

EAST SACRAMENTO NEWS

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

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AROUND THE HOOD

by Corky Oakes

Ring in the holiday season...



A Baroque Christmas ... Dec. 2, 7:30 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Baroque Soloists ring in the holiday season with Baroque Concertos and "their own lively arrangements of early Christmas carols." For more information visit <http://sacramentobaroque.org/tickets>.

Tickets are available at <https://boxoffice.printtixusa.com/mastersingers/agenda>.

DADAs Art Gallery & Boutique is hosting its **Holiday Bazaar** featuring local artists. This is the place to visit for "unique gifts and specialty items you will not find in stores - Jewelry, wearable art, journals, cards, apparel, and art." Saturday, Dec 3 11-5 and Sunday Dec 4 from 11-4. DADAs is located at 3655 J St. Also--bring non-perishable food for DADAs **food drive!!!!**

The ever popular **Sacred Heart Holiday Home Tour** is once again upon us. The tour includes six homes in the Fab Forties decorated for the holidays. The tour benefits Sacred Heart Parish School. Don't forget to visit the Boutique and Cafe for holiday gifts, edibles and cheer. Here's the schedule:

Friday, December 2nd: 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Boutique 12:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 3 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Boutique 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Sunday, December 4th: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Boutique 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For information e-mail shhometour@gmail.com.

Holiday Open House at Summer Porch, 3254 J St. Saturday, Dec. 3 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. A great place to find gifts for home and garden.

Holiday Boutique hosted by the Yoga Solution. Saturday, Dec. 10, 9:30 a.m. until noon. Handcrafted gifts (e.g. goat milk soap, yoga eye bags, soy candles) will be for sale. Yoga Solution is located at 5290 Elvas Ave. A booth will be set up outside on the grass.

Holiday Food Drive - Sacramento Zoo in partnership with River City Food Bank is accepting non-perishable food daily throughout December. Hours are 10 am to 4 pm. During December when you bring food Zoo and receive \$1 off your Zoo admission!

The Zoo will raise donations for River City Food Bank with your support!

Winter Jazz Festival, Saturday, Dec. 10, from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. at Capistrano Hall (CPS), CSUS. According to the CSUS website, this is a "non-competitive, educational festival featuring regional instrumental and vocal ensembles from middle schools, high schools, and colleges in performance and clinic settings. Closing concert will feature The Sacramento Jazz Orchestra with guest artist: grammy nominated Donny McCaslin on tenor saxophone. Evening closing concert to be held in the University Union Ballroom." For more information visit <http://calendar.csus.edu/MasterCalendar/EventDetails.aspx?EventDetailId=338418>

KRU - East Sac Contemporary Japanese Dining is now open! Located at 3135 Folsom Blvd, Sacramento, CA 916.551.1559. <http://krurestaurant.com>.

Over the river and through the woods.... want a little wintry road trip? Want to bring home a tree? Visit the **Pacific Ranger Station Christmas Tree Sale** now through Dec. 31st. Why Dec. 31? Because the Forest Service realizes military families cannot always celebrate on Christmas. Truly heartwarming, yes? Pacific Ranger Station is located just east of Fresh Pond on Highway 50, 7887 US-50, Pollock Pines. The main office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call (530) 644-2349.

Happy Holidays!

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SCUSD to begin negotiations over Old Marshall site

Sacramento City Unified School District's Board of Education has directed staff to begin negotiations with a potential developer for the Old Marshall School site in Midtown.

Mogavero Architects and Bardis Homes submitted a proposal to renovate the 113-year-old school into senior housing and to build on the site 35 to 50 for-sale condominiums targeted to empty-nesters and retirees. Bardis Homes is currently developing The Mill at Broadway in North Land Park. Any potential development plan for Old Marshall would require review and approval by various governmental agencies, including the city's Planning Commission. The proposed development will then be submitted for review and final approval at a future Board meeting and will be subject to public comment.

SCUSD has been at work since last spring to find a new use for Old Marshall, which has been vacant since 2009. Old Marshall was designed by Rudolph Harold, a locally prominent architect who designed City Hall. Located at 2718 G St., it was used as an elementary school until 1976, when it was closed due to concerns about its ability to withstand an earthquake.

After a major infrastructure overhaul, it reopened in 1983 and at various times housed a preschool, adult school, employment center and small high school.



