

SHINING OVER CALIFORNIA'S GREAT CENTRAL VALLEY SINCE 1869

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2011

BREAKING NEWS ONLINE AT WWW.MERCEDSUN-STAR.COM

## NCAA Big Dance tickets punched. SPORTS, PAGE B1



## ENVIRONMENT: UC Merced to host seminar. LOCAL, PAGE A2

### Domestic violence awareness

# Inmates address vicious cycle



SUN-STAR PHOTOS BY BEA AHBECK

Above: Tiffany Sanders and Jovanna Washington act out a scene in the skit "Love the Way You Lie" during the fifth annual Domestic Violence Awareness Day at Valley State Prison for Women in Chowchilla on Saturday. Below: Brandi Vogl reacts to a skit. Several of the inmates are incarcerated because of domestic violence-related offenses.

By YESENIA AMARO  
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Camilla Russell was abused as a child. "I never talked about it," she recalled.

Not talking about it for years caused the tension inside of her to build up as anger.

Russell later released that anger on her 6-year-old stepdaughter, abusing her for 2½ months.

"In her I saw that little girl that I hated within myself," Russell remembered.

Ultimately, her stepdaughter's school helped put a stop to the abuse.

"I was in denial. I'm so grateful there was intervention," Russell said, glad someone stepped in before the abuse got to the point



that she could have killed the child.

Russell was among 400 inmates who participated in the fifth annual Domestic Violence Awareness Day at the Valley State Prison for Women in Chowchilla on Saturday. Throughout the daylong event, inmates performed skits, read

poems and shared their stories.

The event celebrated survivors and those who have lost their lives to domestic violence.

Michelle Sabin, self-help sponsor at the prison, helped organize the event. She said one goal was "to bring awareness of domestic

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### NATURAL DISASTER

# Death toll in Japan soars past 10,000

Over a million without power; cold weather adds to misery.

The Associated Press

SENDAI, Japan — The estimated death toll from Friday's disasters climbed past 10,000 on Sunday as a second nuclear reactor exploded and hundreds of thousands of people struggled to find food and water. The prime minister said it was the nation's worst crisis since World War II.

Nuclear plant operators worked frantically to try to keep temperatures down in several reactors crippled by the earthquake and tsunami, wrecking at least two by dumping sea water into them in last-ditch efforts to avoid meltdowns. Officials reported a second explosion but didn't expect it to pose a health threat.

Near-freezing temperatures compounded the misery of survivors



ASSOCIATED PRESS

A man, with his face covered to protect against dust, looks out at the damage Monday in Yotsukura, Japan, three days after a giant quake and tsunami struck the country.

vors along hundreds of miles of the northeastern coast battered by the tsunami that smashed inland with breathtaking fury. Rescuers pulled bodies from muddy jumbles of wrecked houses, shat-

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### Business Profile

## VACATIONS PLANNED WITH PERSONAL TOUCH

By CAROL REITER  
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Ann Baucom has traveled around the world. She's seen six of the seven continents. She knows what travelers want and need when they go on vacation.

Baucom owns Merced Travel and has been in the travel business most of her life. Her parents owned Pegasus Travel in Merced, and after working with them, Baucom bought Edmonson's House of Travel in 1984. In 1986, she

bought Merced Travel.

Today, travel agencies' biggest competitor is the Internet. But Baucom isn't afraid of taking on the Web.

"I'm here, I'm local, you always have a face to see," Baucom said. "And you get an honest opinion. Many times the Internet is trying to sell you something, and I'm not here to sell. I'm here to fulfill your dreams, not mine."

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## Quick Take

News outside Merced County

**STATE BUDGET:** Democratic lawmakers advise their Republican counterparts not to overplay their hand as negotiations with the governor continue. See page A3

**SLOW TO CHANGE:** Despite an order from the president, federal agencies are struggling to meet requests filed under the Freedom of Information act more quickly. See page A5

**REBELS PUSHED BACK:** Forces loyal to dictator Moammar Gadhafi have seized momentum, driving back rebels, below, from territory in the North African country. See page A7



## MONDAY MERCED MATTERS

# Illness doesn't deter volunteer from mission

By VICTOR A. PATTON  
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The message in the St. Patrick's Catholic Church bulletin was plain and simple: "Volunteer wanted to help pregnant women in crisis and escape a violent environment."

It may have been a short message, but Patricia Hall believes it was meant for her eyes to see. "I looked at it and I thought, 'I know God wants me to do this,'" she remembers.

Fast-forward four years. Hall is a volunteer at JMJ (Jesus, Mary and Joseph) Maternity Homes, a local nonprofit geared toward helping pregnant women in dire

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SUN-STAR PHOTO BY BEA AHBECK

Patricia Hall, right, gets a hug from fellow JMJ Maternity Homes volunteer Mary Estrella. Hall helps mothers in need despite battling cancer.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: 'Merced Matters' appears every Monday. In it we will tell the stories of Mercedians — ordinary people doing extraordinary things, extraordinary people doing ordinary things and a lot in between. We hope you like our effort to let you know more about others in our community, and we welcome your suggestions. Please contact Mike Tharp at mtharp@mercedsun-star.com or (209) 385-2456 with your ideas for 'Merced Matters.'*

### WEATHER

Mostly cloudy today and tonight. High of 69, low of 47.

### CONTACT US

Contact the newsroom at (209) 385-2457 with a tip or story idea.

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### COMING TOMORROW

Follow the latest news on the aftermath of the disaster in Japan.

