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See Inside Back Cover!

High School Students Ride Metro Buses Free



The Topeka Metro board of directors has approved for the 2024-25 academic year, that all high school students with a valid student ID can ride fixed bus routes for free.

Paratransit users will need to apply for eligibility. Middle school and grade school students are not included in this promotion.

To ride free, high school students will only need to present their valid student ID to the bus driver.

■ Please see RIDE FREE page 3



How to Know What is True or False

One day while I was reading the news, a major national story appeared, written about a friend of mine. I was deeply troubled by what I read, as it detailed many illegal things he had done. But as I read, I thought to myself, "Something just doesn't seem right. This doesn't sound like David." So I picked up my phone and gave him a direct call and walked through the story with him. Then I did my

own research afterwards, and in the end, I found the news story about him to be filled with many lies.

How do we know if the information we come across is true? Maybe some will say, "It sounds believable" or "It comes from a reliable source." Since we live in a time of so much creative deceit how do we protect ourselves from believing lies? How can we know

what is true so we can make decisions or accept certain beliefs on things?

We need wisdom.

Let us call out for wisdom and seek it like a valuable hidden treasure in our backyard. The Bible speaks of people who "...have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil." (He-

■ Please see TRUE OR FALSE page 2

Voting Deadlines Set for Election



Election season is in full swing. Here are the voting deadlines you need to know.

- MONDAY, AUGUST 5: In-person advance primary voting ends at 12:00 p.m.
- TUESDAY, AUGUST 6: Primary Election
- TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15: Deadline to register to vote or update your voter registration information to participate in the 2024 general election.
- WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16: First day of advance voting. Advance ballots by mail are transmitted. In-person advance voting may begin. Check with your county election officer for specific times and locations.

■ Please see VOTING page 3

Majority of congregations are in excellent or good financial health

More than six in 10 religious leaders report that their congregation is in excellent or good financial health, according to the Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations research project released this week by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research.

Based on data from 2023 and 2020 and surveying congregations from more than 50 Christian denominations, as well as Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and other religions, the report found

that leaders say their institutions generally are in good financial health, although a bit limited because of inflation, according to Religion News Service.

Congregational leaders were asked in 2023 to assess the financial health of their congregation. About a quarter of congregations reported that they were in "excellent" financial health, more than a third reported "good" financial

■ Please see FINANCIAL HELATH page 3



Six warning signs of potential crises in Christian organizations

The recent news has been filled with stories about the moral failings of prominent Christian leaders, both locally and nationally. Media consultant Phil Cooke identified six types of risky behavior that can lead to crises in churches and ministries.

Abusing alcohol and/or sleeping pills. “Especially if you’re a pastor, I can give you plenty of reasons never to drink at all. Having said that, I don’t believe the Bible prohibits alcohol, but it does clearly warn against *getting drunk*. The problem is, with booze, you don’t have to be drunk to do risky and stupid things. Plus, I’ve known pastors (or their wives) who became alcoholics but wouldn’t dare tell anyone until it was too late. If you *do* drink, do it at home or do it around trusted friends. And please don’t do it alone in places like a hotel bar, which is often filled with attractive members of the opposite sex. Sleeping pills can sometimes be worse, and the biggest offender seems to be Ambien.”



Crude or sexualized joking with staff members. “Years ago, I was consulting with a large church, and during a staff meeting the pastor started trying to guess what color underwear the female staff members were wearing. I pulled the executive pastor outside and asked him what in the world just happened. His response? ‘Oh, everybody knows pastor is just a joker. It’s not a big deal.’ It was a big

deal. Within a few months, he was forced to step down because of an adulterous relationship with someone outside of the church.”

Spending too much time away from your spouse. “There are a lot of red flags when it comes to a deteriorating marriage, but a big one is too much time apart. One pastor preferred to enjoy a vacation home without the company of his

wife. Another would go on long work trips alone without his wife. Too much time away alone usually leads to spending too much time with a woman other than your wife. And of course, one thing leads to another.”

Fascination with pornography. “In today’s digital, social media age, porn is everywhere. It’s online, incredibly easy to access and it’s impacting younger kids more than ever. Today, statistics reveal just how early kids are being exposed to the most graphic sexual content. And adult leaders can access it even more easily. I met a Navy SEAL team member who told me that whenever they captured high-level Muslim terrorists, they all had one thing in common: a huge stash of pornography. It’s almost as if being so radical in restricting women creates an unhealthy obsession with them.”

Really stupid decisions. “Who thought it was a good idea for a nationally known Christian evangelist and apologist to own a chain of massage parlors? To ‘be more

productive,’ one pastor had his female assistant move into his and his wife’s home. Another started picking up women in his hotel bar after preaching at other churches. Really stupid decisions can happen more often when a leader has power, money, little-to-no transparency and/or lots of control.”

No one can question the boss’s decisions. “Yes, there are actual churches and ministries where the pastor or leader’s decisions are rarely, if ever, questioned. That pastor has created a culture where it’s his way or the highway, and anyone in meetings who disagrees with the man of God will need to find another job. More often, I actually see cultures where no one questions the leader out of genuine respect. Respect is good, but *anytime* the team feels uncomfortable questioning any leader’s decisions, something is wrong. Either way, these cultures are simply ripe for abuse, whether sexual, financial, spiritual or otherwise.”

Project 2 Restore to host 3rd Annual 5K Walk/Run

Project 2 Restore is hosting its 3rd Annual 5K Walk/Run on Saturday, August 24th at Lake Shawnee, Shelter House #1. Check in/late registration will open at 8:00 am and the event will start promptly at 8:30 a.m.

The cost of the event is \$50.00 per

person aged 13 and above. Children 12 and under are free.

Each paid participant will receive a FREE event T-shirt. Shirt sizes are Adult SM – XXL.

Participants may register at www.theproject2restore.org. Sponsors

or donors may contact the organization through the website as well.

Proceeds from this event will go toward the 24/7 care and programs for Project 2 Restore residents. Project 2 Restore provides support and shelter for victims of sex trafficking who are seeking recovery from the trauma of sex trafficking and are starting a new life. The faith-based program provides spiritual care, mental health

counseling, educational programs and life skills training. For more in-

formation, contact Angie Boles at angie@theproject2restore.org.

TRUE OR FALSE

continued from page 1

brews 5:14) Discernment is a form of wisdom. It gives a person understanding and good judgment.

When what is true could be false, and what is false could be true, we need discernment. When the pressure is on from family or friends to make decisions, we need discernment. When our job, health, finances, or our very lives are at stake we need discernment. It helps us see more clearly what is true, so we can wisely respond to what is before us.

How do we practice godly discernment? **1. Pray.** Ask God to provide you with discernment in your situation so you can make a wise decision. **2. Read the Scriptures.** It is the source for wisdom, where God will show you something in His Word to give you needed guidance. **3. Identify the costs.** There are consequences to decisions, so

identify what they are before you decide. **4. Identify pressures.** List out the various pressure points you are feeling, and where they are coming from. **5. Research.** Take time and effort to read, ask questions, learn and gain as much information as you can. **6. Get advice.** Search out for a few people you would consider to be wise and get their input. **7. Trust God and act.** After you have done all this, there comes a time to stop dithering, place your complete faith in God and take action.

Godly discernment is a faithful guard, protecting us against lies, deception and manipulation. It can literally save our life and the lives of those whom we love. But there is a high cost. It means we question things when we are discouraged from doing so. It means we may have to separate from the crowd and go a different way. Though the cost is great, the benefits are worth it. There is a peace that abounds, knowing we have chosen to

do what is right. There is also a peace that comes from obeying God as best as we understand, and believing He will take care of the unknown.

How do we obtain such wisdom, that the Bible calls more valuable than silver or gold? It comes through a covenant relationship with Jesus. He is the very embodiment of wisdom. When we turn from our disobedience, and call upon Him with all our heart, He will save us and give us the gift of Himself, and His wisdom.

A prayer for you - *Lord God, open the eyes of the confused, frustrated, fearful and anxious. Give them godly discernment in the situations they face. Turn them toward yourself, for you are the wisdom they so desperately need. In Jesus’ name. Amen.*

--Clint Decker is President of Great Awakenings. Please share your comment at cdecker@greatawakenings.org and follow his blog at clintdecker.blogspot.com.

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ASK US ABOUT TUITION ASSISTANCE!

Community Christian School celebrating 3rd year

The vision of Community Christian School is to prepare students spiritually, academically, and in accordance with their God-given potential equipping them with a Biblical worldview that will enable them to stand firm in their faith and be the leaders of tomorrow. Directed by a well-established school board and supported by several area churches, it seems God has had His hand in bringing together many who share the same vision.

Located in Overbrook, KS, CCS is positioned for full and part-time students to attend from several counties including Osage, Shawnee, Douglas, and Franklin. Entering its third school year, CCS has amazing teachers, pastors, and volunteers who teach and guide the students. In addition to academics, students are offered art, music, drama, p.e. and practical arts. Students have the opportunity to display their skills in an exhibition once per semester.

The school board has a goal to keep tuition low to allow as many families that would like to attend as possible. To further their opportunities, the school board



Becky Florance, principal, at Community Christian School in Overbrook, teaches students in one of her classes.

has also established a financial assistance program to support families, in

This financial assistance program is funded by generous members of the community that support Christian education.

For questions or to schedule a tour, contact Becky Florance, principal, at (785) 331-9683 or by email at: ccs.kansas@gmail.com.

For more information, visit the website at: ccskansas.org.



addition to the already low prices.

FINANCIAL HEALTH

continued from page 1

health and about 28 percent said it was "tight, but we manage." Only about one in 10 reported being in "some" or "serious" financial difficulty (8 percent and 3 percent, respectively). By comparison, in 2020, only half reported "good" or "excellent" financial health, and more congregations reported that they were experiencing fiscal hardship.

Charissa Mikoski, Ph.D., primary author of the report, pointed out that it's important to note the congregational health question was self-reported by con-

gregations and thus subjective. Instead of doom and gloom, she found it "interesting so many viewed their financial health as good or excellent despite inflation."

In 2023, the report found the typical congregation had a median of 60 in-person weekly worship attendees and an annual income of \$165,000, with expenses of \$160,000; an increase over 2020, when churches reported a median income of \$120,000, with \$108,000 in expenses. According to Hartford, 2023 saw the highest income reported by congregations in nearly 15 years, even as congregations reported the lowest average worship attendance since Hartford's surveys began in 2000.

The survey asked congregations to reflect on their current (2023) financial health and that of five years earlier (2018) to determine which congregations were financially stable, which had improved and which had experienced financial decline over the past five years. About a quarter of congregations reported being worse off financially in 2023 than in 2018, a fifth had improved their financial situation and the largest share remained constant.

"This relatively positive assessment could be considered surprising given that this period directly spans the COVID-19 pandemic," according to the report.

RIDE FREE

continued from page 1

For students who have not rid-

den Topeka Metro's service or are not sure where a bus stop is near their residence, call customer service at 785-783-7000 for assistance. You can also access information on the

website at www.topekametro.org.

As a reminder, the Kids Ride FREE! promotion for youth 18 and under is still in effect until August 15, 2024.

VOTING

continued from page 1

• TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29: Last day to apply for an advance voting mail ballot.

• MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4: In-per-

son advance voting ends at 12:00 p.m.

• TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5: GENERAL ELECTION

For more information visit these links: <https://sos.ks.gov/elections/important-election-dates.html>

<https://cdn.sncogov/.../docu.../2024ElectionCalendar-PG.pdf>

Voting Guide offered

Kansans for Life Political Action Committee is dedicated to electing pro-life leadership in all governmental offices. They are offering a free pro-life endorsement guide at www.kflpac.org/vote

C5 meeting to showcase family & business tips; free admission

The August C5Alive POWER Luncheon will be held on the 8th at Celtic Fox restaurant. Jim Hanna and Jim Congdon will review a fun book: "Doing Life With Your Adult Children - Keep Your Mouth Shut and the Welcome Mat Out."

The cost to attend the luncheon is free, and food may be purchased from the restaurant,

RSVPs and inquiries can be sent to info@C5Alive.org.

