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Carmichael Times

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100 WAYS TO OVERCOME SHYNESS



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New CID Leadership Announced



Carmichael Improvement District's new District Manager Diane Ebbitt gets down to business with the organization's Chair, James Eowan

Story and photos by Susan Maxwell Skinner

CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG) - Beginning its eighth year, the Carmichael Improvement District (CID) gets down to business with a new district manager and a new board chair.

Executive Diane Ebbitt comes to the organization from the Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce.

Volunteer James Eowan assumes leadership of an 11-strong CID board. Owner of two apartment complexes, he puts area improvement at the top of his wish list. "I believe in giving back to the community," says the Rio Americano graduate. "As a business owner, I strongly support the CID's

mission. We need this organization in order to continue to thrive."

Sole CID employee Diane Ebbitt attended Roseville High School and served the banking industry for 25 years before her Citrus Heights Chamber job. "I have a passion to see businesses grow," she says. "I also want to help property owners attract quality tenants."

Ebbitt will work from CID headquarters, near the post office on Fair Oaks Boulevard. "I love the location," she enthuses. "I get to drive through CID's streets on my way to work. At that hour, I see business people turning their door signs to 'open.' I feel excited to be part of their lives."

Her agency operates with a

budget of more than \$535,000. Funding comes from assessments on nearly 900 stakeholders with business premises between Oak Avenue and Crestview Shopping Center (Manzanita Avenue). Formed in 2016, the CID is one of 18 similar groups in Sacramento County.

Carmichael's district manager oversees a seven-day-per-week security and maintenance service. The operation includes trash clean-up and graffiti removal. Beautification is a high priority; street banners have been raised and new landscaping has been undertaken to improve curb appeal for merchants.

Ebbitt will also administer allocation of grant money and spearhead

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Alleged Murder-Suicide Leaves Three Dead in Carmichael



By Annie Kerr

CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG) - According to media sources, horror and tragedy struck on the afternoon of Feb. 17 when deputies were called to a townhouse on the 5700 block of Shadow Creek Drive in Carmichael, a block west of Manzanita Avenue, for a welfare check. There, law enforcement discovered three deceased individuals, presumed to be the home's residents.

Sacramento County Sheriff's Office public information officer Amar Gandhi confirmed on Feb. 18 that all three victims died from gunshot wounds, according to media reports. He also said it's a typically quiet neighborhood and there is no history of calls from the residence. Some neighbors said that they didn't hear gunshots and that violence is a rarity in their neighborhood.

According to other media sources, Gandhi stated that homicide detectives have confirmed that two of the three deceased were a married couple, and the husband shot and killed his wife. Then he shot and killed an 18-year-old male who was inside the residence. After shooting the woman and man, according to law enforcement, the husband allegedly turned the gun on himself.

Authorities have not publicly identified the three residents who were found deceased in the home, as of press time. However, neighbors told law enforcement that the 18 year old was the couple's son.

The Sacramento County Coroner's Office has yet to release the identities of the three individuals but is expected to in the coming days.

This is an ongoing investigation and the Carmichael Times will provide updates as soon as more information is released. ★

Camellia Show Celebrates 100 Years

By Carol Feineman, photos by Julie Vierra, Camellia Society of Sacramento

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - It's not every day that nonprofit organizations celebrate a centennial so Camellia Society of Sacramento members are especially excited about its Camellia Show on March 2 and March 3.

The nonprofit gardening organization's first Camellia Show, highlighting the plant that is a member of the tea family, was in 1924.

This year's 100th show includes hundreds of camellias to view, floral arrangements, camellia waxing, plants for sale, raffle, collectible camellia buttons and a Matsuyama, Japan display. The Japanese city is the organization's sister city. The Sacramento History Center will have an informational table with memorabilia about camellias, the show and the former Camellia Festival.



The Pink Perfection camellia is featured in this year's Camellia Show sponsored by the Camellia Society of Sacramento. The photo contest is focused on this particular variety.

"Our 100th is going to be a big deal for us! We are hoping lots of people attend," said Camellia Society of Sacramento President Julie Vierra this week.

Vierra has more than 100 of the flowering plants in her West Sacramento front and backyard.

