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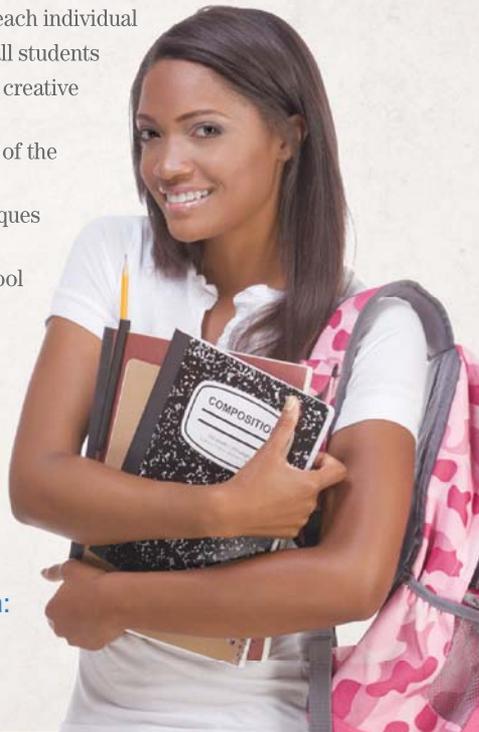
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On confident footing

When my father-in-law was in his final days, before he was moved from the hospital back home under hospice care, the nurses asked the family if they wanted a priest to visit with him. My father-in-law was a Protestant evangelical pastor, and this was a Catholic hospital. My wife doubted that her dad would desire such a visit. The Reformation had occurred, after all.

But she knew better than to decide without consulting him, even in his last days. Ever interested in creating an ecumenical moment, her dad said yes, he did want a visit.

This reminded me of the last words attributed to Voltaire, the French enlightenment writer and philosopher who, on his deathbed, was asked if he wanted to renounce the devil.

“This is no time to be making enemies,” he said.

The young priest in the hospital was quite respectful and polite in his conversation. When he asked my father-in-law about how he felt about his future, the reply was loud and clear enough for everyone in the room.

“Confident,” he said.

This was a sacred moment. It was a voice from within him, as well as a voice from God, echoing in the room. My father-in-law was not declaring “Mayday.” This was a grace-filled moment that said, “I don’t know where this is going, but I know who is going with me.”

Later, when he was moved home under hospice care, he drifted into a coma. A blood disease made his arms too swollen to move without splitting the skin. Even in his unconscious state, move-

ment would cause his face to go into a grimace of pain.

And yet, when it was time for him to go, with his daughters, son and wife around his bed, he calmly, painlessly, lifted both arms toward the ceiling as if to receive a package. Or a Presence. It was as if he were getting assistance in stepping off of a curb, onto a street. Or



off of a rotating planet, into eternity.

We live under a shadow. Deep down, we know we’re going to die, and we know that the people we love are going to die. And we know that grief is excruciating. Grief is the companion of love, for when the person we love dies, our grief is the measure of that love.

When it comes to death, “What we must never do is get over it as soon as possible, or make as little of it as we can,” said Eugene Peterson. “‘Get over it,’ and ‘make little of it’ are unbiblical and inhuman. Denial and distraction are the standard over-the-counter prescriptions of our culture for dealing with loss; in combination, they’ve virtually destroyed the spiritual health of our culture.”

Imagine the grief of Jesus’ followers when he died. Mixed in with that grief was confusion—had they been misled

all this time? Did they just fall for one big cosmic joke? Or fear—would the authorities now come after them for being followers? Or guilt—should they have tried harder to protect Jesus? But mostly, I imagine, it was grief—grief over one they had loved, and who had loved them so purely.

Then imagine Mary at the empty tomb. Still grieving, still confused, still fearful, still guilty. All of those feelings blinded her to the Presence of God, standing in front of her. And then Jesus delivers what some say is the shortest sermon in the Bible. He simply says, “Mary.” The word pierces the grief, confusion, fear and guilt. It is God saying that he sees past all of the things that we think define us,

and Eternity speaks our name.

I imagine my father-in-law heard something similar—“Jim”—and his response was to raise his arms toward the voice.

The Risen Christ is near, and he is speaking your name, my name. He’s seeing past the things that lock us up—our grief, fear, doubt, confusion and guilt. What is the state of our being now?

Confident.



Dean Nelson directs the journalism program at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego. His book about seeing God in everyday life is “God Hides in Plain Sight: How to See the Sacred in a Chaotic World.”



Taking shots

Emotions run strong in vaccination debate

by LORI ARNOLD

The recent Disneyland outbreak, traced to an unvaccinated child visiting from overseas, is a good example of how a once-eradicated disease can come roaring back.

Just like any new mom, Mary Miller educated herself on the ABC's of childbirth and rearing, wading through often conflicting information in books, periodicals, and the World Wide Web. She listened to trusted friends, and got plenty of unsolicited advice, she prayed, read her Bible and soul-searched. The confusion over best approaches only seemed to magnify when the baby alphabet took her to the letter "V."

"There wasn't enough research, but a number of prominent voices in the anti-vaccine field were absolutely convinced that vaccines were tied to autism and I simply did not feel safe," she said.

Miller is not alone.

According to the California Department of Health, just 90.4 percent of public school children received all of their required immunizations for the 2014-15 school year, while the rate for private schools was even lower, at 87.3 percent.

While 90 percent is enough to earn an "A" in any classroom, proponents of childhood vaccinations say the state's rate is dangerous because of a phenomenon called "herd immunity." The concept, embraced by the Centers for Disease Control, means that by immunizing as many children as possible, those who

cannot take the vaccines because of serious medical conditions will be protected against outbreaks. Medical experts and the CDC recommend vaccination rates of at least 92 percent to maintain the sought-after herd immunity.

Although the debate over immunizations has percolated for decades—peaking with a now-debunked 1998 British study linking vaccines to autism—a recent outbreak of at least 140 measles cases tied to Disneyland and a new proposal to eliminate California's long-standing personal belief exemption for the shots has fueled increased angst on both sides.

...

When Miller's son, Ian, arrived in 2003, many parents were leaning on a study authored five years earlier by British researcher Andrew Wakefield, who concluded there was a direct correlation between autism and the combined measles, mumps and rubella vaccine. The study, though later proven to be fraudulent, instilled panic as parents opted to forgo the widely accepted health protocol. With the findings disputed and Wakefield accused of manipulating the



PHOTO BY SARAH TOLSON PHOTOGRAPHY
The Millers, Mark and Mary, and their children Ian and Julianna, have struggled over the issue of childhood vaccinations.

data for financial gain, the journal that published the study retracted it and the UK medical register stripped him of his license to practice medicine.

But those who question the mandated use of vaccinations argue that the same can be said for research supporting the use of vaccinations. In his documentary "Bought," producer Jeff Hayes discusses the lack of independent research and oversight in connection with vaccine development.

Dr. Tami Meraglia, who has an integrative and natural medicine practice

in Seattle, said in the documentary that more needs to be done to protect the integrity of the development process.

"Medications, including vaccinations, are not all bad, but they're not all good," she said. "We need to bring up questions. We need to have science and data be the focus and get the money people out of the conversation."

As a concerned mom, Miller agrees.

"This is a billion dollar industry and I kept thinking to myself, 'If vaccines really work, for the good of the public why don't they provide them free or at much more affordable rates?'" the Santee resident said. "If this was a 'public service' they wouldn't be making

insane amounts of money. There's a huge profit here. I'm always leery of anything that's being pushed upon the American people when it's for profit for somebody else."

As with many Americans, immunization costs were an issue for Miller and her husband, Mark, the pastor of a small congregation. When their second child, Julianna, was born in 2006, they had no health insurance and opted for a home birth.

"We had no way of paying for vaccines and she was home with us and I certainly felt like she wasn't in any kind of a risk category and I decided not to vaccinate her," Miller said.

When Ian began home-schooling a couple of years later, the Millers had him immunized.

"He did the vaccines, but he did them on my time table," she said. "I am still pro-



foundly uncomfortable with the idea of loading an infant with vaccines.

“I have also read about too many children who went in and overnight had severe reactions to the vaccines after what amounted to, like, 12 shots in one day.”

• • •

Dr. Brian A. Stenzler, a Pacific Beach chiropractor who serves as president of the California Chiropractic Association, said that California’s current vaccine schedule requires that children take 69 vaccine doses before their 18th birthday—49 of them required by age 6.

“Parents should be told of the benefits of vaccination, while also being provided an accurate presentation of the risks, which include a myriad of potential side effects, including death,” Stenzler said, adding that his organization takes no formal position on the use of vaccinations. “Many of our members choose to vaccinate their children and many choose



PHOTO BY SARAH TOLSON PHOTOGRAPHY

Dr. Brian A. Stenzler, a chiropractor with offices in the San Diego beach communities, believes there is enough uncertainty about vaccinating that parents should be given the choice of whether to immunize their children.



PHOTO BY CAROL SONSTEIN

Dr. Wayne True visits with patients and family friends Don and Denise Ashley. True, a family medicine physician in La Mesa, is a staunch advocate for childhood vaccinations. His work in Haiti confirmed to him what he learned about disease prevention in medical school.

not to vaccinate.

