



**Record-breaking
Year at the
Capital Airshow**

PAGE 2

**Our Fascinations
Celebrated
in Film**

PAGE 9



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**SEE
INSIDE**

**ORIENTAL FRUIT
FLIES DETECTED**



PAGE 2

**PROGRAM TO
HELP VETERANS
IN NEED**



PAGE 6

**NIELLO HONORED
WITH GOLDEN
APPLE AWARD**



PAGE 4

CRPD Celebrates 65 Years!



Cordova Recreation & Park District (CRPD) threw a party celebrating its 65 years of service with community members, supporters and partners at the new Cordova Community Pool. Photo by Rick Sloan

**By Shelby Golden,
CRPD**

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - On September 8, 2023, Cordova Recreation & Park District (CRPD) celebrated 65 years of service to the community!

Community members, supporters and partners gathered at the Cordova Community Pool to enjoy the celebration which featured speeches, music, appetizers and drinks, a photo booth and more!



Following the initial celebration, the Cordova Community Pool was opened for a Free Family Swim night to keep the party going. Photo by Rick Sloan

Following the initial celebration, the Cordova Community Pool was opened for a Free Family Swim night to keep the party going.

Throughout the event, participants reflected on the history and growth of CRPD. Established in 1958, CRPD started with 3 parks: Hagan Community Park (which was originally called Rancho Cordova Park), Federspiel Park and Ahlstrom Park. Over

Continued on page 3

Sacramento Blankets for Kids Readies for Holiday Giveaway



Kids love Beanie Babies, so SBSK is asking for donations of new or "almost new" Beanie Babies as well as Joann's fleece blanket kits (48 x 60). Photo courtesy of SBSK

**By Claire Gliddon,
SBSK**

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Every September, Sacramento Blankets for Kids (SBSK) picks as many of the lowest-income elementary schools they can and finds out how many kindergarteners they have. Then volunteers make double fleece blankets (about 40" x 60") for ALL of them, and a little fleece pouch with a Beanie Baby in it to go with each blanket.

Through this act of generosity, SBSK gives these blankets to children as gifts right before Christmas break. Some of these kids live in their cars or in places without heat! And this is ALL they get for Christmas. It is wildly popular with the teachers and the kids! Spread the word, too!

SBSK has been doing this for 10 years and we hope to continue doing it, as long as they can get Beanie Babies. In 2022, SBSK gave out over 2,200 blankets and Beanie Babies in their Kindergarten Project! SBSK is always looking for new volunteers to make blankets all year round for children in need. SBSK is asking for donations of Joann's fleece blanket kits (48 x 60) all year long. SBSK is asking for donations of new or "almost new" Beanie Babies all year long.

If you'd like more information about SBSK, please go to www.sacblankets4kids.com and sign in! No pressure, no timelines, no meetings...just people who enjoy crocheting, knitting, quilting, sewing, making no-sew blankets and helping a whole lot of children at the same time.

SBSK is a nonprofit organization that serves children in need from infants to 18-year-olds. They do this all year long! But the Kindergarten Project is their "special" project of the year. ★

River Gravel Project Roars Ahead



Carmichael's iconic water tower stands amid the \$3.6 million project to restore salmon spawning beds on the American River. Water Forum Habitat manager Erica Bishop watches excavation progress near Ancil Hoffman Park.

**Story and photos
by Susan Maxwell
Skinner**

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Bulldozers and monster truck sightings are

now as common as wildlife on the Ancil Hoffman Park walking trail.

Though small boys might delight in the roaring excavators, big fish are the real beneficiaries.

The area defined as Upper River Bend is the sight of a \$ 3.6 million project to help threatened salmonids.

Started last month, the eight-week project continues annual Sacramento

Water Forum efforts. Chinook salmon and steelhead populations must have movable stones for nesting and egg laying. To this end, 30,000 cubic

Continued on page 8



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Record-breaking Year at The California Capital Airshow

By Lindsey Nelson,
Niche Communications

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The California Capital Airshow (CCA), presented by Sacramento County in partnership with the City of Rancho Cordova, successfully wrapped its 2023 Airshow on Sunday, September 24, with more than 105,000 attendees at the two-day full-capacity event. The 17th Annual Airshow featured performances from the world's most talented pilots and thrilling aircraft, including the legendary United States Air Force Thunderbirds jet demonstration team.

To kick-off the weekend, the Airshow hosted a free community event on Friday at Village Green Park in Rancho Cordova. Attendees met airshow performers, including the USAF Thunderbirds, and enjoyed live music, food trucks, and activities provided by local STEM and sports organizations.

On Saturday and Sunday, the Sacramento skies were filled with the sound of U.S. Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt II Demonstration Team, the return of the U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster Demonstration, U.S. Navy F-18 Super Hornet, an awe-inspiring lineup of world-class civilian aerobatic performers, and an extraordinary selection of rare World War II aircraft.

"The feeling of bringing the Airshow back to full capacity for the first time since 2019 is indescribable," said Darcy Brewer, CCA Executive Director. "It was a perfect weekend, made even more memorable by seeing the joy and excitement the event brought to the Sacramento region's families and aviation enthusiasts."

True to CCA's mission of nurturing young people's interest in STEM careers, the Airshow hosted a special 'Girls in Aviation Day' on Saturday, where girls ages 8-18 were invited to learn more about what their future may look like in aviation, aerospace, or related career fields. The event featured mentors from Travis Air Force Base, UPS, Beale Air Force Base, Metro Fire, Mach 5 Aviation, Aerospace Museum of California,



Two of the F-16Cs performing daredevil acrobatics for the legendary United States Air Force Thunderbirds team during this year's California Capital Airshow. Photo by Rick Sloan



A sold-out crowd of more than 105,000 attendees enjoyed 204 acres of event space on September 23-24. Photo by Rick Sloan



The United States Air Force Thunderbirds F-16 demonstration team soared through the Sacramento region's skies this September. Photo by Rick Sloan

and William Jessup University.

"The greatest thrill for us this weekend is knowing that we have inspired young people to dream big and explore the world of aviation and STEM," said Terrence McNamara, CCA Board Chairman.

At the center of the Airshow was a 'Cold War Legacy' pop-up museum, which honored Mather Air Force Base's integral role in the Cold War and efforts such as the Korean War, Cuban Missile Crisis, and Vietnam War. Attendees took in informational exhibits and were able to get up-close to Cold War-era aircraft throughout the event including Colonel Douglas MacArthur's "Connie."

"We are especially grateful to the over one thousand volunteers who work tirelessly to produce this thrilling and meaningful community event every year," said Darcy Brewer. "We simply couldn't do it without them."

Special thanks also to CCA sponsors Sacramento County, the City of Rancho Cordova, Knight Elk Grove Dodge, 7Up, Lockheed Martin, Modern Aviation, Michelob Ultra, Visit Rancho Cordova, Thunder Valley Casino Resort, Matheson, SMUD, Atlas Disposal, Fox 40, and iHeart Media.