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LIFE IN THE VILLAGE

By JAN DALSKÉ
East Sacramento News

I had been very busy yesterday and there had been no time for me to just be a kid and have fun. My plan for today was to find some girls my age that I could get to know better. I had already met some of the girls in the neighborhood at school. But I was sure there were more of them living on our street. My brothers, Rodney and Timothy, had already made friends with most of the boys.

I could hear my parents talking in the living room. My dad was telling my mom that he really liked the new curtains that she had made. She was opening them with a pull string to let the sunshine into the room. He hugged her and told her to have a good day, gave her a kiss and left for work. I liked to see my parents expressing their feelings for each other.

Maybe I would be lucky enough to have a relation-

ship like theirs when I grew up. Or, maybe, I would never get married. I had plenty of time to make that decision. After all, I was only six years old and in first grade. Oh yes, I forgot, I was going into second grade when school started again in September. And, my little brother Timothy would turn 5 in a week and he would be registered for Kindergarten, and could walk to school with Rodney and me.

Before I could make it down the hallway to the front of the house I heard my little brother Wayne crying. He was in his crib and probably had a wet diaper and wanted a bottle. Rita slept in the same room, in her own little bed, and I wondered how she got any sleep at all with his crying all

of the time. Maybe she was used to it by now. When she was a little older my mom planned to get her a larger bed and put it in the room where Linda and I slept. I guess that room would be called the "girls' room".

I headed for the kitchen to tell my mom about Wayne's cries. She nodded, telling me that she had already heard him and had hoped that he would go back to sleep. But, we both knew that was not going to happen. Once he was awake, he wanted to get out of his crib. I helped her set the table with the bowls for the cereal. Pretty soon everyone would be awake, dressed and heading for the dining room. We might as well be ready for them. And after they ate, the two older boys would be going outside to play.

I wanted to do that too. But, I had my usual morning chores to finish first. Maybe if I told my mom I would take Linda and Rita with me she would let me walk around the neighborhood. My dad had recently bought us a shiny new red wagon, and Linda and Rita could ride in it while I pulled them. The only kid left at home would be Wayne, and mom could surely handle just one little boy. She agreed to my plan, and I went to the garage to

find the wagon before she changed her mind.

It was great to be walking down the street where we lived. People were in their yards, mowing the grass, or just visiting with their neighbors. They were still strangers to us, as we were the newest family to move into the neighborhood. Our mother had not met any of the neighbors as she was home all day doing the housework, and laundry and looking after her large family. Since she did not have a driver's license, and we only had one car, she was always at home during the week. She only left to go to church with her family on Sundays.

The day seemed much too short, and pretty soon we had to return home. I had met some of the neighbors, and I know that Linda and Rita enjoyed the ride around the block. It was not what I had planned, but it was a good start. And, our mom had gotten her laundry washed and hung out on the new clothesline while we were gone. Maybe I could take another walk tomorrow, this time without my little sisters. But, I guess I did have the rest of the summer to make new friends and get to know our new neighborhood.

East Sac group collects stockings for homeless women and children

The Junior League of Sacramento, based in East Sacramento, has been hard at work on its latest project to bring holiday cheer to local women and children who have experienced homelessness. The group is donating 20 filled holiday stockings to local nonprofit Women's Empowerment, which empowers women to break the cycle of homelessness.

"We want to give these women and their families a chance to feel the holiday spirit while also receiving gifts that are useful," said Anna Martinez, who chairs the Junior League's community outreach committee.

The Junior League is hoping other local residents will donate to Women's Empowerment's annual Holiday Stocking Drive, which is seeking 200 unstuffed stockings and specific fillers for local infants and toddlers, children, teens and adult women once homeless.

"There is nothing like hearing the squeals of joy from children and their mothers who have gone from having nothing to now having a place to call home during the holidays and cheerful stockings to hang in their homes," said Lisa Culp, executive director, Women's Empowerment. "But these stockings not only bring joy, they give these families necessary items so they can stay healthy and warm this winter as they rebuild their lives."

For the list of items needed, visit www.womens-empowerment.org. Those interested also can donate \$35 to have a volunteer elf fill a stocking or donate \$15 Target gift cards. Items are needed by Dec. 7 and can be dropped off at 1590 North A Street, Sacramento.

The Junior League will be hosting three craft tables at Women's Empowerment's annual Holiday Craft Party where the stockings will be distributed. The party brings together 200 formerly homeless wom-

en and children to make holiday gifts for loved ones and experience "the dignity of giving," as Culp describes it.

The Junior League will provide 12 volunteers, four at each table, to help guests create three kinds of ornaments: snowmen, angels and glass bulbs filled with items needed to make hot chocolate.