"POWER" luncheons are held on the second Thursday of each month and are open to the public. C5Alive is dedicated to creating Christian culture in the Capital City, by developing and uniting Christian Leadership in community businesses, non-profits and churches.

Upcoming luncheon dates are September 12, October 10, November 14

and December 12.

C5 also hosts other periodic events, including EASTERFEST, the annual Topeka Easter Parade and Fun Fair, held on N. Kansas Avenue and at Great Overland Station on the day before Easter.

C5 members may also sponsor luncheons and other events as a way to promote their organizations.

C5 is currently holding a membership drive with special incentives for new members. Lower-priced memberships for small and home-based businesses are now available. Individuals without a business to promote may also join for \$20. A list of current members is available on the website.

For more information about C5Alive, go to www.C5Alive.org, www.facebook.com/C5Alive, or call 785-640-6399.



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While giving is up, inflation erodes its power

The good news is giving is up but inflation takes its toll.

Individuals made up 67% of giving, an increase from 64% during 2022. Foundations contributed 19% of all philanthropy tracked compared to 21% during 2022. Bequests were 8%, down from 9% during 2022. Corporations inched up 1% to 7% of all giving.

Giving to faith-based nonprofits topped the donors' recipients list at \$145.81 billion, followed by education at \$87.69 billion and health at \$56.58 billion. Giving made up 2% of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) for 2023.

The data in the annual "Giving USA: The Annual Report on Philanthropy" are reported in real dollars and inflation-adjusted dollars. The 2023 number of \$557.16 billion will be adjusted next year but likely will not exceed the \$621.29 billion of 2021.

"Fundraisers say they care about the number because we know that is what they are measured against. On the nonprofit side, if they are raising the same

amount of money, that \$100 is not going as far. From the donor perspective, \$100 doesn't buy as much in their own basket of goods," said Una Osili, Ph.D., associate dean for Research and International Programs at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University.

Giving has declined just five times in real numbers since 1983, the first year reported by "Giving USA." However, giving has declined in inflation-adjusted

numbers 35% of the time. For 2023, inflation-adjusted dollars are adjusted to 2023 dollars, so just for 2023, current and inflation-adjusted dollars are the same \$557.16 billion.

"Keep in mind the economy is actually much better," said Osili. "Most analysts had 2023 as a recessional year, not only recession and part of a pullback." According to data from the U.S. Depart-

ment of Commerce, the nation's gross domestic product for 2023 was an estimated \$27.36 trillion, which was a 6.3% increase from 2022. "Inflation is a formidable foe. I'm glad giving is resilient in the face of it," said Josh Birkholz, chair of Giving USA Foundation and CEO of fundraising for BWF in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The number of deaths in the United States hit a record in 2021 at 3.46 million and 3.27 million in 2022. Time estimates for estate probate can be anywhere from six months to two years or more. The bequest number was estimated from multiple sources, according to Jonathan Bergdoll, applied statistician and associate director of Data Partnerships, at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University. Much of the data is from educational institutions and reported via the Voluntary Support of Education (VSE) Survey.

"Even though we don't have final IRS data yet 2023... bequests tend to be what we call a little noisier because a few very large bequests can change things. There are always some spikes," said Bergdoll. "It's a grim truth, but we do expect, because of the great wealth transfer, for (revenue) start showing up in the bequest data in the next 10 years." It is getting difficult to track all giving to charity. These areas will form a foundation for giving but will need to be expanded to get a more complete picture. Osili explained there is an issue of transparency, with wealthy donors using various types of capital to infuse equity into the sector. "Perhaps as we think about the problems we are trying to solve globally, that we need more types of capital to solve these problems... one single sector with its philanthropy alone cannot tackle some of these issues," she said.

Birkholz agrees that high net worth individuals are bringing fresh capital into the sector but might not have the intended impact.

"Already starting to see aspect of it (blended capital). The thing that is pretty universal is the need to solve big systemic problems. A ripple effect, a high-end donor would care very deeply about solving a food insecurity issue however they will rarely give to someone who needs it right now, buy someone a sandwich" said Birkholz.

He's concerned about the decline in the total number of donors during the past decade. There needs to be more "participation in giving for the social value of it," he said. "As it continues to pull upstream (to the more affluent) I'm more concerned about losing that cul-



ture value that giving is something everybody does," he said.

His idea was echoed by Richard C. Shadyac, Jr., president & CEO of ALSAC, the fundraising and awareness organization for St. Jude in Memphis, Tennessee. "We want to make sure they can find a place in this mission whether they can be a Partner in Hope at \$19 a month or make a donation of \$50,000 or \$100,000 or a million dollars," said Shadyac.

"It's not just about charitable giving. It is about charitable living, the ability to live charitably. What does that mean? They can wear our brand. They can wear our baseball cap. They can wear a t-shirt, volunteer, living a life that is charitable, being kind and doing random acts of service," he said.

While St. Jude concentrates on where wealth congregates, such as the coasts, major cities and retirement areas, he is always surprised by the donors who were not on the radar. Two recent large donors were someone retired from U.S. Postal Services and a retired railroad conductor.

Another area is gaming. "I like to think we are the pioneer in gaming. We

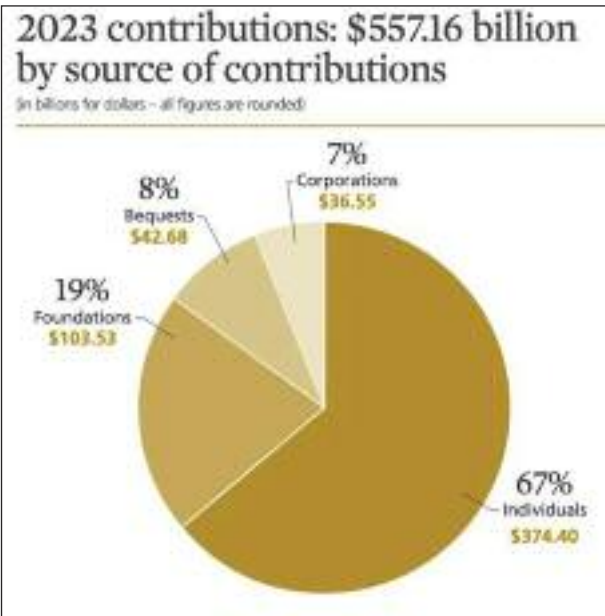
having been doing it for almost 10 years," said Shadyac. Online gaming has brought in \$62 million for the organization. The foundational program is Play Live, streaming of content creators "playing games and asking some of their followers to make donations to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital," said Shadyac. The live streams often emanate from the St. Jude campus.

St. Jude recently hosted on campus an event for 330 influencers and content creators. "It's not just entertainment. I see these kids as having heart and real compassion," he said.

Both Birkholz and Shadyac are frustrated that the 2% of GDP doesn't budge much. Giving "usually tracked with GDP but more and more it is dominated by wealthy donors, moved to seeing the asset market predicting giving outcomes," said Birkholz.

Said Shadyac: I always ask myself why is charitable giving 2% of GDP? Why is that acceptable? Why can't we move the needle? It is a move to charitable living."

This article was originally published by The NonProfit Times.



ment of Commerce, the nation's gross domestic product for 2023 was an estimated \$27.36 trillion, which was a 6.3% increase from 2022.

"Inflation is a formidable foe. I'm glad giving is resilient in the face of it," said Josh Birkholz, chair of Giving USA Foundation and CEO of fundraising for BWF in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The number of deaths in the United States hit a record in 2021 at 3.46 million

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In Quitting Church, Americans Gave Up More Than They'd Bargained For



Now, atheists and agnostics realize the important role a church community plays in the health of the nation.

I've long argued it's difficult — really, next to impossible — to practice Christianity effectively without becoming (and staying) an active member of a local church congregation.

Not only Christianity but the other major faiths are, by intention and maybe by definition, communal pursuits rather than solitary ones.

Private spirituality is vital, of course, and underpins the communal life of any religious group. Hats off to the desert fathers, those legendary hermits of yore. And all of us should pray regularly in our secret prayer closets.

Still, faith is mainly a team sport. Until you're part of a group, you have about as much chance of mastering divine mysteries as a guy who only plays football by himself in his back yard has of becoming

a hall of fame quarterback.

Writing this never fails to stuff my inbox with irate replies from readers. But trust me on this. Like the proverbial stopped clock, I'm right occasionally — and this is one of those times.

The rate of churchgoing in the United States keeps dropping like a cannonball in pie filling. That's bad for us all, even the nonreligious. The ill consequences of that decline will be felt by society for years to come.

On the latter point, I'm not alone. Derek Thompson, a staff writer at *The Atlantic*, basically argued the same in an article titled, "The True Cost of the Churchgoing Bust."

Unlike me, Thompson is no apologist for religion.

"As an agnostic, I have spent most of my life thinking about the decline of faith in America in mostly positive terms," he wrote. "Organized religion

seemed, to me, beset by scandal and entangled in noxious politics. So, I thought, what is there really to mourn? Only in the past few years have I come around to a different view."

He recognized that religion, "for all of its faults, works a bit like a retaining wall to hold back the destabilizing pressure of American hyper-individualism, which threatens to swell and spill over in its absence."

In the United States, about 40 million people have stopped going to church over the past 25 years. More people have quit religion than have converted to Christianity, Judaism and Islam combined. That's the largest shift in church attendance in history.

"No faith's evangelism has been as successful in this century as religious

A similar story holds for working-class Americans, and especially for low-income and unmarried men, who now spend more time alone than almost any other group.

It's not clear from the research whether the decline of religious participation has in itself cut people off from some crucial path to social engagement, Thompson said. Declines in religion could be part of a larger retreat from associations and memberships generally. Smartphones have played a role in keeping people apart from face-to-face meetings, too.

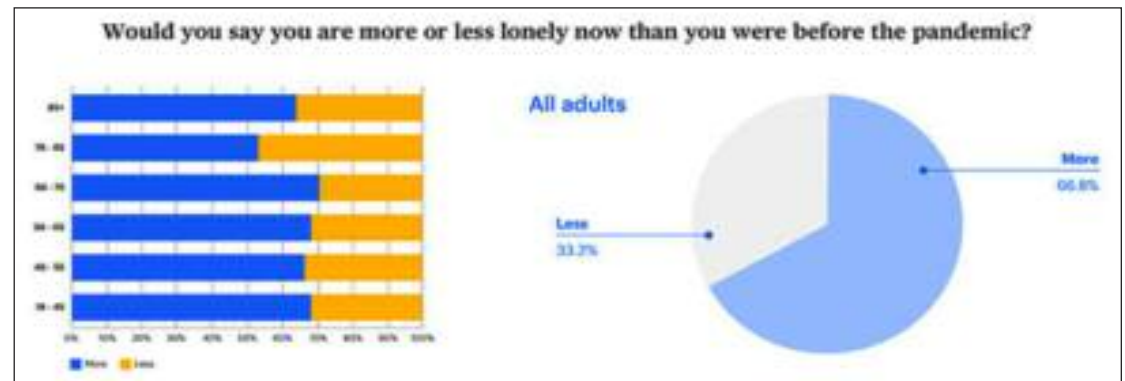
But, whatever the cause-and-effect, as people have disaffiliated from organized religion it appears they've also become less likely to affiliate elsewhere, with netlesome results.

gants. Finding meaning in the world is hard too; it's especially difficult if the oldest systems of meaning-making hold less and less appeal. It took decades for Americans to lose religion. It might take decades to understand the entirety of what we lost?"

As I said, Thompson comes at this issue from a different angle than mine. But what he says resonates with my arguments for attending services regularly.

That is, church (or synagogue, or mosque) participation can be troublesome and boring. Sometimes your minister is a birdbrain or the choir is under-staffed. Occasionally it's worse: Your leaders are retrograde, emotionally manipulative or hypocritical.

But you also can reap a windfall of



skepticism," Thompson said.

Why should anyone other than pastors and deacons care?

Because people's relationship with organized religion apparently has a vast ripple effect.

Religious observance can provide many things, Thompson said: "not only a connection to the divine, but also a historical narrative of identity, a set of rituals to organize the week and year, and a community of families."

