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THE NEWS

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Local Girl Scouts Reach Outer Space!



Above: Girl Scouts from Troops 793, 917, 1089, and 1105 smile before their big moment. Right: Jasmin Moghbeli. Photo courtesy of NASA

Story and photos by Annie Kerr

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Wouldn't it be fascinating to speak to an astronaut who's currently in outer space? On the cloudless morning of Feb. 22, Girl Scout Troops 793, 917, 1089, and 1105 from Sacramento, Lodi, and Roseville had the extraordinary opportunity to make contact with the International Space Station (ISS). Via Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS), the 13 Girl Scouts were able to reach NASA Astronaut Jasmin Moghbeli, who was traveling through space at approximately 17,000 miles per hour.

The event was held at the Sacramento Regional Program Center and STEM Center, home of the Girl Scouts Heart of Central



Jasmin Moghbeli. Photo courtesy of NASA

California (GSHCC), and was bustling with camera crews, families, friends, and media. And cookies, of course.

Because the opportunity is so rare, the Girl Scouts were preparing since November for the event. Each Girl Scout prepared individual questions to ask Moghbeli, a very accomplished woman. Moghbeli is not only a

NASA astronaut, but a United States Marine Corps test pilot, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) graduate, a flight engineer, and the Mission Commander of SpaceX Crew #7. She is qualified to fly at least 25 different aircraft. Adding to her list of accomplishments, Moghbeli is the first professional Iranian American astronaut to fly to

space. While on her space mission, Moghbeli spoke to the Girl Scouts for about 10 minutes until connection was lost.

Before the connection was established, the event began with comments from various speakers. Sue Richards and Amanda Bates, troop leaders for Troop 1089 and GSHCC volunteers, spoke briefly about how honored they were to have this opportunity and how it happened. According to Bates, there are only about 60 to 100 International Space Station contacts globally made per year, which is about two per week. In fact, the last two contacts occurred in Rome and Spain.

Next, Jennifer Garland spoke. Garland was the event's primary volunteer and is a River City Amateur Radio Communications Society member. She helped

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ABC License Administrators Can Now Submit Catering Authorization Applications Online

Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control California News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control's (ABC) catering authorization applications are now available online for the first time, permitting users to complete the form within minutes.

"We are excited to bring an online method for licensees to apply and pay for the most common application submitted to the department," said Licensing Division Chief Jaime Taylor. "Catering authorizations are used for selling and serving alcohol at many types of events, from weddings to large scale music festivals. Our new online applications will make the process much simpler and faster, providing an enhanced service to Californians who are applying for a catering authorization."

Catering authorizations allow licensees with an active caterer's permit to sell alcoholic beverages for consumption during events approved by ABC. Applicants must have an ABC Online Services account with the License Administrator role. Applicants can submit their application, pay with a credit card or eCheck, and upload required documents or approvals.

To qualify for the online authorization, the event must be more than five days but not more than 60 days from the application date. Users can submit and pay for events online for up to three consecutive days if each day has the same number of attendees and hours during which alcohol is served. If the dates are not consecutive, or if the number of attendees and hours are not the same, each day must be submitted and paid for as a separate event.

There is a limit of 36 catered events per year at any given location. This limit applies to all Caterer's Permits (Type 58), including those held by club licenses (Type 50, 51, and 52). An exception may be made to exceed 36 catered events if the licensee can clearly establish that additional events are in the best interest of the State and necessary to satisfy substantial public demand. Exceptions can be requested at a local ABC

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Reducing Ambulance Patient Offload Time

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Every second counts in an emergency, and when it comes to medical emergencies, time is of the essence.

The time it takes for an ambulance to offload a patient to the emergency department (ED) can make all the difference; the longer the wait, the more critical their condition can become.

It's an emotional and stressful situation for patients and their loved ones, who are already worried about the outcome of their medical emergency.

As the population of Sacramento County continues to grow, so do the demands on its emergency medical services. One crucial metric that affects patient outcomes and the overall efficiency of emergency medical services is the Ambulance Patient Offload Time (APOT).



Sacramento County Board of Supervisors want to reduce the time that it takes to get an ambulance patient into a doctor's care from 72 minutes down to 20 minutes. Photo Courtesy Sacramento County

The time interval is between the arrival of an ambulance patient at an ED and the time that the patient is transferred to the ED gurney, bed, chair or other acceptable location and the emergency department assumes the responsibility for care of the patient. In Sacramento County, that time has hit a

high of 72 minutes but the county has an ambitious goal to drop that time to 20 minutes.

This goal comes as Assembly Bill 40, which takes effect on July 1, will require every local EMS agency to develop a plan not to exceed 30 minutes for 90% of ambulance arrivals and report the

standardized time to the authority.