"Our focus for the next five years will be on empowering girls," Martinez said. "Women's Empowerment is a great fit because it's empowering to be able to give your children gifts and have them participate in the holidays without feeling excluded."

The Junior League of Sacramento is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving the Sacramento community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. For more information, visit www.jlsac.org.

Celebrating its 15th anniversary this year, Women's Empowerment was recently featured on NBC's The TODAY Show for offering the most comprehensive job-readiness program in the Sacramento area designed specifically for women who are homeless and their children. The 2014 Organization of the Year has graduated 1,367 homeless women and their 3,700 children. Last year, 93 percent of graduates found homes and 83 percent found jobs or enrolled in school or training. The program combines self-esteem courses, job training, health classes and support services to help homeless women across diverse ages, races and cultures. Women's Empowerment is funded through private donations from the community and receives no government funding except for in-kind rent from the County of Sacramento. To make a donation: www.womens-empowerment.org.



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More than \$150,275 raised for the food bank at this year's Run to Feed the Hungry

By MONICA STARK
editor@valcomnews.com

The weather couldn't be better for the 29,002 participants in the annual Run to Feed the Hungry who on Thanksgiving morning collectively raised more than \$150,275 for the Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services. Made possible by dedicated volunteers and title sponsor Western Health Advantage, the annual event has become a holiday tradition for countless families and individuals.

"People want to give back and do something for the less fortunate and the beneficiary is the best non profit in town, the Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services," race director Rich Hanna said. "We're in East Sacramento, the best neighborhood, in my opinion. I live in East Sac, the most beautiful neighborhood in town. And (Thanksgiving) is the perfect day to do it."

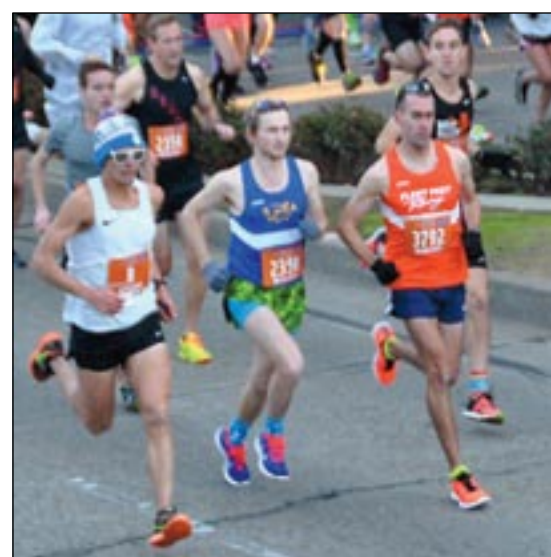
The East Sacramento News caught up with runners prior to the 10-kilometer and 5-kilometer races to talk about their reasons for running this year.

A runner of the 10K, Wayne Watts donned a homemade jersey with the slogan: "This one is for you Little David." In memory of his grandson who died from leukemia in 2000, Wayne said he created the jersey for him and over the years, he's added a name or initials of someone he's lost to cancer "or something. I run to remember all of them. This is my 13th year now," he said, adding that he enjoys this "well-organized" event. "I like the charity that it takes care of - the food bank. I see a lot of hungry on the streets all the time. It's just basic. People gotta eat. It's a great charity."

Runner Stacy Fat, of the locally-known Frank Fat's family, ran the race for the second time this year. Looking forward to it after running it last year, Stacy said her sister and her mother have participated in the event every year since the event began 23 years ago and have dragged her into it. After the race, she said about 30 members of the Fat family come together for a traditional Thanksgiving meal at home.

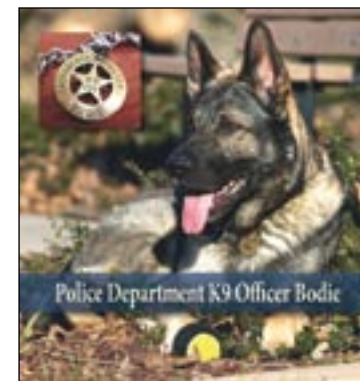
Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services is a local, non-profit agency committed to serving individuals and families in need. With a staff of 83 and a volunteer force close to 6,000 annually, Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services provides free emergency goods and services to 150,000 men, women and children each month.

After December 1, please donate online at www.sacramentofoodbank.org. All donations are 100 percent tax deductible. Once your donation has been processed, you will receive a thank you letter with our organization's Tax ID on it.



