

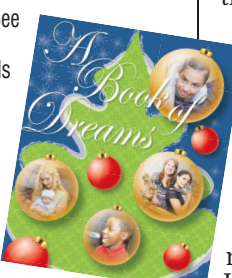
BEE CONNECTED
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HAVE A FAVORITE CHRISTMAS CAROL?

Who can resist a giveaway! **Modmomslubs.com** is giving away a copy each of "Big Yellow Sunflower" and "Little Green Frogs" by Frances Barry. These are two colorful books geared toward toddlers and preschoolers. To win, tell us on this thread what your favorite Christmas carol is and why. Modmomslubs will choose a winner from the responses. Just go to the site's homepage and click on the rotator, to the left of the "Welcome!" area. Contest ends Thursday at 5 p.m.

CHILDREN THE FOCUS IN BOOK OF DREAMS

Since 1990, Bee readers have made hundreds and hundreds of dreams come true for people with special needs through **A Book of Dreams**. In recognition of the ever-worsening economy, this year's Book of Dreams focuses on serving the neediest and most vulnerable of our community — the children. If you want to read about some of these stories, and perhaps donate what you can, go to www.modbee.com/dreams.



MAKE YOUR SEARCH A LITTLE SMOOTHER

Ever have trouble searching for a story at www.modbee.com? Here's a handy tip. Type in a word or phrase that you believe might narrow the search, and put the word or phrase in quotes. You can find the search toolbar in the upper right corner of the homepage. Make sure the circle designating a modbee.com search is selected.

AVAILABLE HERE: ADDITIONAL CONTENT

At modbee.com, we have tons of space to provide you with oodles of information. Not only will you get the stories you find in our print version of The Bee, but you'll also get documents, links to related Web sites, video reports and extra photos that we weren't able to get into the newspaper. We also offer you the ability to give instant feedback by commenting on each story. After you've finished with the paper, click on modbee.com to find additional content available there.

THE TOP 10 STORIES

- The most viewed stories Friday on modbee.com:
1. Give no help to any illegal immigrant
 2. UC Davis vets save the tortoises
 3. Homeless man burned in motel fire
 4. Driver OK after pickup flips
 5. Stolen Bentley turns out not to be Christmas gift
 6. Firefighters douse flames in 2 Modesto house fires
 7. Motorcycle officer hits oil, crashes
 8. Valley partners fight for survival
 9. Trio arrested in pirated DVD probe
 10. Alligator on the mend in Riverbank

SUNSHINE IN THE BEE

LIFESTYLES

With the economy taking a downward spiral, experts share strategies parents can use to help their children deal with a leaner holiday gift haul.



TRAVEL

With less commotion and smaller crowds than some other theme parks, Legoland near San Diego has all the pieces for a fun time.



PEOPLE

Keanu Reeves and Jennifer Connelly talk about their big-budget holiday film, a remake of "The Day the Earth Stood Still."

PARADE

You may be cutting corner on holiday spending this year, but you don't have to scrimp on the season's cheer. Find out how some families are making their celebrations bountiful without the pile of presents.

PORTER: Kin may go to trial over Craig trust

CONTINUED FROM A-1

Henry "Bud" Whitney, 75, calmly read a statement on behalf of Craig's family. Whitney is married to Craig's niece, Marilyn.

"What you did to Frank Craig is about as nasty as it gets," said Whitney, addressing Porter directly.

Craig enlisted Porter's help in 1999, when the rancher inherited \$2 million from a brother and struck a deal with the preacher to build an agricultural museum.

'Ruined an old man's dream'

During his 20-minute statement while standing in the jury box, Whitney said Craig initially sought help from other people who wanted to find an attorney to set up a nonprofit organization and fund the museum construction appropriately.

"I think Doug Porter ruined an old man's dream," Whitney said. "Doug Porter said he would do it for free. You have to worry about someone who says they'll do it for free."

Authorities said Porter siphoned \$1.1 million from Craig, using the money to supplement his lifestyle and subsidize a family compound in La Grange.

Whitney said Craig had saved old farm equipment and memorabilia he had hoped to put in the museum.

"Frank saved all his life to do that," Whitney said. "It took Doug a year and a half to spend all of Frank's money. And what did Doug do with Frank's money? He built a big compound on a hill in La Grange."