The Airshow's performances, themes, exhibits, and activities are new and different every year, and planning is already underway for 2024. CCA will be releasing more information about that event in the coming months. For more information on the Airshow, go to www.californiacapitalairshow.com.

Established in 2004, the California Capital Airshow 501(c)3 plans and operates the exciting, family-friendly annual event designed to honor the Sacramento region's rich aviation heritage and veterans while using the power and magic of flight to inspire young people. CCA gives back to the community through STEM scholarships, charitable group donations, and exciting educational youth programming throughout the year. For more information, please visit the California Capital Airshow website. ★

Oriental Fruit Flies Detected in Sacramento County

Sacramento County
News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Agricultural Commissioner, in cooperation with the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture, have initiated an extensive survey and eradication plan in response to the detection of nine male oriental fruit flies (OFF), *Bactrocera dorsalis*, near the city of Rancho Cordova and the American River Parkway in Sacramento County.

The initial detection was confirmed on Sept. 12, 2023. The detections were made as part of our coordinated pest prevention system that protects our agriculture and natural resources from invasive species, with early detection as a key component to successfully eradicating an infestation before it can become established.

The extensive survey, also known as a delimitation survey, consists of multiple oriental fruit fly traps at prescribed densities going out 4.5 miles in each direction from the oriental fruit fly detection sites. These nine OFF will trigger a quarantine, which will be announced shortly by the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

Following the principles of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), agricultural officials use "male attractant" technique as the mainstay of the eradication effort for this invasive species.



Bactrocera dorsalis, the oriental fruit fly, can enter the state is by "hitchhiking" in fruits and vegetables brought back illegally by travelers. Photo Courtesy of Martin Hauser/California Department of Food and Agriculture

This approach has successfully eliminated dozens of fruit fly infestations in California. Trained workers squirt a small patch of fruit fly attractant mixed with a very small dose of Spinosad, a natural pesticide made by a soil bacterium and approved for use on organic crops, approximately 8-10 feet off the ground on street trees and similar surfaces; male fruit flies are attracted to the mixture and perish after consuming it. The male attractant treatment program is being carried out over an area that extends 1.5 miles from each site where the oriental fruit flies were trapped.

While fruit flies and other invasive species that threaten California's crops and natural environment are sometimes detected in agricultural areas, the vast majority are found in urban and suburban communities. The most common pathway for these pests to enter the state is by "hitchhiking" in fruits and vegetables brought back illegally by travelers as they return from infested regions of the world or from packages of homegrown produce sent to California. Help protect California's agricultural and natural resources; please don't pack a pest when traveling or mailing packages.

"Invasive non-native fruit flies are serious pests for California's agricultural industry and backyard gardens," said Sacramento County Agricultural Commissioner Chris Flores. "These recent detections remind us that we need to remain vigilant in protecting our agricultural and natural resources. When traveling abroad or mailing packages to California, we urge the public not to bring back or ship fruits and vegetables as they are pathways for oriental fruit flies and other invasive species entering our state."

The oriental fruit fly is known to target over 230

different fruit, vegetable and plant commodities. Important California crops at risk include grapes, pome and stone fruits, citrus, dates, avocados, tomatoes and peppers. Damage occurs when the female fruit fly lays her eggs inside the fruit. The eggs hatch into maggots, which tunnel through the flesh of the fruit, making it unfit for consumption.

The oriental fruit fly is widespread throughout much of the mainland of southern Asia and neighboring islands, including Sri Lanka and Taiwan, and it has invaded other areas, most notably Africa and Hawaii.

Federal, State and

County agricultural officials work year-round, 365 days a year, to prevent, deter, detect, and eliminate the threat of invasive species and diseases that can damage or destroy our agricultural products and natural environment. The efforts are aimed at keeping California's natural environment and food supply plentiful, safe and pest-free.

Residents with questions about the project may call the Sacramento County Agricultural Commissioner's office at 916-875-6603 or the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Pest Hotline at 1-800-491-1899. ★

CRPD Celebrates 65 Years!



CRPD board and manager receive a Resolution from Sacramento County Supervisor Pat Hume. From the left: Patrick Larkin, CPRP General Manager; Brian Danzl, 2023 Vice-Chairperson; Michael Yearwood, 2023 Chairperson, Supervisor Pat Hume, Daniel Langan CRPD Board Member, and Rick Sloan, 2023 Secretary. Photo courtesy of CRPD



A photo booth was made available for those who wanted to take home a personal souvenir of the 65 year anniversary. Photo courtesy of CRPD



Cordova Recreation & Park District Board of Directors, staff and community members celebrate CRPD's 65 years of service to the community. Photo courtesy of CRPD



Mrs. Rancho Cordova Torreyanna Tripetto makes an appearance during the 65th year anniversary celebration. Photo courtesy of CRPD

Continued from page 1

the years new parks were developed and new partnerships were formed. Today, CRPD currently operates over 44 parks and facilities, provides quality recreation programs, parks and services for our diverse and growing District. CRPD also hosts dozens of events throughout the year and

provides athletic, educational and creative outlets for children and adults of all ages.

CRPD was honored to receive resolutions and proclamations in recognition of 65 years of service from CA State Senator Roger Niello, Assemblyman Josh Hoover, Congressman Ami Bera, City of Rancho Cordova

Mayor Linda Budge and Rancho Cordova Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Diann Rogers.

CRPD is grateful for the donors for this event including Bristol Hospice Sacramento, Beach Hut Deli Cordova Golf Course, Dust Bowl Brewing Company, Christopher Cellars, Rancho Victoria Vineyard and Boeger

Winery.

CRPD looks forward to serving the community for many years to come!

For more information on CRPD and our story, visit www.crpdpd.com/65th/.

Cordova Recreation & Park District is one of the largest independent special districts in

Northern California serving over 128,00 residents and four school districts in the greater Sacramento area. CRPD provides over 44 parks and recreation facilities, a full-service 18-hole golf course, as well as youth & adult sports, camps, enrichment classes, education programs and special events for the community. ★

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Medicare's Annual Election Period Fast Approaching

By Tim Coughlin

Medicare's Annual Election Period, ("AEP") for Part D Prescription Drug Plans and Medicare Advantage plans runs from October 15th until December 7th. During AEP eligible Medicare enrollees can join or change a Medicare Advantage (Part C) or Part D drug plan. Enrollees can also "disenroll" from a Medicare Advantage plan and return to Original Medicare (Parts A/B) and join a drug plan.