“Chiropractic is the largest drug-free healthcare profession in the country and as such, attracts people to become doctors of chiropractic who are typically more holistically oriented and prefer to avoid drugs and surgery for themselves and their families whenever possible.”

Despite frequent depictions that those who opt out of the vaccine protocols are naïve, uneducated or living on the fringe, Stenzler said chiropractors and their patients who make that choice do so out of deeply held beliefs in the body’s “inborn ability to heal and regulate naturally, all the while keeping their immune system functioning at the highest possible level.

“They often choose to live a proactive lifestyle consistent with building strong immune systems naturally which includes (but is not limited to) proper diet, exercise, relaxation, positive thinking, prayer, meditation and keeping their nervous system functioning optimally; rather than remain passive and ‘hope

not to be stricken with illness,” said Stenzler, whose Dream Wellness practice also operates an office in Del Mar.

• • •

While the chiropractic industry may be divided on the issue, traditional medicine is not. Those in public health circles and most private practice physicians believe strongly that failing to comply with the vaccine schedules is not only dangerous to young patients, it’s also perilous to the wider community.

The recent Disneyland outbreak, traced to an unvaccinated child visiting from overseas, is a good example of how a once-eradicated disease can come roaring back.

Dr. Wayne True, who specializes in family medicine through the Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Group, said his confidence in the safety and efficacy of vaccinations was formulated by his disease prevention work while earning a master’s degree in public health studies at the University of Michigan.

His views, he said, are also shaped by his own personal experience.

“When I was in fourth grade, a measles epidemic swept our school,” True

said. "One of my best friends had measles encephalitis, was never quite the same after the infection. In our school district there was at least one death from measles."

The disease, he said, was halted several years later after the immunizations were made available to the public.

True was further convinced while doing medical work in Haiti, where neonatal tetanus resulted in mortality rates of 50 percent. The infant deaths there stopped with the implementation of immunizations and training programs that taught midwives to use sterile razors to cut the umbilical cord and to tie them with sterile shoelaces. Because of those advances, True was able to help a woman through a successful pregnancy after losing 10 previous children to the disease, each dying within two weeks of birth.

"(It) made the efforts all worthwhile," he said.

While much of True's practice centers on the science of medicine, the physician said that as a practicing Christian his personal faith also plays a role in how he approaches healing.

"Through sin, death and disease entered in to the world," he said. "This includes the childhood diseases. It seemed right to me to use any of the modern medical advancements to prevent these illnesses. This seemed to be a blessing from God, that we could prevent some measure of disease and suffering in the world."

• • •

Although the link to autism has been disproved, there are still serious risks associated with the vaccines, many of which include trace amounts of mercury, aluminum, formaldehyde, antibiotics, eggs and MSG. The Internet is rife with testimonies from parents whose children



have experienced vaccine injury.

In 1986 Congress passed the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act in an effort to stabilize the country's vaccine program after juries began awarding large monetary damages for vaccine injury. As a result of the act, the government established the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, which pays expenses and reparations to families whose children have been harmed or killed by vaccines. More than \$2.8 billion has been paid out by the fund to date.

Among those receiving compensation were the parents of Porter Bridges, a now 20-year-old who suffers from autism and severe seizures resulting from a pertussis vaccination when he was just four months old. In the "Bought" documentary, his mother, Sarah Bridges, said medical costs associated with his care have topped \$2.1 million. After fighting the government for seven years the family finally reached a settlement.

Stenzler said compensation payouts from the fund demonstrate a real risk when taking vaccines.

"The feeling is, if there is risk, there should be a choice," he said.

True said although he once believed that all vaccines were good, he understands that some may be problematic with certain patients, something he witnessed first-hand in treating one of his teen patients.

"There is more data today on folks who react adversely to the trace amounts of preservatives, or some ingredient used

in manufacturing," he said, adding that patients should seek out preservative-free shots when possible.

According to the teen's mother, the young man responded to his childhood immunizations with extreme fever, marked behavior change, and then arrested mental development.

"The family chose not to immunize any more after the age 6-month shots," True said. "But by then the damage seems to have been done. He seems to have suffered the most severe type of reaction to the immunizations."

• • •

Last year, Miller reluctantly immunized her daughter, now 8, with several basic vaccines. As with Ian, it was an immensely difficult decision made even tougher with her own diagnosis two years ago of multiple sclerosis, an autoimmune disease that is highly reactionary to food and other environmental factors.

"One of the reasons that propelled me to vaccinate Julianna were all the illegal immigrants who were crossing the border," she said. "Some diseases that were extinct in the United States at one time are crossing the border now. We are seeing an upswing in this."

She also struggles with the decision on whether she will have Julianna take her follow-up shots since her daughter battled high fevers for two days after the injections.

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Despite pressure from her neurologist to take the standard minimally effective medicine for her MS, Miller, already an advocate of healthy eating, opted instead for a more holistic approach.

“I began to research the adulteration of our food supply,” she said. “I am in complete remission through a healing diet. How much of our corrupted food supply, coupled with overloaded toxins in our bodies, leads to some of the neurological conditions parents believe are caused by vaccines? I don’t know.”

She does know, however, that there are no simple answers, and that each parent needs to decide what works best for them, although she personally believes that children should not be immunized until they are at least six months old.

“While I wouldn’t identify as pro-vaccine, I also do not claim to be anti-vaccine,” she said. “You could call me an independent. I believe more solid, non-sensational research needs to be presented where parents can make an informed choice. I respect my friends who have chosen either path.

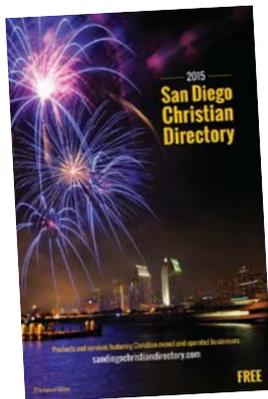
“I understand why the vaccine companies are trying to push this because they believe many people are not informed and educated and this is true,” she said. “There are people who make wild-hair decisions regarding their kids. But America is the great melting pot. We have people from all races, ethnicities, religions, cultural backgrounds and we have given people freedom to make their own decisions.”

Her true heart is that the dialogue will become more civil and people will stop demonizing the other side, whichever one that may be.

“It’s really challenging to swim upstream and to hold your belief and be willing to defend your belief in the face of ridicule and opposition,” she said. ■

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Who should choose?

Bill would eliminate parental opt-out option

by LORI ARNOLD

The moral and ethical questions surrounding vaccinations are not always clear-cut. Supporters maintain they are safe and effective. Opponents counter that research is suspect because of a corrupted money-centered process. The debate has left the public pondering a host of questions:

Should parents have the right to opt out? Should all children face reaction risks to protect those who can't or won't? What medical conditions merit a vaccination exemption? Is there a point when public safety should trump deeply held religious beliefs? Is it fair that some parents allow others to risk their children's health so they don't have to?

"The CCA does not feel that any one child is more important than another child," said Dr. Brian A. Stenzler, president of the California Chiropractic Association.

Stenzler said he believes the vaccination issue has stirred up visceral emotions because of three key factors: forced participation that squelches the basic medical tenet of informed consent; a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that has deemed vaccinations to be "unavoidably unsafe"; and parents left to bear all of the risks associated with vaccines since the drugs' manufacturers and health care providers are immune from liability.

But Dr. Wayne True, a family medicine doctor with Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Group, believes so strongly in their effectiveness that he won't treat families who don't vaccinate.

"Parents always have a right to not immunize," the La Mesa doctor said. "But I won't care for their children any more, and don't want their kids in public schools to put others at risk. I could not bear to watch a child die from an illness that could have been prevented by a simple immunization."

The right to not immunize, however,

is in jeopardy in California with the introduction of Senate Bill 227, a proposed law that would remove personal belief—including religion—as an acceptable exception to the state's immunization requirement. If it passes, the only acceptable waiver would be for certain medical conditions.

Although the California Chiropractic Association does not take an official position on the use of vaccinations, it has weighed in on SB 277.

"The real issue related to mandatory vaccination policy is that of parental choice," Stenzler said. "Should a parent have a say in what pharmaceutical products get injected into their child's body?"

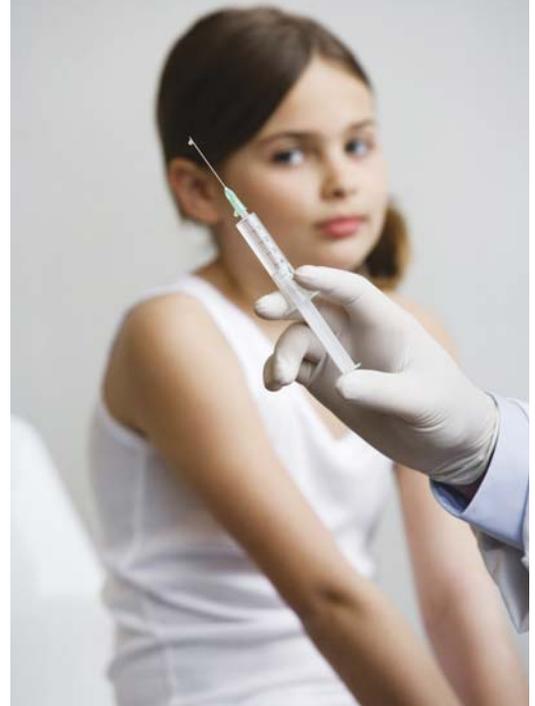
"We believe that regardless of one's position on vaccination, a parent should have the right to choose what is in the best interest of his or her child based on his or her religious or personal beliefs."

