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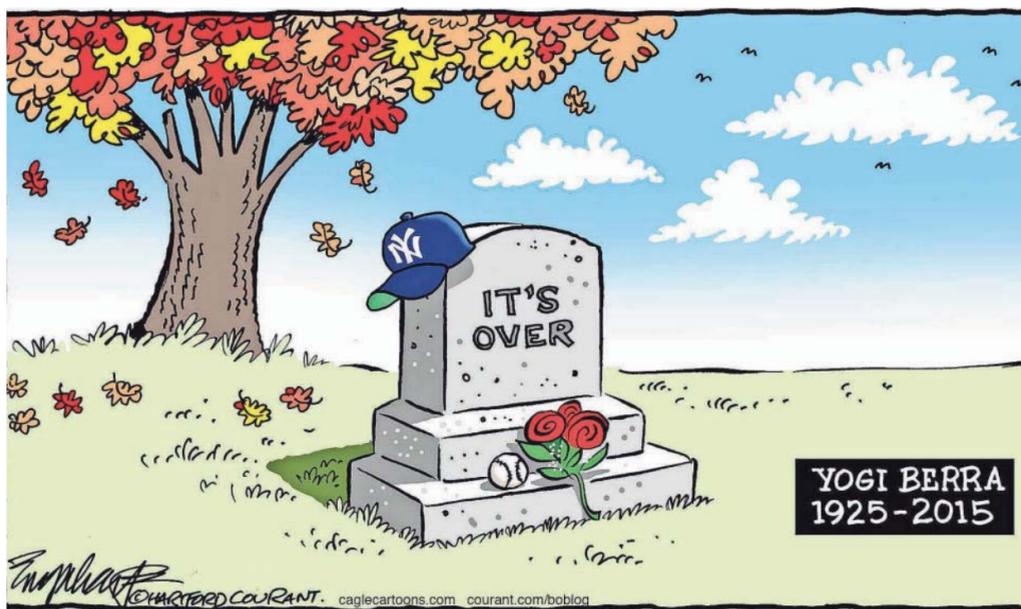
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**VALLEY VOICE**

## Help needed for displaced seniors on bus

I am riding the bus to work. In front of me is a woman in her 70s; it's harder to tell when there is no makeup and the skin is weathered.

She is slumped over her various plastic bags of belongings, snoring. Her hair is matted. Her clothing is dirty in the way that only days of living and sleeping in the same clothes can be. She has a brand new hospital band on her wrist. She was probably given a bus pass by a well-meaning hospital social worker. The bus is her discharge plan.

She wakes up and reaches into a pocket of one of the three shirts she is wearing and pulls out a small bag of Dots, the size they give out on Halloween. It is only when she goes to eat a red Dot that I see that the whole left side of her mouth has no teeth at all. She is limited to the 5-6 remaining teeth on her right side to gnaw at the red candy.

This woman is one of our displaced elderly. She has been displaced from the security that I am sure she thought she would have by this age. Granted she is at the far end of the spectrum, perhaps homeless for months or years. But equally possible is that she may have been just like the many seniors we speak to everyday who are just unable to keep it all together: rising utilities, rising rent, new medications and the need for fresh food for her diabetes.

She probably receives Social Security but it has not prevented her from sleeping on a bus and carrying her belongings around with her. She probably has Medicare but it hasn't helped her keep her teeth. Whatever the facts, there are simply too many safety nets that this woman has fallen through.

I have worked for and with many of those safety nets. One thing I am sure of now, 30 years later, is that seniors in crisis who are expected to negotiate the maze of serial safety nets by themselves usually can't. They miss the bus, they don't get their medications filled, they get evicted, and they end up back in the ER.

But seniors with at least one person alongside them, as they begin to slip on the slope of economic insecurity, have a fighting chance because someone will notice that they haven't paid rent, that their electricity has been shut off or that they are back in the hospital. If they have one "someone" who is looking out for them, it can make all the difference; but if they don't, I believe we have an obligation and an opportunity.

As a community we can come together as hospitals, senior centers, feeding programs, nonprofit agencies, and funders to create and maintain a network of valley wide senior resource check-in points with accurate resources and cross agency case management that can follow a senior in crisis.

As an agency that has served seniors for over 30 years in this valley, Jewish Family Service of the Desert is committed to help build this much needed collaborative. Please contact me at if you would to receive information or join in this vital conversation. The next senior on the bus needs us.

Email Maureen Forman, executive director of Jewish Family Service of the Desert, at [mforman@jfsdesert.org](mailto:mforman@jfsdesert.org)


**Maureen Forman**
**ANOTHER VOICE**

## Americans should embrace pope for once-in-a-lifetime

The News & Observer of Raleigh (North Carolina) published this editorial on Sept. 21:

Those fortunate enough to see Pope Francis on his visit to the United States will know it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, one they'll share with friends and family all their lives. And that feeling will apply to non-Catholics as well as members of the church.