Here is a timeline to assist you in navigating this important Enrollment Period and to help you avoid coverage surprises:

September
 Your current Medicare Part D drug plan or Medicare Advantage plan is required to send you an Annual Notice of Change ("ANOC") notice. It's important that you read this notice as it contains important information about changes to your plan for the 2024 Plan Year. The "ANOC" notice will advise you if the plan premium is changing or if there are changes to the drug formulary, provider network and/or plan benefits. It can be a mistake to assume the plan you have this year will remain the same next year. Take the time to review your "ANOC" notice!

October 1st
 Sometimes referred to as the "marketing" period or "shopping" period, October 1st is when the 2024 Plan Year information is released and companies can begin marketing Medicare's Annual Election Period Fast Approaching plans. This is a good time to review options for your prescription drug or Medicare Advantage coverage for 2024. Since plans can and do change, it's a good idea to confirm that your current plan continues to cover your prescriptions well and to meet your needs for the upcoming year.

October 15th Until December 7th
 This is when you can actually submit an enrollment if you want to enroll in a plan or to change plans for 2024. December 7th is a hard deadline. Your ability to change Part D Prescription Drug Plans after December 7th may be non-existent or extremely limited.

Every year we have people call us that miss the December 7th deadline and end up stuck on a Part D plan that has increased their premium or that doesn't cover their prescriptions well.

Last Valid Enrollment
 During AEP it is possible to submit multiple enrollments with the final enrollment being the plan that will go into effect on January 1st. This allows for you to change your mind during the Enrollment Period.

Disenrollment / Medicare Supplements
 AEP is also a time when you can "disenroll" from a Medicare Advantage plan and return to Original Medicare (Parts A/B) and join a Part D drug plan.

If you're also intending to enroll in a Medicare Supplement (aka Medigap) plan when returning to Original Medicare during AEP, keep in mind that enrollment in a Medicare Supplement may not be guaranteed. You may have to answer health questions to enroll in a Medicare Supplement outside of limited guaranteed issue periods. An experienced insurance agent can be valuable if you're wanting to leave your Medicare Advantage plan and get a Medicare Supplement. Failing to do things properly and in the right sequence can end up creating a deficit in your medical coverage. The services of an independent agent are free to consumers.

A Word on Medicare Commercials
 During AEP the airwaves are flooded with commercials pitching Medicare Advantage plans and all the free benefits you're missing out on. These commercials often tout benefits that are only offered in specific areas or to select segments of Medicare enrollees. They entice you to call and once you call they'll try to enroll you in a plan quickly over the phone. Exercise caution if you call one these large call centers.

Being proactive about your Medicare coverage during the Annual Election Period can go a long way to helping you avoid coverage issues and to feel confident in your coverage selections for 2024.

Tim Coughlin is an award-winning independent insurance agent specializing in health and Medicare insurance for over 35 years in Gold River. He can be reached at (916) 346-4417 or by email: tim@summitindins.com.

"We do not offer every plan available in your area. Currently, we represent 9 organizations which offer 52 products in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov, 1-800-Medicare, or your local State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) to get information on all of your options."

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Virtual Education Group Honors Senator Niello with Golden Apple Award



CPPVE President Tab Berg and his daughter, Tori, present the 2023 Golden Apple Award to Senator Roger Niello for his role empowering families to make the best public educational choices for their children. Tori is a high school student attending Visions in Education. Photo courtesy of TAB Communications

TAB Communications News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Celebrating our annual recognition to accessible education and parental choice, California Parents for Public Virtual Education (CPPVE) is delighted to present the Golden Apple Award to Senator Roger Niello (R-SD 6). The award serves as a testament to Senator Niello's relentless advocacy for online education and his unwavering dedication to the advancement of quality curriculum and equal funding for all California students.

CPPVE, a volunteer organization comprised of parents whose children benefit from public virtual learning experiences, such as full-time school-at-home, non-classroom based school, and independent study programs, has been at the forefront of promoting access to online education since its inception in 2011. The organization's tireless efforts have been instrumental in educating California policymakers about the invaluable contributions of public virtual schools to families and students alike.

During the most recent legislative session, CPPVE extended its support for Senator Niello's Senate Bill 426, further highlighting his remarkable contributions in championing parental choice and advocating for a well-rounded, equitable education system.

The Golden Apple Award is an annual

recognition bestowed by CPPVE each legislative session to policymakers who exhibit exemplary dedication to promoting parental choice and quality education in California. Senator Roger Niello's commitment to these principles has undoubtedly earned him this esteemed recognition. Previous award recipients have included Governor Jerry Brown, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell, Senator Shannon Grove Assemblywoman Shirley Weber and Assemblyman Kevin Kiley.

California Parents for Public Virtual Education is a statewide volunteer organization comprising of parents advocating for access to online education, quality curriculum, and equal funding for all students. Founded in 2011, CPPVE strives to educate California policymakers about the benefits of public virtual schools and their positive impact on families. The organization's mission centers on promoting parent choice and supporting legislative initiatives that enhance educational opportunities for all students.

The Golden Apple Award, presented by CPPVE, is a recognition of policymakers who demonstrate exceptional dedication to supporting parental choice and quality education in California. Each legislative session, this award celebrates individuals who champion initiatives that empower families to make informed educational decisions for their children. ★

Congressman Bera Calls for Action on Thefts and Vandalism of Cluster Box Units

Office of Congressman Ami Bera, M.D

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On August 31, 2023, U.S. Representative Ami Bera, M.D (CA-06) pressed U.S. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy to address the rise in thefts and vandalism of Cluster Box Units (CBU) in Sacramento County.

"Nationwide, from January to March 2023 alone, there were more than 25,000 reported thefts from cluster mailboxes, compared with 38,500 in all of 2022. In our region, we've seen this rise in thefts mirror the nationwide increase," said Representative Bera in a letter sent today to Postmaster General Louis DeJoy. "In Sacramento County, there has been significant increase in vandalism and theft with at least 105 CBUs damaged or stolen in the past several years. These thefts often include high value items such as passports, checks, and essential medication. Previously USPS has taken the responsibility of maintaining, repairing,

and replacing the CBUs. However, recent correspondence shared with my office by residents of some neighborhoods, such as Natomas Park shows that this responsibility is being disputed and has been shifted to the neighborhoods' homeowners associations."

Bera continued: "Due to theft and stolen key concerns, we request that consideration be made to replace existing and at-risk USPS CBUs in Sacramento County, giving them a more secure design to discourage future vandalism. There is a need for physical safety precautions to be taken because of cases of identity theft, stolen bank account information, etc. This has been a recurring issue for many years, so it is critical that a long-term solution is developed that can be effectively carried out in the near future."

