

# POCKET NEWS

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## Merry Christmas

See a collection of a Pocket area light displays and where to find them

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Pocket barber donates haircuts each Wednesday to the homeless, listens to their stories

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Pocket resident speaks about his familiar link to first Transcontinental Railroad

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## Swim with Santa:

Even Santa Swims at the YMCA

Photo by MONICA STARK  
[editor@valcomnews.com](mailto:editor@valcomnews.com)



Santa enjoys swimming at the YMCA. Taking note of children's wishes as some little ones hung onto his arms, others swam around the 85-degree indoor pool. Free and open to the entire community with a donation of a non-perishable food or new winter clothing item, the fun continued with crafts and holiday snacks in the gymnasium on Friday, Dec. 12.

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## Witherell's holding first Sacramento estate auction— live January 10, 2015

On Saturday, Jan. 10, 2015, "Antiques Roadshow" appraiser, Brian Witherell, will hold his first estate auction live in the warehouse across from Witherell's showroom at 300 20th St.

"We are excited to finally be able to make furniture—including mid-century modern—silver, jewelry, Asian art, paintings and décor from estates in the region available to local residents at very reasonable prices," said Brian Witherell, chief operations officer of the local auction house.

The auction starts at 10 a.m. and continues until items are sold.

People can preview items from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. Estate sale items are valued at \$1,000 or less unless they are furniture, which could be worth more if the cost of shipping is prohibitive.

By offering estate sales, Witherell's will be able to provide full-service auction services to people who have antiques and fine art, but want to sell complete estates.

The estate auction is being held in conjunction with Witherell's winter online auction of mid-range fine art and antiques.

On Mother's Day weekend in the Gold Country, Witherell's also holds an on-site sale of unique items from the Old West.

Witherell's Old West Antiques Show Grass Valley, is one of the highlights on the "Antiques of the West" year.

The event also is held in conjunction with an online auction of high-end pieces from the Old West valued at \$25,000 and more.

Founded in 1969, Witherell's is part of half-a-dozen companies nationwide that sell fine art and antiques online through [www.igavelauctions.com](http://www.igavelauctions.com).

For information on the auction, go to [www.witherells.com](http://www.witherells.com).

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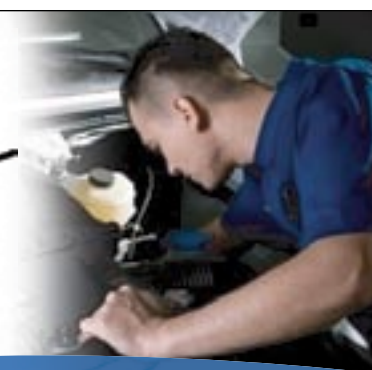
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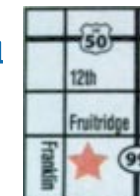
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# Pocket barber donates haircuts each Wednesday to the homeless, listens to their stories

By MONICA STARK  
editor@valcomnews.com

Every Wednesday afternoon for the past two years, Pocket barber Brian Wong of Passion Hair salon in the Promenade Shopping Center takes his combs and clippers out to Union Gospel Mission, a homeless shelter in the Richards Boulevard area, which features a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program.

As Michael Jackson's "Killer" booms from Brian's iPhone, conversations aren't of the typical small-talk, barber salon variety. Instead, Brian's clients speak freely to him about their storied past lives and how the

drug and alcohol rehabilitation program is writing a new chapter for them.

While styling one client named Danny Regalado, Brian spoke to the Pocket News about why he cuts hair at Union Gospel Mission and how he got started volunteering there. "I like just cutting hair for everybody. I just come here sometimes, just try to give back when I can. When I first came here, I had not cut hair before. I just got out of barber college. I stayed here, practiced, got better. I tell a lot of people, 'Thanks, I wouldn't be where I'm at if it wasn't for you guys.' Right now, I am just thankful.

You never know what people have been through in their lives, and a haircut can change a person's image, and I like making people look good, and they're all cool people in here. We got cool people like Danny telling me stories," Brian says on the afternoon of Wednesday, Dec. 3, as he continued on his client's new hairdo.

In and out of prison for the most of his adult life for various convictions, including: robbery, assault with a deadly weapon, burglary, possession of weapons and narcotics, all of Danny's crimes, he said, involved drugs somehow. "The longest sentence I ever had was nine years. I went to prison for a two-year bid and I did seven years for the homeless - for the cause -- you know, gang banging in prison. I joined the prison gang. I started stabbing guys, throwing bombs at people, (getting into) gang fights."

If it wasn't for his wife Anna Regalado's insistence he check into rehab, Danny said he might still be on that path of crime. Anna was on the verge of leaving him and him attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings wasn't going to satisfy her. "She wanted me to do a residential program and I feel like if I want to submit to me, I have to submit to her, too. So, I came and I asked the pastor to let me into the program and give it a try and I really like it here. I'm grow-

## Barber:

Continued from page 4

ing spiritually. I don't know how to control my urges, so I am here to learn that."

A structured rehab program, he said the members stick to a schedule and everybody has a job to do and they have to attend Bible classes twice a day. "With the way I am, that's what I need. I need the structure."

Growing up in "the projects" on Fifth Street and Broadway, Danny thought the "way out of the ghetto" was by learning how to box. He tells of a time when his childhood consisted of hanging out at Luigi's Pizza Parlor on Stockton Boulevard, playing pinball and hanging out with friends nearby. Behind the restaurant, he picked up boxing at the former Capitol Boxing Gym, getting his first taste in the sport at age 10.