"Did you know the flower of Sacramento is the camellia?," Vierra stated. "We will be going to the State Capitol on the 29th. Our 100th resolution will be presented to us by Kevin McCarty (California Assemblymember, 6th District)."

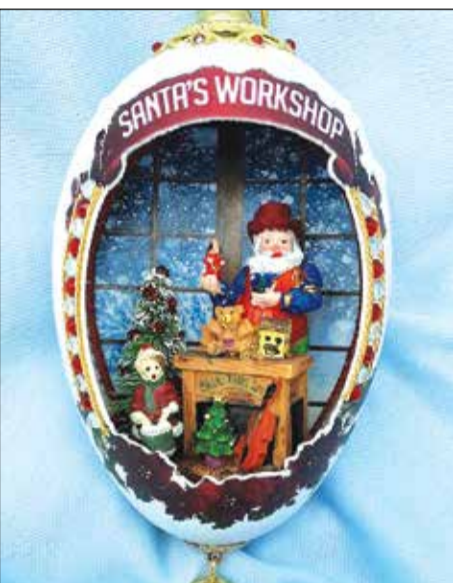
New this year is a

partnership between the camellia society and the Camellia Coffee Roasters at 12th and R streets in Sacramento. That includes Camellia Coffee Roasters Instagram "infomercials" with club members describing how to care for the plants. The cafe and

Continued on page 3



Egg Artists Raise Funds for Shriners Children's Hospital



These eggs and more will be featured in 11 classes on making egg art. Preregister for the classes at www.norcaleggshow.com or Northern California Eggstravaganza on Facebook. Photos courtesy of Diana Macias

By Carol Feineman

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Local fine artists are invited to be in the 32nd annual Northern California Eggstravaganza Egg 'N' Art Show and Sale that benefits the Shriners Children's Northern California hospital for children in Sacramento.

The show and sale runs from April 12 to April 14 in Elk Grove. All proceeds from the event go to the Shriners Children's prosthetic department.

The Northern California Egg Artists ran the show as a club activity for years and Diana Macias, a club member and a Wilton egg artist, now

organizes the show.

Macias expects that a few hundred eggs will be on exhibit from regional and national artists at the event.

"Some people have never seen egg art and they will be surprised and astonished to see what can be done with an egg and the types of art possible with eggs," Macias said. "It's not what you think when you think of dying eggs for Easter eggs; it's real fine arts. Everything that artists have done in art, all of those arts can be done on an egg. There's no limit to what you can do."

According to the Library of Congress, egg art is one of the oldest

decorative arts. In 2010, a University of Bordeaux (France) team led by Pierre-Jean Texier found etched ostrich eggs in South Africa dating back 65,000 years ago.

Each year, egg artists at the Northern California Eggstravaganza Egg 'N' Art Show and Sale donate artwork that will be raffled with all proceeds benefitting the children's hospital. Show genres include porcelain, carving, beading, jewels, miniaturists and sculpting.

Last year's show in West Sacramento included artists from Berkeley and New York, Texas, Washington and Idaho. This year's show will be in Elk Grove's SES

Hall, with artists from throughout the United States, according to Macias.

Public viewing hours will be from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 13 and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 14. Admission is free. The SES Hall is at 10428 E. Stockton Blvd., Elk Grove.

While finding out more about egg art, viewers can also learn more about the Shriners Children's Hospital. Shriners volunteers will provide pamphlets and signage about the nonprofit hospital and answer questions.

Event attendees can also make egg art at a "learning table" for \$5 with all proceeds going to the Shriners Hospital. The learning table will be

open from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on April 12 and April 13. Children at least 6 years old up to adults can work on the projects designed for beginners. All materials are supplied.

Eleven classes on making different types of egg art will also be offered April 12 to April 14. Class preregistration is required at www.norcaleggshow.com or Northern California Eggstravaganza on Facebook.

Artists and the public can contact Macias for more information about the upcoming Northern California Eggstravaganza Egg 'N' Art Show and Sale at leggantdesigns@frontier-net.net or at 916-230-9811. ★



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Camellia Show Celebrates 100 Years New CID Leadership Announced



Camellia Society of Sacramento members will dip fresh flowers into paraffin to make the flowers last longer at the Camellia Show on March 2 and March 3 in Sacramento.