Congressman Bera represents California's 6th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives. CA-06 lies entirely within Sacramento County. ★

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A Promise Made

Life is not always kind. We suffer setbacks, loss from divorce, surviving disasters, dealing with life-threatening diseases, and I could go on and on with what we deal with on a daily basis. Frank D'Maio knows what that's like. He has been there and wants to help others deal with adversities and evolve to emotional prosperity. You see, Franks's wife was diagnosed with breast cancer, and that's when he began a journal. He told me on my radio show POPPOFF that it opened the door to his soul. That journal became a gift. But it wasn't that way at the beginning. It was a repository for emotional intimate moments, outbursts of screaming in words, and things he wanted to remember or forget. He added that, in his opinion, husbands are ill-equipped to handle the jumbled emotions of grief, trauma, and hopelessness. They attempt to create an "emotional fortress" that fails to protect them from the pain of loss. So that's when he wrote "A Promise Made, A Promise Kept." It's a husband's journey through journaling to heal the loss of his spouse. And it's written with other husbands in mind. He shares his emotional decline of being left behind with no specific group counseling geared toward the level of loss and the depth of a rabbit hole delivered by breast cancer. Granted, group counseling is a general approach, but moving forward isn't about the steps or stages, it's about oscillating through layers of emotions and recalling important moments of positive memory. That's why he wrote the book to provide others a glimpse into the process of trial and error he went through. Eight years later he participated in a group counseling program

and received training as a peer support group facilitator. Here are five points to start cleaning the negative chaos in our emotional house through journaling.

- 1. Allow, Accept, And Acknowledge Mourning And Grief.** Writing those feelings in a journal gives you time to evaluate them.
- 2. Surrender And Let Others Help.** Don't be stubborn or pig-headed, thinking you can do it all alone. Frank said he tried and failed until 2012 when he hit emotional bottom and sought group counseling.
- 3. Lower Your Expectations Of Getting Over The Loss.** The emotion is raw, but it doesn't have to define who you are as a human being in pain.
- 4. Show Blame Out The Door.** Shame and guilt only drag a person down – a reminder of stored negative memories. These act as triggers or what he prefers to call prompts.
- 5. Laugh Often And Out Loud.** Laugh at yourself. Laughter releases hormones, making a person show joy, happiness, and improved spirit. Remember moments of laughter and joy. Those shared emotions leave you smiling and playful with the innocence of a child again.

If you want additional information on Frank D'Maio and his book "A Promise Made, A Promise Kept" check out his website FJDwriter.com. Life goes on, but it isn't easy when your pain persists. Hopefully, Frank's book can give you solace from any loss. ★

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Don't Judge My Books by Their Cover

If I ever come to your house, I'll likely take a sideways glance at your bookshelves.

I don't mean to be judgmental, just curious about what kind of books you read.

For instance, do you like the formulaic writings of Sue Grafton or are you up for the challenge of Fredrik Backman. Do you like romance or adventure? I go more for intrigue. Romance books send my eyes into barrel rolls.

Today, I offer you a look at my shelves in this annual column of the books I've read. As you'll see, I don't read a lot of religious books. So please, no judgment.

However, I do want to comment on one book from the religion section. Last June I mentioned reading Peter Enns's book, "The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires Our Trust More than Our 'Correct' Beliefs."

Enns demonstrates that the Bible contains 150 Psalms that are basically of three types: 1. Everything is fine. 2. Nothing is fine, but I still love you, God.

Enns focuses on the third type, which he paraphrases as, "Things are terribly wrong, I am at the end of my rope, and to make things worse, Oh Lord, you're nowhere to be found" (Psalm 88).

In a very relatable way, Enns makes it OK to doubt God and still be a faith survivor. The book's pressing point says, "Real faith requires trusting God rather than having correct views about God."

I used the book to launch a sermon in my new church this summer proclaiming that our church would remain "A Safe Place to Explore Faith."

A long way from piety books, one I made myself read was "Nine Nasty Words: English in the Gutter: Then, Now, and



Forever." The author, John McWhorter, is an associate professor of linguistics at Columbia University. His specialty is creole languages, sociolects and Black English.

McWhorter's background should help you understand why this writer/chaplain wanted to read the book. As you might suspect, I'm sometimes intimidated by cuss words. I'm not offended, mind you. With 28 years in the military, I'm not prudish.

McWhorter helped me unpack the power they sometimes have over me by tracing each word to their original use and meaning. He suggests that the words may just be "nine nasty ways of being human."

But my new favorite author spends a lot of time on the NY Times Bestseller list.

My wife, Becky, said it's been years since she watched me consume a book the way I did David Grann's most recent title, "The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny and Murder."

It's the story of a British vessel that left England in 1740 on a secret mission during an imperial war with Spain.

The Amazon description speaks without exaggeration, saying, "It's a page-turning story of shipwreck, survival, and savagery, culminating in a court martial that reveals a shocking truth." Time Magazine was spot on, calling it "Riveting...Reads like a thriller."

I also read Grann's

"Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI." The book and upcoming movie portray the brutal murders of an Osage family to gain control of their oil-rich Oklahoma land.

Finally, I hope you'll read "The Lost City of the Monkey God: A True Story," by Douglas Presto. The book depicts the search for a lost Honduran city containing a pyramid with a giant monkey-god statue.

It's "required reading" if you want to join me on our next volunteer trip to help Chispa Project establish more libraries in Honduran elementary schools. <https://www.chispaproject.org/volunteertrip>

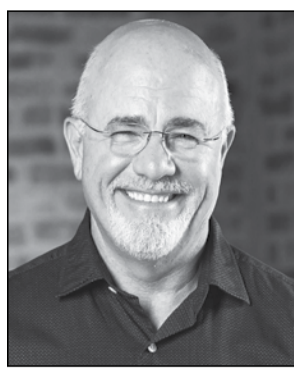
Now, if you must read romance novels, please check out Davaylnn Spencer's books. She has edited this column for 15 years and is obviously a great judge of award-winning writing.

But if you're interested in a light, sometimes tearful story, read one of my books. They are compilations of the columns I've written since 2001. Find them on my website at www.thechaplain.net or drop me an email and I'll send you the details.

When you write, please share your latest reads. I promise I won't judge you for your choices.

Consider joining my email list to receive a weekly email version of this column. You can request it by email comment@thechaplain.net or voicemail 843-608-9715 or sign up on my website at <https://thechaplain.net/newsletter>

Column excerpted from my book, "Thriving Beyond Surviving." Copies can be ordered on my website at www.thechaplain.net, or by sending \$20 to 10566 Combie Road, Suite 6643, Auburn, CA 95602. ★



It's Not a Good Long-Term Plan

Dear Dave,

My girlfriend's parents are divorced, and they're both in their early seventies. We talked the other night, and she's thinking about buying them each life insurance policies. The only coverage her dad has is through his employer. Her mom has remarried, and she doesn't have any life insurance at all. On top of this, her dad is worried he might have to pay her mom's funeral expenses if she died, and he's not in good enough shape financially to do that. Do you have any advice?

– Joshua

Dear Joshua,

If the only life insurance her dad has is furnished through his employer, then he probably won't have

Dave Ramsey Says

it anymore once he stops working. I suppose it's fine if she wants to buy them each a small policy, but it's liable to be pretty expensive at their age.