Currently our country is seeing an unprecedented decline in face-to-face socializing and, with that, a host of widespread ills.

"The social collapse is steepest for some of the groups with the largest declines in religiosity," Thompson said.

Teens are fleeing religion faster than others. Teens also have seen the largest fall in in-person socializing — and, as has been widely noted, skyrocketing rates of anxiety and depression.

"There is no statistical record of any period in U.S. history where young people were less likely to attend religious services, and also no period when young people have spent more time on their own," Thompson said.

"This year, the Pew Research Center reported that religiously unaffiliated Americans are less likely to volunteer, less likely to feel satisfied with their community and social life, and more likely to say they feel lonely," Thompson said.

Thompson wasn't suggesting atheists and agnostics rush out and join churches.

"But I wonder if, in forgoing organized religion, an isolated country has discarded an old and proven source of ritual at a time when we most need it," he added. "Making friends as an adult can be hard; it's especially hard without a scheduled weekly reunion of congre-

positive — if often hidden — benefits for yourself and others that you just won't get when you're out there trying to navigate a spiritual life alone.

Paul Prather has been a rural Pentecostal pastor in Kentucky for more than 40 years. Also a journalist, he was The Lexington Herald-Leader's staff religion writer in the 1990s, before leaving to devote his full time to the ministry. He now writes a regular column about faith and religion for the Herald-Leader, where this column first appeared. Prather's written four books. You can email him at prattrpd@yahoo.com. Reprinted from ReligionUnplugged.com



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THIS IS WAY OUT OF LINE

Dear Dave,

I'm trying hard to get control of my money and get out of debt, but I had a situation come up the other day, and I really don't know what to do. I'm one of four brothers, and our parents' fiftieth wedding anniversary is early next month. My two oldest brothers got together and made plans for a party without consulting the rest of us. They want everyone to chip in \$1,000 to help pay for things. I love my mom and dad, but the only savings I have is \$1,000 in my beginner emergency fund. Will you tell me how to address this situation?

Ronald

Dear Ronald,

I'm going to be blunt here, okay? Since you weren't asked about any of this

ahead of time, and had no say in anything, fair would be for you and your brother who weren't consulted to pay zero. Zilch.

Planning something that expensive without consulting everyone involved well ahead of time—and expecting them to lay out \$1,000 without warning—is way out of line. And don't let your older brothers lay a guilt trip on you, either. This has nothing to do with how much you love your parents, being greedy or anything like that. It has everything to do with consideration and communication, or in this case, a lack of these on their part.

If I were you, I'd let your oldest brothers know exactly what your financial situation is like right now. Explain what you're doing and why you're doing it, then let them know in a nice, but firm, tone you'll give them whatever you can scrape up, but you won't be chipping in anything close to \$1,000. Oh, and I'd tell them next time they hatch up a big, expensive plan like this, to check with all their brothers way ahead of time.

Best of luck, Ronald. I'm sorry you have to deal with this.

—Dave

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I'm beginning to feel some bitterness and resentment towards my parents for their recent decisions and financial irresponsibility. Fifteen years ago, while I was still in school, they left good-paying jobs to enter the ministry. They both took pay cuts when they made this decision, and they've been regularly asking for money for living expenses from my husband and I ever since. Sometimes, they even try to make us feel guilty if we can't give them the amount they ask for. My mom, especially, constantly brings up their call to the ministry, adding that we should want to help them. We believe in their calling, but we also feel they knew they would have to live on less money, and they're being irresponsible with the money they make. What should we do?

Abigail

Dear Abigail,

What I'm hearing is giving money to your parents isn't necessarily a financial hardship for you and your husband, but that by consistently giving or loaning your parents money you're losing respect for them. This is not a healthy situation. Your relationship has become strained, and that's a tough thing for anyone to deal with—especially in a parent-child scenario.

Make no mistake, going into the ministry with the right heart is an admirable thing. However, in the Bible, Paul made tents while he conducted his ministry. I'm paraphrasing, of course, but his line was to the effect of, "If you don't work, you don't eat." He had a job. So, I don't think suggesting your folks think about working outside the ministry while trying to do God's work is unfair in a situation like this.

I'm sure your mom is a good person, but no one should do this to their child. On top of it all, she sounds like a travel agent for guilt trips—like she's working you over while implying it's all really for God. That's not only toxic, it's just plain wrong.

It's going to be hard to unravel it all and turn this into a respectable situation where they're not constantly asking for money, and you're not feeling pressure and falling victim to the guilty feelings that enable this behavior. I hope all of you will consider sitting down with a reasonable, objective third party and talking things through. I also hope you'll take some time to read a book called Boundaries by Dr. Henry Cloud. It will open your eyes to a few things.

God bless you and your family, Abigail.

—Dave

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Has your risk tolerance changed over time? Here is how to tell.

By Jim Hanna



Hanna

Risk tolerance can play a large part in determining the structure and composition of an individual's investments and financial plan. As an investor, it's important to know your risk tolerance for investments and be aware of circumstances that may affect it. Evaluating your risk tolerance regularly can help ensure your portfolio mix is still aligned with your current situation and future goals. Here are five considerations to make when assessing your risk profile:

1. Understand how risk tolerance can affect a portfolio. Investors with conservative profiles are often individuals who have shorter investment horizons or fewer assets. These investors are usually matched to similarly risk-averse investment vehicles, such as bonds. Bonds generally offer lower returns in exchange for their relative safety. A portfolio heavily weighted in stocks is better suited to individuals with a high-risk tolerance. For example, younger investors who have time to bounce back from market fluctuations or investors with ample resources may utilize higher-risk investment options. Similarly, wealthy individuals who are willing to take on more risk for the potential of higher returns might explore IPOs, hedge funds, options and futures and other alternative investments. Most investors find a balance between risky and conservative portfolios. Risk tolerance is a spectrum, and you can find equilibrium in your portfolio as a whole by adjusting the riskiness of individual investments.

2. Changes to your personal life. Big life events such as marriage, divorce, home ownership, parenthood or a job change can impact your risk tolerance. For exam-

ple, having a baby may compel you to be more cautious about how you manage risk exposure because you're responsible for an additional member of your family. On the other hand, making the last payment on your mortgage may give you more financial flexibility, and your risk tolerance may adjust accordingly.

3. Changes to external circumstances. Your risk tolerance can be influenced by matters outside your personal sphere of influence. Stock market volatility, inflation and political events can contribute to your ease or discomfort with investment risk. When big external events occur, you may feel compelled to adjust your portfolio. Before doing so, keep two principles in mind: (1) It's important for your investments to at least keep pace with the rise of inflation over time, otherwise your portfolio will lose purchasing power. (2) Staying invested is one of the best ways to weather through market volatility.

4. Consider your confidence with risk. Check your stress level when the market fluctuates. You may not have the stomach for market dips. You also may be less comfortable with risk if you have other reasons to avoid it: you've taken on more debt, had a reduction in your income, or have seen an increase in your cost-of-living expenses. Older investors may be most concerned with safeguarding principal and earning reliable, even if modest, returns. If you have noticed your discomfort with risk increase, speak with a financial advisor about potentially adjusting your portfolio mix.

5. Progress towards goals. Younger investors can usually manage more risk because they have years ahead of them in which to make up for market downturns. A windfall or other improvement in your finances may allow you to take on more risk. Alternatively, drawing nearer to your goals – such as a child's

college enrollment or retirement – may mean you need to take on less risk to protect the money you need. (But remember: retirement investors should also consider that their nest eggs may need to last several decades).

Risk tolerance is not static. Like many aspects of your life, it can change over time. When circumstances shift, it's wise to evaluate whether your investments are still appropriate. A financial advisor can help you assess the health of your holdings and make adjustments that match your risk tolerance.

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5,000 accept Christ at California Harvest Crusade

Counselors continue to follow up with people who made decisions for Christ at a crusade in Southern California. Last weekend's outreach, led by Pastor Greg Laurie's Harvest Crusade, attracted 50,000 people to Angel Stadium in Anaheim, Calif. Around 3,500 of them accepted Christ in person, while another 1,500 did so online.

"It was absolutely packed out — 50,000 people filled Angel Stadium,"

Laurie said of the event. "In fact, the fire marshals locked the doors, finally, because no one else could fit in. But what I love is that people stayed outside of the gates and joined us in worship. There was such an energy and such an excitement in that space as thousands of us worshipped together as if with one voice."

When Laurie's sermon concluded and the invitation was given and thou-

sands walked to the field to talk to a counselor. "We're just giving God the glory for what he did," he said.

Laurie, pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship, said he has a few theories for why this year's crusade was so "powerful and effective."

"I think maybe it's a combination of events going on," he said. "I think that what's happening in our nation, so much instability; we see what's going on in the political world, an assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump. And now President Biden has just announced that he's dropping out of the race.;

There also is instability throughout the world, he said.



"And then there's just that general hunger for God," Laurie said. "People love to write California off. I've jokingly said that the No. 1 export of California is Californians moving out, but a lot of new people are coming in. What's so exciting is when we do these events, people

of every background attend and come to Christ — old people, young people, white people, black people, Hispanic people, Asian people. "It just seems like it's a cross-section of the world attending these crusades. We just want to thank God and give him the glory."

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J.D. Vance found his way from atheist to Christian

Sen. J.D. Vance of Ohio, the Republican vice presidential candidate, went on a journey from atheist law student to devout Christian. In a speech to the Faith & Family Coalition, he talked about being raised mostly by his grandmother, who regularly prayed and read the Bible.

"I went off to the military, to college, to law school," he said. "Somewhere along the way, that faith that had developed and was germinating sort of evaporated. And so, by the time that I was in law school, I started to call myself an atheist."

Marrying his Hindu wife, Usha

Chilukuri Vance, whom he had met at Yale Law School, brought him back to the Christian faith. They wed in 2014.



"Thinking about what was required of me as a husband and as a father, the more that I thought about those deeper questions, the more that I thought there was wisdom in the Christian faith that I had completely discarded and completely ignored," Vance said.

He began attending church when his first child was born in 2017. He recalled how his wife observed that "there's something about becoming Christian that is really good for you. There's something

about thinking about the Christian faith, there's something about practicing the Christian faith, that makes you more patient with our son and makes you a little bit more forgiving when I'm grumpy after a long day"


Vance realized at that moment that his wife was describing grace, adding that he did not believe grace happens instantaneously but over a lifetime. "In ways big and small, if you practice your faith, if you pray, if you think about what it requires of you, then God makes you a little bit better each and every single day," he said.

In 2019, Vance converted to Roman Catholicism, saying that he never had a strong attachment to any denomination growing up. The vice presidential nominee said he loves being part of a faith community, taking his kids to church every Sunday and answering the questions his children ask about Christian faith. "One of the really deep beliefs I have is that there all of these small little miracles," Vance said. "And if you look for them, you actually see them."

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Nigerian, other Christians slaughtered while Christians focus on Last Supper



As Christians in the West were fuming over what they saw as a blasphemous interpretation of The Last Supper at the Olympics, as many as 76 Christians died for their faith in the last 10 days. Militant Muslim Fulani attackers perpetrated a late night rampage on a Christian village in central Nigeria and a Pastor in Laos was shot in the head.

According to Christian Daily, the assailants invaded Mbacher village, a predominantly Christian community in Benue state's Katsina-Ala County, at about 11 p.m., said Joseph Achiv.

"A group of Fulani Muslims carrying deadly weapons attacked Mbacher village," Achiv told Christian Daily International-Morning Star News. "Eighteen Christians were killed during the attack as the villagers were sleeping."

Justine Shaku, chairman of the Katsina-Ala Local Government Council, said members that night received distressed calls and text messages from villagers that a group of Fulani terrorists were invading their village.

"We made efforts to ensure soldiers were drafted to the area to repel the bandits, but the soldiers got there when the terrorists had left after killing 18 persons," Shaku said.

Catherine Anene, spokesperson for the Benue State Police Command, said security agents had been deployed to the area.

"We have received reports from Katsina Ala Division of the police about the attacks in that area and the killing of 18 persons," Anene said. "A joint security effort is on as security agents have been deployed there, and investigation into the occurrence of the incident has commenced."