The community says goodbye to Bodie at East Lawn Cemetery

As many in the Sacramento area will remember, the Sacramento Police Department's K9 Officer Bodie was shot in the line of duty four years ago. He became a local celebrity as people from all over followed his story on Facebook on the Sacramento Police Canine Association page. He recovered but never returned to active duty as a patrol K9 officer. Instead, he became a police K9 ambassador visiting thousands of people and dozens of locations and schools in and around Northern California.



Bodie's obituary

On November 8, 2016 Bodie died unexpectedly from an infection. He was only 8 years old. Many in the community came out to pay their final respects to this K9 warrior. K9 Officer Bodie's obituary can be found by clicking on the link below. He was buried in East Lawn Sierra Hills Pet Cemetery beside 51 other K9 Officers. East Lawn is proud to have been chosen as the final resting place for K9 Officer Bodie and many other K9 heroes including retired K9 Officer Bandit who died just one day after Bodie.

K9 Bodie was born March 27th, 2008 in Bergen, Germany as Ibo an der Langen Furt. In 2010, he came to the United States and was partnered with Officer Randy Van Dusen to become a police dog for the Sacramento Police Department. He quickly certified as a patrol and narcotics detection K9 and made a name for himself on the streets as a hard-working and loving police dog. After a short time on patrol Bodie became a trusted and reliable SWAT K9 and earned the respect of all who worked with him.

On May 18th 2012, K9 Bodie was shot in his face by a car theft suspect dur-

ing a foot pursuit in the Land Park area of Sacramento. Bodie was immediately rushed to VCA Veterinary Referral Center where they saved his life. K9 Bodie showed a warrior spirit and the will to live. One week later he walked out the front door of the vet and into his patrol car to start his recovery at home with his family. After numerous hours of physical rehab and 5 major surgeries to repair damage to his jaw, paw, and later his spinal column, Bodie retired to live out his days with his family. Bodie went on to become an ambassador of the police department and educated school children and the public about the important role police dogs play in society.

Bodie also went on to sire several puppies who have already followed in his paw prints by certifying as po-

lice and search and rescue K9s. Bodie's amazing life of public service will carry on with them.

K9 Bodie lived an amazing life and was able to accomplish things in his short eight years that most dogs and humans only dream about. Flying in helicopters, riding in boats, rappelling from towers, scaling fences, searching for bad guys, visiting school children, receiving numerous awards, being a loving family dog, siring puppies, and being recognized at the California State Capitol as a hero were just a handful of Bodie's accomplishments. Even with all that he got to do and see, Bodie's favorite thing in the world was chewing on his Kong toy and leaning against anyone who would give him ear rubs or would scratch his chin. Bodie was an amazing partner, loving family mem-

ber, and fierce protector. He will forever be in our hearts and memories.

K9 Officer Bodie was interred in the Garden of Valor section of Sierra Hills Pet Cemetery on Nov. 14 and his graveside service was attended by many in law enforcement and the community.

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Arts & Activities



2016 Sacred Heart Holiday Home Tour
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 Saturday, December 3rd: 10am to 7pm
 Sunday, December 4th: 11am to 5pm

Rain or shine!

One of Northern California's most popular holiday home tours returns with five elegantly decorated homes in East Sacramento's historic Fabulous Forties neighborhood.

This self-guided walking tour begins on 11th Street between M and Folsom Blvd with participating home addresses and a neighborhood map on the back of each ticket.

Don't miss the Holiday Boutique and Cafe located at Sacred Heart Parish School. No ticket is required to visit the Holiday Boutique and Cafe.
www.sacredheartthometour.com

Tickets are \$30 in advance and \$35 the day of the event.
 Children over the age of one must have a ticket.
 Advance tickets can be purchased at a number of fine local retailers until Thursday night prior to the tour or online at SacredHeartHomeTour.com

The Holiday Home Tour is a fundraiser that benefits Sacred Heart Parish School. All ticket purchases are non-refundable.

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Reporting back from the Turn Verein

Kandern Jazzchor singers participated in annual harmonie concert, another bridge built in the efforts of sister-cityhood

By **MONICA STARK**
editor@valcomnews.com

"Twas a night of fun and frivolity at the Turn Verein on Saturday, Nov. 12 as 10 Jazzchor singers from Kandern, Germany, performed at the annual Harmonie Concert, Dinner and Dance.

"The concert was a great event and after the concert, (the audience) stood up in applause," reported back Peter Völlker of Kandern whose mission has been to create a sister-city relationship between Kandern and Sacramento.

