

# FAITH & SPIRITUALITY

## Advice & Tips from the Purple Mountain Sage



BY: SHARON COURMOUIS, SACRED ROCKS RESERVE

### Increase your enjoyment of living:

"A few minutes ago every tree was excited, bowing to the roaring storm, waving, swirling, tossing their branches in glorious enthusiasm like worship. But though to the outer ear these trees are now silent, their songs never cease." - John Muir

### Hunkering Down

The phrase "hunker down" comes to mind when hearing of wild weather. For some reason, we seem to be closer to the weather here in the mountains. It is more intense - rainier, windier, sunnier, colder. If you like the seasons, then living in the mountains is special, every season. One of the best seasons is winter. And one of the best activities is 'hunkering down'. According to the dictionary, hunker is usually used with 'down' and has three meanings:

1. To squat close to the ground; crouch.
2. To take shelter, settle in, or hide out.
3. To hold stubbornly to a position.

I have also noticed three types of "hunkerers." The first type waits until the weather is bad, and only then, believing the evidence of their own experience, hunkers down or squats. The second type takes heed of warnings, prepares for storm by laying in supplies in advance, checking flashlights and such, then at the impending signs of bad

weather, stays inside, except for work as necessary. The third type simply ignores the warnings, and holds their position no matter the cost. The third type often must be rescued or buried.

When I watch the critters at Sacred Rocks Reserve, the odd thing is that they all take cover and hide out at the first signs of harsh weather. The snakes hibernate deep in their small caves, birds find places out of the wind and hunch over, and the coyotes and bobcats snuggle close to each other in their caves. Animals know that when there is no compelling reason to be outside, it is better to hunker down.

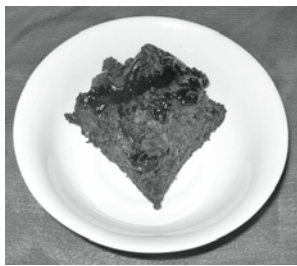
There is a saying from old Mexico "que bonito ver llover sin mojarse" or 'how beautiful to see it rain without getting wet!' It is a delicious day when you can snuggle in close to the fireplace with your flannels and slippers, sipping hot chocolate and smelling the pot of chili simmering on the stove. And listening to the rain beat on the roof.... seeing the rain without getting wet.

Are we not the most fortunate people in the world? My mind considers the troubles in the world, especially our Haitian brothers and sisters, and grieves their loss. In some way, this disaster, like the tsunami, allows us to watch but not be involved directly. Just like watching the rain without getting wet. How can we offer help? Perhaps along with cash donations, we can be type three hunkerers, the stubborn ones, but focused on prayers. We can hold up our prayers often, over the day and the night as we think about their plight.

Perhaps, there is a lesson for us, that there are some storms in life that come with no warnings - just like the earthquake in Haiti. When I find myself in the midst of such rain and fierce winds, rather than watching from the safety of my burrow, whether it is a financial, physical or emotional

storm, can I still hunker down spiritually? Perhaps by strengthening my faith and building my spiritual reserves - developing trust in God and in humankind to be there when I am in need - maybe those are the best provisions to lay aside for the storms that inevitably come in life.

### Chocolate Cake with Fudge Sauce - (Comfort Food)



**Cake Ingredients:** 1C flour, 2 tsp. baking powder, ½ tsp salt, 2/3 C sugar, 2T cocoa, ½ C milk, 4T oil, 1 tsp vanilla, ½ C nuts (optional)  
**Filling (sauce):** ¾ C brown sugar, 4 T cocoa, 1 ½ C boiling water, ½ C semi or bittersweet chocolate chips (optional)

**Directions:** Grease an 8x8 dish. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Sift together dry ingredients. Add milk, oil, and vanilla and mix only until smooth. Add nuts if desired.

Turn into prepared baking dish. Combine sauce ingredients and pour over batter - DO NOT MIX! Bake for 40 minutes until the top looks dry and firm. There will be a rich fudge sauce under the cake. Serve with whipped cream or ice cream.

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## Connor Reid's Race

BY CONNOR'S MOM, ESTHER REID

Although his chemo ended in July 2009, Connor still has numerous appointments. He will receive checkups and MRIs for the rest of his life. So far and by the grace of God, all MRIs and neurological test are clear. Connor has none of the permanent side effects.

We have been busy getting Connor back to his healthier self. Connor received his last chemo dose 7 months ago, but he still had to recuperate from the effects. Within a month he was feeling better and was alert. He wanted to run, but his body would ache and he got frustrated. The local soccer team (The Mighty Bees) allowed him to practice with them. He would hurt from someone bumping into him and would get fatigued easily. But, he was determined to be a kid again and we understood.