2023 Bright Star winners included Carmichael's School of Rock owners Celia and Jason Kline. CID director Nick Bloise (left), Supervisor Rich Desmond and Senator Roger Niello offer citations to the couple at the State of the PBID dinner

Continued from page 1
 coffee wholesaler company has also named one of its coffee blends in the society's honor. The Camellia Coffee Roasters will be at the Camellia Show on March 3.

Camellia Show hours are from 3 to 6 p.m. March 2 and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 3 at the Scottish Rite Temple, 6151 H St., Sacramento.

Admission is free both days.

"If you enjoy gardening, you will love the show. We are all gardeners," Vierra said.

The Camellia Society of Sacramento meets once a month from October to April. Northern California Camellia Society President Justin Bergamini will speak about grafting techniques at the Feb. 25 2 p.m. meeting at Sierra 2, 2791 24th St., Room 12, Sacramento.



The trophy table in the 2022 show included yard art and gardening items. In honor of the 100th-year celebration, this year's trophies will be crystal and cut glass.

members are from Sacramento, Orangevale, West Sacramento, Fair Oaks, Carmichael, Folsom, Davis, Elk Grove, Rancho Cordova, Roseville, Gold River, Lincoln and Woodland. New members are always welcome.

"We have fun, we have food and we have lots of knowledgeable camellia people if you have any questions," Vierra said.

For more information about the 100th Camellia Show or the organization, call Vierra at 916-812-3202 or visit <https://camelliasocietyofsacramento.org>. ★

Continued from page 1
 new projects. She is now working on the State of the PBID Dinner — an annual event that includes

presentation of "Bright Star" awards to recognize outstanding beautification efforts.

encouraged to attend the dinner at Carmichael Elks Lodge on April 25. For information, visit www.discovercarmichael.com. ★

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RayRiehle.com

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Hoover and Patterson Introduce Measure to Address Homelessness

**Office of Assemblyman
Josh Hoover News Release**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Today Assemblymembers Josh Hoover (R-Folsom) and Joe Patterson (R-Rocklin) announced Assembly Bill 2417 to expand and improve California's response to our state's homelessness crisis. This legislation increases funding flexibility for treatment and service-oriented programs by repealing the state's existing one-size-fits-all "Housing First" approach to homelessness.

"Our current approach to homelessness is failing to get the results our communities are asking for," Assemblyman Josh Hoover said. "We need a renewed focus not just on housing, but on getting people the necessary treatment they need to get out of the cycle of homelessness. It's time for our state to support programs that are driving real change and getting people the help they need."

Since 2018 California has spent over \$20 billion taxpayer dollars to solve the homelessness

crisis. During that same period the state's overall homelessness population has increased by 32 percent and today half of the nation's unsheltered homeless live in California.

"If we are serious about fully addressing the growing homelessness crisis, we must ensure we are treating the root causes of homelessness," said Assemblyman Joe Patterson. "Shelters without accountability have proven to be ineffective. AB 2417 will allow the existing successful programs in

my district, and statewide, to focus their efforts on providing proven effective services to assist individuals in restoring and rebuilding their lives."

AB 2417 shifts California's focus "Beyond Housing" by recognizing that individuals experiencing homelessness have diverse needs and may require different pathways to stability. The bill would allow state agencies and departments to allocate funds to programs that prioritize mental health and drug treatment as a prerequisite for

participation.

The proposed legislation comes in response to growing concerns over the shortcomings of the "Housing First" model, which has failed to adequately address the root causes of homelessness in many cases and has left many individuals without access to essential services. Moving "Beyond Housing" offers another tool in the toolbox for local governments as they seek to develop more holistic approaches to addressing homelessness. ★

ROOT CELLAR Sacramento Genealogical Society SPRING SEMINAR



ROOT CELLAR welcomes our guest speaker, Michael L. Strauss, AG. Michael has been employed as a forensic investigator for 30 years and works as a research manager and senior genealogist for *Ancestry ProGenealogists*. Michael is a native of Pennsylvania and a veteran of the United States Coast Guard. He is a court qualified expert witness in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. He is a national genealogical lecturer and instructor and is a faculty member at Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy, Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh, and the Institute of Genealogical and Historical Research where he coordinates the military history and research courses. Michael was the film historian for the 2015 Academy Award nominated movie *Finding Vivian Maier*. He has been a Civil War reenactor for more than 25 years.