Christian Daily reports that "Nigeria remained the deadliest place in the world to follow Christ, with 4,118 people killed for their faith from Oct.

(WWL) report. More kidnappings of Christians than in any other country also took place in Nigeria, with 3,300."

Nigeria was also the third highest country in number of attacks on churches and other Christian buildings such as hospitals, schools, and cemeteries, with 750, according to the report.

Around the world, in Laos, Pastor Thongkham Philavanh was tending to chickens at his house in Vanghay village, northwestern Laos, on Monday when two masked men on mo-

torcycles, and shot him seven times in the face and body using guns with silencers. Pastor Thongkham was

rushed to a hospital, where he died on arrival. He left behind his wife and two teenagers.

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Why Americans Mistrust Election Results More Than the Citizens of Any Other Democracy

By Dennis Prager

Last week, 27 European nations voted for their representatives in the European Parliament.

If you were aware of this, did you happen to notice that there were no allegations of cheating in any European country? If you are on the left, you might respond that there were no such allegations because the right did better than the left, and it's the right that makes these allegations.

But that response has little merit. For one thing, there were no such allegations, let alone demonstrations, during all the years left-wing parties won European Parliamentary elections or national elections. For another, in America, it is not only the right that has charged election fraud: Hillary Clinton, for example, still claims the 2016 election was stolen from her.

The fact is that, among democracies, America is essentially alone in having nearly half its population mistrust election results. So, either America is cursed with a paranoid population, or there are valid reasons for Americans to mistrust their elections' results.

There is no question it is the latter. America is unique among democracies in having half its people mistrust election results because America is unique among democracies in the way it conducts its

elections.

America is almost alone among democracies in not demanding that voters provide any identification when they vote. For some reason, the American left vehemently opposes voter ID. It claims voter ID is racist and that those who favor it are engaged in "voter suppression." This is prima facie absurd: Are airports racist for demanding passenger identification? Does passenger ID result in "passenger suppression"? The most plausible reason the left opposes voter ID is to enable some degree of voter fraud. If that is not the reason, isn't it enormously irresponsible to cultivate doubts about election integrity among half its country's citizens — for no valid reason? Moreover, in no other country does its left oppose voter ID.

America is almost alone among democratic countries in not requiring paper ballots. As of 2023, only Brazil counts all its ballots in national elections through electronic voting. According to Pew Research Center, votes are cast by manually marking paper ballots in 209 of the 227 countries. In France, as reported by the Associated Press, voters "use the same system that's been used for generations: paper ballots that are cast in person and counted by hand." In 2009, Germany's Federal Constitutional Court ruled that voting machines could no longer be used. In 2017, the Dutch government an-



nounced that all ballots in the 2017 general election would be counted by hand.

Moreover, among those countries that use electronic voting, only in America are the source codes of the voting machines kept secret. Three companies — Dominion, Election Systems & Software, and Hart InterCivic — control about 90% of the U.S. voting technology market. Each is privately held, and each is committed to keeping its source code from becoming fully public. Wherever else in the world electronic voting is allowed, the source codes are available to all political parties.

America is almost alone among democratic countries in not confining voting to one day. All through American history, Americans voted on Election Day (unless they had previously requested an absentee

ballot). The left has obliterated Election Day; we now have Election Month.

Various American states are alone among democratic countries in mailing ballots to all their citizens — that is, even to those who never requested a ballot be sent to them.

America is almost alone among democratic countries in the length of time it takes to learn election results. In other countries, people continue to learn the results within hours. Throughout American history, Americans knew the outcome of virtually every election the night of Election Day. No longer.

All too often, tragically, there are valid reasons for Americans to mistrust election results. Add elections to the long list of institutions the left has ruined.

Minimum Wage Backfire

By Kerby Anderson

The Wall Street Journal editorial board begins with this observation: "The laws of economics continue to exist even when politicians ignore them." What they are talking about is the decision in California to increase the fast-food minimum wage to \$20 an hour. When the editors predicted the inevitable outcome, the governor's office claimed they were "pushing a false narrative." Now reality has set in, and the predictions have come true.

Over the years, I have written commentaries about progressive attempts in cities like Seattle and Portland to raise the minimum wage significant amounts. The results are always the same. Some benefit,

but most others do not. Owners cut back the number of workers and the number of hours for those who remain. And prices go up. California is no different.

"An Associated Press dispatch last week reported that California fast-food franchises have been cutting worker hours after the wage mandate took effect. ... A Del Taco manager slashed the number of workers for each shift by half. A Jersey Mike's franchise owner reduced morning and evening shifts, reduced his staff by 20 workers, and raised prices."

The greatest harm is to those who lose their jobs. Research done by Beacon Economics recently found that California's minimum wage law "does particular harm to teenagers. In the past two years,



unemployment among 16-to-19-year-olds nearly doubled." As the editors noted, "Instead of flipping burgers, more California teens will be flipping through TikTok videos."

Think of your first few jobs. Like me,

your only job skills were a strong back and a good work ethic. We probably weren't worth \$20 an hour, but we did learn from skills that have made us successful today. Many young people won't get that opportunity because of this law.

Everyone has a role to play in alleviating our fellow Kansans' despair and daily needs

Poverty. Crime. Anger. Despair. Confusion.

They're everywhere. The pain is deep and far and wide these days in Kansas and beyond. When I am near downtown Topeka, I shop at a store where there are people who exhibit great needs. I often see homeless people with stolen grocery carts, using them as places to keep their belongings.

A local nonprofit called Let's Help is opening a location nearby, and I can just see ahead to the people who will seek assistance there. I truly care, however, and my compassion gives me strength in a time when despair and lack threaten to overtake us all.

Last month, I was given a tour of the Lois Curtis campus on Indiana Street in southeast Topeka. They have renovated an old grade school to provide services to people in need, especially those who have a disability. They have a food bank section, a room with durable medical equipment along with other resource rooms. The people who work there are lovely.

That's just how it is for folks. Poverty affects too many people, but it especially affects those who have an extra struggle, such as a physical or mental

disability. It also affects people of color and those who struggle with addictions.

There are people who say that Jesus is the answer for the poverty issue — that churches are the answer, not the government. While my faith is vital to my life and very, very important, I think Jesus would ask us all to lend a helping hand. That includes local nonprofits, homeless shelters, and federal, state and local government.

It definitely takes all of us — everyone — working together to help eradicate poverty.

One of the issues I think a lot about is food insecurity. When we see someone in front of us in the grocery store checkout using a food benefit card, I would say that's the time to offer a smile and a kind word, or even a prayer. We don't know that person's story.

I just completed another gift card drive for the housing specialist at a local mental health nonprofit, and my friends gave \$300 in gift cards for vul-

nerable clients. The housing specialist emailed me and shared her joy that she and also the case managers experience when they drive their clients to the store to use the gift cards to purchase food and other necessities. This made me happy.

My grandpa was a minister for 60 years. I often wonder: What would grandpa do? My grandpa gave to people in need. He and my grandma lived in a huge home in Americus, Georgia,

yet they weren't snobs or prideful. They always helped people.

I want to make a difference like my grandparents did. I have volunteered at Doorstep, a Topeka nonprofit that gives food, clothes and rent and utility assistance. I have also helped provide food for a friend in need. I drop off sandwiches for lunch at her doorstep.

We can all work together to face the poverty we see. We can work together to address the needs creatively and

bravely. We will need the courage of people like Barry Feaker, who has been helping folks experiencing homelessness for years. He and LaManda Broyles and their team at the Topeka Rescue Mission truly provide hope and health.

Sgt. Matt Rose at the Topeka Police Department and the officers there truly care about homelessness. Rose has been given a huge job to help deal with complex needs in individuals and he and the officers on his team really reach out to help people in crisis. I have the honor of speaking each year to law enforcement in the Crisis Intervention Team training. It's very important.

Yes, it's time to gather our courage and our strength and to work together to address these huge issues in our communities and our state. There isn't just one easy answer, and we need to congratulate ourselves when we find even part of an answer and when we help even just one individual in need.

Let's run into the future with hope and heart and embrace the needs with strength.

—Rebecca Lyn Phillips is a published author, writer at Kansas Reflector, peaker and mental health advocate.



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Speaking Truth

Imagine you and a friend are doing some hiking in the woods when you stop to have lunch. Then while eating you notice a dangerous animal in the distance watching you both. So you say to your friend, "There is something very hungry with sharp teeth who is watching us and slowly heading in this direction. We need to get up and go right now!" Then what if your friend responds with, "I'm tired and enjoying my lunch. No! You go on and I'll catch up with you later."

How would you respond? "Hello! Did you hear what I just said?" You told the truth, and you are not some-

one who jokes around a lot, so your friend has no reason to dismiss your warning.

Jesus once said, "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30) Despite this being true, it was an offensive statement to the Jewish religious leaders Jesus was speaking to. So how did they respond? They immediately picked up stones to throw at Him. Why? Because they believed He was lying, and therefore guilty of blasphemy and deserving of death.

Jesus responded to their anger with a question, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" (Jn. 10:31) His opponents provided a very transparent answer, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God." (Jn. 10:32-33)

The enemies of Jesus refused to believe the truth, that Jesus was more than a man, but is the one true God in human form. His opponents denied His works and teachings, which all

verified His claims. Instead, they rejected Him and conspired to have Him silenced through the brutality of crucifixion.

The truth of Jesus' deity has been opposed from the first century until modern times. Major religions of the world like Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism and Judaism, all deny the deity of Christ. Jesus and His followers stand alone in upholding this essential truth.

What is Jesus' greatest work in validating His claims of deity? When the enemies of Christ put Him to death to silence Him, He used their evil scheme against them. How? When Jesus rose from the dead. For His resurrection gave the world the clearest proof of His deity.

How did His enemies respond? They denied His resurrection too. They lied about it and said it never happened. Still today, all major religions in the world deny Jesus' resurrection, except for His own followers, because it points to His deity.

Here are four ways the truth of the



deity of Christ has changed the world.

1) The deity of Jesus reveals what God is like up close and personal, and shows that God is not a myth, legend or lie, but is real and there are no others.

2) The deity of Jesus reveals that He is the Savior of all mankind. For only He can save men and women from the power of sin and its eternal judgement that awaits them.

3) The deity of Jesus reveals that forgiveness for our failures before God, can only come through Jesus.

4) The deity of Jesus reveals that He is the King of kings and Supreme Ruler of the universe, possessing all

power, where all people should come before Him in worship and honor.

A prayer for you - Lord God, I pray you will bring people to truly believe in your one and only Son. That He truly was more than a man, but divine. Open our human eyes to see His greatness and glory. Then after people see the truth of who He is, may they turn to you with all their heart. In Jesus' name. Amen.

—Clint Decker is President of Great Awakenings. Share your comment at cdecker@greatawakenings.org and follow his blog at clintdecker.blogspot.com.



North Topeka has the ARTS! And more!

Artismo will present the NOTO Art Fair on August 3, as Veterans Park will be taken over by ART! Reach out to Artismo.artfair@gmail.com for details on showing.

The NOTO Summer Concert Series is a celebration of music that strives to offer culturally rich experiences for the community through a diversity of genres and performers. In addition to regionally acclaimed bands, concerts feature a local emerging artist as the opening act. With the intentional focus on diverse music, the vibe of NOTO, and the intimacy of Redbud Park, these FREE concerts are like none other in the community.

Fronted by vocalists Ramon Terrada, Jacque and Luc Apollon; this is the full-scale Mundo Nouvo. Thirteen musicians make up this powerhouse unit that looks to stir your mind and hips. Songs include both classic Fania-era dance charts as well as originals that were inspired to tell the dance floor a story. With a three

drummers, four horns, piano, bass, guitar and a lot of great singing this is a dynamic experience that can move anyone.

Opening Youth Musician: Out of Commission

Super Nerd Night August 15 is a mini convention at Great Overland Station! Build your drawing skills with comic artists, play board games and video games, learn about dark age technology with the Society of Creative Anachronism, Tea Party with Topeka Steampunk Society, build cosplay with members of Shawnee County Cosplay Collective, open build night with Legos!