Völlker lives on the street which carries Johann Sutter's name and the town has a small museum where visitors can find documents of the life of Sutter and visit the house where he was born. And at Sutter's Fort, there is a plaque that mentions Sutter's birthplace as Kandern. So to Völlker, making Kandern and Sacramento a sister-city relationship seems like a viable option and he is determined to make it happen. "We know many Americans who are

very keen to find out about their roots, which often lie in Germany," he said.

So happy the Jazzchor sang the famous sea shanty work song, "De Hamburger Veermaster", Völlker said the tune reminded him of his childhood because the song was sung regularly during school -- and was an appropriate choice for the nature of the event. An excerpt of the lyrics, read, as follows:

[: To my hooday!:]

To my hoo day, hoo day, ho - ho - ho - ho!

I once saw a four-master from Hamburg.

[: To my hooday!:]

Her masts were as crooked as the skipper's legs.

To my hoo day, hoo day, ho - ho - ho - ho!

Refrain

[: Blow, boys, blow, for California,

There's plenty of gold, so I am told,

On the banks of Sacramento.:]

[: Blow, boys, blow, for California,



Photo courtesy Shown here are members of the Kandern Jazzchor who visited with Governor Jerry Brown, Jr. in efforts of making Sacramento and Kandern sister cities.

There's plenty of gold, so I am told, On the banks of Sacramento.:

Perhaps the excitable spirit of the sea-faring, gold longing sailors from Hamburg mentioned in the shanty is one that's still alive today. Eager to visit California and share with the people of Kandern the Golden State's Gold Rush history, primarily Sutter's contribution to the capital city, Völlker and the Jazzchor singers continue to build that metaphorical bridge across continents all in the spirit of unity.

According to Völlker, former Kandern mayor Bernhard Winterhalter visited Sacramento in 2008 in an attempt to establish a sister-city rela-

tionship but didn't have enough support for the initiative.

So, it has been Völlker's mission to carry on the effort and it appears he's continuing to make more connections. Besides Turn Verein members, management at Sutter's Fort, members of the Fort Sutter Lions Club, German classes at local Sacramento schools, during Völlker's most recent visit, he met with Governor Jerry Brown, Jr. who relayed his interest in the sister-city partnership. "(Brown) showed photos and paintings of his grand grand grandparents. They knew Mr. Sutter personally and had a good relationship," Völlker said.

So, what's next on Völlker's agenda? That, is the question.

Matías Bombal's Hollywood

Arrival

The MPAA has rated this PG-13

Paramount Pictures brings us science fiction with "Arrival" based on the book "The Stories of Your Life and Others" by Ted Chiang, adapted for the screen by Eric Heisserer. Several large spacecraft arrive across the earth, causing widespread global panic as the military from all nations try to determine what is the intent of these UFO's. The United States assigns Colonel Weber (Forest Whitaker) to enlist the aid of a linguist that they have used before, Dr. Louise Banks (Amy Adams), to assist with communication with the aliens.

She agrees to go to a location in the western hemisphere where one such craft hovers over the surface of the globe to attempt to understand just who "they" may be and why "they" have come. Using all of her skills and assisted by scientist Ian Donnelly, played by Jeremy Renner, the two regularly visit the inside of the craft and try to understand and communicate. Will it lead to answers?

This movie, directed by Denis Villeneuve, has visual references that remind one of "2001: A Space Odyssey" and 1951's "The Thing from Another World". I found it one of the most refreshing science fiction movies since "Ex-

Machina" of a few years ago. Here, at last, is sci-fi without the gimmickry of 3-D and a smorgasbord of visual effects, loud music and disgusting looking monsters or people. Although it may not be a picture that will lend itself to repeated watching due to the way the story unfolds, at initial viewing you are taken by the subtle way that it slowly builds, allowing for great character development and mood. Nothing flashy here, I just loved that.

The story not lost on me, yet the idealism of Dr. Banks sees us through to a higher human level. The picture also features the talented Michael Stuhlbarg, again somewhat underused. I enjoyed "Arrival" and think you will appreciate its subtle nature. It is an excellent production beautifully realized.

Almost Christmas

The MPAA has rated this PG-13

Universal Pictures offers director/writer David E. Talberts feel good family "dramady" for the holiday season with featuring some of the most popular black actors working in an ensemble. "Almost Christmas" gives you the back story of all of the family members over the years to the present right during the title sequence.