"I used to go over there and watch the guys fight and the owner over there, Ernie Guevara, he asked me if I wanted a job. And I said, 'what do you want me to do?' He said, 'I want you to sweep the rings, sweep the floors, take the towels home and let your mom wash them and then bring them back. And in return, I'll teach you how to box.' That's how I learned. That's how I started. I was the King of the Hill when I

was boxing and I was pretty good. I still miss it. I had my own boxing gear."

An amateur boxer for four years, Danny said he boxed in every gym in Sacramento, depending on where he was living at the time. A member of the National Junior Golden Gloves at age 13, Danny dreamed of boxing one day at Madison Square Garden. He used to watch the old boxing matches on television, hoping to make it big one day. But, at age 14, he said he got shot in the leg by a drive-by shooter, which stopped his lateral movements in the ring. "I could still box, but I couldn't do it competitively," he recalls. Dependent on prescription drugs after his injury, Danny said that dependency was



Photo by Monica Stark

Pocket barber Brian Wong donates free haircuts to the homeless every Wednesday at Union Gospel Church. Here, he is shown with client Danny Regalado who is on the path to recovery from a life of drug and alcohol addiction.

See Haircuts, page 6

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See Barber, page 5

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www.valcomnews.com • December 18, 2014 • Pocket News

# Haircuts:

Continued from page 5

a gateway to the addiction of illicit drugs.

Speaking about the life changing event, he said: "I got hooked on the pain medication. I started hanging around these guys in my neighborhood. (One of them) was a heroin dealer. He had nine sons. I used to hang around his sons. They were selling dope for their dad and I got hooked on heroin. And I struggled with that from the age of 14 until I was 35. When I was 35, I decided I didn't want that anymore. I tried to quit, but I kept relapsing and going back to it."

Danny's hopeful drug and alcohol program will be his saving grace. The nine-month program is quite strict with general conduct requirements, mandatory attendance, assigned job duties, rules on when guests are welcome and more.

According to Union Gospel Missions website, as fund-

ing permits, the church tries to send graduates of their drug and alcohol program to receive vocational training at one of several centers around town. The website states: "Giving these men a valuable skill set that will help them set off on their new life as productive members of society is what this program is all about. Once one of our men graduates from the program, we do not push them out into the world as some sort of test of their hard-won sobriety. Typically they move out to the Eagle's Nest Ranch where they learn additional skills that help them re-acclimate to a normal life or to Grace Haven Annex when they get a job or enrolled in school."

Barber Brian Wong's dedication to serving the homeless community is just one example of many that can help people like Danny get through the rehab program. Additionally, the church, according to its website, supplies food baskets to families that may be working, but still come up short at the end of the month. They have a women's clothes closet that supplies the needs of homeless women and working poor. To

give to the mission is to have the opportunity to be a part of the rehabilitation we provide to all men wanting to escape the endless cycle of drugs and alcohol. Monetary donations can be made at [www.ugmsac.com/#!ways-to-give/cacg](http://www.ugmsac.com/#!ways-to-give/cacg). Also, the shelter is taking winter gear, jeans, pants, shirts, underwear, bras, sweat-shirts, sweaters, gloves, hygiene items, towels, blankets, tarps, sleeping bags, purses, backpacks, duffel bags, shoes, socks, accessories, jewelry, and umbrellas. To fill Christmas food baskets, ham, canned vegetables and canned fruit are needed by Monday, Dec. 22. For more information on donations, call 447-3268.

Brian's salon is located inside the Promenade Shopping Center at 7465 Rush River Dr. Ste. 810. To make an appointment with Brian, call 832-9949 or schedule it online at [www.passionhairstyles.com/](http://www.passionhairstyles.com/). Business hours are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (except closed on Wednesdays); Saturdays are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (appointments only) and Sundays, noon to 4 p.m. The salon will be closed on Christmas, Dec. 26 and on Jan. 1-2.

## Merryhill preschool students in Pocket to deliver toy donation for UC Davis Children's Hospital Preschoolers will donate toys to residents of the Child Life Program

Thirteen Sacramento-area Merryhill preschools, including the one in the Pocket area, are teaming up this holiday season to deliver a toy donation to support patients at the Child Life Program at UC Davis Children's Hospital on Friday, Dec. 19 at 11:30 a.m. The schools set up giving trees and asked family and friends to make a donation of new, unused toys, based on the Child Life Program's wish list. Merryhill Preschool students have been learning the importance of giving back to the community and look forward to making the holiday season brighter for more than 100 children.

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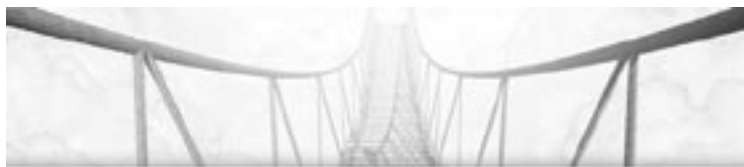
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# PUZZLE PLUS

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## The Crossword by Margie E. Burke

**ACROSS**

1 Letter opener?  
 5 Throw in the towel  
 9 Like many a wrestler  
 14 Scottish lake  
 15 Emphatic agreement  
 16 Aerie builder  
 17 Mark's replacement  
 18 Leeway  
 20 Concert venue  
 22 Half of a Charlie Brown exclamation  
 23 Actor's prompt  
 24 Contest participant  
 26 Frond-bearing plant  
 27 Hole in one  
 30 A, for one  
 31 Trash holder  
 32 Penitent  
 34 One way to break bad news  
 37 Part of ATM  
 38 Tropical malady  
 39 Meditation instruction  
 40 Devil-may-care  
 41 Vague amount  
 42 "People" newsmaker  
 43 Cow's chow  
 44 Tony Shalhoub series  
 46 Makeshift ballfield  
 48 Leaf lifter  
 49 Desert feature