First Friday Art Walk hours are 10 am to 9 pm. First Friday Art Walk & Market is the first Friday of every month. The North Topeka Arts District has become an attraction to Art Lovers and History Buffs alike with beautiful scenes of art and history. Entertainment can also be



Mundo Nouvo

found on First Fridays, at various venues during the artwalk up and down N. Kansas Avenue, as well as streetside vendors. The restaurants, locally owned shops, art galleries antiques and studios have become a favorite art walk destination.

You can also visit 3rd Friday's NOTO Night Out! Many Merchants are also open longer hours on Second Saturdays.

For more event information visit explorenoto.org/.

More North Topeka events:

BIG RICK AND SOUL'D OUT – Aug. 2, 6-9pm, Redbud Park in NOTO. Part of First Friday events.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES COMMUNITY GIVEAWAY – Aug. 3, 10-noon, Seaman Comm. Church, 2036 NW Taylor. Students receiving supplies need to be present. Proof of address required: For those who live in the following zip codes ONLY: 66608, 66616, 66617, 66618, 66073, 66429, 66539

STATION 9 ¾ – Aug. 3 & 4, 10-4 at Great Overland Station. Magic, mirth & merriment!

HAYSTAK LIVE – Aug. 31, 9pm, Woodshed Event Ctr., 1901 N. Kansas Ave. Doors open at 8pm

Saturday September 2 is Arts-tember – the season to embrace the beauty of nature with the vibrancy of fall colors, and its also a time to embrace the arts with an array of activities featuring live art performances.

SENIORS PITCH CLUB – Every Tuesday 1 pm at Garfield Community Center. First visit free then a dollar per visit for coffee and replacement cards

For more information visit <https://explorenoto.org/>.

SUNRISE OPTIMIST CLUB – Every Tue., 6:30am, Sunrise Optimist Complex, 720 NW 50th St. 246-1291.

VIP LUNCHEON FOR SENIORS – Every Wed., 10:45 bible Study and meal at Noon, Topeka Church of the Brethren, 3201 NW Rochester Rd. 1 mile north of Dillon's North). FREE lunch with Christian fellowship, devotions & entertainment provided by Topeka North Outreach. For info: 785-224-8803.

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The Area's Most Complete Guide to the Family-Friendly Events You Want to See!

the events calendar

FREE LISTINGS! E-mail your events to: Voice@cox.net; mail to Metro Voice, P.O. 5724, Topeka, KS 66605; fax to 785-235-3340 or enter online at metrovoiceneews.com
Get your event **Highlighted in Blue** in print, our online calendar and promoted in social media for only **\$29!**

CONCERTS

KANSAS PRAIRIE PICKERS – Fourth Sun. ea. Month, 1pm, Auburn Community Center. Foot-stomping, hand-clapping tunes. Concessions available

GRAND OTTAWA OPRY – 2nd & 4th Saturday, 5:30PM-pre-show, 6PM showtime, Ottawa Memorial Auditorium, 301 S Hickory, Ottawa. Tickets are \$15 and only at the door. Ph. 785-241-6762, email grandoprpy@gmail.com. GrandOttawaOpry.com

PICKIN' ON THE PRAIRIE BLUEGRASS JAM, every Sunday 1-3:00, Potwin Drug Store, Old Prairie Town, 785-215-6997 for info. Milkshake for the month of August is GIMME'S MORE

BIG RICK AND SOUL'D OUT – Aug. 2, 6-9pm, Redbud Park in NOTO. Part of First Friday events.

CHURCH LADIES UNSUPERVISED – Aug. 2, 7pm, Classic Bean, Fairlawn Plaza. Folk & Country, Free admission. 785-271-5005

BRADINGFEST – Aug. 3, 5pm, 3311 N. Kansas Ave. Free Admission. Cleveland Blue, Mark & the Sharks, The 800s. Food available. Bring lawn chairs & your favorite beverages.

EATS AND BEATS – Aug. 8, 6pm, Evergy Plaza. Blacktop Thunder, then Stranded in the City

VELVET BLUES REVUE – Aug. 9, 7-10pm, Compass Point, 800 N. Kansas Ave.

SECOND SATURDAY CONCERT – Aug. 10, 5pm, in front of Celtic Fox. Jamie Green and The Bash.

EATS AND BEATS – Aug. 15, 6pm, Evergy Plaza. Josh Vowell Band, then Lazy Wayne Band

NOTO 3rd FRIDAY CONCERT SERIES – Aug. 16, 7-10pm, Redbud Park. Mundo Nouvo

DELTA HAZE FREE CONCERT – Aug. 17, 7pm, Woodshed Event Ctr, 1901 N. Kansas Ave. Cash bar and BBQ!

SUMMERTIME BLUES – Aug. 21, 7pm, Gage Park Amphitheatre. The Mix with Mike Babb

EATS AND BEATS – Aug. 29, 6pm, Evergy Plaza. Nate in the Evening, then Switch in Time

TRIBUTE QUARTET CONCERT – Aug. 30, 7pm, Wanamaker Woods Church, 3501 SW Wanamaker Road. Doors open at 6pm. Dree-will offering. Contact 785-273-2248, office@wnnaz.org, wnnaz.org

HAYSTAK LIVE – Aug. 31, 9pm, Woodshed Event Ctr., 1901 N. Kansas Ave. Doors open at 8pm

EATS AND BEATS – Sep. 5, 6pm, Evergy Plaza. Wilder Horses, then Big Rick and Soul'd Out

SPECIAL CHURCH EVENTS

HARVESTER'S PROGRAM FOR SENIOR CITIZENS – every second Sat., takes place at Christian Lord Ministries, 2421 SE California. Call 266-4979.

HOPE HOUSE FREE COMMUNITY CLOTHING BANK – Wed. 6-8pm and Sat. 12-3pm, Oakland Church of the Nazarene, 939 NE Oakland

HARVESTER FREE MOBILE FOOD DISTRIBUTION – 2nd Saturday each month, 1:30-3pm, Oakland Church of the Nazarene, 939 NE Oakland

FIRST SATURDAY BREAKFAST BUFFET – 7:30 AM - 10:00 AM, Shawnee Heights UMC, 6020 SE 44th

INSIDE OUT FELLOWSHIP CHURCH – Every Sunday 12pm service; Every Tuesday 7:30pm service. Location: 2409 NE Division St. For info: 785-380-7031 or io@insideoutinc.net or www.insideoutinc.net

KIDS for JESUS! – Wednesday's 7 – 8pm, Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Bring your friends, family, neighbors, enemies! For info: 785-266-3247, FB: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene, Email: Lake-naz@aol.com

MID-WEEK PRAYER & BIBLE STUDY – Wednesday's, 7-8pm, Lakeview Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. You are invited! Contact info: (785)266-3247, FB: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene

LOL "LADIES OF LAKEVIEW" – Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Monthly Women's Ministry Events! (Cooking, Crafts, Outreach, Bible Study, Fellowship!) Call the church office for info: (785) 266-3247, Facebook: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene Email: LakeNaz@aol.com

ROOTED CHRISTIAN HOMESCHOOL CO-OP; Colossians 2:6-7. Monday's 12-4pm. Cooking class for 4th graders & older at noon. Call the Church Office for more information. Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Church: (785) 266-3247. Facebook: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene. LakeNaz@aol.com

SCHOOL SUPPLIES COMMUNITY GIVEAWAY – Aug. 3, 10-noon, Seaman Comm. Church, 2036 NW Taylor. Students receiving supplies must be present. Proof of address required: For those in these zip codes only: 66608, 66616, 66617, 66618, 66073, 66429, 66539

BACK TO SCHOOL BASH – Arg. 11, 6-7pm, First Christian Church, 1880 SW Gage. Water games, sprinklers and a foam party for kids along with outdoor lawn games for everyone. Hotdogs and chips will be served.

A fun event for all ages. Bring a lawn chair

FREE MONTHLY HYGIENE GIVEAWAY - HANDS FULL OF PURPOSE on Aug. 24, 10-11am, Faith Temple, 1162 SW Lincoln

FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENTS

SENIORS NUTRITIONAL LUNCH – Weekdays, except holidays, at noon at Auburn Civic Center, 1020 N. Washington Street. Minimal cost per person. Reservations/cancellations required 24 hours in advance by calling Meals on Wheels of Jefferson & Shawnee Co. at 295-3980. Each meal includes 1% milk & sugar-free items for diabetics. 215-0064.

MEDICARE MONDAYS – First Mon. ea. month, 1-3pm. Topeka/Sh. Co. Public Library, 1515 SW 10th. Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging offers Senior health insurance counseling. For info: 580-4545 or rhon@tscpl.org

COUNTRY AND BALLROOM DANCING – Thursdays 6-9pm. Croco Hall. Info: Edwina 379-9538, 478-4760.

FIRST FRIDAY ART MARKET – Downtown and NOTO arts district. Arts, antiques, fine crafts, flea market items, snacks, beverages, entertainment and more.

TOPEKA ACAPELLA UNLIMITED AUDITIONS – Topeka Acappella Unlimited is looking for female singers who would like to sing four-part acappella harmonies. Topeka Acappella Unlimited is a Chapter of Sweet Adelines, International. Call Cindy Patton at 785-640-7403 for info

HARVESTERS MOBILE FOOD PANTRY, 1st & 3rd Sat, 2-3pm, Shawnee Heights UMC parking lot.

FREE MOBILE FOOD DISTRIBUTION – 4th Tue. thru Nov., 9am, 1231 NW Eugene St. Randel Ministries, Inc.,

in partnership with Harvesters and Family of God Church will have its monthly food distribution. No ID or proof of income required, first come first served. Distributing fresh produce and other items to families in need. 785-234-1111. RandelMinistries.com

TOPEKA PUBLIC LIBRARY PLAY BUS – 9:30am-noon, Lakeview Nazarene Church, 2835 Croco. Every Tuesday, enjoy story time, play opportunities, books for check-out & take & make art. 785-266-3247.



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entertainment

Faith plays role in Kevin Costner's new film

Kevin Costner understood the central role of faith as he created his Western epic "Horizon: An American Saga."

"Faith is what guided people out there to the unknown," the actor told "The Christian Post." "They just leaned on it. There was this promise, but the promise was not enough. You had to go on faith. And people brought the religion with them west."

His own faith tradition inspired him.

"I grew up a Baptist, and church has always been a part of my life, my grandmother. the whole thing, so I don't mind it bleeding into a movie," the actor said. "I don't force it in. But when I think about why people went west, when they said goodbye to people back east, they never saw them again, there was some kind of trust that people needed to lean on, because they were oftentimes in situations where they didn't even know what they were doing. They were out of control, they needed faith."

Costner stars in "Horizon" alongside Sienna Miller, Sam Worthington and Luke Wilson, and also directed, produced and cowrote the three-hour film, the first of a four-part series. The first installment debuts in theaters on June 28. "Horizon: An American Saga — Chapter 2" will be



released six weeks later, on August 12, while the third is expected to be released in 2025.

Filmed in Moab, Utah, and set against the tumultuous backdrop of the Civil War from 1861 to 1865, "Horizon" captures the intense emotional landscape of a nation divided, viewed through the interconnected lives of families, friends and adversaries striving to define what it means to be a nation.

It's a passion project for Costner, who has been working on the franchise since the 1980s and even invested \$38 million of his own money into it. He said prolonged creation process required a steadfast belief that the film would come to

fruition in its own time.

"I've had hands over me, for sure, in my life, and I'm like anybody, I try to force it," he said. "I try to force things through force of will, and I've been able to do that a lot in my life. But I've also found that things come in their own time. I think that's how my career's gone, to be honest. Everything in its own time, I didn't burst onto the scene as a teenager. It took me a while. So, I trust my journey."

Despite not being a faith-based film, Costner stressed the profound influence faith and family had on the narrative. "I wanted scripture to obviously relate to the situation," Costner said.

Chiefs Hallmark Christmas movie to film in Kansas City



Two iconic Kansas City brands — Hallmark and the Chiefs — are teaming up for a new Christmas movie. "Holiday Touchdown: A Chiefs Love Story" is set to air during the 15th annual Countdown to Christmas event this year.