At our full-day seminar, Michael will present four awesome lectures: (1) Descendancy Research: Another Pathway to Genealogy; (2) Secret Societies: Finding Your Ancestors in Fraternal Organizations; (3) Federal Taxes and Genealogical Records they Created; and (4) That Splendid Little War: Research in the Spanish-American War. Join us in-person; all are welcome.

Date: April 27, 2024 • Time: 10 am - 5 pm, doors open at 9:15 am
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Cost: \$40 Root Cellar Members; \$55 Non-members
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To register, go to www.rootcellar.org



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Carmichael Times

Serving Carmichael and Sacramento County since 1981

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Social Security Matters

Should I Claim Social Security at 68, or Wait Until I'm 70?



By Russell Gloor,
AMAC Certified Social
Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I have a question regarding my SS benefits. I turned 68 this month and work part time. I earned \$28,000 last year but will probably gross \$36,000 to \$38,000 this year. My husband collects his SS, and he earned \$25,000 last year. I was told by a financial planner that I should apply for my benefits now, instead of waiting until I'm 70. I would collect \$1700/month at 68 and \$1944/month if I wait. Which is the smarter move?

Signed: Seeking Answers

Dear Seeking: I'm sure your financial advisor would agree that your decision on when to claim your Social Security comes down to just a few basic things – 1) how badly you need the money, 2) your life expectancy, and 3) whether you will receive a spousal boost from your husband when you claim.

Because you have already passed your full retirement age (FRA) of 66 years and 4 months, your work earnings won't negatively affect your monthly SS benefit amount. If you claim now, however, your work earnings will affect how much of your SS benefits will be subject to income tax. Assuming you file your income tax as "married/

filing jointly," up to 85% of the Social Security benefits you receive during the tax year will become part of your income taxable by the IRS. If you do not urgently need the extra money that your SS will provide, then waiting longer to claim will also postpone paying income tax on your received benefits, and that may be a consideration.

Your life expectancy is key in making your decision on when to claim. You already know that your benefit will be \$244 per month more if you wait until you are 70 to claim. If you claim at 68 (e.g., this month), you will collect about \$40,800 by the time you reach 70. If you, instead, wait until age 70 to get that extra \$244/month benefit, it will take you about 14 years collecting at the higher rate to offset the \$40,800 you would have received had you claimed now (in other words, you would break even moneywise at about age 84). If your life expectancy is longer, then waiting to claim may be the better choice. Of course, no one knows how long they will live but, for general guidance, average life expectancy for a woman your current age is about 87. Family history and your current health are obviously influencing factors as well. If you wish to get a more personal estimate of your life expectancy, I suggest using this tool:

www.socialsecurityreport.org/tools/life-expectancy-calculator/.

In the end, if you believe you will attain at least average life expectancy and you don't urgently need the money now, waiting longer will not only give you

a higher monthly benefit in your later years, but also the most in cumulative lifetime benefits. If, however, you have reason to suspect you won't achieve at least average life expectancy, or you need the SS money sooner, claiming before age 70 is likely the better move.

One other thing to consider: If your benefit as your husband's spouse will be more than your own earned maximum SS retirement benefit, then you should claim your SS benefit now. Your maximum benefit as a spouse would be 50% of your husband's full retirement age entitlement and, if that is more than your own benefit will be at age 70, then claiming now to get your maximum spousal benefit would be your best choice. To get a spousal benefit from your husband, your personal FRA entitlement (not your age 68 amount) would need to be less than half of his FRA entitlement. If that isn't the case, then you should make your decision based only on your own Social Security entitlement, as described above.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. ★

California Should Not Tolerate Having So Many Children Struggling To Read



By Dan Walters,
CALMatters.org

Of all the skills that children may acquire in school, none surpasses reading in importance.

The ability to read and comprehend what's read is the key to all other learning, either formal or personal, and the students in California's schools are not doing well.