Stenzler points to a California mom who is fighting desperately to block the bill after her son developed severe reactions to his immunizations because of a compromised immune system he inherited from his mother. The family has spent three years and thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket expenses trying to detox his body from the shots. His younger sister has been tested and has the same immune issues. Unless her children have cancer they are unlikely to qualify for the hard-to-get medical exemption.

"The authors claim this bill is intended to protect those who cannot be vaccinated," she told Stenzler in a letter. "The reality is that this bill is forcing vaccines on those they claim to want to protect."

Stenzler said he is also concerned that the mandatory vaccination bill is open-ended.

"The California Department of Health would be permitted to add vaccines to



this schedule at any time, without limit, and without public input," he cautioned.

Impact on homeschoolers

Also concerned is the homeschool community, which could be significantly impacted by the law change since most families supplement their private instruction with programs included under the new provisions.

"If SB 277 passes as written, there will be no non-medically based exemptions for mandatory immunization of school-aged children (ages 6 and up) in California at all, homeschoolers included, other than those using the private tutoring option," said an opinion by Caitlyn Obolsky, an attorney with the HomeSchool Association of California. "This option requires that the parent hold a current California multiple-subject teaching credential and has various other restrictions."

Physician True, however, said it is vital that enough children are immunized in order to prevent a widespread outbreak, a concept known as herd immunity. Experts warn that geographical pockets with lower immunization rates put entire communities at serious risk.

"The risk of exposure remains high as long as we have open borders, and families who choose not to immunize," True said. "Herd immunity only works if all get immunized. We rely on herd immunity to help protect the very few who cannot respond to the immunization, have true allergy to it, etc. We should not rely on herd immunity for those who simply choose not to be immunized." ■

Field of

BLOOMS



The Carlsbad flower fields bring beauty to San Diego County

by LORI ARNOLD

Carlsbad's perennial rainbow carpet is once again in full bloom and eager to show off its breathtaking colors. And, thanks to the work of the Ecke family, The Flower Fields at Carlsbad Ranch are more than just another pretty face.

Now through May 10, visitors to the sloped, kaleidoscope hillside on the eastern edge of Interstate 5 will be treated to a wide range of activities, including concerts, picnics, photo contests, wagon rides and arts and crafts shows.

Since purchasing the property in 1993, the Eckes have developed the working coastal ranunculus farm into a seasonal family-friendly venue that leverages its tourism draw to help preserve the grounds for generations.

Although the 50-acre flower farm—and its newest edition, the 3,200-square-foot Paul Ecke Jr. Barn—hosts year-round special events, such as weddings, the parcel puts on its Sunday finest each spring, offering visitors a 10-week urban playground.

The star of the show is the farm's Giant Tecolote Ranunculus, which grow in 13 stunning colors, including a variegated plant called a picotee.

The showy spring production is also used as a popular teaching moment for school children from San Diego, Riverside and Orange counties. Each fall, a Flower Field instructor visits classrooms to teach about the ranch and the horticultural process in growing the peppery buttercups. After the presentation, each child is given their own pot, soil and bulb to cultivate on their own. In the spring, the students then participate in the second phase of the project by taking a literal "field trip" to the farm to see the plants in bloom up close. While there, students are also instructed on the benefits of recycling through the venue's on-site composting program.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE FLOWER FIELDS AT CARLSBAD RANCH

The day-to-day farming operations are handled by Mellano and Company, with whom the Eckes partnered when purchasing the business from Edwin Frazee. Frazee began his work with the tuberous bulbs as a teen-ager. His uncle, Earl Frazee, began cultivating the ranunculus in the 1920s while serving as foreman on a farm operated by horticulturist Luther Gage.

Gage, who like Frazee had success raising freesias, brought home a new seed from England, the ranunculus. He opened the Luther Gage Giant Tecolote Ranunculus business, naming the company after owls that were nesting nearby. Gage, who with his wife taught Bible study at Carlsbad Community Church, eventually brought the elder Frazee on as his business partner. Frazee bought the farm outright in the 1930s.

The younger Frazee, who quit high school to work the farm, proved to be adept at raising the bulbs, handpicking those with fuller flowers, double petals or an unusual color to replant the next year. Even as his farming expertise

expanded, he managed to weed out the competition and by the mid-'50s his was the only commercial growing operation

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Amenities: Picnic and picture-taking areas, handicap access, restrooms, shopping
Parking: Free
Tickets: Adults \$12; Seniors (60-plus) \$11; Children 3 to 10 \$6; Wagon rides are \$5 for adults and \$3 for children
Location: 5704 Paseo del Norte, Carlsbad
Info: www.theflowerfields.com
(760) 431-0352

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- April 5 Zydeco Day. The Bayou Brothers are known for their memorable accordion-based musical genre hailing from Louisiana!
- April 11 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.: Bluegrass Day. A musical journey of guitar, banjo and fiddle.
- April 12 Stoney B. Blues Band. Great entertainers and musicians rolled into one.
- April 18 Box Canyon Band. Acoustic bluegrass.
- April 19 Michele Lundeen. Dubbed the "Queen of Steam," she specializes in rhythm, blues, and rock 'n' roll.
- April 26 Blues Day. A Blues Pro All Star Jam, featuring some of the finest musicians in the community.

Daylong events

- April 19 Canon Photography Workshop. A macro-photography workshop set against the colorful backdrop of the Tecolote Ranunculous.
- April 26 Red Hat Ladies' Day. Celebrating the popular women's society, the day will include a fashion show, wagon ride, refreshments and door prizes.
- May 9-10 Bonsai Show and Sale. Art and horticulture will blend at this exhibition and sale.
- May 10 Celebrate Mother's Day on the final day of The Flower Fields season.

Arts and Crafts shows

The shows, set for April 4 and 5, 18 and 19, and 25 and 26, will feature an array of outstanding paintings, photography, and crafts by local artisans.

Learn more at www.theflowerfields.com.

in the nation. His success even caught the attention of National Geographic photographers.

Over the years, the fields were relocated several times, eventually landing on a parcel along Palomar Airport Road, with sweeping views of the ocean and its cooling breezes.

In an effort to help farm staff focus on the agricultural end of the business, the Eckes turned over the retail operations to Armstrong Garden Center in 1999.

While the ranunculous tend to grab all the headlines, the farm also has 2 acres dedicated to numerous specialty flowers, including the poinsettia, which the Ecker family has developed into a signature Christmas plant. ■

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Psalm 139:14

Float your way to relaxation

On the trip of a lifetime three years ago, Tom and I joined several friends on a 10-day, unforgettable visit to the Holy Land.

Our tour of Israel was a thrill! Among the highlights, a time of prayer at the Wailing Wall, a challenging hike up to the desert fortress, Masada and, like the early followers of Jesus, an emotional baptism in the Jordan River.

From the river, we traveled to the sea—the Dead Sea—for a nice swim. Actually you can't really swim in the hyper-salinated sea. The water is so super salty, all you can do is float. So you just lie back and enjoy bobbing around... relaxing in a warm, soothing, natural mineral bath. The sensation was so lovely, I didn't want to leave.

Guess what? The other day, I got to re-live that marvelous experience, not in Israel, but in San Marcos. In a cozy,

little nook behind Grand Avenue I found A Quiet Place Flotation Spa and went in for a time of relaxation and peace in its state-of-the-art floatation spa.

Spa owner Richard Fraccalvieri greeted me with a warm cup of Tranquility Tea, seated me in the comfy waiting area and prepared me for what to expect. Floatation therapy, he said, is a "luxurious escape from the constant stress of life's daily pressures and a natural way to heal the body and mind." He said the concept is, indeed, similar to the mineral salt bath I experienced at the Dead Sea.

Nearly 1,000 pounds of Epsom salt is dissolved into the spa tub of skin temperature water to create this effect. After showering off lotions and hair products, I stepped into the large, egg-shaped pod and lowered myself into the

warm bath.

My mind drifted back to my Dead Sea experience... as I floated effortlessly on my back. While you may want the pod opened slightly, I chose to close it completely, so my "float" would be light-proof and soundproof. The gentle roll of the water freed me of gravity, noise and other distractions.



For some, the experience is like deep meditation as body and mind achieve calmness... entering into a theta brain wave state and a profound state of relaxation. I found myself praying and thinking about things peaceful and lovely.

Although relatively new to the health spa industry, floatation therapy emerged in the 1950s through sensory deprivation research by John Lilly. It was mostly confined to academic work until the 1980s when other industries began exploring its benefits.

The treatment seeks to eliminate as much outside stimulus as possible by reducing light and sound and eliminating temperature differentials between the skin and surrounding air, while also creating a zero-gravity environment for the body. All those elements combined,

enthusiasts say, help usher the body and mind into a deep state of relaxation.