Tyler Hynes, Hunter King and Ed Begley Jr. will star in the original movie, with production kicking off next month. It will film entirely in Kansas City, becoming the first Hallmark production to film at GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium.

"With Hallmark and the Kansas City Chiefs both homegrown, rooted in values, tradition and community, there is a special alchemy between these

two iconic organizations," said Darren Abbott, chief brand officer for Hallmark. "By blending the warmth of Hallmark storytelling with the excitement of professional football, we are thrilled to give audiences a front-row seat to this community's spirit, rich traditions and passionate fans that define Kansas City, all wrapped up in the comforting and uplifting Hallmark way."

This marks the second time the channel has teamed up with the NFL team; they celebrated the playoff season with a campaign titled "Tis the

Preseason."

"We are honored to partner with Hallmark on a project as unique as this," Chiefs President Mark Donovan said. "As a club, we pride ourselves on exploring new ways to grow our brand, as well as connect with new audiences. This partnership unites two passionate fanbases and gives us an opportunity to show Chiefs Kingdom's energy and tradition on one of the most-watched channels during the holiday season."

Here is the film's official logline: "Alana H i g m a n (King) is sure that her family's lifelong history as Kansas City Chiefs superfans makes them a frontrunner to win the team's 'Fan

of the Year' contest. Derrick (Hynes), director of fan engagement, is tasked with evaluating how Alana and her family stack up against the other two finalists. As the pair spends time together, it's clear there's a spark between them but when her grandfather's (Begley Jr.) vintage Chiefs, good-luck winter hat goes missing, Alana begins to doubt everything she believed about fate, destiny and even questions her future with Derrick — unless, that is, a little Christmas magic can throw a Hail Mary."



One Million Souls Campaign sharing gospel through movie

The ambitious One Million Souls Campaign hopes to introduce one million people to Christ through the message of redemption in the upcoming movie "The Firing Squad."

Directed by Christian filmmaker Tim Chey, "The Firing Squad" stars Kevin Sorbo ("God's Not Dead," "Let There Be Light"), Cuba Gooding Jr. ("Jerry Maguire," "Selma"), and breakout star James Barrington. The movie chronicles the journey of men in a third-world prison who discover faith in the face of execution. The film challenges viewers to confront their own "firing squads" — the trials and tribulations they encounter in life

"The One Million Souls Campaign is about extending the film's impact beyond the screen, driven by my com-



mitment to spreading the gospel through cinema," Chey said. "I'm an evangelist first, a filmmaker second. My prayer is that those who already know Christ will commit to invite their unsaved friends and family to watch the film. Together, we can save America by inspiring hope and transformation in the hearts of millions."

The One Million Souls Campaign, in partnership with ShareTheTruth-Now.com, aims to ignite a national re-

vival. The film's producers invite churches, community groups and individuals to join the campaign and be part of a movement that seeks to make a profound spiritual impact.

"I've seen audiences so deeply moved by this film that I've decided to do something I've never done before," Sorbo said. "After the climactic end of this movie, I come on screen and invite the audience to accept Jesus. Our hope is that we can lead one million souls to Christ through this movie, but we can't do it without you. Bring your unsaved family and friends, and watch Jesus take control of their lives."

"The Firing Squad" premieres in theaters nationwide on August 2. For more information, visit millionsouls.org.

Singer John Rich says he wrote ‘Revelation’ to counter ‘satanic’ content

Country music star John Rich said God inspired him to write the song “Revelation” to counter “satanic” content promoted by the mainstream media. Rich, a multiplatinum artist and half of the duo Big & Rich, told Tucker Carlson that the prophecies of the Apostle John inspired his latest single.

“I was at home in Nashville, not even thinking about writing a song, when suddenly it felt like a hammer hit me in the back of the head,” Rich said. “When the Lord slaps you upside the head with something, you have a physical reaction to it. The message I felt coming back to me was, ‘Take it all the way to the mat.’”

Rich, 50, said he felt led to write the song dealing with the return of Christ, drawing heavily from biblical themes, particularly Ephesians 6:12: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

“Oh, Revelation, I can feel it coming, like a dark train running / Oh, get ready ‘cause the king is coming/ the king is coming back again,” according to the



chorus.

He had the message applies today as mainstream media and entertainment continue to promote satanic themes.

“When you watch the Super Bowl halftime show or the Grammy Awards, you see them putting satanic symbolism right in your face,” he said. “They are practicing witchcraft on the stage right in front of you. You’re watching a football game or an award show with your kids, and now evil is coming straight at you. We’ve all seen this. Somebody has to counter that.”

The music video of Rich’s latest song also dramatizes the battle between the Archangel Michael and Satan, as de-

scribed in Revelation 12. Rich, whose father was a pastor, also stressed that the war is spiritual.

“The real war is not Trump and Biden; the real war is not left and right, and the real war is not a culture war,” he said. “When God says about himself, ‘I am the same yesterday, today and forever, my word does not change;’ ‘We change, culture changes, the world changes, but he doesn’t. So, however he dealt with things all the way back to the beginning of the written word is exactly how he’s going to deal with them now and into the future. That is something people don’t want to come to grips with.”

Book Review: Wilderness Woman: A Triumphant Spirit

Diane Young’s recent memoir, *Wilderness Woman*, has a very apt subtitle: “A Triumphant Spirit.” In this brief, but compelling account, Ms. Young tells a sobering, but ultimately redeeming tale of the lingering effects of childhood abuse, neglect, and indifference. This is a tale of one woman’s triumphant spirit as she refuses to let her wounded past define her.

Avoiding unnecessary details, Ms. Young recounts a horrific upbringing at the hands of a mother who was at best indifferent and, at worst, complicit in Ms. Young’s physical and sexual abuse at a young age. She embarks on a healing path early in life as she discovers a deep and abiding love for animals and nature, finding the fingerprints of the Creator God all over the beauty of creation.

Falling into marriage at a young age, she struggles to find her voice. The straightjacketed, confining stereotyped roll definitions of a 1950s stay-at-home



Mom are gradually overcome as she asserts her identity and discovers her artistic gifts. Nature photography becomes more than a hobby. It becomes a channel of healing and liberation.

Ms. Young is wise enough to know that her liberation can only take place with the help of others and she is quick to utilize therapists, friends, and her faith community as resources to overcome the pain of a crumbling marriage and subsequent divorce and a deep

loneliness that weighs heavily on her.

But that weight is lifted as she discovers who she is. Her art and her passion for nature combine and become a liberating channel of deep inner healing and a source of recognition and satisfaction.

At the heart of her story is faith. She is not “preachy,” but she has learned well that when we are weak, then, in the Lord, we can discover that we are strong.

I recommend this volume to all who struggle with the wounds of the past and desire to, like Ms. Young, become a triumphant spirit.

Young’s book can be pre-ordered at Apple, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Google Play e-book. It can also be purchased as a digital edition.

—Randy Horn / Guest Reviewer / Randy is a retired pastor in the Lee’s Summit area.



Faith-based animated series ‘is funny

“Fleur de Lis” is a sharp-witted and endearing animated hijinks-adventure sitcom with a Christian worldview and a controversial way it’s made: using artificial intelligence.

Faith-based films and TV shows are not known for their innovation. Between the running gag of faith-based knockoffs of secular content (such as “Revelation Road” being a knockoff of “Mad Max”) and otherwise playing it fairly safe with its inspirational drama formula (like this year’s “Ordinary Angels” and “Unsung Hero”), there’s little to suggest to the average person that faith-based content is pushing the boundaries of creativity.

But “Fleur de Lis” — a TV show on the faith-based streaming platform LOOR — is a rare exception on two fronts. It is not only innovative with the story it tells but how it tells its story — using advancements in AI.

The show is the passion project of Ethan Hill, an Orthodox Christian programmer who made his own video game and graphic novel of this property and characters before deciding to rework it as a TV show. The tale follows husband and wife Aaron and Enoki and their friends Mable (Aaron’s sister) and Scout. Enoki ropes them all into wild schemes to try to earn money to make ends meet in their small town in Louisiana. Along the way, they encounter (and have to fight off) the devil, church-lady Qanon and greedy land developers, while sometimes accidentally gaining superpowers.

“I’ve always wanted to make a TV show, for one, and I have always been very creative,” Hill said. “But I never expected to be able to have the opportunity. And because I’m a software engineer by day — that’s my day job — I have a lot of options available to me to express that. So in the past I’ve worked on — I’ve made books, I’ve made video games and I developed a set of characters that went through a couple of those that I slowly sort of fine-tuned. And then when the time came to make a TV

show, I thought, ‘Oh, well I’m going to create a plot that makes the most sense for a television setting, and I’m going to include some characters from some projects I’ve worked on in the past.’”

LOOR is a fitting home for “Fleur de Lis.” It’s a faith-based streaming platform that describes itself as unashamedly trying to create anti-woke Christian content (often describing itself as “based faith films”) and content for the male 18-35 years old (typically overlooked by faith-based film studios). The platform itself is built on a rather innovative business model: It works like a regular subscription-based streaming service, but a portion of your money each month goes to funding the content the subscriber picks. This puts more of the power of determining what movies and shows get made in the hands of the subscribers.

“Fleur de Lis” has a refreshingly wholesome mean-spiritedness to its humor — a cross between animated hits like “Rick and Morty” and “Phineas and Ferb.” Many shows that are harsh with their humor also have an underlying nihilism about life, and many shows that are wholesome — like faith-based content — are very often afraid to get too cruel, and are therefore less funny. But in “Fleur de Lis,” the characters and the plots ruthlessly roast each other, and people frequently get the tar beaten out of them physically and emotionally by life.

These jokes are often really, really funny in the way that harsh jokes typically are. And yet, all of this is in the service of the characters ultimately loving each other and wanting them to succeed. And as much as the show dumps on its characters, it always ultimately validates their values of faith and family.

Another thing that makes this series unique is how it uses its Christian imagination as the basis for the jokes and drama. Typically, faith films will use jokes and drama as a thinly veiled set up for a lesson rather than an end in and of

■ Please see FUNNY on page 19

sports

Athletes Point to Christ as the Strength Behind Their Success



The U.S. men's gymnastics team earned America an Olympic bronze medal in men's gymnastics in Paris.

The big moment included a personal comeback from gymnast Brody Malone. He delivered strong performances in every competition on Monday, recovering from a disastrous opening night where he had several falls.

Malone has been outspoken about his Christian faith and how it has helped him overcome tremendous odds, including competing after a devastating knee injury. He had to learn to walk again after that injury, and he's one of many U.S. athletes who point to their faith as the strength behind their success.

When he asked about his journey, he was quick to say, "I give all the glory to God first and foremost. I have to give glory

to God. He's the only reason I'm standing here."

One of the most anticipated races is the women's 400-meter hurdles featuring reigning Olympic champ Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone.

She's the world record holder, and she lowered the record again in the 400-meter hurdles at trials. Right after the race, she said anything is possible through Christ.

"It's far beyond gold, McLaughlin-Levrone said. "It's achieving salvation which is already mine in Jesus but obviously running the race of the Christian life well even on the track. Before races, that's what I'm reminding myself of — setting my mind on things above — knowing the Lord is looking down on my life right now and me wanting to honor that, and He's glorified in that."

FUNNY

continued from page 17

themselves. Meanwhile, secular shows will use their worldview as the set up for the jokes and drama. But for "Fleur de Lis," the point is the laughter and drama, based on a Christian understanding of the world. The most explicit example of this is the episode "Allons a Crossroads," where Enoki makes a deal with the devil with chaotic results based on orthodox rather than secular interpretations of Lucifer.

Hill added, "It's very upsetting to me that a lot of Christian artists believe that they have to choose between sanitizing their work [and being authentic]. I'm going to be honest, to a lot of the world, it rings horribly false when you're living your life and you have to do a hard turn and say, 'Oh, yeah, by the way, here's this Gospel narrative I'm going to tack onto it.' It feels very forced and acts against the primary narrative, by suggesting that the Christian life isn't something you can ac-

tually walk; it's something you pretend to do while you're actually doing something else. And that's no good."