Craig was crippled March 5, 2002, when Porter's truck veered off Lake Road and slammed into a tree. Craig drowned April 22, 2004, after his truck, driven by Porter, veered off an embankment and plunged into the Ceres main canal.

After the hearing, Harold Thompson, 77, one of Porter's friends from Hughson, shook hands with the prosecutors and said to them politely, "You convicted an innocent man."

Thompson also spoke with Whitney and told him Craig once said he didn't like to have his family coming around because they were only out to get his money.

"Mr. Porter is a very honorable man," Thompson said. "I've known him since he was a little boy, when he used to live across the street from me."

Porter will be sent to Deuel Vocational in Tracy

In the hallway, Porter's family and friends waited to say goodbye before he was taken to the Stanislaus County Jail, where he has been held without bail since he was arrested Nov. 30, 2006.

Deputy District Attorney John R. Mayne said Porter will be transferred to Deuel Vocational Institute in Tracy, where he will be evaluated before state prison officials decide where to send him.

Mayne said it's up to the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department to decide when Porter will be transferred, but it usually happens within a week.

The prosecutor stood outside the courtroom with Craig's family after the sentencing.

"Mr. Porter collided with a tree, he collided with a canal and now he has collided with justice," Mayne said. "Mr. Porter is a murderer; he got caught and he was convicted."

As part of his sentence, Porter was ordered to pay \$1.24 million in restitution to Craig's estate — which was left to Hickman Community Church — and a \$10,000 fine. A restitution order would follow Porter alone, not his relatives.

"It will be taken out of his prison allowance, but it's unreasonable to believe all that money will be repaid," Mayne said.

The Whitneys sued Porter, his family and the church in 2005, challenging the revocable trust that Craig had changed in 1999, when he expected his \$2 million-plus would be used to build the museum.

"It's in mediation right now, and it's not going well," Whitney said Friday about the lawsuit. "They're really playing hardball, and we might have to go to trial with this."

Earlier this week, Zeff denied a motion for a new trial from Porter's defense attorney, Kirk McAllister.

McAllister said Friday night he will file a notice for appeal on behalf of Porter next week.

"Mr. Porter thanks his many supporters who stood by him during this trial," McAllister said. "He looks forward to finding justice in the appellate process."

Bee staff writer Rosalio Ahumada can be reached at rahumada@modbee.com or 578-2394.

A LOOK BACK AT THE CASE

"If I die for any reason, except in my bed, you make sure justice is done."

That was one of the last comments telephone technician Paul Harvey of Hughson heard from his friend, 85-year-old Frank Craig.

Harvey and 90 other witnesses took the stand during 32 days of testimony in the murder trial of former pastor Howard "Doug" Porter, which began with jury selection May 12 and ended with guilty verdicts Aug. 4.

After less than a day of deliberations, 12 jurors said Porter, who was known for coaching championship wrestlers at Hughson High School, was guilty of murdering Craig in the second of two truck collisions involving both men.

Stanislaus County Superior Court Judge Thomas Zeff on Friday sentenced Porter, 57, to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Here are events from a sensational case involving a country preacher, an elderly man who collected farm equipment and an agricultural museum that never was more than a plan on paper:

THE DREAM

Frank Craig, a lifelong bachelor and World War II veteran, collected antiques and old farm equipment for decades. He inherited \$2 million from a brother in 1999 and believed that he could build an agricultural museum to display his treasures, including a dozen old tractors and a machine called the Fresno Float, which was used to dig canals around the region.

THE DEAL

Doug Porter, pastor of Hickman Community Church, agreed to help Craig build his museum. Craig made the church his beneficiary and Porter the executor of his estate. Later, he gave Porter power of attorney over his personal finances and health care decisions. Porter was supposed to use Craig's money to build the Central Valley Museum of Agriculture.

THE PARTNERSHIP

The board of elders at the church, which included Porter, agreed to use Craig's money to build a multipurpose building that would include exhibit space for Craig's treasures as well as church offices and a new sanctuary for the growing congregation.

THE FIRST RED FLAG

A few months after Craig set up a \$150,000 fund to seed the museum plan, church secretary Cathy Bergman got worried because bank statements were missing. When she got duplicates, she found that Porter spent \$15,700 on personal purchases. Porter admitted wrongdoing and church elders wrote a letter to Craig, telling him about a mistake in bookkeeping. Porter reimbursed the fund with Craig's money.