Others say the benefits of floating also extend beyond the treatment room. A widely cited study at The Ohio State University, for instance, found that floating resulted in improved creativity in jazz musicians, accuracy in rifle shooting, focus before academic

examinations, and stress relief, among other benefits.

In addition to universities and health spas, the floating chambers are now found in training rooms of professional sports teams, fitness centers and hospitals.

While some doctors and athletes use floatation therapy for neurological, circulatory, respiratory and digestive issues, others claim a decrease in chronic pain, depression and anxiety. But all who use the therapy regularly agree it feels great.

If, like me, you enjoy being surrounded by water... you will love the hour-long float. But even if you're not a water person, give it a try. You don't even have to get your face wet...and you can't sink even if you try. There are at least half a dozen spas offering the treatment in San Diego County.

Grandma always said a warm Epsom salt bath would do me good. Right again, Gram.



Learn more at www.carollebeau.com.

Carol LeBeau is a former 10News anchor, Staying Healthy reporter and current Health Champion for Palomar Health, avid runner, bicyclist and ranked, rough water swimmer.

WORDS for the whole WORLD

New methods, technology create
Bible translation boon

by LORI ARNOLD

Bible translation, which used to take as long as 30 or 40 years for a single language, is speeding up, thanks to new approaches and digital advances.



Volunteers with Wycliffe Associates, one of the globe's leading translation ministries, for instance, recently completed 48 percent of the New Testament in just two weeks through a pilot program using native-language translators.

"Rather than a single team translating their way through the Scriptures sequentially, multiple teams of national translators, church checkers, and certified translation consultants translate Scripture portions simultaneously, working in parallel," said Bruce Smith, president and CEO of Wycliffe Associates.

The new translation and training approach, Mobilized Assistance Supporting Translation, or MAST, launched late last year and included a group of minority Christians who were routinely persecuted for their faith.

"The whole translation strategy is based on learning principles that have been tested and proven over a long period of time in a wide range of educational settings," Smith said.

The 13 national translators were divided into teams of four, and each team was assigned one of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Next, each team member was assigned a portion of the book. The translators worked 12-hour days and completed approximately 34 verses each day, drafting during the mornings and using a five-step process to verify the verses in the afternoons and evenings.

By the end of two weeks, the group had completed the drafting and checking process for Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and 1 and 2 Timothy, representing approximately nearly half of the New Testament. The entire New Testament,



A Nepalese woman assists in a Bible translation project for Wycliffe. Since it is a country that persecutes Christians, the faces are not visible for their safety.

Smith said, should be ready to print sometime this summer. An audio version should also be completed by then.

During the project, Wycliffe officials said they found no decrease in the quality of the translation compared to traditional translation methods, which can take 25 to 30 years for completion of a New Testament. Even updated translation methods limited completion time to an average of 6 to 10 years.

While the pilot has proven successful, there is little time for these teams to rest, as translators estimate there are 30 to 40 more Asian languages still in need of the Bible. In addition, 25 other groups have asked Wycliffe Associates to facilitate the MAST strategy for their languages, and Wycliffe Associates has made plans to begin additional translations in 2015 using the MAST program.

"We have a rapidly expanding number of partners and languages who want to test this strategy as soon as is practical," Smith said. "The great news about this is that it will not only increase the number of languages that have Bible translation in progress, but it will also significantly expand the team of trained facilitators—meaning that even more languages can benefit in the years to come!"

Last year, 2,544 Wycliffe Associates

team members worked to speed Bible translations in 66 different countries.

In addition to the work by Wycliffe, other translation groups are using technology, including phone apps, to improve access as a way to eradicate "Bible poverty."

In February, for instance, Deaf Bible and DOOR International announced a new initiative to make Bible content available in more than 350 sign languages world-

wide, in hopes of increasing access to that population.

According to both groups, just 2 percent of the global deaf population has ever been exposed to the gospel.

DOOR International, an acronym for Deaf Opportunity OutReach, International, has trained deaf leaders in evangelism, discipleship, church planting and leadership development for more than 15 years. Eleven years ago they teamed up with the Wycliffe Global Alliance to begin work in sign language Bible translation. DOOR now has projects in 12 sign languages, with four more to begin this year.

Officials with Deaf Bible said they are committed to coming alongside translators to help get the sign language translations into the hands of those who need it.

"What we really see ourselves as is *translation accelerators*," said J.R. Bucklew, director of Deaf Bible. "Whether it's raising funds, providing support material and labor, or working on the newest tech innovations, we will do everything within our power to open God's Word to the Deaf."

The Deaf Bible is an online platform developed by Faith Comes By Hearing and is the No. 1 deaf app in the market, according to its website. ■

Prayers aboard the Midway

SAN DIEGO — Horizon Christian Fellowship will host a community-wide National Day of Prayer event, featuring a continental breakfast, from 7:30 to 8:45 a.m. May 7 aboard the USS Midway.

This year's national theme is "Lord, Hear Our Cry," based on I Kings 8:28.

A table for 10 can be reserved for \$250. Tickets will not be available at the door. The reservation deadline is April 15.

Parking is available at the USS Midway for \$10 and 2-hour metered parking, within walking distance of the museum, is \$1.25 per hour.

Reservations can be made by contacting Sandi Harman at sharman@hcf.org.

Creation workshop for kids

SANTEE — The Creation and Earth History Museum will hold its next monthly Kids Creation Club Workshop at 10 a.m. April 11.

The theme for the outing is "God's Glorious Creatures—Mysterious Creatures of the Deep."

The workshops offer a variety of activities to help promote learning.

Upcoming workshops include "Dinosaurs!" on May 2 and "Creeping Things" on June 6.

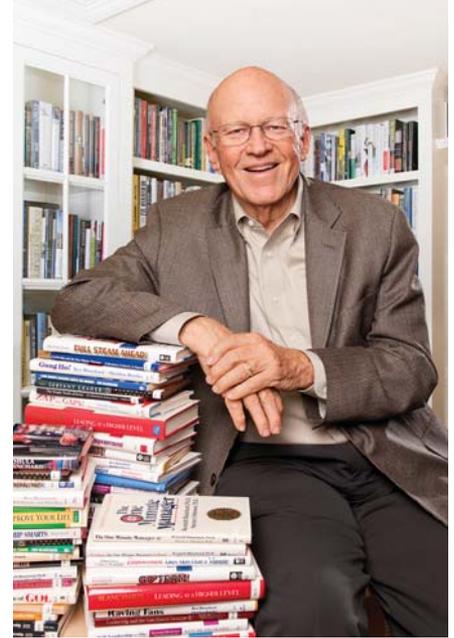
The museum will host daily workshops from July 8 to 11. The themes for those sessions will be "The Age of the Earth," "The Garden of Eden," "The Seven Ages of the Dinosaurs" and "The Mysteries of Ancient Man."

The museum is located at 10946 Woodside Ave. N.

Learn more at www.creationsd.org or call (619) 599-1104.

Blanchard updates old classic

SAN DIEGO — Management expert and best-selling author Ken Blanchard is releasing his newest project, "The New



Ken Blanchard

One Minute Manager."

An update of his previous *New York Times* best-seller, the latest venture offers tips on how to manage both the workplace and home.

When it was first released 30 years ago, the book sold millions of copies, becoming one of the best-selling business books in history.

The updated version, co-written with Spencer Johnson, is a classic parable of a

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“The One Minute Manager character has evolved exponentially over the last three decades, and Blanchard and Johnson realized how necessary it was to revisit his role in order to better reflect the modern workplace and home-life dynamic,” a news release said.

Blanchard, a San Diego resident, is also the author of “Lead Like Jesus.”

Escondido prayer breakfast

ESCONDIDO — The North County Prayer Breakfast will be held from 6:45 to 9 a.m. May 7 at the Escondido Center for the Arts.

Mark Roehr will be the musical guest. The featured speaker has not yet been announced.

In addition to hosting this annual event, the group holds monthly prayer meetings, scheduled for 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month at the California Center for the Arts in Escondido.

The venue is at 340 N. Escondido Blvd. Learn more at www.ncpsd.com.

Four-day conference explores culture

LA MESA — Skyline Church will present the “Future Conference,” a four-day seminar that explores some of the biggest challenges facing the church, from June 14 to 17. Scheduled speakers include Newt Gingrich, Star Parker and Bishop Harry Jackson.

Speakers from across the country will speak on a variety of topics, including cultural assessment, poverty and racism, Hispanics and immigration, Israel and radical Islam, saving persecuted Christians, reaching millennials, the church in this culture, media, entertainment media, religious liberty, terrorism at home, prison reform, economics, Asian influence, radical new evangelism, abortion vs. life, human traffick-

ing, marriage, emergency preparedness, pornography and pastors, and civil government.

The conference is free, but offerings will be taken. Registration is requested.

The church is located at 11330 Campo Road.

Learn more at www.skylinechurch.org or call (619) 660-5000.



tainment industry and other spheres of influence. The event will include special music.

For information, call (619) 890-2404.