**DOWN**

1 Pet peeve?  
 2 Sullen look  
 3 160 square rods  
 4 It may be cradled  
 5 Crow's cry  
 6 Leave home, in a way  
 7 Put down  
 8 Gas guzzler  
 9 Complaint, slangily  
 10 Bud holder?  
 11 Self-absorbed  
 12 Gravy ingredient  
 13 Mideast nation  
 19 Give the go-ahead  
 21 With fury  
 25 Astrological aspect  
 26 Important test  
 27 High point  
 28 Gently persuade  
 29 Captivating  
 31 Dwell on  
 33 Part of TGIF

**34 Auctioneer's aid**  
**35 In \_\_\_ of (instead of)**  
**36 Football unit**  
**38 Seagoer's woe**  
**40 Peso part**  
**42 Short snooze**  
**44 "\_\_\_ mial"**  
**45 Where the elated walk**  
**46 Early riser?**  
**47 Boxer's quest**  
**49 Second to none**  
**51 Monopoly card**  
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# Taking deliveries:

Sacramentan hand delivers clothing items and more to homeless through out downtown and near Sac State

By MONICA STARK  
editor@valcomnews.com

About eight or nine years ago, Regina King lived on the streets of Sacramento suffering from alcoholism, drug abuse and humiliation. Today, Regina, is married to Gina Backovich, has a 17-month-old son named Rex and is one semester into completing a masters degree in speech pathology from California State University, Sacramento. What changed from that dark time was the realization of who she wanted to be. Cognizant of resources around her, Regina was driven af-

ter a couple months of living on the streets to check into a county rehabilitation program.

But what she experienced while homeless was deep.

"There's something dehumanizing. Either people don't see you or they move away from you or they fear you. And sometimes there's reason for that and often there's not. There's definitely a sense of dehumanization."

That affect on her has been a motivating factor for her efforts over the last few years to put out a call on social media for essen-

tial winter items like warm clothing, socks, and toiletries – items that she picks up from people directly and hand delivers them to the homeless she sees during her side-street commute to and from school. By February in years past, she's taken to donating what she hasn't been able to hand deliver to the Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services.

To kick off her homeless supply drive event, she puts out a call on Facebook to her friends and for them to let their friends know she is collecting warm items for the winter. Then she takes it right back out into the community, not anywhere specific. "It's just a matter of walking around Midtown, Downtown and whenever I just see somebody it's just me leaving it with their stuff or asking if they need anything. I keep a stack of blankets."

With a sense of humor, Regina joked when asked more about the process. "There's no organization, whatsoever, none at all. It's like, hey, you have something? I'll put it in my trunk. It's really, really, very basic."

Usually, she parks her car, scopes out the people and then hands them items she thinks they might need. "I try to judge by size and gender and try to figure what they would prefer. Like today, it's been raining and I received a big plastic poncho and I don't even know who I left it with. It was just a person wandering around over near Panera (Bread) on Howe (Avenue) and I saw where she put all her stuff."

Unlike previous years when she's put notice out in October, this year she's just getting started. As of the interview with this publication last Thursday, she had only received the aforementioned poncho and two small food packets.

Regina proceeds with the deliveries without judgment, without agenda, except that of having a bit of a human interaction. "To have human interaction and human touch is really a big deal," she said. For that reason, it's important to her to hand deliver items as opposed to donating them to the food bank initially. Further explaining that, she said, "one of the things about homelessness is that people get really turned off by smell or lack of cleanliness and I like to be able to touch people, touch somebody's hand or look into somebody's eyes – just human connectedness; it's incredibly important to me."

Asked about the response from homeless individuals she gets upon delivery, Regina said it has been mixed. Elaborating on her experiences, she said: "I've had a lot of people who are really distrusting and people have gotten really upset with me for coming up to them. But I've gotten to hear a lot of stories of how people got on the streets and I've gotten a lot of people who are silent. It's across the board."

Regina's efforts started in 2009 with one of her friends and has been going strong for nearly four years. "I think when I started was just a friend who asked me, hey, do you want to help me with this? And then as time has gone on, I've noticed myself complaining about going from my heated house to the rain, to my heated car, into the rain, into the heated building at work or at school and complaining about that. And I'll catch myself doing that. I have more than I could ever need. And I just think so many of us have so much. We go through our closets every year. I've had more jackets than I could ever know what to do with and there's people out there really in need."

Regina, a former volunteer at a residential treatment center for women coming off of drugs and alcohol, used to cook for the residents. The amount of gratitude she witnessed face-to-face "was such a big deal and I think I've been searching for that ever since. For the love of humanity, for the love of people. I think

See Supply Drive, page 9

## Supply Drive:

Continued from page 8

we live in a nation where homelessness shouldn't even be an issue, so the fact that it is, breaks my heart and I feel like it's something I can do and there's a lot of things I feel like I am helpless about. And, this, I feel is something."

Speaking about one donor who heard about Regina's efforts through mutual friends on social media, Regina said, "She lived in Rosemont. I went to her house and she was wheelchair bound and she just shared her story of having had real tough times before and she wanted to do what she could to help, so she gave me boxes of hotel shampoos, and just hygiene stuff. It was amazing. So I've gotten to meet really great people, too."