THE FUND-RAISER

Craig's money wasn't enough for a \$3 million facility, complete with outdoor amphitheater and ball fields, the church envisioned. So Porter hired former newspaper reporter James TenNapel to raise money. More than a year later, Porter gave TenNapel \$30,000 of Craig's money to help him buy a home. TenNapel never raised any money and later testified that Porter warned him not to mention the money to Craig.

A CRIPPLING WRECK

Craig was a passenger in Porter's Toyota Tundra on March 5, 2002, when it veered off Lake Road and slammed into a tree. Porter was protected by an air bag and walked away. Craig was not wearing a seat belt and his air bag was turned off. Craig nearly died, spent months in a rehabilitation hospital and never walked without an assistance again.

CARETAKERS

When Craig returned to his ranch in Hickman, he needed help to bathe, dress and eat. Porter initially

hired Martine Escobar, who was taking Bible study classes at the church. Craig's friends complained that Escobar had a drinking problem and left Craig outside for hours at a time, including once when Craig was severely sunburned. Escobar left and Porter hired Richard Peterson, a teen who tended a tropical fish business on a nearby farm. Peterson told the jury that Craig received only junk mail and was angry that Porter did little work on the museum.

POST OFFICE BOX 373

Porter had mail related to Craig's investment accounts sent to a post office box in Hickman. The box was rented to Porter and the father of a young man who wanted a Hickman address so he could attend Hughson High and wrestle for Porter.

CHURCH BACKS AWAY

Church elders had control of a \$600,000 fund Craig set up for the museum, spending money to purchase 14 acres near the church where the multipurpose building was to be erected, install a phone system, pave a parking lot and access road, and renovate some bathrooms. When fund raising failed, elders left it to Porter to guide the project. The day before Craig drowned, Porter told the elders that the project would be easier



THE BEE
Hickman Community Church

if Craig were dead.

CRAIG DROWNS

Craig was a passenger April 22, 2004, when Porter was driving a GMC Sonoma he purchased with Craig's money. The truck veered off an embankment and plunged into the Ceres main canal, east of Swanson Road, where Craig drowned. Porter told authorities he lost control of the truck after hitting some rocks. Authorities found no signs of braking and think the truck turned left 100 feet after hitting rocks that were about the size of a man's fist.

WHERE DID THE MONEY GO?

Most of Craig's money was gone before the first wreck. A forensic accountant said \$820,000 directly benefited Porter and members of his family, and \$300,000 more likely benefited the family. Porter bought and sold two homes, sold some of the land purchased for the museum and used Craig's money to supplement the construction of a family compound dubbed "Rivendell" in La Grange, even spending museum money to stock a private lake with trout. After Craig died, Porter sold Craig's ranch for \$415,000, pocketing money that should have gone to the church.

THE ARREST

Porter was arrested in November 2006 while entering the United States from Mexico near San Diego, capping a 2½-year investigation. Porter had resigned from the church in November 2005 and reportedly had been living part time in Mexico while beginning a ministry. Porter was returned to Stanislaus County, where he was put in jail without bail.

THE VERDICT

Twelve jurors deliberated for less than six hours, then found Porter guilty of first-degree murder, attempted murder, elder abuse causing death and theft from an elder by a caretaker. The jury said Porter killed Craig for financial gain and to silence a witness to his theft.

THE SENTENCE

Porter was sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole, maintaining his innocence to the end. "Frank Craig was a friend of mine. He was a friend of mine until the day he died," he told the judge. "This was an accident, and I tried to save his life."

— Susan Herendeen

RULES: According to estimates, trucking industry cost will be \$5.5B

CONTINUED FROM A-1

fornia could be older than 13 years unless it had equipment to cut nitrogen oxide emissions.

Big diesel trucks are a major contributor to smog and soot pollution. Most of the trucks and buses on the road today have few emission controls or none, according to the Air Resources Board.

Low-mileage agriculture vehicles and specialty farm vehicles have later deadlines to comply, but all the trucks must meet the standard by 2023. The rules also call for school buses made before April 1, 1977, to be off the road by 2012.

State will save billions

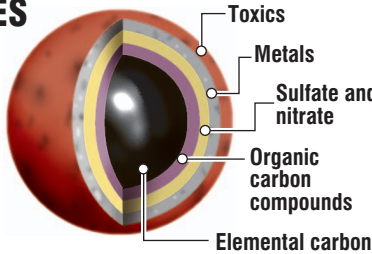
The regulations will cost the trucking industry \$5.5 billion, according to air board estimates. But supporters said the state will save many more billions of dollars in healthcare costs, especially in the valley, one of the nation's dirtiest air basins.

