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MITCHELL ROSEN

CAN'T BUY HAPPINESS

I can remember a Christmas from the past, shortly after the HMOs had drastically affected my practice, when my personal finances were reeling. Worries about making the mortgage, car payment and children's tuition punctuated my thoughts.

For reasons I cannot remember, it was around December and I was at South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa. For those of you who may not know South Coast Plaza, it is an upscale mall strewn with obscenely expensive shops. No cost is spared decorating the plaza over Christmas.

Walking around the shopping center, trying to find a parking spot in a lot filled with Mercedes, BMWs and other cars costing more than most people make in a year, it was easy to feel sorry for myself. I remember thinking, "Where do these people get all their money? How can they spend \$10,000 for a watch or \$400 for a sweater?"

I found myself watching the customers as they walked, smiled and laughed their way through the aisles. I got a pretty good case of envy and saw each couple as an Orange County version of Ken and Barbie. I'm worried about an excessively high heating bill and these people are deciding between a \$300 pair of slacks or a vase retailing at \$800. I came home very depressed and angry at the world.

Like a scene from a Frank Capra movie, the next day my patients were mostly wealthy couples, dressed to the nines but emotionally hurting. One husband was trying to decide whether to stay with a wife who had betrayed him. Another woman struggled with the realization her husband's gambling had spiraled out of control. The last family was attempting to come to terms with a diagnosis that their son might not see the next Christmas.

I felt work ashamed of my pettiness and with a deeper understanding of wealth and fortune. I was so eager to trade places with these people the day before and now I was grateful not to be them. Because of what I do, I see behind the doors of the couples who look great on the outside but have so much more happening on the inside. Few other professions allow access to families' most personal struggles.

As I pulled up to my driveway, my kids were playing in the front yard. I heard "Daddy, daddy, daddy" and saw my wife washing our springer spaniel. I knew we still had to decide which bills to pay first but realized these problems — though tough — were not even close to what I had just heard.

There are times I struggle with envy and for whatever reasons believe other people have easier lives, but in more rational moments, I understand we all have our burdens.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Mitchell Rosen, M.A., is a licensed marriage and family therapist with practices in Corona and Temecula. Contact him at family@PE.com.



TERRY PIERSON/THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Star Trek the Exhibition, located at the Metropolitan Showcase at 3800 Main St., is open daily from noon to 6 p.m. General admission is \$15 for adults and \$12 for children and seniors.

Star Trek exhibit adding ride

MOTION SIMULATOR: Visitors can go on a four-minute mission with the Starfleet crew to destroy the enemy Borg ship.

SPECIAL TO THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

The Riverside Metropolitan Museum's Star Trek exhibit is adding a new feature for visitors to enjoy — a motion simulator ride.

Ride with a group of fellow travelers on a flight through the solar system. Beginning on Friday, visitors can go on a four-minute mission with the Starfleet crew to

destroy the enemy Borg ship.

The simulator ride is located next to the Festival of Lights Ice Skating rink on the corner of University Avenue and Main Street, directly across from The Metropolitan Showcase featuring Star Trek The Exhibit: Where Science Meets Science Fiction. The simulator ride is available Friday through Jan. 2 as part of the Festival of Lights celebration.

The simulator ride is open Monday through Thursday from noon to 6 p.m. and Friday through

Sunday from noon to 8 p.m. Ticket price for the motion simulator ride is \$3 per person.

For more information, visit www.riversideca.gov/museum/exhibit-startrek.asp or call 951-826-5273.

Star Trek the Exhibition, located at the Metropolitan Showcase at 3800 Main St., is open daily from noon to 6 p.m. General admission is \$15 for adults and \$12 for children and seniors. The exhibition retail shop includes a large selection of collectable and specialty items.

DATEBOOK

SUBMIT INLAND COMMUNITY EVENTS AT WWW.INLANDSOCAL.COM. CLICK ON "SUBMIT AN EVENT"

DAILY DATEBOOK

CORONA

CARS
CAR CRUISE, Friday, Nov. 26, 1 p.m. Farmers Boys, 1625 E. Sixth St., Corona. Free. 951-737-3411, 909-838-4693, 1-866-924-4490.

LIBRARIES
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE CLASS, Thursday, Nov. 25, 5 p.m. Eastvale Public Library, 7447 Cleveland Ave., Corona. 951-273-2025.

MORENO VALLEY

CHARITY AND VOLUNTEER
2ND ANNUAL COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING DINE, Thursday, Nov. 25, 11 a.m. Moreno Valley Conference and Recreation Center, 14075 Frederick St., Moreno Valley. Free. 951-653-9131.

FARMERS' MARKETS
MORENO VALLEY MALL FARMER'S MARKET, Thursday, Nov. 25, 4

p.m. Moreno Valley Mall Farmer's Market, 22500 Town Circle, Moreno Valley. 951-643-6458.

NORCO

COMMUNITY
THANKSGIVING DAY DINNER, Thursday, Nov. 25, 11 a.m. Silverado Burgers and Mexican Food, 1091 Sixth St., Norco. Free. 951-545-3697.
ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DINNER, Thursday, Nov. 25, noon. American Legion Post 328, 3888 Old Hammer St., Norco. 951-371-9108.

RIVERSIDE

COMEDY
GOURMET DETECTIVE, Friday, Nov. 26, 8 p.m. The Gourmet Detective, 3663 Main St., Riverside. \$69 per person. 866-992-5424.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS
18TH ANNUAL RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS, Friday, Nov. 26, 6

p.m. Main Street Riverside, 3900 Main St., Riverside. Free. 951-683-7100.