Results from the state's latest academic achievement tests, released last October, revealed that fewer than half met standards in English language skills and scarcely a third met those in mathematics.

California's overall score in the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the federal government's program of measuring academic achievement, is equally bleak, ranked seventh from the bottom.

One reason the state fares so poorly is that for decades, California embraced trendy theories of teaching them to read, such as "whole language," while spurning strong evidence that using phonics, a more traditional method, would produce better results.

The conflict, dubbed the "reading wars," was not confined to California, but the state was one of the major battlegrounds given its size.

Ultimately, phonics-based instruction, recast as "the science of reading," won out, at least on paper. But the state has not been insistent on its adoption, and many local school systems have continued to use less effective teaching methods.

Last month, the National Council on Teacher Quality released a report on how well states are implementing the science of reading and California achieved only a mediocre score, once again falling behind other states, such as Texas, Florida, Arkansas, Louisiana and Alabama, that many would regard as regressive.

California won plaudits in some areas, such as setting reading standards in teacher training and including skills in its licensing process, but fell behind in requiring ongoing literacy training and overseeing teacher preparation programs to ensure that the science of reading is being stressed.

"In California, only 58% of fourth grade students can read at a basic level based on the most recent National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP)," according to the report. "That number falls precipitously for California's historically underserved students.

"Students who are not reading at grade level by the time they reach fourth grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school, which in turn leads to additional challenges for them as adults: lower lifetime earnings, higher rates of unemployment, and a

higher likelihood of entering the criminal justice system.

"These alarming statistics can be largely attributed to inequities in access to effective reading instruction, a problem that strong state policy and bold state leaders can solve."

The brighter side of the picture is that within a few months, California will require teacher preparation programs to stress the science of reading with an eye on meeting the state's new literacy standards.

Newly introduced legislation would make the science of reading mandatory. In the absence of such a mandate, it could take years for full implementation, if ever, because many liberal school districts will continue to resist, falsely believing that phonics are incompatible with educational equity.

California has an odd policy on overseeing what happens in local school systems. It closely monitors their finances and will essentially seize districts that are in danger of becoming insolvent, but takes a more hands-off stance regarding educational outcomes.

Reading is too important to allow local school systems to decide if and when they will adopt the science of reading. As the report on teacher quality points out, a child who can't read is likely to fall behind for the remainder of his or her life.

Dan Walters has been a journalist for more than 60 years, spending all but a few of those years working for California newspapers. ★

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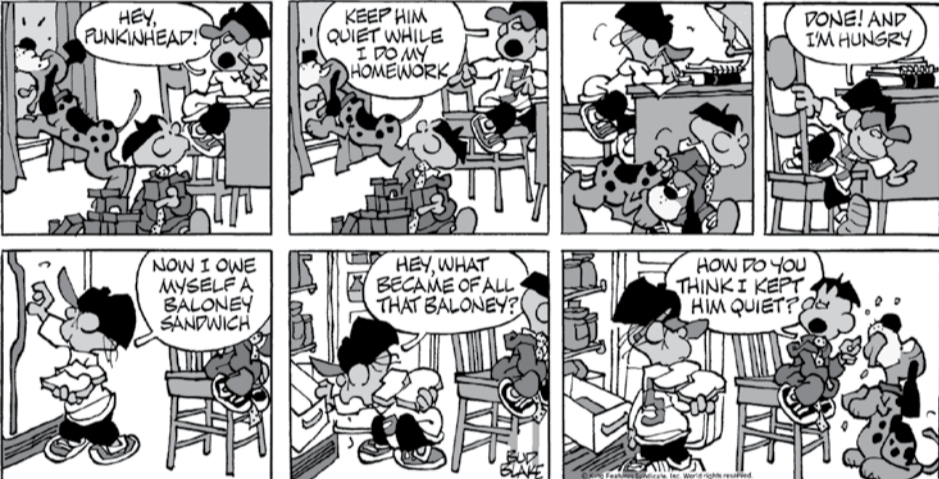
HOCUS-FOCUS



BY HENRY BOLTINOFF Find at least six differences in details between panels.