Gina Backovich, who works full time and helps with the household has been a great support to her wife's efforts to help the homeless population. Describing Gina's efforts, Regina joked, "The garage is her domain and I

get to take it over for a few months, so it's really, very sweet of her. But I try to turn things around as soon as I get them." On a more serious note, Regina added, "She also comes with me. Last year, we filled the back of her truck with these flashlights (that her sister-in-law donated), and batteries and coats and we made lunch. My wife and a friend and her three kids – we parked the truck near Loaves and Fishes and let people come and she just did it. She's so personable. She really gets to talk with people. She loves it. She's really great."

Originally from San Jose, Regina did spend some of her formative years in Sacramento, however. "I spent a few years here from when I was 10 until I was 15. My parents were split, so I stayed with my mom for a few years up here and then went back to live with my dad. And then I don't know, somehow I just kept ending up back in Sacramento. So, I moved back here seven years ago and here I stay. I settled down, had a family."

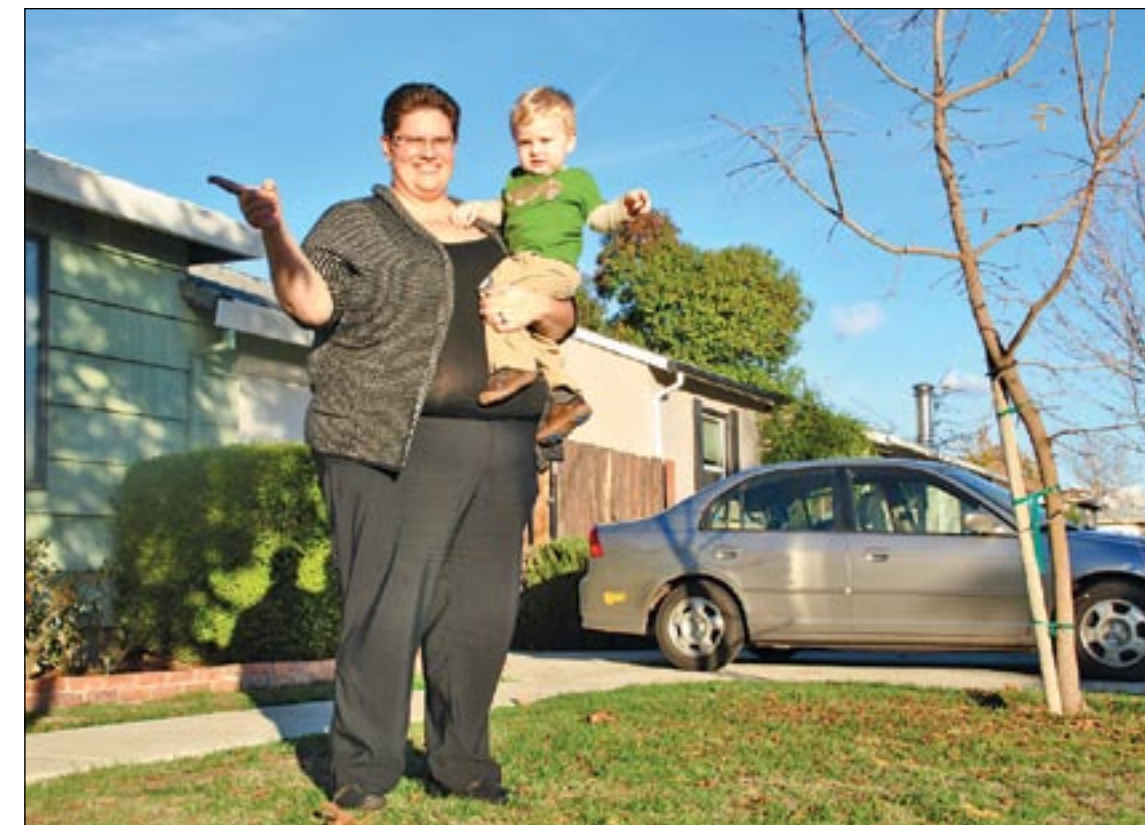


Photo by Monica Stark

Regina King and her 17-month-old son Rex stand outside of their Sacramento home. Regina is starting up her annual homeless supply drive. She is currently collecting cold weather items and hygiene products.

### TO HELP:

**WHAT:** Donations for the homeless: Blankets, jackets, coats, sweatshirts, socks ("a big deal, especially in the rain"), and hygiene products like toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, combs, non-perishable foods (anything that could be

"packed up and handed out easily – water bottles, stuff like that.")

**HOW:** Regina will come to you (within reasonable distances from South Land Park). She can be reached at 470-2092 or find her public event on Facebook called "Homeless Supply Drive" hosted by Regina King.

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# Reduce, re-use, recycle the 25 percent more trash created at the holidays

During the holidays, people throw away 25 percent more trash than during any other time of year, the California Department of Resources Recovery and Recycling (CalRecycle) reports.

The extra waste amounts to 25 million tons of garbage, or about 1 million extra tons, per week nationwide.

With this in mind, local governments in the Sacramento area are urging residents to reduce, reuse, and recycle this holiday season.

"The amount of garbage sent to the landfill increases dramatically each the holiday season," said Traci Goularte, Regional Recycling Group spokesperson. "We can change the holiday habit of tearing open presents and throwing away wrapping paper and cardboard. We can recover these materials and

more. Recycling holiday paper is a better alternative than throwing it into the trash."

The number of empty bottles and cans also soars during the holidays. About 100 million plastic water bottles will end up in the California trash during the holidays.

If recycled, those bottles could be used to make 48,000 sweaters, or 220,000 square feet of carpeting, according to CalRecycle.

"Tons of empty beverage containers are also generated during this time of year," said Goularte. "These cans, glass and plastic bottles should also be recycled."

Residents can put greeting cards, gift boxes and wrapping paper in their curbside recycling program.