‘Come As You Are’ women’s seminar

SAN MARCOS — The women’s ministry of Rock Church will hold a women’s seminar in San Marcos on April 11. The “Come As You Are” one-day event will be held at The Rock’s North County Sanctuary from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Dolores Marin will lead three sessions discussing Worthiness, Forgiveness and Freedom. Worship will be led by Tina Misel.

The cost is \$15 and includes a continental breakfast and lunch.

The church is located at 1470 La Costa Meadows Dr., Suite 200.

For more information or to register, visit www.sdrock.com/events/15480.

Praying for Coronado and beyond

CORONADO — Churches around the community will come together at 7 p.m. May 7 at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church for the 9th annual National Day of Prayer observance.

Featured guests will lead the gathering in focused prayers for elected officials, government leaders, the enter-

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EVENTS ONLINE

For more Community News and an online Calendar of Events for San Diego County, please visit www.refreshedsandiego.com.

It was a very full year

In 1993, a U.S. postage stamp was 29 cents, gas was \$1.09 a gallon and the average price of a home was \$125,000. National headlines included the conviction of two Los Angeles police officers in the beating of Rodney King, the first bombing at the World Trade Center in New York and the fiery end to the Branch Davidian cult siege that left 72 people dead.

It was also a transformational year for Sean C. Johnson, who struggled with the death of his mother and viewed pornography for the first time. That year he also fell in love with music and discovered Jesus Christ. All four events have merged into *Circa 1993*, a new album from the former Air Force Staff Sergeant.

“Each song on the album will be told through the lens of these four events and give listeners a peek into what shaped me,” he said. “When I was kid I loved

reading comic books. The issues I enjoyed the most were the ones that told a hero’s origin story. This album is my ‘origin story.’ While I’m no hero, I do have a story to tell.”

As the son of a music teacher, Johnson was influenced by Sunday family dinners, singing along to the likes of The Winans, The Clark Sisters, and Sam Cooke. His song “Mountains” is a moving tribute to the indie artist’s late mother.



Soul musician Sean C. Johnson takes on his past with his new album ‘Circa 1993.’

‘Anchor’ ahoy

Colton Dixon, the seventh-place finisher in Season 11 of “American Idol,” is busy touring the East Coast in advance of the May 31 K-LOVE Fan Awards at the Grand Ole Opry House.

Still a relative newcomer on the Christian music scene, with his sophomore album “Anchor” releasing late last summer, Dixon has already earned favor in the industry, bringing home a Male Artist of the Year nomination—for the second straight year.

Since appearing on “American Idol” in 2012 Dixon has received three Dove Award nominations, winning for Best Contemporary/Rock Album. His debut album, “A Messenger,” brought two No. 1 radio singles in 2013 and set the record for biggest first-week sales by a new solo Christian act, becoming the No. 1 selling album of 2013 by a new Christian artist and the No. 9 best-selling album of 2013 in the Christian genre overall.

Following the success of his first album, Dixon said he realized how easy it is to become distracted and to drift away from one’s purpose, prompting the album title “Anchor.”

The K-LOVE awards, launched three years ago, provide the only fan-driven Christian award show.



Protecting at-risk infants

The Newsboys, who head to Southern California in June for two concert appearances, have partnered with Food for the Hungry as part of the band’s “We Believe...God’s Not Dead” 2015 Spring Tour.

The 40-plus city tour comes to Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre in Irvine on June 12 and then makes an appearance the following day at Spirit West Coast in Ontario. The single-day music festival is at Citizens Business Bank Arena.

At each concert, Gotee recording artist Finding Favour will share information about Food for the Hungry and the organization’s child sponsorship program. To help prevent the passing of HIV/AIDS to unborn babies, the Newsboys will provide one month of medical treatment for expectant patients at New Life Clinic in Uganda for every child sponsorship collected during the tour.

Lead singer Michael Tait, whose sister died of AIDS after a history of drug abuse, has taped a special video that will be shown during each performance.

Founded in 1971, Food for the Hungry provides emergency relief and long-term development programs in more than 20 countries.

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Spirit West Coast to hold single-day festival at San Diego County Fair

by LORI ARNOLD

DEL MAR — Spirit West Coast, which took a two-year hiatus from San Diego County, returns to the Del Mar Fairgrounds June 25 for a single-day event in conjunction with the San Diego County Fair.

The festival will feature Third Day, Rend Collective, Brandon Heath and The Afters.

“The SWC ministry organization couldn’t be more thrilled about bringing ministry and music back to San Diego,” said Jon Robberson, director of Spirit West Coast. “Having presented eight festivals there from 2004 to 2012 we’ve missed having an event in recent years. We’re excited that the Lord has given this opportunity to return.”

Christian-oriented music is not new to the San Diego County Fair, which for the past decade has hosted a Gospel music festival. The 11th annual Gospel Festival will also return this year, set for June 27.

The traditionally multi-day festival, which had been alternating between Northern and Southern California in recent years, has emerged with a new format and scope: three single-day events in June. Spirit West Coast is produced in association with Celebration Concerts and Transparent Productions.

In announcing the new format last year, Robberson said the shortened festival schedule allows them to cut high-cost logistical and structural requirements, including camping options.

“As a nonprofit ministry our goal and purpose is to not only provide incredible Christian music entertainment but even more so to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ,” Robberson said at the time. “The (new) event model allows us to accomplish these goals and we’re excited about seeing many newcomers turn out, plus the many thousands who have

attended Spirit West Coast in the past.”

One result of the changes is a reduction in ticket costs, which can draw even more fans, he said.

The first festival will be held in Ontario on June 12, followed by a June 14 date in Concord. The abbreviated format was first tried last summer at both those cities. Tickets are now available for all three festivals.

The play list for the Inland Empire event at Citizens Business Bank Arena includes TobyMac, Newsboys, Matt Redman, Hillsong Young & Free and Rend Collective.

For those interested in a trip to Northern California, the Concord festival will also feature TobyMac and Hillsong Young & Free, plus For King and Country, Mandisa and San Diego’s own Jon Foreman, frontman for Switchfoot.

Unreserved tickets for Del Mar are



Brandon Heath will join Third Day, Rend Collective and The Afters for the June 25 Spirit West Coast.

\$20, with reserved seats available from \$25 to \$150 for VIP floor. Tickets for Ontario range from \$14.50 to \$39.50 for general seating, with premium Gold Circle and VIP tickets going for \$65 to \$150. The online ticket vendor for that festival offers a nifty free option to reserve seats for friends, giving them a limited time period to make the purchase.

Learn more at www.spiritwestcoast.org.



Christian rock band Third Day returns to San Diego this summer for the single day Spirit West Coast festival, to be held in conjunction with the San Diego County Fair.

'Little Boy' packs big message

by LORI ARNOLD

Life can be especially cruel when you are 7 and the world is at war. It's even more so when you are unusually small and the war comes closer to home in the form of a bulky town bully and his small army of tormentors.

"Little Boy," a new offering by the makers of the surprise independent hit "Bella," is a feel-good story about conflict, will and faith. It's an exceptional piece of filmmaking that leaves viewers wishing for more. It opens April 24.

"Little Boy" follows the story of Pepper Busbee, his hero-father James Busbee, and their storybook relationship. In the comfort of their living room the two partners embark on great adventures as pirates and cowboys and bandits. They track the exploits of comic book magician Ben Eagle and adopt his motto, "Do you believe you can do this?"

Around O'Hare, a sleepy fishing village with clapboard homes and mom-and-pop shops, dad and son share moving pictures, ice cream cones and bike rides.

Pepper's world is shattered, though, when the Army rejects his older brother's application to join the war effort. Their dad must go in his place. In a tearful bus-side send off, Dad looks his son in the eyes and says, "Do you believe you can do this?"

"Yes, I believe I can do this," Pepper responds with quivering lips.

Emily Watson shines in her understated role as Emma Busbee, Pepper's mom. Vulnerable but composed she dedicates herself to protecting her sons, including London, who is tasked with keeping the Busbee & Sons Garage in business while dealing with his own issues of guilt and rage.

The rage is manifested on Hashimoto, an elderly Japanese man who moves to their village after being released from an American concentration camp. Hashimoto quickly becomes a scapegoat for the war and "Little Boy" captures the



In a scene from 'Little Boy,' Pepper Busbee (Jakob Salvati) finds himself on rollercoaster journey while seeking the faith to bring his dad home from war.

pain and ugliness of racism.

Newcomer Jakob Salvati is no doubt the star, not by way of the script, but by the sheer force of his acting. When his heart bleeds so does yours; when he steps out in faith, your own soars; when he marches to victory, you are ready for the prize.

After listening to a sermon by Father Crispin, Little Boy is inspired to do whatever it takes to bring his father home.

"If we have faith the size of a mustard seed, we can move a mountain, if we can move a mountain then nothing will be impossible for us, not even ending this war and having our loved ones back," the priest tells his congregants.

In search of his own mustard seed, Little Boy submits to the guidance of Father Oliver, the parish's senior leader. Under his hand, Little Boy embarks on a journey to strengthen his faith through acts of mercy: feeding the poor, visiting the sick and burying the dead. But Father Oliver adds one more item to the list: befriend Hashimoto.

"Are you craazy?" the incredulous child blurts out.