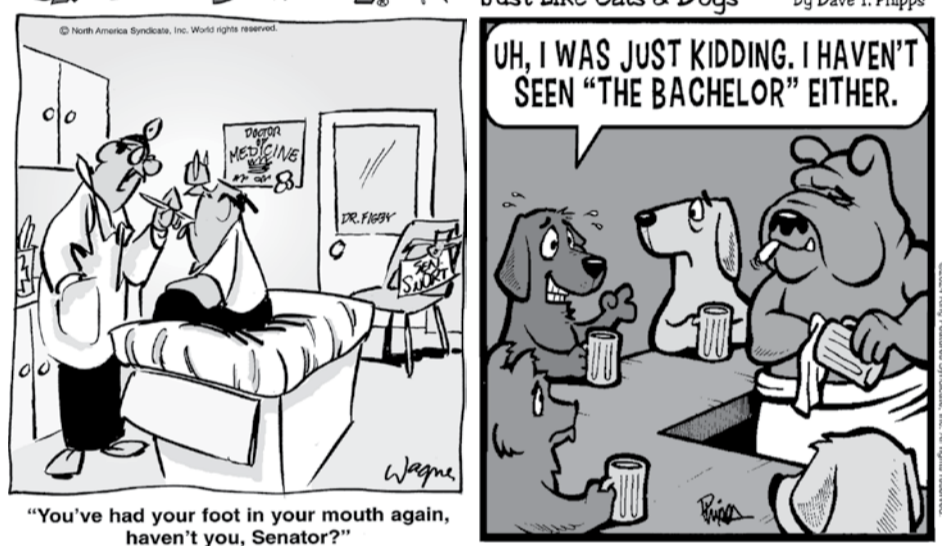
Differences: 1. Flower picture is reversed. 2. Clock is larger. 3. Nose is different. 4. Pillow picture is reversed. 5. Curtain is larger. 6. Drawer is missing.

TIGER



by BUD BLAKE

GRIN AND BEAR IT



Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps

"You've had your foot in your mouth again, haven't you, Senator?"

A	G	I	S	M		D	O	M			Y	L	E	M						
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CLUES

ACROSS

- Anti-seniors sentiment
- ____ Pérignon, Champagne
- Big Bang's original matter
- Prefix for earliest
- Call to Maria
- Bob and ____
- "Peter, Peter Pumpkin ____"
- "Le ____ des cygnes"
- Like yesteryear
- *Greta Gerwig's Oscar nominated movie
- *He's nominated for playing Leonard Bernstein
- Nothing
- White ____ shopping event
- Federal food safety agency, acr.
- It ran away with the spoon
- ROTC happenings
- Figure skating jump
- Grad
- Arrogant one
- Archaic preposition
- Passé
- Scrubbed
- Sugarcoating
- Money in Mexico City
- What DJs do
- Trickery
- Swerves
- Sigma Alpha Epsilon
- *Typical number of nominations in one Oscar category
- Emergency responder, acr.
- **"Nyad" nominee
- *"What kind of moon?"
- "Finnegan's Wake" author
- Mother load offering
- Java cotton tree
- Artemis' companion
- Fat of olives
- *"What actors do
- Spinner's product
- Wisecrack
- Like Phoenix

DOWN

- Cornelius of the movies
- Snap up
- 'I' in Greek alphabet
- Howard of radio fame
- Death-related
- One of the Earnhardts
- Spermatozoa counterparts
- Muhammad's birthplace
- Review service, with .com
- Use a ladle
- At any time
- **"No Country for Old ____" multi Oscar winner
- Suitors
- Trojan War story
- Just an ____-fashioned love song"
- Slumber
- Fl., as in fl. oz.
- "A Confederacy of ____" sing.
- Place above a ceiling
- Dueler's strike
- Overnight lodgings
- Shoelace bunny ears
- Divine saying

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DA Thien Ho Announces Settlement with Quest Diagnostics

Sacramento County District Attorney's Office News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - On February 14th, Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho announced a settlement with Quest Diagnostics, Inc., resolving allegations that the diagnostic laboratory company unlawfully disposed of hazardous waste, medical waste, and protected health information at its facilities statewide. As part of the settlement, Quest Diagnostics will be required to pay nearly \$5 million for penalties, costs, and supplemental environmental projects and make significant changes to its operations and practices at its California facilities. Attorney General Rob Bonta, DA Thien Ho and the district attorneys of Alameda, Los Angeles, Monterey, Orange, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Ventura, and Yolo Counties are a part of today's settlement.