Now, she can do this, but I don't think it would be a good long-term plan. I'd tell your girlfriend she needs to start saving money and building up her own wealth. If she had just \$20,000 in savings, that'd be more than enough to bury two people. Please understand, I don't mean to sound insensitive. We're talking solely about the economics involved in this kind of situation.

The other thing your girlfriend should do is have a discussion with her mom to find out if the stepfather has the money to handle that kind of thing. When it comes right down to it, any final expenses for her mom would be his responsibility now – not her dad's. She should have a discussion with her dad about preparing for things, too. But if her dad's got insurance

through work, and the stepdad is ready to pay for her mom's burial, then they're covered for the immediate future.

In short, I wouldn't do it unless they absolutely don't have this sort of thing covered. Even then, I'd prefer she just covered it with cash, because all we're talking about is enough to cover burial costs. No matter what anyone else says, Joshua, a nice funeral doesn't have to be crazy expensive.

– Dave

Dave Ramsey is an eight-time national best-selling author, personal finance expert and host of "The Ramsey Show." He has appeared on "Good Morning America," "CBS This Morning," "Today," "Fox News," "CNN," "Fox Business" and many more. Since 1992, Dave has helped people take control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for the company Ramsey Solutions. ★

CDPH Recommends All Californians Stay Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccine

CHPH Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Following federal approval of the updated COVID-19 vaccine and recommendations for the upcoming winter respiratory virus season, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is recommending all Californians stay up to date on the vaccine and get the updated shot when available.

For renewed protection against severe illness, hospitalization and death, all Californians 5 years and older should receive one dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccine, as long as it's been 2 months or more since their most recent dose. Getting vaccinated may also minimize your symptoms if you do become infected so you can return to your daily activities more quickly. Recommendations for younger children depend on the number of doses received previously.

CDPH strongly urges vaccination for individuals who are at high risk of serious illness from COVID-19 due to advanced age or underlying illness as this is the group of individuals most vulnerable to severe disease and the worst outcomes.

"Staying up to date on the COVID-19 vaccine is the best way to keep your immunity strong and protect yourself and others from severe illness, hospitalization, and death," said CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer Dr. Tomás Aragón. "As we enter the winter season, it is crucial that all individuals remain up to date with vaccinations when they're eligible, including flu, COVID-19 and RSV."

WHO SHOULD GET VACCINATED

•**Everyone Age 5 and Up:** Everyone 5 years of age and older, regardless of previous vaccination, is eligible to receive a single dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccine as long as it's been at least 2 months since the last dose.

•**Younger Children and Infants:** Infants and younger children, 6 months through 4 years of age, who have previously been vaccinated against COVID-19 are eligible to receive one or two doses of the updated vaccine. The timing and number of doses depends on the previous COVID-19 vaccine received.

•**Unvaccinated Younger Children and Infants:** Unvaccinated infants and younger children, 6 months through 4 years of age, are eligible to receive three doses of the updated Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine or two doses of the updated Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.

WHEN & HOW TO SCHEDULE YOUR UPDATED COVID-19 VACCINE: Initial supplies of updated COVID-19 vaccine are expected in California in the coming weeks. For added convenience, COVID-19, flu, and RSV vaccines can all be administered in the same visit. Schedule a vaccine appointment by visiting MyTurn.ca.gov or contacting your local pharmacy or health care provider.

HOW TO PAY FOR A COVID-19 VACCINE: COVID-19 vaccines will continue to be free for most Americans through their health insurance plans, including Medi-Cal and regular health care providers.

The CDC's Bridge Access Program will provide limited quantities of COVID-19 vaccines to uninsured and underinsured adults through December 2024. The Vaccines For Children (VFC) program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children (18 and younger) who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of inability to pay.

CDPH'S VIRUS PREVENTION TIPS: The best defense against COVID-19 and other winter viruses starts with good prevention. Follow these five tips to protect yourself and others:

•**Stay Up to Date on Vaccines:** Vaccines reduce the chances of infection and are the best defense to limit severe illness and death. COVID-19, flu, and RSV vaccines will all be available for this winter season.

•**Stay Home if You're Sick, Test for COVID and Treat if Needed:** Staying home when you're sick slows the spread of COVID-19, flu, RSV, and even the common cold. If you have symptoms, test for COVID-19 and contact your doctor immediately to seek treatment. Treatments work best when started right after symptoms begin.

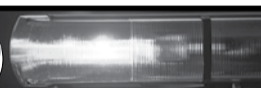
•**Consider Wearing a Mask in Indoor Public Places:** Wearing a mask significantly reduces the spread of respiratory viruses, especially in crowded or poorly ventilated spaces.

•**Wash Your Hands:** Frequent handwashing with soap and warm water, for at least 20 seconds, is an easy and very effective way to prevent getting sick and spreading germs.

•**Cover Your Cough or Sneeze:** Remember to cough or sneeze into your elbow, your arm, or a disposable tissue to help prevent the spread of winter viruses. Wash or sanitize your hands and dispose of your tissue after.

For more information visit www.cdph.ca.gov ★

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WE SUPPORT FIRST RESPONDERS



Nation's Finest Educational Program to Help Veterans in Need

Nation's Finest News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Veterans' advocates and community leaders joined together at the California State Capitol on September 12, 2023, to launch a 3-month campaign by Nation's Finest to raise awareness about programs and services to help Veterans in need.

Coinciding with National Suicide Prevention Month, the community outreach program aims to shine a light on the alarming statistics impacting Veterans - from mental health and high suicide rates to homelessness and unemployment -- and help connect Veterans and their families to resources that honor their service and ensure their care and success.

"The suicide rate among Veterans remains high, with approximately 17 Veterans committing suicide each day, and on any given night, over 40,000 Veterans don't have a place to call home in our country," said Chris Johnson, President & CEO, Nation's Finest. "As a nation, we can and should do better to honor those who have sacrificed and served, which is why we are launching this program to raise greater awareness and help connect Veterans to the help and services they need."

Through Veteran's Day, Nation's Finest will host a series of community awareness events in California, Arizona, and Nevada, that bring together community leaders, Veterans' advocates, and community partners to ensure Veterans and their families have access to services, programs, and



Honoree Don Harper (left) and Sacramento City Mayor Darrell Steinberg study this veteran's storyboard on display at the State Capitol in Sacramento. Photo by Tracy Atkins/Nation's Finest

the care available to them. Each event will feature a Nation's Finest mobile service unit staffed by trained professionals to assist Veterans, as well as community partner booths to provide educational information about available services. On display will be a powerful storytelling exhibition honoring Veteran heroes for making a difference in the lives of Veterans. At each event, Nation's Finest will present special awards to local Veterans who have gone above the call of duty to help Veterans and their families in their local communities.