Sacramento County, with prehospital providers, local hospitals, interested community members and Sacramento County Board of Supervisors Patrick Kennedy and Pat Hume, shared their innovations and best practices Feb. 13

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Newsom Announces New Appointment To Sacramento Superior Court



Gavin Newsom

Sacramento Superior Court News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Gov. Gavin Newsom recently appointed Richard C. Miadich, of Sacramento County, to the Sacramento Superior Court bench.

“The court welcomes the addition of Mr. Miadich and the experience he will bring to the Sacramento County bench,” Presiding Court Judge Bunmi O. Awoniyi said.

Miadich has served as chair of the California Fair Political Practices Commission since 2019. The commission is responsible for regulating statewide campaign finance, governmental ethics, and lobbying activity.

Prior to his appointment to the FPPC, Miadich

worked at Olson Hagel & Fishburn LLP from 2005 to 2018, where he held several positions including managing partner, partner, and associate. The practice focused on litigation matters involving election and campaign finance law, education law, government and administrative law, and constitutional law. He also assisted in the firm’s political advising, primarily in areas of elections and initiatives.

Miadich has litigated matters at the trial and appellate levels in California, including the California Supreme Court, and has represented clients before state administrative agencies. He has also participated in matters before the United States Supreme Court, the United States Courts of Appeals for the Seventh and Ninth Circuits, and the United States District Courts for the Northern and Eastern Districts of California.

Miadich was an at-large director of the Sacramento County Bar Association

Board of Directors. He also served on the Board of Directors of the Sacramento County Bar Foundation, the charitable arm of the Sacramento County Bar Association. Previously, Miadich also served on the Executive Committee of the Public Law Section of the California State Bar and was the assistant editor of the State Bar’s Public Law Journal.

Miadich earned his law degree from the University of California at Davis in 2002. While there, he served as a member of the U.C. Davis Law Review, externed with the California State Assembly Judiciary Committee, and participated in the school’s trial practice program. He received his bachelor’s degrees in political science and history from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1998.

Miadich fills the vacancy created by the appointment of Judge Daniel J. Calabretta to the federal bench. ★

It Costs \$18,441 for a Hospital Stay in California

Charlotte Green, Digitaloft News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - A new study reveals the most expensive states for a hospital stay and the most common reasons for those stays.

The research, conducted by Universal Drugstore, looked at the average cost of a hospital stay in each state to determine the most expensive states for a stay. The study also uncovered the most common reasons for a hospital stay.

California is the most expensive state for a hospital stay. On average, by staying for 4.6 days, patients can expect to pay an astronomical \$18,441, equating to just over \$4,000 daily. Despite the high prices, the sunny state has various hospitals for residents to consider, including Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and UCLA Medical Centre. Each hospital is ranked nationally in multiple specialties with high-performing procedures and conditions.

Oregon is the second most expensive state for a hospital stay. It’s a top visitor location known for its diverse landscape, scenic forests, and beautiful lakes. However, when it comes to its healthcare, Oregon is one of the most expensive states in the US, averaging around \$18,336 to afford a typical 4.6-day hospital stay. There are plenty of hospitals in and around the state, including OHSU Hospital, which has been described as Oregon’s leading academic medical center, offering advanced treatments and expert care.

Washington state is also one of the most expensive places for a hospital stay. An average stay of just under five days in Washington can cost as much as \$17,753, equating to more than \$3,800 per day in

hospital fees. If you are looking for specialized hospital care, Inova Fairfax Hospital and MedStar Washington Hospital Center have numerous medical specialties. From complex care to common procedures and conditions such as knee replacement and heart failure.

The most common reasons for hospital stays:

- 1-Septicemia
- 2-Heart failure
- 3-Osteoarthritis
- 4-Pneumonia (except that caused by tuberculosis)
- 5-Diabetes mellitus with complication
- 6-Acute myocardial infarction
- 7-Cardiac dysrhythmias
- 8-COPD and bronchiectasis
- 9-Acute and unspecified renal failure
- 10-Cerebral infarction

Septicemia, also known as sepsis, is the clinical name for blood poisoning by bacteria; surprisingly, it is the most common reason for hospital stays in the United States, with a shocking rate of over 2.2 million. Sepsis is a life-threatening infection that requires urgent medical treatment.

Another primary reason for hospital stays across the US is heart failure. This typically happens when the heart cannot adequately pump blood around the body, especially when it has become weak. In the United States, a staggering 1,135,900 hospital stays resulted from heart failure in 2018.

With more than 1.1 million hospital stays, osteoarthritis is one of the most common reasons for visiting the hospital in the US. The condition causes joints to become painful and stiff. It is also one of the most common types of arthritis. ★

ABC License Administrators Can Now Submit Catering Authorization Applications Online

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District Office.