The settlement is the result of over 30 inspections conducted by the district attorneys' offices at Quest Diagnostics laboratories and Patient Service Centers (PSCs) statewide. During those inspections, the district attorneys' offices reviewed the contents of Quest Diagnostics' compactors and dumpsters and found hundreds of containers of chemicals, as well as bleach, reagents, batteries, and electronic waste; unredacted medical information; medical waste such as used specimen containers for blood and urine; and hazardous waste such as used batteries, solvents, and flammable liquids. The unlawful disposals are alleged to violate the Hazardous Waste Control Law, Medical Waste Management Act, Unfair Competition Law, and civil laws prohibiting the unauthorized disclosure of personal health information.

After being notified of the investigations, Quest Diagnostics implemented numerous changes to bring its facilities into compliance with California law, including hiring an independent environmental auditor to review the disposal of waste at its facilities and modifying its operating and training procedures to improve its handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste, medical waste, and personal health information at all four laboratories and over 600 PSCs in California.

The settlement resolves the allegations above and requires Quest Diagnostics to pay \$3,999,500 in civil penalties, \$700,000 in costs, and \$300,000 for a Supplemental Environmental Project to support environmental training and enforcement in California. The settlement also imposes injunctive terms, including requirements that Quest Diagnostics maintain an environmental compliance program, including hiring a third-party waste auditor, and report annually on its progress.

"This settlement is the result of a successful collaboration between District Attorney's Offices and the state Attorney General's Office to protect California's environment and its health consumers," said Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho. "Thanks to the joint efforts of our Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit and prosecutors across the state, the financial penalty and permanent injunction will deter Quest Diagnostics from violating hazardous waste, medical waste and protected health information laws. Sacramento County will receive a total of \$259,440 from the settlement, which will reimburse the cost of prosecuting this case and increase the enforcement of consumer and environmental protection laws." ★

Major Takedown of Vast Organized Retail Crime Operation

CHP News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The CHP, California Department of Justice, and allied federal agencies announced the takedown of a vast organized retail theft operation spanning 21 counties and involving \$8 million worth of stolen beauty products.

The ringleader of an extensive organized retail crime operation spanning 21 counties, involving an estimated \$8 million in stolen beauty products, was arrested and charges were filed. The announcement signals the culmination of several months of collaborative investigatory efforts in the CHP's ongoing fight against retail crime.

The investigation was conducted by the California Department of Justice (DOJ), CHP, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Postal Inspection Service along with Ulta's Loss Prevention Organized Retail Crime team and Sephora representatives. It is alleged that the ringleader of the scheme paid more than seven people to steal from Ulta Beauty stores, as well as other retail outlets. The ringleader would then sell the stolen cosmetic items on her Amazon storefront.

CHP Commissioner Sean Duryee said, "The success of this investigation is due to the collaboration between several of our Organized Retail Crime Task Force teams throughout the state, the CHP's Computer Crimes Investigation Unit, the DOJ, our federal partners, and retailers. Through

increased collaborative efforts, retailers and law enforcement have become more efficient and effective in our fight against organized retail crime."

Recognizing the complexity and scale of the operation, in August 2023, federal investigators requested the CHP's Organized Retail Crime Task Force (ORCTF) join their ongoing investigation. In December, simultaneous search warrants were executed by ORCTF investigators in Southern California and the suspects were taken into custody.

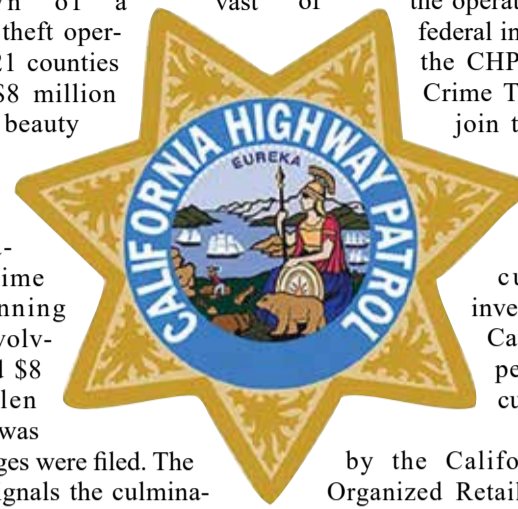
The charges, brought by the California DOJ, include Organized Retail Theft, Conspiracy, Receipt of Stolen Property, and multiple counts of Grand Theft.