From that moment on, we see this somewhat dysfunctional family as they gather for their first Christmas holiday at home following the death of their mother.



The father is played by likable Danny Glover and other cast members include Gabrielle Union, Nicole Ari Parker, Jessie T. Usher, Omar Epps, Romany Malco and the irrepressible Aunt May, played by Mo'Nique. Although this may be marketed to the African-American community, I found this to be a somewhat predictable, but at times very funny picture reflecting the very human nature of family gatherings, a universal experience in the coming holiday season for folks of every kind.

As much as I did through the more frequent comedy moments of "Almost Christmas" in this first Christmas themed movie to be released this year. Hollywood usually waits until Thanksgiving to start the rush, but it seems the Christmas mood comes earlier and earlier every year. This year, we may need a little Christmas.

The story of the gathering offers subplots; a rivalry between two sisters, a philandering husband of one of the two sisters, one young athlete with a pain pill ad-

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SATURDAY, DEC. 3
THE ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTALISTS' HOLIDAY PARTY: From 6 to 9 p.m. the public is invited to the Annual Environmentalists' Holiday Party, co-hosted by the Sierra Club Sacramento Group and the Environmental Council of Sacramento. Jenn Rogar will perform live acoustics. A main dish, a vegetarian option and some beverages will be provided. Please bring a beverage to share, along with your favorite side dish, salad or dessert to complete this holiday portluck. Cost is \$10 (to cover room rental and main dish). Tickets to be sold at the door. Ticket proceeds will equally benefit the Sierra Club Sacramento Group and the Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS). Silent Auction to benefit the Sierra Club Sacramento Group. Shepard Garden and Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd.

FULTON AVE. HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING: The Fulton Avenue Association presents the 10th annual Holiday Tree Lighting and gift drive benefiting the Children's Receiving Home. The home is committed to positively impacting the lives of children, youth and families affected by abuse, neglect, behavioral health issues and trauma in California. Area gift drop locations can be found by visiting fultoavenue.com or crhkids.org. Bring a gift to the tree lighting or donate \$1 (or more) to the CRH and get a photo with Santa. The tree lighting event starts at 5 p.m. at Tognotti's Auto World, 2509 Fulton Ave. (on the corner of Fulton Avenue and El Camino Boulevard). There will also be a Christmas tree

raffle, music and entertainment, hot dogs, chicken, coffee, cookies and more.

SUNDAY, DEC. 4
NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS: Starting at 10 a.m. with special music, celebration, and God's word. 3235 Pope Ave. For more information, call 487-5192.



FRIDAY, DEC. 2- SATURDAY, DEC. 4
2016 SACRED HEART HOLIDAY HOME TOUR Friday, December 2nd: 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Boutique 12:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Saturday, December 3rd: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Boutique 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday, December 4th: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Boutique 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

One of Northern California's most loved holiday home tours returns this December with six elegantly decorated homes in East Sacramento's historic Fabulous Forties neighborhood. For 43 years, this popular tour has grown to include approximately 4,000 patrons from all over Northern California and beyond. The homes showcase elaborate renovation while preserving historic detail, custom interior design and creative holiday decor that is sure to ignite the spirit of the season. Homes on the tour this year range in style from a charming, yet iconic, East Sacramento cottage to a beautiful California bungalow. This year the self-guided walking tour begins on 41st between M Street and J Street and winds its way through East Sacramento ending on Sonoma Way. You may start at any home and the tour takes approximately two hours to complete depending on your pace. Participating home addresses and a neighborhood map is printed on the back of each ticket. Following the tour, don't miss the beloved Holiday Boutique and Café located at Sacred Heart Parish School. The boutique

is made up of local Northern California vendors selling traditional and unique holiday gifts and decorations. Refuel your tank with a variety of delicious sandwiches and salads or warm up with a hot and flavorful soup. Hot Mulled Cider, coffee, soft drinks, wine and beer are also served. No ticket is required to visit the Holiday Boutique and Café. You may use your ticket for a one-time admittance to each house any time during the home tour weekend. Tickets are \$30 in advance and \$35 the day of the event. Children over the age of one must have a ticket. Advance tickets can be purchased online or at a number of fine local retailers until Thursday night prior to the tour start. The Holiday Home Tour is a fundraiser that benefits Sacred Heart Parish School, and is organized by the parents of Sacred Heart School. This event occurs rain or shine. All ticket purchases are non-refundable.