During a ceremony on the west steps of the Capitol, seven local Veteran heroes from Northern California were honored for their service. Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg joined Nation's Finest to present special medallions to them for their work. A special storytelling exhibition featured their stories and that of other Veteran heroes, which

will also be on display through September 30th in the window fronts of the historic Weinstocks Building in downtown Sacramento located at 1130 K Street.

"These local heroes exemplify the spirit of our community and continue to answer the call of duty in helping those who have served access mental and behavioral health care, including housing stability, employment and suicide prevention services," said Mayor Steinberg. "I applaud the efforts of Nation's Finest in launching this important program and so many other Veteran organizations, community partners, and advocates, who work tirelessly to ensure our Veterans can get the care they need and deserve."

Sacramento area recipients of the Nation's Finest 50 Local Heroes Award include Gail Belmont, Don Harper, Kia Phillips, Steve Reed, Preston Sharp, Julie Baumgarten, and Michael Harris.

Their personal stories, along with all the Nation's Finest awardees, are featured in the exhibition and on the Nation's Finest website at www.NationsFinest.org, along with information about the Community Outreach Program.

Harris, a U.S. Army Veteran and Sacramento native credits the work of Nation's Finest and the support he received at Mather Veterans Village for helping change his life during vulnerable times, saying, "It was a life-changing experience to be so humbled to have to ask for help with you are vulnerable and broke. They helped lift me up and gave me a chance." Today, Michael helps other Veterans, particularly those facing homelessness. He is also Chair of the California Black Agriculture Working Group, where he is dedicated to bringing equity to Black agricultural producers.

The Nation's Finest Community Outreach Program is funded

through the support of many community partners, including Verizon (presenting partner), U.S. Veterans Affairs, Safeway, the Land of the Free Foundation, Comcast, Turton Commercial Real Estate, Enterprise Community Partners, and the Charles M. Shulz Museum, among others.

"Verizon is honored to join together with so many community partners in supporting Nation's Finest and their mission help Veterans in need," said Sophia Garcia, Director, External Affairs & Local Engagement at Verizon. "Verizon is committed to helping Veterans and their families with access to smart technologies that improve connectivity to the programs, services, and care available to them. It's through community partnerships like this that we can work together to make a difference."

This year marks 50 years since Nation's Finest was founded to support Veterans returning from the Vietnam War by providing critical housing, health, and employment support to ensure Veterans reach their full potential. During the past five decades, the programs and impact of Nation's Finest has continued to grow, having served 150,000+ veterans and providing \$275 million in direct services in 31 locations in California, Arizona, and Nevada, as well as through national services. Additionally, through its mobile service unit program, Nation's Finest can reach thousands more Veterans each year, who lack access to care by bringing resources directly to them, particularly those living in rural areas. ★

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CLUES

ACROSS

1. "Planted" customer
6. Pie and mode connection (2 words)
9. *Atomic ____ unit
13. Salk's conquest
14. Bessly of "The Office"
15. Secret storage
16. Crème de la crème
17. Flow alternative
18. a.k.a. vampire
19. *Any substance in chemistry
21. *Periodic table entry
23. Douse or soak
24. Pavarotti's song
25. Between Big and Wolf
28. Mattress description
30. *Positively charged particle
35. Elevator manufacturing giant
37. Horsefly
39. Rabbit trap
40. Sure or uh-huh
41. Sainly rings
43. North Sea feeder
44. Flax flower genus
46. Shrivle, as in plant
47. Like undesirable row
48. Related on mother's side
50. Barbara of "I Dream of Jeannie"
52. Porky's home
53. Practice in the ring
55. Burmese neighbor
57. *Core of an atom
61. *C
64. Theater guide
65. Org. that gets parents involved in school
67. Sign up again
69. Supernatural being
70. Three, to Caesar
71. Grouchy Muppet
72. European sea eagles
73. News channel acronym
74. Liable to cry

DOWN

1. Health resort in Baden-Baden, e.g.
2. River islet
3. Hip bones
4. To-do enumerations
5. Bingo and keno
6. Imitator
7. *Chemistry classroom
8. Fly in ____, or a reminder of the past
9. Hat-tipper's word
10. Highest point
11. Splints site
12. Assigned spot
15. Rids of obstruction
20. Period in history
22. Mouth piece
24. Designer's studio
25. *____-Mariotte Law
26. Dined at home
27. Late Princess of Wales
29. Defect
31. Two halves of two
32. Discussion intended to produce agreement
33. Galactic path
34. Demanding attention
36. Like a barred door
38. *Aurum, in English
42. Type of grave marker
45. It loves company?
49. PC "brain"
51. Limited in scope
54. Gelatin
56. Like one with high BMI
57. Artist's model, sometimes
58. Application utilizer
59. Keep it up?
60. TV classic " ____ Make a Deal"
61. Jealous biblical brother
62. Fairy-tale opening
63. Less than average tide
66. *Sn, or stannum, on periodic table
68. Like dry humor

CROSSWORD

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Masai Giraffe Loses Calf Shortly After Giving Birth

Sacramento Zoo News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Zoo is saddened to share that Masai giraffe, Amirah, lost her calf on Monday, September 4th shortly after giving birth. Amirah, a first-time mother, had a routine and successful gestation and delivery, but unfortunately the calf was not viable. Veterinary staff from the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine as well as members of the Zoo's giraffe care team were on site throughout the birth to observe and assist if needed. Amirah is healthy and continuing to do well under the observation of animal care and veterinary staff and will be back with the rest of the giraffe herd soon.

"I am beyond proud of our Zoo staff and their commitment to the animals we care for here at the Sacramento Zoo," said Melissa McCartney, Senior Manager of Animal Care and Veterinary Health Services at the Sacramento Zoo. "While the loss of any animal is heartbreaking



Masai giraffe Amirah lost her calf on Monday, September 4th. Despite this, the first-time mother is doing well. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Zoo

to our zoo family, we are grateful for the support of our community as we continue the important work of protecting wild giraffes and providing exceptional care to the giraffe herd at the Sacramento Zoo. On behalf of the Zoo's animal care and vet teams, we are appreciative of everyone's compassion as we process this loss."

In addition to Masai giraffe, Amirah, the Sacramento Zoo is currently home to three other female Masai giraffes (including two young

giraffes born in 2020 and 2023), one male Masai giraffe, and one female reticulated giraffe. The Zoo is one of 34 institutions managing 138 Masai giraffes in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) population. The Zoo partners with and supports the Wild Nature Institute (WNI), a field research organization studying Masai giraffe demographics and the African Savanna ecosystem. This partnership with WNI is critical to giraffe research and conservation efforts in Africa. ★

Sacramento SPCA Performs 300,000th Spay and Neuter Surgery

Send2Press Newswire News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento SPCA announced today that they hit a spay and neuter surgery milestone - altering the 300,000th animal in Sacramento since 2007. That's an average of nearly 19,000 animals a year - making the Sacramento SPCA one of the top clinics in the nation.