All mixed paper — cardboard, advertising mail, catalogs, paper boxes,

newspapers, computer paper, old calendars and other "clean" household paper — also can be recycled in curbside recycling programs.

Even phone books and calendars are acceptable.

Paper should be placed in the mixed recycling container and set out on the curb on regular recycling pick-up days.

For those without curbside recycling, drop-off sites are located at many grocery stores, schools, and non-profit organizations.

A collaboration of Northern California cities, counties and public agencies working together to reduce waste and increase recycling, the Regional Recycling Group promotes personal action and behavior change through media campaigns.

They conduct regional outreach and events as well as developing



materials, guides, booklets, publications and other educational tools.

For more information on recycling programs, visit [www.HolidayRecycling.com](http://www.HolidayRecycling.com).

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# Matías Bombal's Hollywood

**Exodus: Gods and Kings**  
The MPAA has rated this PG-13. 20th Century Fox Film Corporation brings us the latest from Ridley Scott, a story of Moses, from the time he was a leader in Egypt, conflict with the pharaoh Ramses and subsequent departure from that plague ridden land to lead 600,000 thousand slaves on a monumental journey of escape. This movie is presented in "Real 3-D". Christian Bale is Moses and Joel Edgerton plays Ramses. Sigourney

Weaver, Ben Kingsley and John Turturro are featured. "Ginormous" in style, augmented by use of 3-D, this feature falls flat owing to the fundamental mistake of the writers to humanize Moses in a contemporary way, making him a believable man that might have actually lived on earth rather than an iconic figure of legend. The costumes, in general, seem ill fitting, as if the actors are playing dress-up. Compounding my displeasure was dialogue and

body language that seemed far too contemporary for the period of the movie. This movie left me longing for epics in the style of De-Mille, where the Ten Commandments were written in bolts of lightning and the Red Sea parted spectacularly. The highly anticipated scenes are a let-down, with Moses chiseling out each commandment himself, and with the sea not parting at all, but just receding to a very low tide. This a movie contradiction, in which an epic

story and personality is down played to be a mere mortal, driven by circumstance. Lots of CGI battles to please the action fans in 3-D, but to me, a disappointment. (Editor: Opens Tower Theatre, Friday December 19th)

**Foxcatcher**  
The MPAA has given this an R rating. Sony Pictures Classics brings us an unsettling look at real historical events in a dramatized form with "Foxcatcher," the real life story of billionaire John E. DuPont's involvement with the U.S. Olympic wrestling team seen through the eyes of two wrestling brothers, and the rather unfortunate events following the games of 1988. Inspired by wrestler Mark Schultz's book of this odd and creepy relationship, director Bennet Miller offers us some very fine performances in a movie which takes its time to tell this story.

Actor Steve Carrell plays duPont, tapping into this complex individual in his portrayal of a man whose passion is wrestling, and being a patriot for the USA. His mother, Jean duPont, is brilliantly played by Vanessa Redgrave. Mr. DuPont wishes to bring in both of the successful wrestling Schultz brothers to his Foxcatcher team, beginning with Mark Schultz, played by Channing Tatum as a not-too-bright man who excels in wrestling, but who also lacks the finesse of social skills, resulting in one of the oddest screen pairings you'll ever see. This movie is fascinating to

watch because of the excellent performances from all of the actors involved and solid camera work by Greig Fraser whose long steady shots let us examine the faces of complexity as if we are studying them under glass.

However, I found the writing to lack sufficient motivation for both of the principal characters to offer an understanding of why they do things and react in the manner that they do. Perhaps, this was intentional to keep us all wondering about these strange men. For example, had duPont's wrestling passion been born from some latent homosexual inclination, then that would help to understand where he was coming from, but no such possibility is offered by the writers. If Mark Schultz's brooding manner could have been explained more clearly, we'd get why he was pouty for most of the movie, other than the clear feelings of never meeting the level of success of his wrestling brother, David, played very well in this movie by Mark Ruffalo.

This movie will offer you a sense of unease throughout, and fine acting performances, and aside from my inability to pick up a sense of the characters motivation, this is an excellent overall production, and in an age of movies with fast cutting and shaky camera work, this movie is a welcome offering for adults who are tired of MTV movie making styles. Look for a scene where the wrestlers are weighing in; the weigh-in official No. 1 is the real Mark Shultz, making a cameo in this example of art imitating life.

## Pocket area Marine Corps and Boy Scout troop collect gifts for Toys for Tots

RICHARD and BARBARA CHERRY  
Special to the Pocket News



Teaming up for Toys for Tots, Sacramento Elks Lodge #6 (and the Dave Hamm Memorial Bike Fund), Marine Corps League Detachment 023, and Boy Scout Troop 259, once again exceeded previous years contributions, collecting 23 new bicycles, tricycles, safety helmets, bike locks, and large bags of toys of every description.

In 1947 Major Bill Hendricks, USMCR founded Toys for Tots, the first toy collected was a handmade doll, and some 5,000 toys were donated that year. In recent times it has grown to nearly 17 million toys donated and distributed nationally to approximately 7 million children. No one seems to know how long ago the Elks

began collecting toys for various charitable organizations during the holiday season but the tradition has been around for years and most certainly started about the same time as the beginnings of the Elks in the mid 1880's. Several years ago a member of Lodge #6, Dave

Hamm made it a point to donate two bicycles (1 boy's and 1 girl's) to the toy drive. When he passed away, about five years ago members of the Lodge, his family and friends donated money to continue the tradition, coupled with other donations it grows each year.

