

P\*\*\*\*'s eyes lit up as she saw an early morning phone call coming in from her daughter, a police captain in nearby Napa. The shine in her eyes quickly turned to that of shock as her daughter explained the situation at hand; P\*\*\*\* and her husband J\*\*\*\* needed to evacuate, quickly, because a devastating fire was bearing down on their direct location in Magalia, CA.

P\*\*\*\* always trusts her daughter and explained to J\*\*\*\* they needed to escape the danger. J\*\*\*\* stated he didn't believe it was necessary to leave, that the roads would be jammed and nothing was going to happen anyway. Thus began the marital strain that still exists, born of the fire that would ultimately burn everything they have to ashes. She, in trust of her daughters, got into her Prius with their dog. He remained behind, firm in resolution to stay. Eventually the approaching flames and smoke forced J\*\*\*\* to follow in his wife's footsteps and flee the scene to safety.

As P\*\*\*\* made her way through the chaotic scene of mass exodus from the dangerous inferno at their heels, she encountered the ghastly images of the fire; it's flaming power and scorched black smoke displayed in front of her, impossible to look away and even more impossible to forget. The 19 mile drive to Chico took 6.5 hours, the byproducts of the flames blotting out the sky and midday sun, bathing the tense scene in a dull apocalyptic glow. The trauma of that event caused her to sell her beloved Prius as soon as was viable, the car a sure trigger for her PTSD.

The T\*\*\*\*'s spent the next 6 weeks at a dog-friendly hotel, bills adding up while income going down. P\*\*\*\* has over 50 years experience in healthcare administration and education and was then a work from home quality analyst for a healthcare company servicing many physicians

and their clients. All but one flashdrive of her former work was lost to the fire. The whole home operation including sensitive patient data was just gone. Her client roster kept dwindling out of necessity for all parties, leaving her feeling dejected at such a frustrating and, as she sees it, failure of an ending to her career. Aside from these decimating losses P\*\*\*\* suffers from severe emotional and psychological overstress. The experiences of that day and the resulting life experience henceforth has left her unable to focus, filled with daytime fear, nightly nightmares and no income. Due to the losses and disabilities she has been forced to end her work entirely.

The fires dealt a hardy blow to P\*\*\*\*'s health, causing depression, high blood pressure and an inability to focus. Her personal relationships have all been affected, either directly through loss or displacement from the fires. Her entire social sphere is gone with the wind. Then there's the always present marital strain, this time James wanting to leave with P\*\*\*\* digging in her heels to stay and demanding they rebuild their home amongst their daughters and friends.

The dream of rebuilding, while being her most ardent desire, at times may seem to her unlikely to come to fruition as she states the toll is just too high. Out-of-pocket payments required to keep themselves barely above water combined with no income have burdened the T\*\*\*\*'s beyond belief. They have converted a barn into an apartment on their daughter's property and live with bare-minimum facilities and services, subject to lengthy PGE outages while awaiting the rebuild of their home. The chaos of insurance and constantly changing building codes, not to mention there still being no power to the site of the total burn-down, has left the rebuilding dream no closer to reality than a thought and a prayer. Even with the

hardships P\*\*\*\* is determined to rebuild her life and home in Magalia, it is where and what she knows and is close to her daughters.

Despite the devastation P\*\*\*\* is ever the optimist by affirming that, “Everything happens for a reason,” and although they had lost their entire home and everything in it, including irreplaceable family heirlooms – the 5 generation quilt started by her maternal great-grandmother, the 1904 Victrola purchased new by her great-grandmother on her father’s side, the family Bible traceable back to at least Ellis Island, the antique book collection, the photos and keepsakes, and on and on and on – she insists that they are still truly blessed to just be alive.