"You're faith won't work if you have even the slightest bit of hatred in you." Father Oliver says.

Over time the reluctant friendship

blossoms and Hashimoto encourages Little Boy to stand up for himself in the midst of incessant taunting.

"Don't measure yourself from here to the floor," Hashimoto said as he laid his hand upon the boy's head. Then moving it to the child's chin he adds, "Measure yourself from here to the sky. It makes you the tallest boy in town."

Alejandro Monteverde (who also directs) and Pepe Portillo create a masterful, heartwarming story that tackles issues of faith and God's will without sermonizing. They also succeed in capturing the undertones, anger—and the potential for redemption—that permeate racism. There are twists and turns and hills and valleys, symbolic of an authentic walk of faith.

The cinematography—featuring stunning coastal scenes captured in Rosarito, Mexico—and the musical score is what you would expect from Hollywood.

Executive Producer Eduardo Verástegui, who also appears as Father Crispin, said "Little Boy" was a labor of love.

"This movie took five years of our lives for 1 hour and 45 minutes of your time and we hope it touches your heart," Verástegui said.

It was five years well spent. Don't miss it.

The power of community

If we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other. — I John 1:7

My wife has a brother, Steve, who has been an alcoholic for most of his life. Given that he is 56 years old, his alcoholism has spanned decades. The good news is that he has broken the chains of addiction and is now more than six months sober.

During the last few months, he has reached out to family and re-established relationships. We thought he was a lost cause, having reached out to Steve many times in the past, so you can imagine our surprise when he made a move in our direction.

He came to stay with us for six weeks. During this time, I saw him go to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings once or twice a day. He would often pedal his way to a local meeting on a bicycle while my wife and I were at work. I was amazed at how many AA meetings were available to him within our community. This time, he was determined to make his recovery successful.

After all the research conducted by psychologists over the past 20 years on human addiction, impulse control and recovery, nothing has been as successful in helping alcoholics stay sober as AA.

I called Steve and asked him what the secret was to his success thus far. He said that like-minded friends who provide support, honesty and accountability have made this process much more bearable.

“We do life better because we are doing life together,” he said.

How true! The power of small groups, where you are able to be open, honest and accountable, is synergistic. I have the opportunity of facilitating several small groups as a professor at a local Christian university and as a clinician at a private practice. In both

venues, people benefit from being connected and accountable.

If we were to be analyzed from space by an alien sociologist, he would describe human beings as creatures who cluster together in groups. From the nuclear family to large metropolises, humans need each other to function at maximum capacity. In fact, to not have this need is abnormal enough to warrant the diagnosis of Schizoid Personality Disorder.



No wonder the church is described as a body of believers who interact together (I Corinthians 12:12). When churches create small groups where individuals can find safe relationships, and trust is built on honesty, then these individuals are “doing life better.”

Unfortunately, there are those who prefer to avoid connection and the risk of being known by others (see Hebrews 10: 24-25). They can cite the ills of “organized religion,” but often this is simply a cover for a deep fear of emotional intimacy that has resulted from wounds inflicted upon them in the past.

The best way to overcome any fear is to face it again—but not alone this time. Do it as part of a team of like-minded friends who have the same goals as you. If you meet up with friends once or

twice a day, like my Steve, or just once a month, and listen to what others are sharing from their lives, you will gain clarity, new insights and sharper perspectives on just about any topic.

When you add in the guidance and wisdom from God’s Word, you add another level of synergism.

Once he gained sobriety, brother Steve has reached out to his family. This was a frightening, huge step for him. More importantly, he has also reached

out to God and is now trying to grow in his faith. In addition to AA meetings, he is now going to church and he is learning what it means to be a part of the body of Christ.

Likewise, may you find connection in small groups with others who are also fixing their eyes on Christ (Hebrews 12:2).

Try it and see if you will be “doing life better.”



Daniel Jenkins, Ph.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist at Lighthouse Psychological Services in Mission Valley. He is also a professor of psychology at Point Loma Nazarene University. Learn more at www.lighthousepsy.com.

MARK LARSON

The heap of history

When I announced my recent trip to Israel, reaction included comments such as, “Is it safe over there?” or simply, “Why?!?” One of my favorites was, “Other than sand and camels, what’s there?”

I decided to go for several reasons, the foremost being the opportunity to travel to a place I’d never seen in person. Since our radio stations were preparing similar trips for listeners this fall, it was also a chance to experience a “sneak preview.”

There’s more, of course, considering the crucial current events going on in that region, and plenty of archeology dating back thousands of years. More than anything it was a way to be immersed in biblical history, while gaining a broader perspective about what really matters in life.

In his fascinating book, “Jerusalem: The Biography,” author Simon Sebag Montefiore notes that the city “has a way of disappointing and tormenting both conquerors and visitors. The contrast between the real and heavenly cities is so excruciating that a hundred patients a year are committed to the city’s asylum.”

While he may overdo it in his analysis it’s true that people are often surprised by what they see in places they’ve only dreamed about.

Part of the perception problem for many Americans is due to being blessed to live in the USA. Unless a person gets a chance to travel internationally, it’s easy to assume other places are just like home. Rarely does something we have cultivated in our fertile imagination match reality.

Jerusalem is historic, yes, and yet at the same time a thriving, busy and hard-to-comprehend place. Famous locations are often crammed in the midst of urban development. Jews, Palestinians, Christians, Muslims all live together in a region riddled with daily challenges and tension due to centuries of conflict.

At the same time families and com-

munities thrive, business expands and increasing numbers of people move to Israel, especially those of the Jewish faith escaping red-hot persecution elsewhere.

Despite all of that, I felt very safe when traveling in the Holy Land... more than in some American cities. Security is tight and not always easy to spot, but it’s there. Israel knows what to do to keep its people safe.

I was impressed with how small the region is, and how so many places of tremendous significance are so near. Standing on the Golan Heights, in the snow (an unusual occurrence) I noted that Damascus was only about 25 miles away. On a clear day it’s possible to see civil war battles in the distance. I was standing next to minefields from the 1973 and 1967 wars.

In the course of just one day we were at the borders of Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

It’s all so tightly packed. Gaza is not far south from Tel Aviv, and when sandstorms come the sand is from the Sinai in Egypt.

We visited Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jericho... all now controlled by the Palestinian Authority, with more fences, walls and checkpoints.

The itinerary included the Sea of Galilee, Tiberius, Caesarea by the Sea, Capernaum, the Dead Sea and Masada. There was also the Western Wall, the Temple Mount, City of David, Mount of Olives and the Garden Tomb (still empty).

Suddenly those maps in the back of my Bible came to life for me.

There was our meeting with a very bold Palestinian Christian pastor who has a Baptist church in Bethlehem.

And we spent midday at one of the largest Messianic Jewish congregations in the region, a place where they also house women from Africa who have been victims of human trafficking, and where Sudanese orphans find refuge.

As I think about all of the sights and sounds and issues, and give thanks for



Mark Larson visits the ruins of the ancient city of Beit She’an at the junction of the Jordan River Valley and the Jezreel Valley. When the Philistines killed King Saul, his body was hung on the walls of the city.

new friends made along the way, I remember the impact of the Western Wall and its underground tunnels. As I stood there and gazed into a very deep archeological pit, it was clear.

In layer of layer of rubble, back to the time of King Herod and beyond, there are remains of the big rulers of their day.

In their time, they each felt like “King of the World”... and often proclaimed that they were. Yet as the centuries marched on, new leaders piled on the previous regimes with their own.

And now, their empires are all in the heap of history. Fame is indeed fleeting. But Jerusalem stays essential, living on and more important today than ever.

And God’s not finished with the neighborhood yet.



Larson is a longtime Southern California radio/television personality. His voice is heard on KPRZ 1210AM and his weekday talkshow airs 6 to 9 a.m.

on AM 1170 “The Answer.” He’s also a news analyst on KUSI TV. Learn more at marklarson.com.

When a nutritionist gets cancer

Duane and his wife Linda had been a part of our church home fellowship for the past year and a half. Nicknamed “Tree” because of his ability to reach to the heavens to catch a ball, Duane, a 6-foot, 5-inch world champion Over the Line player was considered a legend among his peers. He was also the father of two great kids, and a loving husband.

A few months back, Duane complained of intense stomach pain and was taken to the emergency room. Three days later he was diagnosed with cancer in multiple organs and three weeks later he entered into eternity.

As Duane was battling cancer, family, friends, co-workers and teammates descended upon Grossmont Hospital daily with profound disbelief. This gentle giant was slipping away before our eyes and, despite our cries and objections, fundraisers and prayer vigils, he left us.

To watch the strength and peace Linda displayed was a supernatural gift. We felt honored to be in her presence. The memorial was like no other; loss and comfort, victory and hope. Duane knew his Savior and we would see him one day. The sting of death would be overcome with unimaginable joy, but for now we were all stunned and hurting.

Part of my therapy was working on a Refreshed column about Duane’s journey. I wanted to honor the impact he had on so many lives and proclaim the peace I witnessed amid chaos.

While writing the story, I was also busy packing for a trip to India with a dear friend, a trip 10 years in the making. The hotels were reserved, the plane tickets purchased.