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# Smart & Final opened new store just outside the Pocket

A brand new Smart & Final Extra!, located at 7205 Freepoint Blvd., opened to the public on Wednesday, Dec. 10. The store opening celebrated with a special, in-store afternoon event, which invited volunteers from the Active 20-30 Club of Greater Sacramento and the Florin Little League for an afternoon of cookie decorating. The children were delighted with a four-foot long sugar cookie in the shape

of the Golden State, complete with a frosted star to mark the state's capital. Spurred on by store associates, the kids were provided with frosting, sprinkles and other decorating tools for an afternoon of fun and excitement.

To further commemorate the store opening, Smart & Final made three \$2,500 donations to local charities, including the Active 20-30 Club of Greater Sac-

ramento, Florin Little League and Sacramento Food Bank.

"We thank Smart & Final not only for its donation but the welcoming atmosphere the staff provided to our very grateful kids," said Linda Abdelbaki, member, Active 20-30 Club of Greater Sacramento.

The evening prior to the grand opening, Smart & Final hosted a special preview event for local businesses and employees to showcase the store's varied product line of both private label and national brands. The California-based company has served customers statewide for more than 140 years, offering a selection of high quality produce and a wide selection of brand items available in a broad range of sizes.

"We're thrilled to open the new Extra! store in Sacramento and look forward to meeting the everyday needs of local household and business shoppers," said Robert Scholl, Store Manager, Smart & Final. "This store truly reflects Smart & Final's unique role providing quality, value and a convenient, one-stop shopping experience."



Shown here are photos from the grand opening opening event for the new Smart & Final Extra! located at 7205 Freepoint Blvd. Photos courtesy

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VALLEY COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

# Pocket resident speaks about his familial link to first Transcontinental Railroad

By LANCE ARMSTRONG  
Lance@valcomnews.com

Editor's Note: This is part eight in a series regarding historic Asian districts of Sacramento.

Pocket resident Gene O. Chan, whose home is presently a meeting place of Gung Ho American Legion Post No. 696, which was featured in the last article of this series, has a family history that dates back to the mid-1850s in the Golden State.

While meeting with this publication last week, Gene, 82, shared details about the Chinese-born Jim King, who was his earliest relative to come to California.

With a proud tone to his voice, Gene declared that Jim helped build the western portion of the first Transcontinental Railroad, which linked the Central Pacific Railroad from the West with the Union Pacific Railroad from the East. That event occurred with a special ceremony in the Utah Territory on May 10, 1869.

Thousands of people, the majority of which were Chinese, were hired as laborers to build the Central Pacific Railroad.

Gene, who is a native of the Sacramento Delta town of Locke (originally Lockeport), which was founded by Chinese nearly a century ago, noted that he believes it is likely that Jim spent some time in Sacramento, including this city's Chinatown.

In speaking about Jim's early life in California, Gene said, "When (Jim) came (to California) in 1855, he was about 15 years old. He came out here and worked on mining near Coloma and in that area. His name was (formerly) Jow Kee, but what happened was he worked with miners, and they're the ones who named him Jim King. So, he went to the railroad as Jim King. I heard from relatives that said (Jim) was a very good worker, so (some of the miners) taught him English.

"So, that's all I have. I don't know the ins and outs of the work he did on the railroad or anything, other than he could speak English, so he was translating and helping them hire people. So, he was the contractor."

Gene said that his family connection to a railroad worker led him to the California State Railroad Museum in Old Sacramento about five years ago.

"I went to the railroad museum, because someone told them that I was a descendent from the railroad," Gene said. "I had given some data to some people, you know, with the paperwork that (Jim) had. And I submitted it to (the museum) and then I got it all back, so I assumed they didn't find (any reference to Jim).

"I (later) talked to them. I said, 'Oh, you didn't find my great-grandpa's name on the railroad?' They said they did (find his name). So, they said I could go and research it (at the museum). But then all of a sudden, somebody wrote a book about the railroad and (the author) got the log from the railroad and I looked at that book ('Nameless Builders of the Transcontinental' by William F. Chew) and there was my great-grandfather's name - Jim King."

That January 1866 payroll entry specifically reads "Jim King & Co." Gene said that he eventually learned something very unique regarding his connection to the Transcontinental Railroad.

"It's so odd," Gene said. "I went out to a gala in San Francisco with the Chinese Historical Society of America. They had canvassed the whole United States and found about 40 people who have some relations to the railroad. And of all of them, I was the only one who had a direct link in the railroad (payroll) log."

Gene also discussed Jim's post-railroad life, saying, "After the railroad was completed in 1869, (Jim worked as) a foreman during the (building of) the levees (in the Sacramento Delta). He was doing the wheelbarrows until the big clamshell (dredger) came. (Jim) then went farming, because he came from a farming area (in China)."

Gene said that he created a timeline of the events of Jim's life and was pleased by the results.

"I did a timeline and it all fits," Gene said. "(In) 1869, he got down here in the valley to build the levees. When the levee clamshell (dredger) came and took it over, he went farming at the Green Ranch in Courtland. He raised a large family on the (Green Ranch in Courtland). So, I have all the farmers there, (and it is) notarized on his immigration papers that he's Jim. They all vouched for him with their signatures."

In commenting about Jim's life on the ranch, Gene said, "He was doing pretty well. He was probably the foreman again on the ranch. He



Photo by Lance Armstrong  
Pocket resident Gene O. Chan, who was born in the Sacramento Delta town of Locke, is a descendent of a Chinese native who assisted in the construction of the western portion of the first Transcontinental Railroad.

was able to teach his children both English and Chinese."