The main cast is simple, yet deeply endearing in the tradition of the best cartoon characters. Enoki is often foolish but loving and well meaning. Aaron is passive but responsible and can step up when necessary. Mable is self-absorbed but level headed. And the show develops layers to the characters as the story goes on, such as revealing the tragedy of Enoki's family history in the season's final episode.

The show's animation style — done like scribbles like in "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" and "Scott Pilgrim" — comes to life and is both charming and not at all a distraction. The genre flexibility is also a treat, with one episode feeling like a straight up sitcom and the next having someone get superpowers and fight off a conspiracy.

The show does suffer from some of its limitations. It is made by basically one guy on a limited budget, with his friends as voice actors with a limited number of

YFC Golf Classic is a Tournament of Champions for teens

Topeka Youth for Christ's 2024 Annual Golf Classic will be held on Monday, September 23 at the Lake Shawnee Golf Course. The four-person, 18-hole scramble begins with a shotgun start at 10:00 PM. The format is a 4-person scramble. Registration will begin at 9:00 a.m.

The YFC Golf Classic helps Youth for Christ staff and volunteers in the Topeka area to continue building authentic Christ-sharing relationships with teens through a variety of ministry programs; i.e. Juvenile Justice Ministry, YFC Core and YFC Camp designed for today's teens.

YFC reaches young people every-

where, working together with the local church and other like-minded partners to raise up lifelong followers of Jesus who lead by their godliness in lifestyle, devotion to prayer and the Word of God, passion for sharing the love of Christ and commitment to social involvement.

Across the country at community centers, high schools, middle schools and juvenile institutions the YFC staff and volunteers meet with young people to share the name of Jesus.

To sign up for the YFC Annual Golf Classic Tournament go online to www.topekayfc.org. Awards and prizes

will be given for first and second low teams, scored in two flights of players. Individuals will receive awards and prizes for closest to the pin, longest drive, and longest putt. The entry fee for the fundraiser is \$500 per team or \$125 per individual. The fee includes green fees, cart for two, a box lunch, two mulligans, Gary Woodland Drive and many great door prizes! Individual and corporate sponsorships are still available.

For more information about Topeka Youth for Christ or the golf tournament, call (785) 232-8296, or email info@topekayfc.org, or visit the website at www.topekayfc.org.

A 16-year-old Brazilian skateboarder also used her time in the spotlight to highlight her Christian faith.

At the Tokyo 2020 Olympiad, skateboarder Rayssa Leal became one of the youngest athletes ever to win a medal in competition when she took home silver in street skateboarding. Just 13 years old at the time, she said "For me it is important, I am Christian, I believe a lot in God."

Leal followed up her performance in Tokyo by winning the bronze medal in the same competition in Paris.

At one point during the competition, Leal used sign language to communicate what is to her an important truth the entire world needs to hear: "Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life."

episodes. The voice acting often sounds stilted and even AI artificial. This frequently ruins the timing of the jokes and creates a barrier between the audience and the relatability of the characters.

The season's shortness also keeps us from having the time to truly get comfortable with the people and world. Shows that are built around a story arc can afford to have a short season, but ones built around wanting to come back each week to see old friends (such as "The Office," "Friends" and "How I Met Your Mother") really need a longer season to really work.

Regardless of concerns about AI, "Fleur de Lis" remains an entertaining show that is worth watching and supporting for people who want entertainment based deeply in a Christian imagination and who also want the content to be authentically dramatic and funny.

"Fleur de Lis" is available to stream exclusively on LOOR.TV.

—By Joseph Holmes | Reprinted from ReligionUnplugged with permission

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50+ Lifestyles

A Guide to Enjoying Life in the Best Years

On their 50th birthday some people turn 70 and some turn 30

On their 50th birthday some people turn 70 and some turn 30.

What makes the difference? There's no silver bullet. It's a million little things done right – a bunch of 0.1% wins stacked up. Here are 50 simple things you can do to make sure you're still young at 50. I bet you'll adopt at least one...

1. Walk 15 miles a week, even if you do other exercise. There's something special about walking that is distinct from running and other cardio. Humans are made to move slowly over long distances – it's critical to longevity.

2. Develop a writing practice. It's the single best way to sharpen your mind. And remember, you don't have to be a good writer to write. Start with 10 minutes a day.

3. Swap out your toothpaste, deodorant, lotions, soap, shampoo, and other personal care products for natural versions. Here's the rule of thumb: Don't put anything on your skin you couldn't safely eat.

4. If you have a positive thought about someone, don't keep it to yourself – share it immediately. Encouragement defies the laws of physics: When you give energy you also receive it.

5. Wear shoes with a wide forefoot (I like Topo Athletic) and wear toe spreaders around the house (search “yoga toes” on Amazon). Spine health begins with the feet.

6. Get sunlight regularly. Moderate sun exposure (without sunscreen) is hugely important for overall health.

7. Do 3 sets of deep (“ass to grass”) squats every morning. Deep squats are often called “the anti-aging exercise.” It's been said that “it's not that you can't do deep squats because you're old, it's that you're old because you can't do deep squats.”

8. Explore minimalism (it's not what you think it is).

9. Set boundaries on toxic relationships. We tend to cling to relationships past their expiration date and it takes a bigger toll on our health than we recognize.

10. Eat real food. Not too much. Don't eat garbage. Binge occasionally. Fast occasionally. That's the diet.

11. Learn about FIRE. It's a great framework for financial success. Start with @mrmoneymustaches's website: <https://x.com/mrmoneymustache> <https://mrmoneymustache.ck.page/1358a01cc7>

12. Don't take antibiotics except in emergency situations. They're mas-

sively over-prescribed and aren't needed in most cases. Antibiotics have done untold damage to our guts, which is where health begins. Great natural alternatives are out there.

13. Get at least 7 hours of quality sleep each night and 8-10 hours if you're under a lot of physical and emotional stress. To optimize sleep: • Don't eat after 6pm • Get blackout shades and cover LEDs with black tape • No screens 2 hours before bed • Go for a long walk after dinner • Try ashwaganda (an herb) to calm the nervous system

14. Stop drinking, even in moderation. People find all sorts of ways to justify drinking but there's no escaping the simple fact that alcohol is a toxin and it limits your potential. People who lead a rich, full, health-centered life don't have space for alcohol.

15. Travel as much as possible. Nothing expands the mind like seeing the world. And travel doesn't have to be expensive – the best experiences happen outside of fancy resorts, when you live like a local.

16. Let go of resentment. When you forgive someone, you release the prisoner, and the prisoner isn't them... it's you.

17. Show up on time, every time. Poor time management limits success more than most people realize. If you struggle with punctuality, stop everything else and fix that first.

18. Spend lots of time in nature and touch the earth. Humans evolved over 300k years to live in harmony with nature and only recently have we retreated indoors. If you don't spend time outside, you're fighting biology (Hint: You won't win.).

19. Stop doing dumb things. As Leo Tolstoy said, “People try to do all sorts of clever and difficult things to improve life instead of doing the simplest, easiest thing – refusing to participate in activities that make life bad.”

20. Find your happy place and



(eventually) move there. Most people live where they live because... that's where they live. Don't underestimate the power of living in a place that inspires.

21. Find a hobby and pursue mastery. You can't have a happy life without a passionate pursuit that isn't your vocation. Your work – even if you enjoy it – isn't enough for fulfillment.

22. Avoid mainstream medicine except as a last resort. The results are in – our healthcare (or more appropriately, sick care) system is badly broken and only makes people sicker.

23. Have a mindset of abundance.

There is no advantage to being a pessimist, with a scarcity mindset – even if you're right it's a miserable way to live and takes years off of your life. In a very real way... whatever you believe, you're right!

24. Choose to do hard things. Everything you want is on the other side of fear and hard work. As Jerzy Gregorik said, “Hard choices, easy life. Easy choices, hard life.”

25. Ignore haters. Hurt people hurt people. Negative/toxic people live in a prison of their own design. Don't join them!

26. Say no more often. Protect your



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time and energy like it's your most precious asset... because it is.

27. Get a whole house water filter (we use the Aquasana Rhino) and be-

which is the root of most disease.

29. If you're over 40 find a good functional/longevity medicine doctor (NDs are great) and start tracking



come a water snob. You are what you drink – literally! We have Mountain Valley Spring water delivered in glass 5-gallon jugs.

28. Stop drinking sodas and sugary energy drinks. After a few weeks you won't miss them and a few months later they'll seem disgusting. Sugar is enemy #1 – it causes inflammation,

your hormones. Modern life is hell on the endocrine system and restoring healthy hormone levels can change your life. As we get older we either accept a slow decline in performance or we do something about it – choose the latter!

30. Develop a morning routine and follow it faithfully. Win the morning,

win the day!

31. Organize your life around experiences, not things. People frequently regret buying things, but rarely regret investing in great experiences (especially when shared with loved ones). Remember, there's nothing you can buy in a mall that you'll remember in ten years.

32. Explore spirituality. It's arrogant and small-minded to believe there's nothing going on in our universe that is beyond our comprehension. We know less about our universe than an ant meandering on a sidewalk understands about its world.

33. Have a strong bias toward action – DOING rather than talking. If you ask a bunch of old people about their regrets, they'll

talk about the things they DIDN'T do – the shots they didn't take – more than the things they did do (even if it went wrong). As Wayne Gretsky famously said, "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take". Most people don't take enough shots.

34. Stay lean. Men in particular are obsessed with muscle mass these days, but bulk doesn't age well. The goal is to be strong but lean. The fittest guys in their 50's and beyond aren't meat-heads, they're lean guys who are serious about a sport.

35. Curate your inner circle carefully. Surround yourself with people you admire and who challenge you to grow. Remember, we're the average of our 5 closest relationships.

36. Be the fittest version of yourself. Your body is your only vessel for experiencing life – so treat it as such. Fitness isn't working out a few times a week, it's a lifestyle. The older you get the more time you need to devote to your health.

37. Take the time to appreciate art and beauty in all its forms.

38. Think globally but act locally. Too many people put their energy into far-away problems they don't understand and can't impact, while ignoring problems right under their nose. Talk is cheap – BE the change you want to see in the world.

39. Try psychedelics. It's one of those things everyone should do at least once, and it might be the breakthrough you've been looking for.

40. Limit bad habits, including unhealthy thought patterns. We all have them – practice avoidance and find substitutes. Get professional help if needed.

41. Be a life-long learner. Your brain is just like a muscle – if you don't feed and flex it regularly it will atrophy.

42. Find your purpose. People with a strong sense of purpose are happier and live longer. Lack of purpose sucks energy and magnifies depression.

43. Only take advice from people who embody the traits you want to have. Talk is cheap – emulate those who have DONE it.

44. The goal is not to retire and do nothing, it's to build a great day-to-day life that you don't want to escape. A life of leisure is a slow death. Happiness isn't possible without a little struggle, uncertainty and skin in the game.

45. Have fun! Do frivolous and silly things that make you smile. As George Bernard Shaw famously said, "We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing."

46. Whatever you want to do or achieve in life, start NOW. Don't fall victim to "someday thinking" because someday never comes.

47. Accumulate assets – things that grow in value over time. It's the #1 habit of rich people and it can be done in tiny chunks. Instead of spending \$100 on an impulse purchase that has no lasting value, put that money into an index fund, buy a collectible, or save for a down payment on a house. It becomes addictive (in a good way).

48. Don't ignore the big 3 canaries in the coal mine for health: • Low libido (and ED) • Frequent sinus & respiratory issues • Depression. These usually aren't medical conditions in themselves, they're symptoms of an underlying problem. Find a good doc (outside of the mainstream) and figure out the root cause.

49. Have a clear vision for your future. How can you decide which direction to go if you haven't clearly defined the destination? It sounds obvious but 95% of people haven't defined their "Ideal End State" in detail and in writing.

50. Make your own decisions. We live in an era where most of what society tells us is wrong. YOU DO YOU and don't be afraid to break from societal norms – it's probably a sign that you're doing something right.

If you made it this far... thanks for your time!