The board separately approved rules aimed at curbing greenhouse gases by increasing fuel efficiency. The regulation applies to tractors pulling box trailers 53 feet or longer. Beginning in 2010, equipment with model year 2011 or older must include fuel-efficient technology, such as aerodynamic devices to reduce wind drag.

Truckers unleashed a fierce lobbying campaign against the rules.

TOXIC PARTICLES

Fresh diesel exhaust contains "ultrafine" hazardous particles that can directly enter the bloodstream from the lungs.

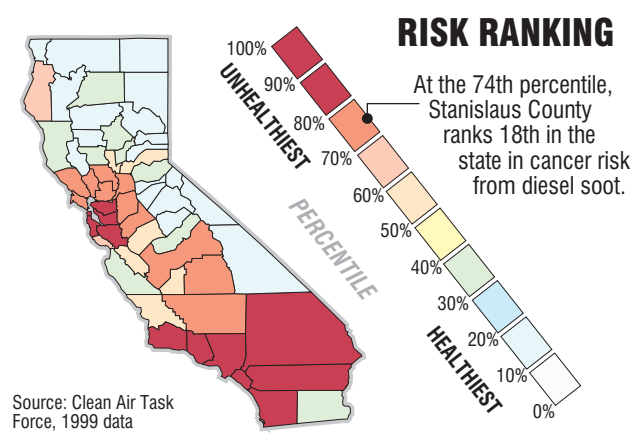


HEALTH IMPACT

A 1999 study shows the average lifetime cancer risk from diesel soot for a resident of Stanislaus County is 1 in 5,047. This risk is 198 times greater than the EPA's acceptable cancer level of 1 in a million.

1999 BREAKDOWN, STANISLAUS COUNTY:

- 13 Premature deaths
- 14 Non-fatal heart attacks
- 310 Asthma attacks
- 6 Chronic bronchitis
- 1,672 Work loss days
- 9,696 Restricted activity days



Source: Clean Air Task Force, 1999 data

RISK RANKING

At the 74th percentile, Stanislaus County ranks 18th in the state in cancer risk from diesel soot.

NAM NGUYEN/THE SACRAMENTO BEE

"The costs are astronomical. Nobody can survive it. Most businesses are going to be out of business," said Jim Gandulgia, owner of a trucking company in Fresno.

Protests from truckers dominated the two-day hearing. But clean-air activists also made their pleas to the board. The Merced-Mariposa County Asthma Coalition

took a group to testify at the Sacramento hearing. Melissa Kelly-Ortega, a program associate and Merced resident who has two children with asthma, said the truck rule gives "a glimmer of hope that our children will be able to breathe clean air."

Fuel savings a plus

Truckers pushed for an alternate proposal that would give them more time to comply. But air board chairwoman Mary Nichols said the delays would keep the state from meeting federal clean-air deadlines.

Larger trucking firms are expected to have an easier time complying than smaller operators.

Richard Raham, general manager for Dot Foods Inc. in Modesto, said the Illinois-based food distributor already has the filters on most of its trucks in California and is moving forward with upgrading the rest.

The company runs 660 trucks in the nation and also will comply with the measures to improve mileage and reduce greenhouse gases, he said.

"It is going to be costly, but if it can increase fuel economy savings, we can see the benefits of it," Raham said.

Fred Burtschi, owner of an agricultural trucking firm in Riverbank, expected it will cost up to \$90,000 to put the emission controls on six of his trucks with older diesel engines.

"What they are trying to implement on the trucks is crazy," he said. "They have trouble retrofitting the trucks to comply and the engines are not designed to handle the extra load. The fuel mileage has gone down 10 percent on those (retrofitted trucks)."

The board agreed to some minor changes, including allowing owners who are downsizing fleets to earn more time to meet targets on their remaining trucks. Also, the board promised to take a fresh look at the rules at the end of next year, including examining the economic fallout.

More than \$1.5 billion in state grants and loans are available for the upgrades, but truckers say that's not enough.

The Associated Press and Modesto Bee staff writer Ken Carlson contributed to this report.

SETTING IT STRAIGHT

We want to make sure the information in this paper is accurate. Please call mistakes to our attention, so we may correct them.

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- Sports 578-2300