SUNDAY, DEC. 11
NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS: Starting at 10 a.m. with special music, celebration, and God's word. At 3 p.m., there will be a special family event. A charming mini-musical fantasy for all ages about a monk and his donkey who celebrate Christmas in a special way; followed by a Christmas carol sing-along. 3235 Pope Ave. For more information, call 487-5192.

SUNDAY, DEC. 18
NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS: Starting at 10 a.m. with special music, celebration, and God's word. There will be a Bel Tempo Handbell Christmas Concert, benefiting St. John's Program for Real Change. 3235 Pope Ave. For more information, call 487-5192.

RECURRING
CHAUTAUQUA PLAYHOUSE presents "Funny Little Thing Called Love"

Chautauqua Playhouse will present the comedy "Funny Little Thing Called Love" by Jones, Hope and Wooten beginning on December 2nd at the Playhouse. The show will run on Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. through Jan. 15 with an additional matinee at 2 p.m. on Jan. 14. The show will not play Christmas or New Year's Weekend. The performances will be held at the Chautauqua Playhouse, 5325 Engle Road in the La Sierra Community Center in Carmichael. Admission is \$20 general, \$18 seniors/students and SARTA members. Premium seating is an additional dollar. Under a full moon on this unpredict-

able night of romance, these four rollicking tales take you on an around-the-globe journey of unexpected and hilarious twists and turns! A slick, successful used-car-selling Romeo in Texas is set up by three fed up "Juliet's", a group of fun-loving gals from Georgia, accidentally crash a Hawaiian honeymoon in progress, two strangers start to connect in a rooftop London Bistro only to be thwarted by an oddball tourist and an ancient, sousaphone playing waitress and finally a man tries to battle his way out of a mid-life crisis with every possible comic distraction! Love conquers all and your sides will ache from laughter! The direction is by Diane Barlett with the set design by Rodger Hoopman and lighting design by Andrew Fiffick. Costumes are by Salina Donek. The cast includes several local actors and Chautauqua favorites. Information and tickets are available through the Chautauqua Playhouse website: www.cplayhouse.org or call the box office at (916) 489-7529, during business hours.

CHAUTAUQUA PLAYHOUSE CHILDREN'S THEATRE presents "Alice's Christmas Party in Wonderland"

Chautauqua Playhouse Children's Theatre will present the new Holiday Comedy "Alice's Christmas Party in Wonderland" by Warren Harrison (based on the characters of Lewis Carroll), beginning on December 3rd at the Playhouse. The show will run on Saturdays at 1:00 pm through December 17. The performances will be held at the Chautauqua Playhouse, 5325 Engle Road in the La Sierra Community Center in Carmichael. Admission is \$8.00 for all seats. Advance purchase of tickets is strongly recommended.

Alice finds a mysterious invitation while decorating the Christmas Tree. She has been invited to the Mad Hatter's Christmas Party. She must travel back to Wonderland to see her friends, but can't be late, or the Queen of Hearts will have her head. Along the way, she is reunited with Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee, the White Queen, the Cheshire Cat, the Queen of Hearts and a new character, Beatrice Thesaurus, the Pathkeeper to Wonderland. Songs and riddles and some stolen tarts keep this fast paced story a delight for the Holiday Season! The direction is by Jill McMahon. The cast features Andrea Kersten, Gregory Smith, Lynnette Blaney, Lauren Cooper and a host of other well-known local actors. Information and tickets are available through the Chautauqua Playhouse website: www.cplayhouse.org or call the box office at (916) 489-7529, during business hours.

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

By CANDY TUTT

Christmas is funny. Why else do you think Santa goes, 'Ho, ho, ho!?' Here's an example.

About 15 years ago my son lived in Sonoma county, a long mostly-scenic drive winding past pastures and vineyards. Once into the suburbs the view from the freeway consisted of back yards, cinder block walls and rooftops.

One December when we drove by, I glanced over to look for Christmas decorations and guffawed.

"What?"
 I could only laugh and point, but my husband didn't get it until I explained. One of the houses had a plastic four-foot tall Santa Claus on their roof, poised with his sack of loot.

But from the back, the way Santa was bent over, it looked LIKE HE WAS TAKING A WIZZ DOWN THE CHIMNEY.

We verified it on the way home, and the next year we actually craned our necks on the outskirts of Petaluma, watching for Santa.

"There he is!" Sure enough, the Jolly Old Elf was relieving himself on the bricks again.

'Up on the housetop, quick quick quick - peeing down the chimney, it's good Saint Nick...' Sigh.