"Spaying and neutering is the most effective way of reducing pet overpopulation and the number of pets entering our region's shelters," said Kenn Altine, Sacramento SPCA CEO. "That's why the Sacramento SPCA opened the Zoe K. McCrea Animal Health Center in 2021 - to immediately expand access to the public and our animal welfare partners in a time when all facets of animal welfare in our region and across the nation are struggling to keep up with demand."

The 300,000th animal to receive surgery at the Sacramento SPCA was "Mama Goose" - a feral cat who had given birth and raised kittens in a yard in Sacramento. She was trapped and brought to the Zoe K. McCrea Animal Health Center at the Sacramento SPCA through the weekday Community Cat Clinic. Thanks to the Feline Spay and Neuter Fund, she was spayed at no cost to her trapper, and returned home.

The Sacramento SPCA serves the Sacramento region and beyond as a premier provider of low-cost spay and neuter services, collaborating with local rescue groups, feral and community cat caregivers, those in need, and the



Spaying and neutering is the most effective way of reducing pet overpopulation and the number of pets entering our region's shelters. Image by Dimitris Vetsikas from Pixabay

public to alter 20,000 animals annually.

The Zoe K. McCrea Animal Health Center dedicates every Sunday to the health and welfare of community cats, providing free surgeries to more than 70 cats in Sacramento County each week. The shelter also offers 10 surgical slots for Sacramento County cats Monday through Saturday at no cost, thanks the Sacramento SPCA's Feline Spay and Neuter Fund. In collaboration with and funded by Zoe K. McCrea, Kathy Lelevier & Richard Rose, Dr. Nancy T. Field, and Mary & Kevin Clark, this initiative was launched in August of 2022 to provide more spay/neuter surgery appointments for community cats outside of the Sunday clinics.

Thanks to the fund, the Sacramento SPCA has altered more than 4,000 community cats so far this year, 500 more cats than this time last year. Since 2007, more than 50,000 cats have been altered, vaccinated, and received flea/ear mite treatments through the shelter's trap, neuter, and return (TNR) program.

As the only full-service 100% nonprofit animal shelter in the Sacramento region providing no-cost spay/neuter

services to feral and community cats 7 days a week, the Sacramento SPCA relies on donations from individuals, businesses, and foundations to support their lifesaving work. The Sacramento SPCA is local, independent, and not affiliated with any other SPCA or humane society, including the ASPCA. All funds stay right here in the Sacramento region - helping animals - and the people who love them - in our own communities.

To join the lifesaving efforts and support of the Feline Spay and Neuter Fund, visit <https://www.sspca.org/> or contact Sarah Haney, Chief Development Officer, at 916-504-2805 or shaney@sspca.org.

Founded in 1892, the Sacramento SPCA has been providing homeless animals with individual comfort, shelter, and love for more than 131 years. The Sacramento SPCA provides compassionate medical care to tens of thousands of animals annually and offer a variety of programs and services designed to keep people and pets together for life. Visit <https://www.sspca.org/> for more information and follow on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. ★

Bitcoin ATM Company Forfeits \$1M for Conspiring to Violate the Bank Secrecy Act

FBI News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Folsom company Amani Investments LLC, which operated Coinucopia kiosks that exchanged U.S. currency for Bitcoin, forfeited \$1 million in currency, a Mercedes-Benz, Bitcoin, and other items for its criminal efforts to avoid reporting requirements under the Bank Secrecy Act, U.S. Attorney Phillip A. Talbert announced on Tuesday, September 12, 2023.

In February 2023, Amani Investments LLC, doing business as Coinucopia, pleaded guilty to conspiring to avoid filing Currency Transaction Reports (CTRs) that are required under federal law. The federal Bank Secrecy Act was enacted by Congress to combat the laundering of criminal proceeds, and it requires money services businesses to report each transaction involving more than \$10,000 in currency. Willful violation of the requirement to file these reports, commonly called CTRs, is a federal criminal offense.

According to court documents, on multiple occasions Amani Investments exchanged over \$10,000 in U.S. currency for Bitcoin without filing a CTR, as required by the Bank Secrecy Act. Many transactions were conducted during face-to-face exchanges of more than \$10,000 in cash for Bitcoin with a Managing Officer of Amani Investments, all without the filing of a CTR. In total, approximately \$1 million was involved in the crime. Today the court finalized Amani Investments' forfeiture order, which included a Mercedes-Benz E63, Bitcoin, gold coins, and \$1 million in United States currency.

"Federal currency transaction reporting requirements are intended to protect our

financial system from the influx of criminal proceeds," said U.S. Attorney Phillip A. Talbert for the Eastern District of California. "The U.S. Attorney's Office will continue to hold accountable those who seek to evade these requirements."

"Today's sentence holds Amani Investments, dba Coinucopia, a registered Money Service Business, accountable for violating the Bank Secrecy Act," said Tatum King, Special Agent in Charge, HSI San Francisco / NorCal. "We know that money is the lifeblood of criminals as evidenced by the \$1 million forfeiture, which is why it is a primary focus for HSI across all of our investigative programs. We appreciate the work of HSI personnel with FBI, USPIS, DEA, IRS-CI, USAO Eastern District, and Sacramento County Sheriff's Office who worked this multi-year case collaboratively and resulted in the substantial forfeiture of ill-gotten gains."

This case is the product of an investigation by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), as part of the Northern California Illicit Digital Economy (NCIDE) Task Force, consisting of agents from HSI, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation, the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General, and the Drug Enforcement Administration. The NCIDE Task Force is a joint, federal task force focused on targeting all forms of dark web and cryptocurrency criminal activity in the Eastern District of California. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Robert C. Abendroth and Veronica M.A. Alegria prosecuted the case. ★

New Guidance Available for COVID Vaccines

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - In response to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 virus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued new guidance for vaccines. Bivalent COVID-19 vaccines have been phased out, making way for an updated vaccine that offers enhanced protection against the prevalent Omicron variants.

Who Should Get the Updated COVID-19 Vaccine?

The CDC strongly recommends that every individual aged 6 months and older receive the updated COVID-19 vaccine. This inclusive approach ensures that a broad spectrum of the population is shielded from the ever-evolving virus.

The updated COVID-19 vaccine will soon be accessible to the public and available to most people at no cost. For those without insurance, a network of pharmacies, select health care centers, and clinics operated by Sacramento County Public Health will offer the vaccine. This approach ensures that no

one is left behind, regardless of their financial circumstances.

Individuals with private health insurance, Medicaid, or Medicare coverage are encouraged to visit a pharmacy or their doctor's office to receive their updated COVID-19 vaccine. This streamlined process allows those with insurance to efficiently access the vaccine through existing healthcare channels.