I had been experiencing some fatigue, a little bloating and a few other minor symptoms so I decided to see my gynecologist. Nothing terrible I thought, but after a few tests, it was.

“Kim you have uterine cancer,” my

doctor said. She said I needed to see a gynecological oncologist right away and start a game plan. India and my article were not to be.

The raw memory of Duane’s homecoming just a few weeks before flashed through my mind. I was not ready to leave this earth. I wanted to see my nieces get married and have kids, continue in ministry and be with our parents as they aged.

When my husband Brandon and I arrived at my parents’ home, we explained the situation, sobbed, then held each other tightly. My Dad said, “We need to pray right now.” The peace of God surrounded us as we called on Him. I remember asking the Lord to let me see the blessings in this serious battle, and to be very real to me every minute as I clung to Him for strength.

Mounting a fight

With incredible speed, we were setting up doctor’s appointments, contacting our insurance company and sharing the news with close friends. Dr. Afshin Bahador, a well-respected gynecological oncologist, was highly recommended and we were in his office that week. I had so many questions. I needed time to do research! He and his staff were compassionate and caring, sure to answer every question and address every concern. In my case, I needed surgery, and a full hysterectomy was scheduled.

I found my relationship with the Lord grew deeper and richer as I immersed myself in reading the Psalms. My husband would wake up in the early morning hours and lay hands on me to pray. He gave me assurance we would fight this together and he would be by my

side, a vow we had taken on our wedding day. I found I needed time to grieve the loss of my own health. My body was at war inside, cancer cells were dividing and I had little control.

The morning of my surgery, my family and friends took over the waiting room at Sharp Mary Birch Hospital.

I clenched the handmade quilt my support group made me and I was ready for battle.

Dr. Bahador joined us all in prayer

I found I needed time to grieve the loss of my own health. My body was at war inside, cancer cells were dividing and I had little control.

and my sister-in-law, a nurse there, held my hand as I went under.

God chose to spare my life that day and the surgery was a success. The love, well-wishes and support was overwhelming. My healing was rapid and I’m back doing what I was meant to do in life; sharing hope and giving encouragement.

Psalms 90:12 reads: “Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom.” May you thrive as well, and experience the fullness of grace as you seek Him first!



Kimberly Ruby, certified nutritionist at University Compounding Pharmacy, has been in the wellness industry for more than 20 years. She has been facilitating one of the

longest running weight management support groups in the nation, meeting weekly in the North County for 10 years. Her health segments have appeared on local news channels.

MICHAEL FOUST

4 ways to raise selfless kids

My youngest son is 3 years old, and he, like all of us, struggles to put others first. His selfish moments, though, tend to be louder—and at the same time, funnier.

For example, there was the moment a few months ago when he was having an extra-difficult time playing with his twin sister. My wife had taught him to treat girls with respect and kindness, and even had taught him to be a “gentleman”—a word that I reminded him of that afternoon when he and his sister were fighting over a toy.

“But I don’t want to be a gentleman!” he screamed to no one in particular, tugging even harder at that toy, determined to get it back.

He was perfectly fine with the death of chivalry that afternoon, as long as he got his way.

Of course, it wasn’t the first time that he had exhibited a stubborn streak of selfishness, nor is he alone. His sister often is the instigator, and if not her, it’s her 7-year-old brother.

Young couples who deny the doctrine of original sin get a wake-up call when they have their first child. A baby’s first words often are, in order, “da-da” and “ma-ma,” followed quickly by “no!” and then “mine!”

Children aren’t taught to be selfish. It comes naturally—and then tugs at each of us every day throughout adulthood until we breathe our last breath.

We can teach our children to be selfless while learning valuable lessons ourselves. Here are four ideas:

1 Observe Christ. And follow His example. The greatest person ever to walk on earth also was the most humble. He created the world ... and then entered it in the form of a helpless baby. He performed miracles ... and days later, washed feet. He lived a sinless life ... but willingly died

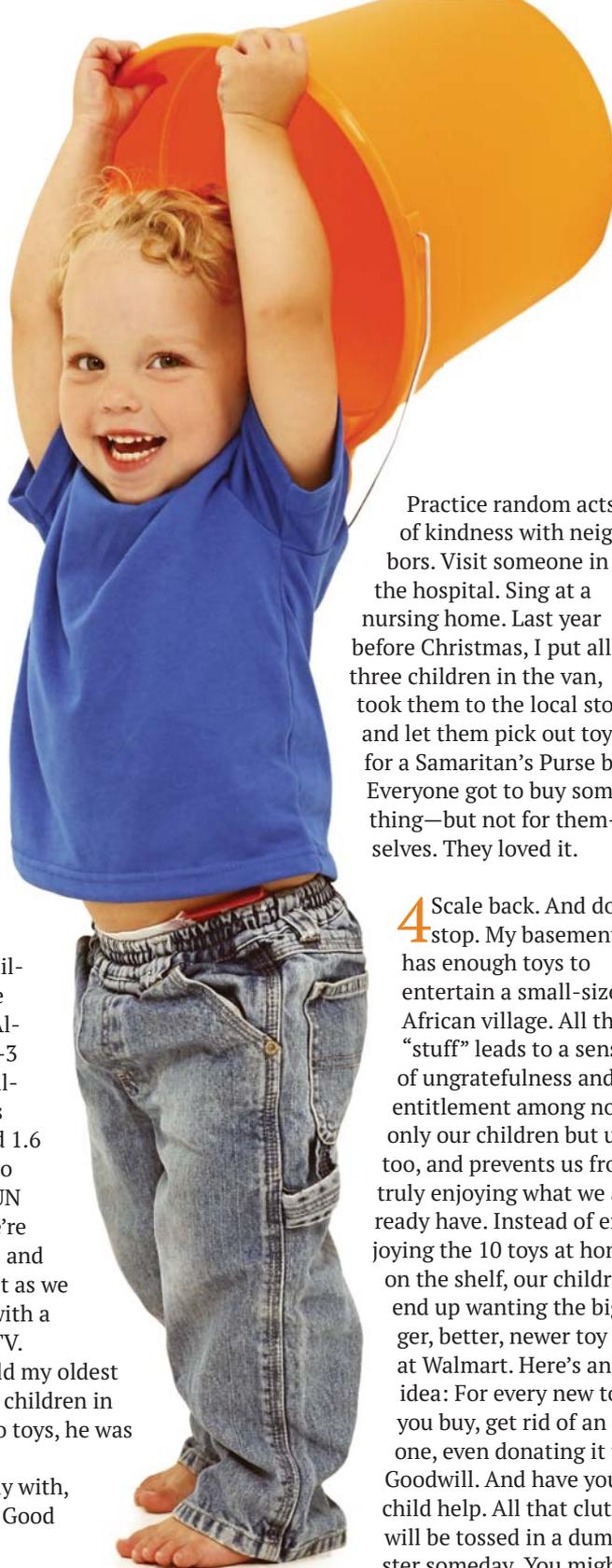
for the sins of the world. The theme of His entire life on earth was loving and serving others. When my children are at their worst and need a “heart-to-heart” talk, we talk about a lot of subjects—but we often begin with Christ.

2 Observe others. And be humbled. About 600 million children in the world live in extreme poverty. Almost half the world—3 billion adults and children—survive on less than \$2.50 a day. And 1.6 billion people have no electricity. (Source: UN data.) Meanwhile, we’re sipping on \$5 coffees and ordering \$20 take-out as we entertain ourselves with a \$1,000 wide-screen TV.

The first time I told my oldest child that there were children in the world who had no toys, he was floored.

“What do they play with, then?” he wondered. Good question, son.

3 Serve others. And be transformed. Puritan preacher John Bunyan once said, “You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.” Lessons on selflessness begin in practical ways in the home, but to take it to the next level with your child, step outside your door.



Practice random acts of kindness with neighbors. Visit someone in the hospital. Sing at a nursing home. Last year before Christmas, I put all three children in the van, took them to the local store, and let them pick out toys for a Samaritan’s Purse box. Everyone got to buy something—but not for themselves. They loved it.

4 Scale back. And don’t stop. My basement has enough toys to entertain a small-sized African village. All that “stuff” leads to a sense of ungratefulness and entitlement among not only our children but us, too, and prevents us from truly enjoying what we already have. Instead of enjoying the 10 toys at home on the shelf, our children end up wanting the bigger, better, newer toy at Walmart. Here’s an idea: For every new toy you buy, get rid of an old one, even donating it to Goodwill. And have your child help. All that clutter will be tossed in a dumpster someday. You might as well get a head start.



Michael Foust is the father of three small children, a writer and editor, and blogs about parenting at www.michaelfoust.com.

Practically speaking...

In matters of life and death (part 2)

Life insurance is a powerful tool. Purchasing and updating your protection are important but often confusing decisions. To begin the conversation about your needs, ask yourself these questions. How much do I need? How long will I need it? How flexible do I need to be? How much can I afford?