The thefts occurred in Alameda, Placer, Kern, Contra Costa, Orange, Los Angeles, Santa Clara, San Diego, Sacramento, San Mateo, Solano, Riverside, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Napa, Marin, Tulare, San Bernardino, Sonoma, Ventura, and Yolo counties.

Since the inception of the ORCTF in 2019, the CHP has been involved in more than 2,300 investigations leading to the arrest of more than 2,200 suspects and the recovery of over 761,000 stolen goods valued at \$41.7 million.

If you witness one of these crimes occurring, do not attempt to intervene — call 9-1-1. Members of the public and retailers can also report retail crime tips directly through the CHP's website.

The CHP's mission is to provide the highest level of safety, service, and security. ★



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	Mar 2 All Vote Centers open through Election Day.
	Mar 5 Election Day! Last day to turn in your ballot.

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Combating the Loneliness Epidemic

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)

- This time of year can feel especially lonely for many — as the holiday season fades and Valentine’s Day adds extra pressure to be in a romantic relationship. If you feel this way, you are not alone. A recent Gallup poll found that about 44 million American adults report feeling lonely. In fact, the US Surgeon General even declared loneliness an epidemic last year due to its serious physical health consequences. According to the Surgeon General’s “Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation” report, poor social connection increases the risk of heart disease, stroke and dementia.

Additionally, loneliness can lead to mental health conditions like depression and anxiety. The CDC reports that having a mental health condition, like depression, can also increase one’s risk of feeling lonely and isolated.

American men are at an especially increased risk of experiencing loneliness and social isolation. While 30 years ago, 55% of American men reported having at least six close friends, that number is now closer to 27%. In fact, 15% of men report having no close friendships at all. Unfortunately, men also experience increased stigma around sharing their emotions and expressing vulnerability, which also contributes to them reporting more instances of feeling lonely.

There are multiple reasons our modern world can feel so isolating regardless of gender. The COVID-19 pandemic led to physical and social isolation that led many to develop thoughts of hopelessness and helplessness. Social media, smartphones



Loneliness can lead to mental health conditions like depression and anxiety. Photo courtesy Helena-Lopes Pixels

and cars have all contributed to a world where people live far apart from each other and are not incentivized to connect in person. It is now common to go for weeks without seeing or speaking to loved ones.

However, it is still possible for us to foster the inclusion and connection that provides us with the necessary support we need to overcome life’s challenges. Here are some ways to combat loneliness from the CDC:

-Keep in regular contact with others. Reach out to different friends and family regularly. If

one person is unavailable to take your call, someone else probably is.

-Ask for help. If you need extra support, ask a mental health provider. The Stop Stigma Sacramento Services page has a list of resources.

-Help others. Lending a hand lets the people you love know how much you care. This can create a deeper connection and can feel rewarding. Volunteering is a great way to help others and meet people.

-Unplug. Ironically, the technology we have to connect

us makes people feel lonelier. In-person interactions make us feel closer to our loved ones.

Being more socially connected can also improve stress responses and minimize the negative health effects of stress, according to a National Library of Medicine publication. To get connected, join a social group. Sacramento has many organizations to join for activities like yoga, a fitness group, art classes and book clubs. Being part of a group with shared interests, values or goals can foster a sense of belonging.

While it can seem daunting to contact someone when you are feeling lonely, keep in mind that reaching out can often help you feel relieved and hopeful. Maintaining your social connections is the key to combatting loneliness.

If you’re struggling with your mental health you can visit the Stop Stigma Sacramento Services page or call NAMI’s (National Alliance on Mental Illness) free helpline at 800-950-NAMI (6264). Know that help and hope is always available. ★

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