To stay updated on the latest information regarding the availability and distribution of the updated COVID-19 vaccine, visit the Public Health website. We will provide valuable resources, including links to the MyTurn platform and information on nearby clinics.

The updated COVID-19 vaccine is a continued resource in safeguarding public health against the Omicron variants. By ensuring accessibility to all, regardless of insurance or immigration status, we aim to create a safer, healthier community for everyone. Stay informed, stay protected, and let us move forward together in the fight against COVID-19. ★

River Gravel Project Roars Ahead

Continued from page 1

yards of small-diameter gravel will be moved from an adjacent bar into the river flow.

Excavated areas will become a side channel and 11 acres of spawning and rearing habitat will result. New native plantings will provide shelter and attract insects to feed baby fish before their swim to the Pacific.

For millions of years, salmonids managed the process unaided. But since the Gold Rush, man-made river alterations have threatened migratory species. The American River and its tributaries once offered 200 miles of breeding sites. More than 150 years of river development have reduced possibilities to about 12 miles.

Dam construction blocked spawning paths and barred natural gravel movement. "The lower part of the American River is gravel-starved," explains Water Forum Habitat Manager Erica Bishop. "Some salmon and steelhead return to home waters and can't find a place to spawn. Fish can't build nests without the right physical



Water Forum Habitat Manager Erica Bishop explains the 2023 habitat restoration project to Ancil Hoffman Park hiker Al Trivett.

conditions.

"Though the Nimbus Hatchery has a role in juvenile fish production, the Water Forum's focus is to help adult salmonids complete life cycles naturally."

The current project must wrap before fall salmon migration crowds the passage. After Chinook giants, steelhead nest in the same gravel beds. "Our work is targeted over time frames least likely to affect migrating fish," says Bishop. "Swings between drought and flood condition create challenges; we focus on long-term habitat improvement."

A nearby 2021 Water Forum project supported 30 percent of threatened

steelhead reproduction for that season. "Results are immediate," notes Bishop. "Fish begin to spawn as soon as we finish our projects. Our restored habitats certainly work."

The Ancil Hoffman project will wrap by mid-October. Though construction areas are fenced, park trails are still operational and rafting is not impacted. In-river work pauses at weekends.

Water Forum projects are supported by the Bureau of Reclamation, US Fish and Wildlife Service, CA Prop 68 funding, Sacramento City and County and signatory water agencies. Learn about the Water Forum at www.waterforum.org ★

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Our Fascinations Celebrated in Film

International Festival Draws Documentaries from 23 Countries

By Margaret Snider

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG)

The second International Documentary Film Festival, September 29 – October 1, received 150 entries winnowed down to the 59 accepted, from 23 countries. The reception at Rancho Cordova City Hall began the event at 5:30 p.m. on the 29th. Dignitaries and their guests enjoyed food, drink and the showing of N-Men, a documentary about the history of skateboarding in the Sacramento area. Festival director Charles Lago and Rancho Cordova Film Office marketing director Sidney Stipanovich guided the evening's events.

The Festival was also a contest, with two panels of judges and four categories. "We hope to announce the winners by mid to late October," Lago said. Rancho Cordova Mayor Linda Budge will announce the winners. The Belka & Hagan Families award for Best of Festival Documentary is \$1,000; KP International Market Award for Best Foreign Film, \$500; Comstock's Award for Best Short Documentary and California Capital Arts Foundation Award for Most Interesting Documentary Subject, each awarding \$250.

Lago came to the Sacramento area in 2020 to produce a film, then realized there was a need for a film office in Rancho Cordova. "They liked the idea of having their own film office, and that's how we ended up," Lago said. They are now in their fourth year.

N-Men showed in two sold-out locations at City Hall. The story began in the 1960s and 70s, continuing through current times. Producer James Sweigert was present, also some of the skateboarders featured in the film, including Steve-O Brockway, accompanied by his wife Kristi Smith-Brockway.

Back then Sweigert was just a kid at the park. "He knew who we were . . . but he was kind of afraid to be around us," Brockway



Producer James Sweigert (front) and some of the cast of the documentary history N-Men, which portrayed the history of skateboarding in the Sacramento area from the 60s and 70s onward. Photo by Rick Sloan



The film festival's director Charles Lago (left) of CCAF lets RCMPD Chief Brandon Luke "steal the show" at the reception on Friday, September 29! Photo by Rick Sloan

said. "We were a motley crew . . . The difference between us and any other skateboarding crew in the whole world is that . . . I'm 63

and a lot of our guys are in their 60s, and we are all still skating together . . . It's not a film, it's a life."

Sweigert recalls the group from the perspective of "a little guy watching this group of skateboarders... All of us young

guys were like, 'Where did these guys learn how to do all this?' It turns out they had been skating in empty swimming pools for years... sometimes, if the pools weren't empty and the houses were abandoned... they would jump the fence, pump 10,000 gallons of water out of a pool in 7 hours, clean it and skate it until they got chased off by the Sacramento Sheriff's Deputies." When Sweigert grew up, he went to LA, became a film producer, and was the obvious choice to produce this documentary.

Not all of the films are stories of fun and games. "Joe 238" tells the story of policeman Joe Chairez, badge number 238, who sustained a burst aneurysm while making an arrest only 5½ months after joining the Sacramento County Police Department. Joe had told his parents Jess and Theresa Chairez that if anything happened, he wanted to donate his organs. Theresa agreed, but Jess was opposed.

With only 1% chance of his son's survival, Jess prayed for guidance and felt God's answer that, "If I honored my son, I'd be honoring Him." The donor process proceeded. Jess joined the Red Cross and went from place to place telling the story of Joe 238 and how many people had been helped by receiving organ transplants. In time, Joe made a cloth patch depicting his son's badge. When he began receiving quilt patches with name, badge, and EOW (End of Watch) date of fallen officers from police departments all over the country, Jess made quilts for those departments. He has now made 50 quilts commemorating the sacrifice of those courageous officers.

"Rancho Cordova Film Office is who we are, but we did the Festival under the California Capital Arts Foundation," Lago said. "The mission of the film office is to attract filming to the Rancho Cordova area . . . and once they're here, we facilitate the filming on behalf of the City." ★



CRPD Board Secretary Rick Sloan (left) sneaks into the director's shoes for some fun, film reviewing with CCAF's Charles Lago at this year's International Documentary Film Festival. Photo by Rick Sloan



Charles Lago (center) Director of California Capital Film Office receives a Sacramento Board of Directors Proclamation from Supervisor Pat Hume's Chief of Staff, Rebecca Sloan (right.) Rancho Cordova Mayor Linda Budge (left) was part of the film festival's attending dignitaries. Photo by Rick Sloan



Jess and wife Theresa Chairez with one of the many quilts he has created featuring patches portraying badges of fallen policemen. Photo by Daniel Aniceto

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