event will benefit Courtyard School and will feature raffle items, live and silent auction as well as a dessert auction. The evening starts at 6pm with a social/cocktail hour followed by dinner at 7:30 p.m. Located at the Dante Club, 2330 Fair Oaks Blvd. Tickets can be purchased at the school: 205 24th Street, Sacramento, CA 95816. For more information contact the school at 916-442-5395.

JANUARY 23

Women's Self-Defense Class/

WEAVE Fund Raiser

Held Saturday, Jan. 23, at the Coloma Community Center, 4623 T St., from 1 to 2 p.m., learn the tools necessary to increase your awareness, defend yourself from bodily harm, and turbo-charge your life by becoming self-empowered in this safe, fun, and non-embarrassing seminar for women. The instructor has taught active law enforcement and security guards the same proven techniques that you will learn. Start the new year feeling smart, safe, and strong! This Women's Self-Defense Seminar is being offered to the community for free as a fundraiser for WEAVE by Zen Martial Arts and Sacramento Parks and Recreation. Donations for WEAVE will be accepted at the class. Receipts available. For more information, call 530-613-6779 or visit ZenMartial.com.

FEBRUARY 15

American Heritage Day

American Heritage Day event at 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 8201 Greenback Lane, Fair Oaks. The 8th Annual American Heritage Day will be held at Mt. Vernon Memorial Park. This event brings history to life for children with hands on/re-enactment performances. Families can enjoy over 17 different performances and continuous free entertainment. For more information, call (916) 969-1251.



Dr. Les Lehr, Music Director

"Symphonies & Sing-Along"

a holiday concert for the whole family!

Sunday, December 13th, 3pm

La Sierra Community Center
5325 Engle Road, Carmichael

916-489-2576 • www.sacwinds.org for map

General Admission: \$5
Child, Student, Senior (60+): FREE
Tickets at the door

Please join us...

Christmas Eve

2 pm - "A Kid's Celebration"
4 & 10 pm - "Carols, Candlelight & Communion"

Christmas Day

10 am - Service with Holy Communion

The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
1615 Morse Ave. | 483-0451 | www.goodshprd.com

It's more than a story...

Celebrate Christmas with us!
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20 @ 10:00 AM



On Sundays, we meet at 4600 Winding Way (corner of Pasadena Ave and Winding Way)



Windermere

Dunnigan Realtors



GREAT NEIGHBORHOOD

Charming open floor plan that's just right for you! Real hardwood floors, updated kitchen with Quartz countertops, huge family room with beamed ceilings and a gigantic garage that's potentially a 4 car garage. See www.4715BowerwoodDr.com \$379,500

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SECULDED OASIS

Desirable Del Norte neighborhood. The private yards offer quiet solitude from the busy city life. The home has high ceilings w/large windows. Great designer colors throughout, bamboo floor coverings, and an updated kitchen are a few of the many features offered. See www.3950RobertsonAve.com \$399,900

DAVID KIRRENE 531-7495



PRIVATE CUL DE SAC

French Normandy home on private cul de sac. Features private open courtyard. Open living room with lots of glass and French doors giving an open and airy feeling. 5 bedrooms and 3 baths. See www.218HathawayCt.com \$795,000

PATTY BAETA 806-7761



UNIQUE ARDEN PARK W/ STABLES

Fabulous remodeled ranch home on 1.19 acre in Arden Oaks. New kitchen, master bath. LR, FR & game rm. Remodeled pool, new outdoor kit w/ Viking range, 4-stall horse barn, oversized 3 car gar w/ shop. Creek runs through yard. See www.4010WindingCreek.com \$1,395,000

**LEIGH RUTLEDGE 612-6911
BILL HAMBRICK 600-6528**



SIERRA OAKS

Remodeled in late '07. Charming hardwood floors, kitchen w/ granite, new appliances, tile flooring, new dual pane windows w/ new shutters. Dining & living rooms have fireplaces. 3 baths remodeled w/ granite, new fixtures & cabinets. See www.3008Huntington.quickbuy.com \$699,000

NITA CASKEY 616-5380



EL DORADO HILLS

Original owners have loved this gorgeous home that shows like a model. Tons of upgrades include tile counters & floors, designer paint colors, beautifully landscaped backyard w/ play area or dog run. Four bedrms w/bonus room or could be five bedrms, three full baths. www.5110GarlendaDr.View24Hours.com \$399,950

LIBBY NEIL 539-5881

AMERICAN RIVER DRIVE

Desirable Sierra Oaks 4 bedroom 3 full baths with great floor plan and generous room sizes. Living room has stunning travertine fireplace. Family room has wood beamed vaulted ceiling. Remote 4th bed and bath. Location, location, close to American River Parkway. See www.3321AmericanRiverDr.eproperty.com \$699,000

CAROLE GOODIN 718-0875

LOTS OF LIGHT

Designed w/space & light in mind. Large bedrooms & entertaining areas w/many floor to ceiling windows. Freshly painted interior & new flooring enhance the cheerful interior. Fenced pool, side yard w/winding path around majestic trees. Steps from Am. River Pkwy. See www.3911CrandallDr.com \$659,000

DAVID KIRRENE 531-7495

WONDERFUL CONDO

Wonderful 3brdm Woodside Condo! Freshly painted! New tile floors kitchen & bath. No cottage cheese ceilings! 2 covered parking spaces deeded to property. Beautiful country-club like grounds. 3 pools, tennis courts, clubhouse & more!! See www.661WoodsideSierraLn.com \$239,900

ROSLYN LEVY WEINTRAUB 952-6602

UNIVERSITY PARK

Spacious & free-standing Powell-built home w/ over 2400 sq ft. Popular model w/ sunny kitchen, formal dining room & a family room off kitchen. Lots of privacy & 2 car attached garage. Beautiful flooring, roof is only a few yrs old. See www.2014UniversityParkDr.com \$388,000

ANN WORTHINGTON 425-7715



Windermere

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