Our neighborhood is eclectic; a Latino influence is noted around Halloween when skeletons of all

shapes and sizes pop up in windows, where they remain through the first week of November in observance of El Dia de Los Muertos and El Dia de Los Santos.

Halloween decorations get a bit bizarre as well. , perched on the steps of one house, alongside a ghost and a scarecrow, was a lighted bright green alien. Well, okay, that's scary, especially if you live in Area 51.

A month later my husband came home one night in early December, laughing. "You gotta see this," he said, "get in the car."

We cruised up and turned to the next street over, and in the middle of the block he slowed down.

"Check it out."
 There on a crowded concrete porch was The Nativity, complete with all three Wise Men, two shepherds and a sheep; Mickey Mouse in an Ebenezer Scrooge outfit, and...the Alien.

Wearing a Santa Hat. It's a holly-jolly Christmas.

My husband's aunt had a humungous plaster Nativity Set. Every year it took over the top of the stereo, laid out on a sheet of cotton batting that I think she bought during the Eisenhower Administration. Hail, hail the gang's all here: the angel, Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, shepherds, sheep, wise men, camels [both standing and seated] [the camels, not the wise men], and a supporting cast of candles among which were little kids in

choir robes, a couple of snowmen, and a pink bunny that snuck in from the Easter decorations but was allowed to remain. Hey, it's the joy of Christmas, why not? A smaller more portable Nativity usually sat on a coffee table or bookcase; the stable portion was made of brown plastic and the participants were separate plastic pieces glued into place. Time took its toll on the little town of Bethlehem, and by the 1990s all that was left was Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, and one sheep.

About five years ago Tony had a job driving cars for an auto auction out in Rio Linda, which is sort of Sacramento to County's version of the Ozarks. One December night Tony arrived home laughing about a display of life-size Christmas figures he'd seen on a lawn.

"They had everything: Joseph, Mary, the baby, Wise Men, shepherds..." then he started laughing again.

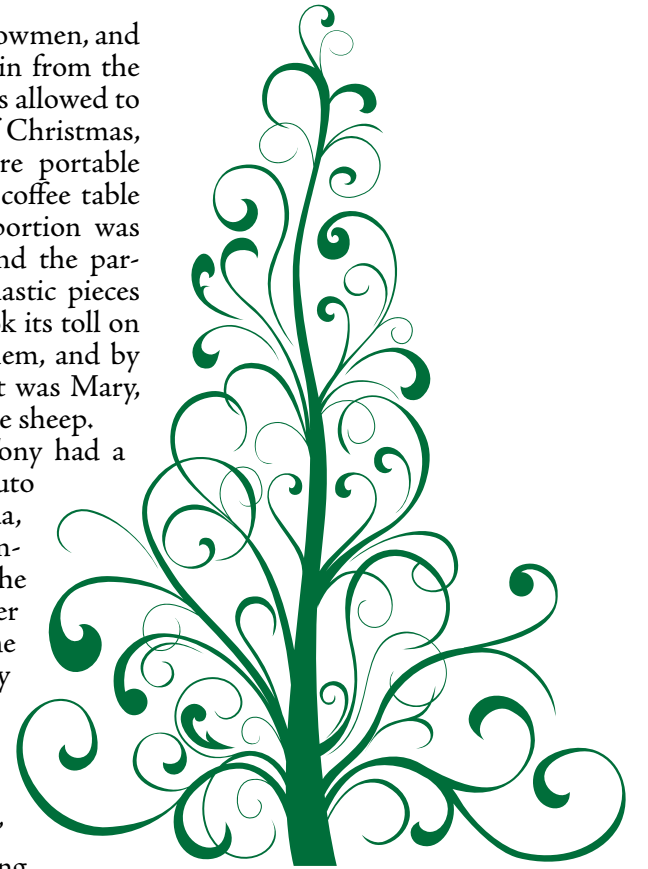
"What?"
 "...and Snoopy. A great big inflatable Snoopy..."

Okaaaay... that gave me an idea. The next day I rooted around in a box of art supplies, and when he got home I pointed to the bookcase.

"Oh, hon, it's Aunt Marie's little Nativity!"
 "Look closer."

There, just outside the stable, next to the lone remaining sheep, I glued a little plastic Snoopy.

"Merry Christmas, Charlie Brown." I still have the little Nativity thingy and it goes on the bookcase every year. Christmas is fun, whether it's Santa peeing in your chimney, an alien on the doorstep, or Snoopy in the manger. God Bless Us Everyone.



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