After being asked when Jim died, Gene responded, "What happened was his wife (Hel Shee) took all of the kids except for one back to China to the village (of Sun Chung). Then he was farming somewhere near Isleton and one of the sons (Kim King) stayed back to look for him. (Jim) disappeared and they never found him. They don't know whether it was foul play or he fell in (the Sacramento River) and drowned, but they never did find him. So, that one son stayed behind, but he also later went to China and got a wife (Wong Shee) and came back, and raised a large family."

"My grandfather (Tai King, who was in San Francisco during the 1906 earthquake) - the number two son (of Jim King) - also went to China to get his wife (also Wong Shee), because there were hardly any Chinese women here, except for people that had some kind of work that allowed them to be here. But great-grandpa, I was told some of the things about him by people who knew him in China that lived in Locke. It's a lot of hearsay. But still, I'm the only direct link to Jim King."

# Pocket area's ACC sponsored documentary on the Transcontinental Railroad

Pocket area's ACC Senior Services is the title sponsor of a new documentary film, "Chinese Builders of the Gold Mountain," which chronicles the great work of pioneering Chinese immigrants in early California history. The film premiere is next month.

Produced by Nimbus Films, a producer of historical documentary films and books, the film, shot on location in Sacramento, Marysville, the Mother Lode, the Delta, the Sierra Nevada and Oroville, takes viewers back to the 1860s to sites where thousands of Chinese pioneers built tunnels for the famed Transcontinental Rail-

road - a skill that the immigrants later parlayed in constructing wine caves for Napa Valley wineries. The documentary also visits historical places where they lived and worked, such as the Oroville Chinese Temple and the Bok Kai Temple in Marysville.

Excited about the announcement of ACC being named title sponsor, Donna Yee, chief executive officer of ACC Senior Services, said: "We're pleased to be a part of a film that highlights the rich and storied history of the Chinese community in California. This is required viewing for anyone who is interested in California history."

Nimbus Films is an award-winning production company that has previously won the Sacramento County Historical Society Award of Excellence, and The American Society of Civil Engineers Award for Excellence. Nimbus Films produced the award-winning documentary, The Hidden Wonder of the World, the Transcontinental Railroad from Sacramento to Donner Summit, which airs on PBS, and Newcastle, Gem of the Foothills.

Nimbus Films owner and film producer, Bill George spoke about the importance of Chinese immigrants in building early California.

"Chinese immigrants played an important role in building early California, and their work led to the state's preeminence as a Pacific Rim economic powerhouse," George said. "This film will give viewers an inside look at how Chinese immigrants battled discrimination and helped shape the Golden State for future generations."

About ACC: ACC Senior Services has become nationally known for providing exceptional services to seniors and their family caregivers, including a top-rated nursing home for the most frail, wellness programs for the most able, and ACC Rides and Meals on Wheels.

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7488 Pocket Road

# Christmas lights in the Pocket

Photos by STEPHEN CROWLEY

'Twas a dark and stormy night in the Pocket, but the lights were still on. So many, in fact, it was quite a show and a good night to take photographs. We've included the addresses to correspond to the displays for easy navigational purposes.



7736 Silva Ranch Way



7631 Greenhaven Dr.



7632 Riverwind Dr.



8700 Pocket Road



1200 Grand River Dr.



7839 Roman Oak Way



1208 Cedarbrook Way



7673 River Ranch Way

# Upcoming Robbie Waters Pocket-Greenhaven Library events

The Robbie Waters Pocket-Greenhaven Library, 7335 Gloria Dr., hours are as follows: Sunday and Monday, closed; Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Wednesday, noon to 8 p.m.; Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Friday, 1 to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 264-2920 or visit [www.saclibrary.org](http://www.saclibrary.org).

**Movie matinee**  
**Dec. 20:** Starting at 1:30 p.m., the Pocket Library presents a family movie matinee: "How to Train Your Dragon 2."

**Mister Cooper's Sing-a-long Club**  
**Dec. 30:** Starting at 11 a.m., Mr. Cooper's Sing-a-long Club will feature a family-friendly performance made possible by the Pocket-Greenhaven Friends of the Library.

**"Knit Together"**  
**Jan. 2:** Carrie Parker, a Pocket-Greenhaven resident and self-professed knit-a-holic, is bringing her needles to the library at 1 p.m. for "Knit Together," a knitting group which encourages anyone interested in knitting—even an absolute beginner—to join. Participants can learn to knit, get help on current projects, or receive general advice from expert knitters. There might even be some great conversations, too. Don't forget to bring your knitting needles and yarn.

**Teen Advisory Board meeting**  
**Jan. 3:** Interested in community service, leadership opportunities and fun? The Teen Advisory Board is all about teens creating their own service projects—whether that means organizing fun programs for teens (think gaming tournaments and movie nights) or other community outreach projects. Bonus: TAB looks great on your college applications. Partially funded by the Pocket-Greenhaven Friends of the Library, the meeting starts at 10 a.m.

**Book Club**  
**Jan. 3:** If you like to read and you like to talk about books, look no further than

the Pocket Library book discussion group. The group, which meets at 1 p.m., reads a wide variety of books to challenge the minds and interests of all group members. The title for discussion is "The Girls of Atomic City" by Denise Kiernan.

**Stay and Play and Storytime**  
**Jan. 6:** "Stay and Play" is an unstructured social time for babies and toddlers (ages 0 and up. Older siblings are welcome as long as everyone can play nicely together) and their caretakers. Developmental toys and board books will be available. These informal play sessions will be immediately followed by a storytime for babies and toddlers (ages 0-3 years) and their caretakers/families except on the last Tuesday of each month when there is a special performance by Mister Cooper instead. Partially funded by the Pocket-Greenhaven Friends of the Library, the group meets at 10:15 a.m. and is followed by storytime at 11 a.m.