Connor wanted to race from the moment that he saw his big brother Jonnathan race

BMX. The problem was that Connor had lost 10% of his body weight and most of it was his muscles. I am happy to report that he has gained enough weight to race.

On February 13, 2010, Connor raced for the first time. I was filled with mixed emotions; I was happy that he wanted to be a normal kid and at the same time scared at how he would react if he did not win. I relied on my husband and he said "Let him do it, he is determined." Family and friends knew the significance of the fact that he was out riding a bicycle again. So there we stood cheering him on.

The first qualifier came and then the second and then the third, Connor did not win. He needed to win one of the races to be able to compete in the main event and hopefully receive a trophy. He felt a little bit down but looked right up and said "I know what I would do next time!" And that was it, he went on to

play with the other kids.

What he did not know was that, he had won the longer race; the race that he began back in April 2008. He did not allow his experience with Cancer take away who he was meant to be. He will not be stopped when he fails but will continue to try and try until he gets it. That's a lesson that most of us learn later on in life and some don't even learn it.

The main reason for me sharing Connor's story is to encourage you. If you are going through some hard times, remember Connor, who at the young age of seven was diagnosed with Cancer but he never gave up, no matter how bad he felt at times. We did not do it alone, we held on to God with all our strength. If you have a problem, do not run away from God, but run to Him!

Thank you for your support!

## Cool Beds Offer a Break For Teens in Crisis

What is a "Cool Bed?"

Cool Beds offer a secure, proven alternative to institutional settings for youth who need a break during stressful situations. Cool Beds are voluntary short-term (21 day maximum) placements in host homes certified by SDYS. While in a Cool Bed youth will continue to attend their regular school on a daily basis.

Who is eligible?

In order to qualify, youth must be a Rural East County resident, or attend a Rural East County school, and be at least 12-17 years of age. Youth must not have a history of fire-setting, sexual perpetration, severe psychosis and must not be gang-affiliated.

How can youth and families access "Cool Bed PLUS?"

Youth and Families can access Cool Bed Plus by calling East County Communities Center (ECCC) at (619) 258-6877. At this time a partial assessment will be taken over the phone or in person to determine a youth's eligibility for the program.

What services are provided to youth and families?

Youth Receive:  
 Structured, nurturing Foster Care  
 Case Management  
 Individual/ Group Counseling  
 Independent Living Skill Training  
 24-Hour Emergency Response

Center Hours  
 Monday thru Friday 9am-5:30pm

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT Aileen Pizarro

at: (619) 838-8890.

Families Receive:

Access to Case Management  
 Access to Family Counseling  
 Access to Parenting Support  
 24-Hour Emergency Response  
 Referrals to Appropriate Community Resources  
 Aftercare Family Support Group

East County Communities' Center:  
 7373 University Avenue  
 Suite 201  
 La Mesa, CA 91942

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## Wind Farms vs Home Generation

BY TONY NEFF

In a perfect world we would have all the answers and know just what to do. When it comes to the research and development part of wind generation we find that large wind farms are able to be a part of renewable energy plans on a large scale and augment existing supplies. The state of California, where I live, has mandated 20% renewable energy by

2012 and 30% by 2020. This includes geothermal, solar, and wind generation to feed into the grid. Many homes are being fitted with solar arrays and small wind turbines, to meet the needs of the homeowner. California homeowners can now take advantage of rebates for installing self-generation systems. Campo resident, Mike Connolly, recently set up a wind turbine for home use and

sent me information about these systems. You can go to the following websites and learn more about what rebates you qualify for. The National Renewable Energy Labs (www.nrel.gov) and Center for Sustainable Energy in San Diego (www.energycenter.org).

Bob Applegate, has two systems at his Campo home, several solar arrays

and a wind generator. In my visit to the Applegate's it was explained that the excess power they generate is fed into the grid. Before 2010, SDGE sent a thank you note for the power the Applegate's generated and a bill if they used theirs. A new law that effects Net Energy Metering (NEM accounts) offers new benefits to the NEM program. SDG&E's basic NEM program will remain

the same, however, the new law will allow SDG&E to compensate NEM customers for generation of net surplus energy over an annual true-up period. The compensation will become available, beginning in 2011, at the end of each NEM customer's annual true-up period. Only NEM customers who generate more energy than they use will qualify for compensation at the end of

each program year.

The need for self reliance drives many homeowners to purchase either solar or wind generation systems. In my travels I have seen several unique wind generation systems. The most unique was installed in Jacumba and is visible from Old Highway 80. This is a cylinder type generator