Here are the five basic types of life insurance policies to consider. Each one provides a death benefit but differs significantly in design. “Term” life insurance is the least expensive because you are simply renting it for a specific period of time rather than potentially owning it for life. The remaining options are considered “permanent” because of lifetime death benefits and cash value components. As a general rule, the more you expect your policy to do for you, the higher the premium per dollar of death benefit provided. This is largely due to the savings feature, higher fees, and commissions. There are many features and nuances—too numerous to explain here—so be sure to seek qualified advice, especially if you have advanced planning needs, are a high income earner, business owner or are considering advanced charitable giving or estate planning solutions.

TERM — typically provides maximum death benefit for the lowest initial premium and comes in two forms: 1) Annual renewable term premiums start very low but increase as you get older, 2) Level term has a fixed premium for a set number of years such as 10, 20 or 30 years. For pure basic protection, this is typically the most affordable solution for families in need of significant coverage with limited financial resources. As family needs change, consider layering various term policies to coincide with time needed. This along with a systematic investment plan may eventually help you eliminate your need for a death benefit.

WHOLE LIFE — is designed for permanent coverage your entire life. It provides guaranteed benefits, level premiums, and savings accumulation. Many policies pay dividends that can be taken in cash or used to purchase paid-up coverage. Contracts require premiums to be paid over one’s lifetime, though they may be paid up sooner through dividends.

UNIVERSAL LIFE (UL) — provides both a death benefit and savings accumulation but differs from term and



whole life in that you can vary the amount and timing of your premiums. You can also potentially increase or decrease your death benefit. As long as you maintain sufficient cash value, the UL provides more flexibility than Whole Life. Caution: with the flexibility in this type of policy comes additional risk that should be understood!

VARIABLE UNIVERSAL LIFE (VUL) — is a cousin to UL with a major difference—growth in cash value can be tied to performance of various investment options you select (equity, bonds, cash, etc.). It has the potential for greater cash value growth than UL because of good investment performance, but can also lose significant value in declining markets. The owner of a VUL bears the full investment risk, which can greatly impact the policy’s performance.

INDEX UNIVERSAL LIFE (IUL) — is another cousin to UL but can potentially provide greater growth opportunity than UL with less risk than VUL. It is important to understand that IUL policies are linked to the performance of one or more financial market indexes such as S&P 500 or Nasdaq-100, subject to floors for downside protection and caps that can limit upside potential. They usually include a fixed-rate crediting option, too. IUL may provide greater downside protection than a VUL, but the upside potential is also more limited.

As important as your initial purchase of life insurance might be, the need for a periodic review is just as important—because life happens! Major events such as marriage, adding dependents, significant debt or a new mortgage are among the triggers that should prompt a review. If you have older policies, evaluate the strength and stability of the insurer through “Best’s Insurance Reports” (www.ambest.com). And keep in mind, it may make the most sense to keep an older cash value policy from a quality insurer as upfront costs and commissions are typically spread over longer periods of time.

Experiencing any life changes lately? Life insurance, while initially perplexing and intimidating, is a powerful tool in your financial plan. Don’t let the confusing terms scare you off!



Janice Thompson is a certified financial planner and co-founder/CEO of One Degree Advisors, Inc. A frequent speaker on financial topics and mentor for financial

professionals, she also serves on the board of directors for Kingdom Advisors. Learn more at www.onedegreeadvisors.com.

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RICK HANDLOSER

Lame changer

Alan Oliviera stood on the medal stand with his gold medal firmly between his teeth, flashing a winning smile as broad as the Amazon River of his homeland, Brazil. He had earned the title of fastest double amputee in the world by running the 100 meters in 10.77 seconds.

His journey to this golden moment began when, at 8 days old, to save his life from a spreading infection, both of his legs were amputated below the knee.

At 8 years old, though, he was racing kids in his neighborhood and winning, running on two prosthetics that were as rudimentary and crude as a pair of logs. The “blades” he now runs on have competitors with two good legs complaining about an unfair advantage that science has given Alan.

His advantage has never been external.

Alan Oliviera has had an advantage in his heart since he first lined up to race the boys in the plaza of his hometown. What is a lame man doing running in a race? It’s absurd. It’s wonderful.

In the Bible, a man with a defect such as Alan’s couldn’t be considered to minister before God regardless of whether his heart desired it or not, as we see in Leviticus 21:18-21a:

“For any man who has a defect shall not approach: a man blind or lame, who has a marred face or any limb too long, a man who has a broken foot or broken hand, or is a hunchback or a dwarf, or a man who has a defect in his eye, or eczema or scab, or is a eunuch. No man of the descendants of Aaron the priest, who has a defect, shall come near to offer the offerings made by fire to the Lord.”

This was to show that whoever would serve in the Lord’s presence had to be perfect. With a last name like Handloser, I guess I am excluded! With the rest of



Alan Fonteles Cardoso Oliveira at the 2013 IPC Athletics World Championships.

me, for that matter, I am excluded. I am so lame! My heart is the worst of it.

As wildly absurd as a legless man running in a race is the fact that the God who made Earth and everyone in it became one of us in humble fashion, a baby born in a manger to poor peasants in a nowhere town. He is the opposite of Alan Oliviera who, through science, has put on a strength that threatens the strong. Jesus put on our weakness to encourage the weak. In fact, Jesus tells a parable beginning in Luke 14:15 that shows the Father’s desire, in the light of the Love that Jesus has for the world, that He would give His life to save.

“Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, ‘Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!’ Then He said to him, ‘A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’ But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’”

“So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.’ And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’ Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.’”

You can make excuses for not starting the race of faith. Or you can have the heart of a champion and follow Jesus in spite of your weaknesses. In the Olympics there is only room for one on the winner’s podium, but in God’s Hall of Champions, He says to you, “There is still room,” and His desire is that “my house may be filled.”



Rick Handloser is an author, a coach and a pastor at Calvary Chapel San Diego where he oversees the Children’s Ministry, acts as the AWANA Commander,

writes and directs VBS, and any other possible activity that involves capturing the hearts of kids for the Kingdom.

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JOANNE BROKAW

10 ways to know you're ready to get a puppy

A friend recently told me that her husband and son are trying to convince her to get a puppy. "I'm trying to be positive about the whole thing," she explained as she asked her dog-owning friends for advice. But she clearly has her doubts.

The decision to add a dog to your family is a big one. That cuddly ball of puppy fur will soon become a rowdy adolescent dog that can wreak havoc on your home, unless you're armed with lots of patience and a plan for training.

As the owner of two dogs (in a long line of dogs), and after years reading about dog behavior, shadowing dog trainers and writing about dog rescue, I'm more than happy to share some thoughts on her dilemma. It can be boiled down to "10 ways to know you're ready to get a puppy."

1 Volunteer to pick up the neighbor dog's poop for a week. If, at the end of seven days, the task seems like a treasure hunt instead of a chore, you might be ready to get a puppy.

2 Pour a measuring cup full of dirt onto your freshly laundered bed sheets. If, after sleeping on them for several days, you find you enjoy the feeling of crunchy linens because it reminds you of your last vacation at the beach, you might be ready to get a puppy.

3 Have your spouse take one shoe from every pair of shoes you own and hide them somewhere in your house or yard. If you can still get to work on time every day, wearing shoes that match, you might be ready to get a puppy.

4 Get up at 5 a.m. every morning and walk around the block, stopping at every telephone pole, tree and fence post. Stand there repeating the phrase,

"Go potty. Please go potty." If patrolling your neighborhood like this, especially in the rain or snow, seems like a good way to start your day, you might be ready to get a puppy.

5 Cash your next two paychecks. Drive directly to your local animal hospital and hand over all the money to the vet. If you don't suffer a massive heart attack on the spot, you might be ready to get a puppy.

6 Several times a day, tip over the kitchen garbage pail. Strew the contents around the living room, dining room and kitchen. Then clean it up. If you are overjoyed at finding banana peels under the sofa cushions, you might be ready to get a puppy.

7 Position two 20-pound bags of bird seed end-to-end on your bed so that they mimic a 40-pound dog stretched diagonally across your mattress. If you can sleep comfortably for a week on the remaining space, you might be ready to get a puppy.

8 Dig holes in your lawn directly in the path where you normally walk. If you can maneuver through your yard, in the dark, without spraining your ankle, you might be ready to get a puppy.

9 Run through mud puddles and then jump on your furniture. Knock over at least one lamp. If you think your living room looks better this way, you might be ready to get a puppy.

10 Sprinkle dog hair on all of the food you eat and in every beverage you drink. If you find that your meals taste



better with fur as a condiment, you might be ready to get a puppy.

I told my friend that in exchange for the trouble a new puppy brings, she'll get love, companionship, security and more joy than she can imagine. But a dog is not for everyone. Of course, my dogs are brilliantly well-behaved, so I'm biased. As I sit here writing, I can hear the gentle snores of darling Bailey and Bandit, who are both sound asleep in the ... wait, is that Kleenex strewn across the living room? ... I made a sandwich but I don't remember eating it ... why are there pawprints on the kitchen counter...?



Award-winning freelance writer Joanne Brokaw spends her days dreaming of things she'd like to do but probably never will—like swimming with dolphins, cleaning

the attic and someday overcoming the trauma of elementary school picture day. She lives with two dogs, a cat, six chickens and one very patient husband. Learn more at www.joannebrokaw.com.

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