

M a k i n g A D i f f e r e n c e



Galena Holiday Tapestry featured 'Ring the Bells of Christmas', a delightful holiday performance. Photo by Eva Dunn

Galena's Tapestry

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...flowing, just beautiful. Ben Mammet stood out the entire evening as a very skilled dancer with great timing, good extension and an electric smile he often bestowed upon an appreciative audience. Watch this young man; his name will be in lights one day, and anticipating that, I got his autograph!

Mackenzie Sant remained energetic despite the grueling number of performances he was cast in; a very excellent dancer! I cannot fully describe the scene that night that this amazing troupe of talented young people presented as they danced for over two hours, with over 15 costume changes, with such dedication and zeal. Not to mention the many hands at work

behind the scenes, including parents, as they did costume changes, sprayed hair down, patted hairdos, wiped sweaty faces, laced shoes, and made sure bows and bangles were straight! Congrats! Great job!

The Finale with Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus surrounded by the Magi, angels, children, and young performers in tuxedos and gowns, was simply beautiful. It exemplified the "reason for the season."

A very impressive celebration of dance, music, and song. Choreography was inspired, set decorations were outstanding, and the way the music and dancers came together to share a story, evoke the holiday spirit and bring joy, delight and wonder for this special of all holiday seasons was skillfully executed in a very

professional manner. Richly enhanced with details even to the sweet, live infant Mary (Jasmine Mullen) held in her arms, this was a skilled fusion of color, music, imagination, and talent.

To learn more about Galena Street East productions, the performing art groups of talented youngsters, and performance dates, visit online at: www.galenastreeteast.org. 2770 21st Street, Sacramento, CA 95818. (916) 731-4090.

Women Farmers Feed the World

Nowhere is it more apparent that women feed the world than in the largest slum in Kenya. Packed full of people, Kibera slum in Nairobi is populated by anywhere from 700,000 to a million people. In an area of about 225 hectares, the equivalent of just over half the size of Central Park in Manhattan, the women we met are growing food not just to feed their families, but to also to generate income.

Some of the women we met earlier this month are raising vegetables on what they call "vertical farms." Instead of skyscrapers, however, these farms are contained in tall sacks, filled with dirt. The women received training from the French NGO Solidarites to start their sack gardens and now grow a variety of vegetables, including greens like spinach and

kale. And more than 1,000 of their neighbors are doing the same thing. A skill that came in handy over the last few years as election violence spread through the slum in 2007 and 2008 when there was conflict in the slums of Nairobi. No food could come into these areas, but most residents didn't go hungry because so many of them were growing crops—in sacks, vacant land, or elsewhere.

Just across from Kibera another group of farmers, most of them women, have been growing food for nearly two decades on a plot of vacant land. They don't own the land where they grow spinach, kale, spider plant, squash, amarynth, and other vegetables. Instead the land is owned by the Kenyan Social Security Administration, which has allowed the farmers to farm the land through an informal arrangement.

They've been forced to stop farming more than once over the years, and although they're getting harassed less frequently, they still face a number of challenges. The biggest challenge is a lack of water and fertilizer for their crops. For many years, they've used wastewater (sewage from an underground pipe they tapped into) for both irrigation and a source of nutrients.

Although this wastewater can carry a number of risks, including pathogens and contamination from heavy metals, it also provides a rich—and free—source of fertilizer to farmers who don't have the money to buy expensive store-bought fertilizer and other inputs. And because of longer periods of drought (likely a result of climate change) in sub-Saharan Africa, the farmers didn't have to depend on rainfall to water their crops.

But even with the loss of their main water supply and nutrient sources, these farmers are continuing to come up with innovative ways of raising food—and generate income. With the help of the organization, Urban Harvest, the farmers are not only growing food to eat and sell, but, perhaps surprisingly, becoming a source of seed for rural farmers. Kibera's farmers have always grown fodder for livestock feed for both urban and rural farmers, but by establishing a continual source of seed for traditional African vegetables, they're helping dispel the myth that urban agriculture only benefits poor people living in cities.

Using very small plots of land, just a quarter of an acre, and double dug beds, the farmers can raise seeds very quickly. Fast-growing varieties like amarynth and spider plant take only about 3 months to produce seeds, with about 3000 Kenyan shillings in profit. And these seed plots—because they are small—take very little

additional time to weed and manage. The future for these farmers continues to be uncertain. Their land could be taken away, the drought could further jeopardize their crops, the loss of wastewater for fertilizer could reduce production, but they continue to persevere despite these challenges. Bernard Pollack and Danielle Nierenberg are blogging about their travels at Border Jumpers.

Pawsitive Pet Care

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...calories with canned food or meat at the start of fall, and increase on really cold days. As spring approaches I cut back on amounts and calories. Dogs without winter coats can withstand cold temperatures, but below 30 degrees it can get uncomfortable. If you see your dog shivering, they are definitely cold. Bring them in.

Cats are pretty resilient also, and although they are not happy about sitting in the rain or getting wet, they can withstand cold temperatures as long as they have shelter. Feed your barn cats a bit more, and some canned food for extra calories that will be appreciated during the cold days.


One of the concerns I have is with older arthritic pets. We know what it is like to feel those aches and pains of winter. Pets go through this also, they just cannot tell us. Older pets may start walking a little slower; shorter steps indicate decreased hip joint flexibility or spinal arthritis. Getting up from their beds will become more difficult and some may need assistance.

All these are signs that your pet may need some pain medication. Speak to your Veterinarian about anti-inflammatory drugs that are safe for your pet. Some of these require blood work before administration, but can really make a difference in the mobility and attitude of your animal family member.

Aspirin can work also, but it should be buffered as so as not to upset their stomach and depending on their health and other drugs they are taking, there may be bleeding concerns. Always talk to your Veterinarian before starting any medications.

Never give Ibuprofen, Tylenol or Naprosyn. Some of these are toxic to the liver. Herbal remedies and natural body work can be very helpful; acupuncture and massage provide relief. Check with a Holistic Veterinarian for advice. Winter can be a great time for pets, enjoy the season and have a great holiday!


Rose Navarro is a CA State Registered Veterinary Tech with a Veterinary medical background in Internal Medicine, Emergency, and Critical Care. She owns a local pet sitting service. More about Rose at: www.pawsitivepetcareservice.com.



Sutter Amador Hospital
A Sutter Health Affiliate

Introducing a new member of our Medical Staff...

General Surgeon
Glenn Levine, MD, FACS



Sutter Amador is pleased to announce the addition of general surgeon, Glenn Levine, MD, FACS to their medical Staff.

Dr. Levine has been a board-certified surgeon for over 17 years. He received his MD from the State University of New York, Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, NY and completed his internship and residency at the University of South Alabama Medical Center in Mobile, AL.

Dr. Levine has been in California for 11 years and performs standard general surgery procedures, including basic and advanced laparoscopic surgery.

He is currently seeing patients on Court Street in Jackson. To make an appointment with Dr. Levine, ask your care provider for a referral or contact his office at: **(209) 223-1854**