For Pope Francis has captured the world's attention not just with his position, but with a message that embraces all people with love and forgiveness and understanding that goes beyond doctrine. Indeed, long-time church observers thought from the moment he appeared as pope and asked people for their prayers that his might well be a transformative period in the church's history.

Francis certainly is not a revolutionary, in that he adheres to and advocates many of the church's traditional beliefs. But he has cleared the way for the church and its leaders to be more forgiving and more understanding. He has given priests the right to absolve the Catholic sin of abortion. He has acted to make annulment easier.

And he has repeatedly emphasized the need for all to help the poor and disadvantaged. He has preached for humility, for tolerance of those who are different.

And of late, he has spoken of the threat of climate change and the need to better care for the environment and tied that together with the needs of the less fortunate. A gifted writer, the pope wrote in his encyclical policy on social justice and the environment, "It must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."

The pope conveys his view of the church's obligation to involve itself in social issues with his own itinerary in the United States.

Yes, there will be parades and masses. But he will be visiting a school, a charity and a prison. And as he always does, this pope will greet his crowds with kisses and handshakes. He seems particularly touched by children, embracing



Pope Francis arrives at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on Wednesday in Washington, before for an outdoor Mass to canonize Junipero Serra.

them when possible, blessing them, kissing them. He makes a special effort with those children who are sick or handicapped.

The pope's humanity is what has caused him to be admired and even adored by non-Catholics. He is a person without pretense, who chooses to live in humble rooms at the Vatican and not the more well-appointed apartment of his predecessors. By example, he is a leader of all, and though he'll address Congress and the United Nations, he'll likely admonish them to serve all the peoples of the world. And they will sit up straight when he does.

Pope Francis has attained extraordinary attention since assuming the papacy. Yes, that's true of all new popes. But in this case, the attention comes as much because of his ideas and his forceful way of expressing them. This is a special day.

**YOUR VOICE**
**HOAs and lawn conversions**

Skip Descant's front-page article, "Lawn Conversion: Landscapes for a changing world," is very timely and will be an inspiration to valley residents wanting to convert to desert landscape.

Some homeowners in HOAs want to convert but are blocked by other homeowners and/or the board. The Desert Horticultural Society of the Coachella Valley is featuring a class on this very topic at Desert Garden Community Day, Saturday, Oct. 17, at The Living Desert: "HOA Conversion to a Desert Landscape: The Balancing Act Between Turf and Turf Removal." The presenter, Cathy Cieslikowski of RGA

Landscape Architects, Inc., will give strategies and information on the many benefits that can come with turf removal.

For more information on this free event and the full day's schedule go to [deserthorticulturalsociety.org](http://deserthorticulturalsociety.org). Again, thank you Desert Sun for helping us all work together to conserve our most precious resource.

Mary Brent Wehrli,  
 Palm Springs

**Different names for CV Link**

Different terminology is being employed when seeking funds or approval for the CV Link. When Measure A funds

are being commandeered for the project, it is described as a ROADWAY. When the concept of the CV Link is being sold to the public it's called a TRAIL.

The reality? The CV Link will sometimes be dual directional, multi-path and multi-level thoroughfares that can collectively span up to 30 feet.

The reason? Full funding for the CV Link is dependent on the inclusion of NEVs (neighborhood electric vehicles). By regulation, NEVs and pedestrians cannot travel on the same pathway. The requirement for separate paths has exploded the concept of the CV Link from a simple bike and walking path to a full blown road because that's the only type of project that most pledged money is allowed to

fund.

Before anyone decides if they are for or against the CV Link, everyone should understand what it actually is. It will not be a simple, little trail gently winding through the valley for idyllic walks and healthful bike rides. The CV Link will be an extensive, elaborate concrete road, with use by electric vehicles as its primary purpose.

Jeri Barry,  
 Palm Springs

**Let us vote on CV Link**

I think the CV Link is a waste of money. It should be brought up on a ballot before the voters. Let voters decide.

If the valley has money to spend on roads, let's get the

bypass road constructed next to Interstate 10. I have been a victim of having to sit on that freeway for hours and hours due to traffic and we were told — when the last 8-hour "sit on the freeway" event occurred a few years ago — that something was going to be done about that; specifically, putting a bypass road for travelers to get off the I-10 during heavy construction, road damage, accidents, etc.

Now we hear about spending road money on a CV Link for people to ride their bikes and golf carts and walk. They can't get there if the I-10 is shut down. Let's fix that problem first, please.

Diane Jeffers,  
 La Quinta