–Kevin Dahlstrom /
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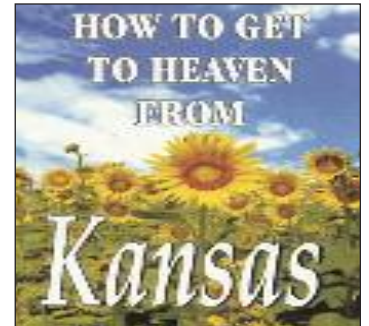
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1. Realize you are a sinner. Everyone starts the same place spiritually. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of god." (Rom. 3:23). Sin's penalty keeps you out of Heaven and condemns you to Hell, separating you from God. Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death." Sin brings both physical & spiritual death. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." (Rev. 20:14).

2. Realize Jesus paid the penalty. Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection provided a way for you to go to heaven and restore your relationship with God. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8). Since Jesus, God's Son, was the only One who could pay for our sin, He is the only Way to Heaven.

3. Repent of your sin and receive Jesus as your Savior. In order to go to Heaven from KANSAS, or anywhere else, you must accept Christ by calling on Him in prayer. He tells us in Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Use the following prayer, or one similar to it, to receive Him now:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I believe that you died and rose again for me. Please forgive me of my sin, become Lord of my life, and take me to heaven when I die. I am trusting you completely, and in nothing I can do. Thank you Jesus! Amen.

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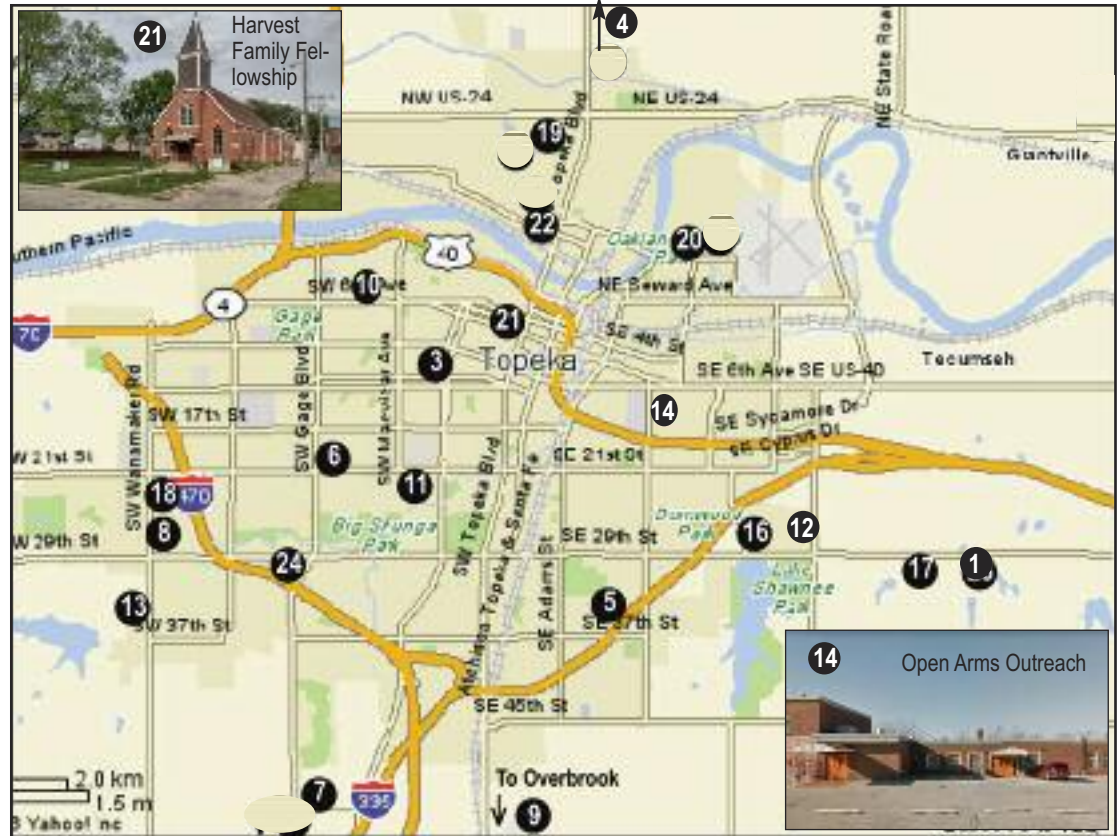
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News Briefs From Around the World: Terrorists, Hostages, Sex Trafficking, Pandemic



Israel kills top Hamas leader

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, mas-terminand of the Oct. 7 invasion and attack on Israel, was assassinated Wednesday morning in Iran. The strike by Israel in the heart of Tehran has few details but is a fulfillment of the Jewish States promise to end the threat to its people from Hamas. It comes after one of Hezbollah's top commanders was killed on Tuesday. Iran's Revolutionary Guards confirmed the Haniyeh hours after he attended a swearing-in ceremony for the country's new president. Western news media says the assassination "sets back" ceasefire negotiations but Israel says that it puts more pressure on Hamas to end the war, a view held by most military experts. China, Russia, Turkey, and Iraq, all supporters of Hamas, condemned the killing.

\$4 billion settlement close for Lahaina fire victims

Hawaii Gov. Josh Green says the parties involved in Lahaina wildfire lawsuits against the state of Hawaii, Maui County and utilities are close to a claim settlement worth a little over \$4 billion, according to the AP. The deal could be finalized as soon as Aug. 6, which would be two days before the one-year anniversary of the fire that killed 102 people and wiped out historic Lahaina. Insurance claims have already paid \$3 billion. "But the additional \$4 billion of settlement will hopefully make it possible for people to rebuild however they feel they need to," Green said.

9/11 families respond to terrorist plea deal

Families of 9/11 murder victims are decrying a plea deal worked out by the Biden administration and three of the terrorists behind the Sept. 11 terror attacks awaiting trial in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. The terror suspects will be spared the death penalty, three relatives of 9/11 victims were told by the Office of Military Commissions (OMC), the New York Post reported. "I am very disap-

pointed. We waited patiently for a long time. I wanted the death penalty; the government has failed us," Daniel D'Alara, whose twin brother, John, was an NYPD officer killed in the attacks, told the Post.

Israel kills top Hezbollah commander connected to death of 12 children

Israel killed Hezbollah's most senior military and political commander and the head of its Strategic Missile Unit. Fuad Shukur "Shukur" directed Hezbollah's attacks on the State of Israel since Oct. 8, and was the commander responsible for the murder of the 12 children in Majdal Shams in northern Israel on Saturday evening, as well as the killing of numerous Israelis and foreign nationals," the IDF said. He was also on the U.S. most wanted list for the 1983 bombing of U.S. Marine Corps barracks that killed 241 service personnel. The operation, which was carried out by Israeli jets, took place in the southern suburbs of Beirut.

Venezuela erupts in protests after election disputed

Protests have broken out across Venezuela after Socialist President Nicolas Maduro claimed victory in Sunday's election. Millions of voters turned out, according to the AP, as the country turned out to end 25 years of dictatorship. Numerous countries, including the U.S., held off recognizing the results. Venezuela is not releasing the official vote count that showed opposition leader retired diplomat Edmundo González losing. "Venezuelans and the entire world know what happened," González said.

Bi-partisan vote to investigate Secret Service

The U.S. House is moving forward after it voted to form a task force to investigate the security failures surrounding the July 13 assassination attempt against former President Donald Trump. The vote underscores the bipartisan outrage over the shooting at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania. One Trump sup-

porter was killed. Lawmakers have responded quickly with hearings and widespread calls for accountability. The legislation passed by a vote of 416-0.

More hostage bodies found in Gaza

The BBC reports the bodies of kindergarten teacher Maya Goren as well as the soldiers Major Ravid Aryeh Katz, Master Sergeant Oren Goldin, Staff Sergeant Tomer Ahimas and Sergeant Kiril Brodski were found during an operation in the Khan Younis area. The military said it had determined that Goren was murdered in captivity, while the soldiers were killed in combat on 7 October and their bodies then abducted. The announcement means 111 of the 251 people taken hostage are still being held by Palestinians in Gaza. The military says about 1/3 of those are presumed dead.

UK must prepare for war in three years

Britain must be ready to fight a war in three years says Gen Sir Roland Walker, the new head of the British Army, citing an "increasingly volatile" world. He outlined that key to the goal is doubling the Army's fighting power by 2027 and tripling it by the end of the decade, according to the BBC. The talk comes as Iran is on the verge of obtaining nuclear weapons, Russia threatens Europe and China moves closer to invading Taiwan. In his first speech in the role this week, Walker said the UK faced danger from an "axis of upheaval". He said focusing on Artificial Intelligence to enable the Army to destroy an enemy three times its own size.

NATO countries to ditch Russian power grid

Three NATO countries have announced they are leaving the electricity grid controlled by Russia. In February, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will shift their grid connections to the main continental European energy network in a move to end reliance. It comes as more European nations move to end all ties with Russia after its invasion on Ukraine.

Court upholds ban on changing sex on birth certificates

A federal appeals court has upheld a Tennessee law that transgender-indenti-

fying individuals from changing their sex on their birth certificates. In a 2-1 decision, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Tennessee statute saying that birth certificates need to line up with sex does not violate the 14th Amendment. The state was sued by four men who identified as women and who wanted to change the sex to female on their Tennessee birth certificates. "No person, male or female, may amend a birth certificate simply because it conflicts with their gender identity," Judge Jeffrey Sutton wrote.

Pandemic cost U.S. 18 trillion

A nonpartisan commission on China and COVID-19 finds that the COVID pandemic caused \$18 trillion in economic losses to the U.S. and placed blame for the outbreak on the Chinese government. That figure includes more than \$8.6 trillion caused by excess deaths; more than \$1.825 trillion in lost income; \$6 trillion due to chronic conditions such as "long COVID"; and mental health losses of \$1 trillion and educational losses of \$435 billion pushed the total above \$18 trillion, according to Fox Business. The commission from the Heritage Foundation says the pandemic was "the most disruptive and costly event of the 21st century" and that the worldwide excess deaths from COVID were estimated to be 28 million, according to an analysis by The Economist.



Iran elects "reformist" but change may not come

In Iran, voters have elected Masoud Pezeshkian, a lawmaker long associated with the reformist movement. Pezeshkian, a heart surgeon and long-time lawmaker, has been associated with a movement that aims to change the country's Shiite theocracy from the inside while seeking better relations with the West, according to the Associated Press. But that doesn't mean Israel. He stated in an interview with Iranian TV, he would "try to have friendly relations with all countries except Israel" and promised to continue the work to destroy it.

US reports illegal Chinese immigrants

With the US presidential election just

months away, the Department of Homeland Security said this week that it sent 116 Chinese migrants from the United States back home in the first "large charter flight" since the Trump administration. The flight comes as Chinese immigration has become the subject of intense political debate in the upcoming U.S. presidential election, according to the Associated Press. "We will continue to enforce our immigration laws and remove individuals without a legal basis to remain in the United States," Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in a statement. Most of the migrants entered across the southern border. Critics responded on Twitter asking why it took almost four years for the Biden administration to enforce the policy.

200 missing kids recovered with most from sex-trafficking situations

The U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) found 200 missing children during the course of a six-week national sting that ended last week. "Operation We Will Find You 2," is the second operation of its kind under an effort begun during the Trump administration. It was conducted in seven federal judicial districts and geographic locations across the U.S. from May 20 to June 24. In a press release, the USMS said the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (USMEC) assisted in the operation. Out of the 200 children, 173 were endangered runaways with 123 of those found in sex-trafficking situations, 25 were considered missing, a family member abducted one, and one was a non-family abduction.

Government removes signs that claim glaciers "gone" by 2020

The National Park Service is quietly removing signage that make now unproven claims. Signs in Montana's Glacier National Park on the Canada-United States border stated, "The small alpine glaciers present today started forming about 7,000 years ago and reached their maximum in size and number around 1850, at the end of the Little Ice Age," the sign claimed. "They are now rapidly shrinking due to human-caused climate change. Computer models indicate the glaciers will be all gone by the year 2020." They've been removed. Critics say when scientists repeatedly portray a doomsday-style argument, it can be hard for the public to believe them after so many incorrect predictions.