**Books at lunch**  
**Jan. 6:** Seventh and eighth graders are invited to talk about books over lunch. This program is scheduled to coincide with the School of Engineering and Sciences' middle school lunch period, but homeschoolers are also welcome to join. The middle school book group will take place inside the Teen Room. Sponsored in part by the Pocket-Greenhaven Friends

of the Library, the group meets at 11:25 a.m. and is followed by the high school group at 12:30 p.m., which usually meets inside the community room.

**Homework Zone**  
**Jan. 6:** Trained volunteers serve as Homework Coaches and Teen Mentors to students in grades first through eighth, offering free homework assistance in all subject areas at 3:30 p.m. Adults and teens interested in becoming part of the Homework Zone team are encouraged to speak with the Youth Services librarian at the front desk. This program is made possible by volunteers and is subject to cancellation depending on their availability. If you would like to volunteer as a homework coach, inquire for more information at the front desk.

**Homework Zone**  
**Jan. 7:** Trained volunteers serve as Homework Coaches and Teen Mentors to students in grades first through eighth, offering free homework assistance in all subject areas at 5:30 p.m. Adults and teens interested in becoming part of the Homework Zone team are encouraged to speak with the Youth Services librarian at the front desk. This program is made possible by volunteers and is subject to cancellation depending on their availability. If you would like to volunteer as a homework coach, inquire for more information at the front desk.

## See More Photos & Open House Schedule for my "Featured Homes" at: [GreenhavenPocketHomes.com](http://GreenhavenPocketHomes.com)

7417 Deltawind Dr – \$320,000  
 Attractive Pocket Area 3 bd 2.5 bath featuring a large family room addition open to the kitchen. Updated roof in 2013, new carpet in 2014. Laminate flooring in living room, formal dining rm & family room. Large private yard. Convenient to shopping, parks, bike path and more! Approx 1,840 sf.\*



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\*Per Seller, public records or other sources, but has not been verified by Agent or Broker; all interested persons to verify.

35 Years Experience - References  
 Greenhaven / Pocket Area Specialist  
 Masters Club, Outstanding Life Member

**Bill Bonner**  
 (916) 320-1888  
[Bill@PocketAreaHomes.com](mailto:Bill@PocketAreaHomes.com)

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**5535 H Street, #10**  
 (916) 422-8120  
 Fri-Sat: 12:00 pm – 10:30 pm

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**PRETIGIOUS RIVERLAKE**

High quality Parker-built halfplex with a spectacular floor plan! 4 bedrooms 3 full baths with downstairs bedroom and bath. Fantastic courtyard for extra living space. Spacious loft/den. Gorgeous formal dining room; and a large nook in charming kitchen. Rare 3-car garage. \$550,000

**MONA GERGEN 247-9555**



**SOUTH LAND PARK HILLS**

Wonderfully spacious ranch style home in desirable South Land Park. Double doors open to a beautiful entry and inviting family room with plantation shutters and view of backyard. 3 or 4 bedrooms 2½ baths, kitchen pantry living room w/ wood burning fireplace insert. \$459,000

**BETH SHERMAN 800-4343**



**AMAZING REMODEL**

Recently remodeled 3 bedroom 2 bath home in the Didion School boundaries. New kitchen, electrical, baths, floors, windows, doors, paint in and out, baseboards, lighting, (includes LED lights), ceiling fans, landscaping, quartz counter top, farm house sink, designer tile floors and much more. \$395,000

**MONA GERGEN 247-9555**



**MOVE-IN READY**

Enjoy this well maintained home! Highly sought after single story 4 bedroom 3 bath home with roomy master suite. The family room adjoins the kitchen and is perfect for the chef to chat while making dinner! Located on a quiet street just steps from the Sacramento River. Pretty backyard. Welcome home! \$425,000

**PAULA SWAYNE 425-9715**



**SOUTH LAND PARK TERRACE**

Mid-century ranch in the hills of South Land Park Terrace. Living area opens to beautiful backyard and pool. 3 bedroom, 1½ bath family home; bright and light and oh so charming. Perfect for entertaining. Convenient location. New roof! \$449,500

**SHEILA VAN NOY 505-5395**



**RIVER OAKS IN THE POCKET**

Amazing remodeled kitchen and home, mahogany floors throughout, stainless steel appliances, double oven, built-in fridge, granite counters, high quality custom cabinets, butler's pantry. 4 bedrooms 3½ baths, Custom bar with cabinets, sink and wine fridge. Master suite with fireplace, close to river and park. \$400,000

**MONA GERGEN 247-9555**



**SHERMAN ISLAND RETREAT**

Amazing opportunity! A special property across the road from the River on Sherman Island. Custom built ... it's the perfect home-away-from-home! Currently 1 bedroom, 1 bath; easily be converted back to a 2 bedroom home. Owner had plans to build up and create a river view. This is a kiteboarder or Windsurfers dream! \$205,900

**JAMIE RICH 612-4000**



**A BYGONE ERA**

Beautifully renovated from head to toe - The Didion House - Rich wood, fine detailing and spacious rooms. Historical in in both style, heritage and culture. 4 bedrooms 2 full baths and 2 half baths with new kitchen, three floors, including media room, and a full basement. \$1,395,000

**SHEILA VAN NOY 505-5395**



**MED CENTER**

Location! Location! Location! This Med Center cutie makes a great investment property or the perfect spot to call home. Walk to UCD, shops restaurants and more. 2 bedrooms, spacious kitchen and nook. Newer carpet and paint, nice backyard and off-street parking. \$279,900

**JAMIE RICH 612-4000**

*for current home listings, please visit:*

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