GIVING THANKS OPEN CELEBRATION, Friday, Nov. 26, 5 p.m. DragonMarsh "History, Mystery and Magic", 3643 University Ave., Riverside. Free. 951-276-1116.

FOOD AND DINING
BATTLE OF JONBOY, Friday, Nov. 26, 9 p.m. Mission Tobacco Lounge, 3630 University Ave., Riverside. \$5. 951-682-4427.

GALLERIES
"HATS OFF" PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBIT, Thursday, Nov. 25, 10 a.m. La Sierra University, 4500 Riverwalk Pkwy., Riverside. Free. 951-785-2000.

HOLIDAY
RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS ICE SKATING RINK, Friday, Nov. 26, 4 p.m. Main Street Riverside, 3900 Main St., Riverside. \$10 per hour per person, \$3 skate rentals.

951-683-7100.
PERFORMING ARTS
ALL I REALLY NEED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN KINDERGARTEN, Friday, Nov. 26, 8 p.m. Riverside Community Players, 4026 14th St., Riverside. \$15. 951-686-4030.
CORONA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, Friday, Nov. 26, 8 p.m. Fox Performing Arts Center, 3801 Mission Inn Ave., Riverside. \$20 - \$55. 951-788-3944.

RELIGION
THANKSGIVING SERVICE, Thursday, Nov. 25, 10 a.m. Christian Science Thanksgiving Service, First Church of Christ, Scientist., Riverside. Free. 951-684-3935.

ROCK
WOODY AND THE HARRELSONS - FESTIVAL OF THE LIGHTS!, Friday, Nov. 26, 9 p.m. Lake Alice Saloon and Eatery, 3616 University Ave., Riverside. \$6. 951-686-7343.

Base's donated food is timely

WARFARE CENTER: The hundreds of pounds gathered go to Settlement House, which aids many families.

SPECIAL TO THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Military personnel and civilians at the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Corona Division, donated hundreds of pounds of food to the Settlement House in Corona for its food pantry program Wednesday, enough to help make Thanksgiving and the holidays brighter for many Inland Empire families.

Beginning Nov. 15, the food drive collected nonperishable food items at bins around the Navy base. Chief Petty Officer Andra Hall, who chaired the event, said the drive helps demonstrate that Navy personnel deeply care about the less fortunate in the community.

The submariner said the food drive is particularly critical because the down economy has seen many families unemployed for the first time in their lives. The base has donated more than 1,500 pounds of food through previous drives.

The Warfare Center's commanding officer, Capt. Jay Kadowaki, said, "We certainly know a number of families in the area have been hit hard by the economic downturn," Kadowaki said. "This is one small way we can support them during the holiday season, as we reflect on the many things we have to be grateful for in this country."

The Corona-Norco Settlement House is a nonprofit charitable organization and United Way Agency that provides for temporary emergency needs of low-income families and individuals in Corona and Norco. It has provided historic service to the area since being founded in 1912 by a local woman's group to assist migrant workers in the citrus orchards.

Sally Carlson, Settlement House board chairwoman and director, said the number of families requesting food and clothing has increased by 1,000 each of the last three years. Each day, the non-profit agency provides 45 to 50 bags of food and averages about 250 bags each week.

"Lots of people could not survive without the donations we receive," Carlson said. "The food pantry is our biggest program," she said. The base's donation, along with those of other charitable groups, is a godsend this time of year when the needs are so great among people clinging to hope for better times. The Thanksgiving food distribution will provide sufficient food to sustain a family for three days.

Inland firefighters fill their boots for burned children

SPECIAL TO THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

As area shoppers descend upon gift shops and retail outlets on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, local firefighters will be there, too, with boots in hand.

It's a campaign they're calling Give Burns the Boot, and the beneficiaries are burn survivors — children from the region who are hoping to participate in Camp Beyond the Scars, a unique four-day outing in Big Bear on Presidents Day weekend this coming February.

"The burn camp is a very important and meaningful experience for these very special kids," says Sherri

Laffey, executive director of the Burn Institute-Inland Empire. "With the help of local firefighters, we raise funds throughout the year to ensure that all deserving children can attend."

Firefighters with boots in hand will be outside major retail stores throughout the Inland Empire on Friday, including the cities of Corona, Rialto, Redlands, Yucaipa and Highland. They will be donating their time, hoping that shoppers will feel the holiday spirit and drop dollar bills, or just loose change, in the boot.

Every dollar donated will help a child attend Camp Beyond the Scars, four days



PAUL PALSA/SPECIAL TO THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

From left, Corona firefighters Trevor Wilding, Justin Shaw and Rick Stone are with Burn Institute-Inland Empire Executive Director Sherri Laffey.

of fun in the snow and outdoors, complete with crafts, singing, and sessions that

address self-esteem, goal setting, and success in life. The camp is staffed with

nurses, counselors and medical professionals who help the children cope with the devastating psychological and physical effects of their injuries.

The Burn Institute-Inland Empire is a nonprofit health agency dedicated to reducing the number of burn injuries and deaths in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. It reaches thousands of children and adults each year with lifesaving fire and burn prevention education; funds vital burn research and treatment; and conducts burn survivor support programs for children and adults. The BI-IE is an affiliate of The Burn Institute

in San Diego and is located at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center in Colton.

Black Friday, the day following Thanksgiving and the beginning of the Christmas shopping season, is associated with special sales and promotions. It is based on an old-time theory that retailers operate at a loss (red ink) from January through November, and made their profits (black ink) during the holiday season. Thus, the term Black Friday.

For more info, or to make a donation, contact Laffey at 909-276-4324. Or visit the Burn Institute-Inland Empire's website at www.burninstitute-ie.org.