For more information about online

catering authorization applications, please visit <https://www.abc.ca.gov/licensing/license-forms/caterers-permits/>. ★

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Reducing Ambulance Patient Offload Time



Sacramento County Board of Supervisor Pat Hume talked about the county's commitment for reducing the Ambulance Patient Off-Load Time during a joint presentation on Feb. 13.

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to address the Ambulance Patient Off-Load Time crisis.

Dr. Gregory Kann stated the importance of sharing ideas and innovations to create better services for all, adding that out of this crisis comes opportunity.

Sutter Roseville, a not-for profit hospital that is part of the Sutter Health network, shared a real-time data system implemented to monitor its Ambulance Patient Offload Time. By using its medical health record system, EPIC, Sutter Roseville tracked a patient's emergency room trip from entrance to transfer, allowing obstacles to be identified and any issues to be corrected. The hospital leadership also educated staff to help identify when a patient needed ER treatment or could be moved to another department or service. These efforts helped the hospital reduce the time from 100 minutes to 31 minutes, according to the Sutter Roseville presentation.

A Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District (SMFD) presentation approached the Ambulance Patient Offload Time issue another way. The fire district implemented the county's revised protocol (Policy Number 5050 – Destination), which authorizes patients to be taken to their medical health system's hospital, instead of the closest hospital, allowing for faster treatment since their medical records were already there.

The Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District also determined if a patient needed to be directly taken to the ER or if they could safely wait in the lobby. The fire district also partnered with other ambulance providers to provide additional ambulances to support the 9-1-1 system.

The fire district implemented a Mobile Integrated Health program, which means a Physician Assistance/Nurse Practitioner teams with a paramedic who responds to calls and determines what a patient might need and if they can be treated at the scene without going to the emergency department.

The Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District's innovations aim to get patients to the right place the first time, whether that's the ER, lobby or another service, according to the presentation.

The Feb. 13 event demonstrated that local hospitals, prehospital provider and the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors are strongly committed to improving Ambulance Patient Offload Time and emergency medical services, according to the county. With continued collaboration, innovation and inspiration, Dr. Kann emphasized that these conversations are what will fuel the plan to better lead the Ambulance Patient Offload Time and deliver better outcomes for patients in Sacramento County. ★

Free Tax Help Available for Low and Moderate-Income Households

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Now is a great time to think about filing income taxes. Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a benefit for which anyone with a household income less than \$63,398 might qualify.

The County of Sacramento Department of Human Assistance (DHA) has again partnered with the United Way California Capital Region to offer the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program. This program offers a free income-tax preparation service to moderate- and low-income working individuals and families with the emphasis on claiming the federal Earned Income Tax Credit.

All taxpayers earning a gross income of \$63,398 or less qualify for this Free Tax Preparation Service. For the 2023 tax year, the earned income credit ranges from \$600 to \$7,430, depending on your filing status and the number of children you have.

Investment income must be \$11,000 or less for the year.

The Department of Human Assistance

site will be available through April 4 by appointment at 2700 Fulton Ave., Sacramento. Available hours are from 5 to 8 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 16.

Also bring a valid photo ID for you and your spouse, Social Security cards for everyone listed on your tax return and all tax forms such as W2s, 1099s, student loan interest/tuition statements and book receipts.

If available, bring last year's tax return. If you plan to itemize deductions, have the necessary paperwork, such as mortgage interest statement, real estate taxes and charitable donations.

Be ready to show a 1095-A and/or 1095-B form if you had health insurance through the Affordable Care Act or Medi-Cal.

If you are married and filing jointly, both spouses must attend the appointment.

Call 916-498-1000 to make appointments at the Fulton office. To make an appointment at other locations offering free tax-preparation services to moderate- and low-income individuals and families, call 2-1-1. ★

Resident Travels to France for Love of Braille

Society for the Blind News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Elizabeth Symington of Rancho Cordova remembers the book that inspired her to learn braille. In college studying art, Symington found a children's book at the library, "A Color of His Own" by Leo Lionni, which paired color with texture and used braille.

The book inspired a series of artwork that Symington created in college and it began her lifelong love of braille.

"All art is texture driven and designed to be touched, so that was my draw to braille," Symington said. "I also love the allure and mystery of writing in a secret code."

Fully sighted, Symington decided to learn braille, starting with "A Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle. She became a certified braille transcriber and executive director of the Sacramento Braille Transcribers, which produced her beloved braille children's books.

When the group merged with Sacramento-based nonprofit Society for the Blind in 2022, Symington began running the Society for the Blind's Braille Production and Training Program and will receive her credential and master's degree in May to become a teacher of the visually-impaired.

In braille's 200th anniversary year, Symington found herself with an extraordinary opportunity: in January, she went on a two-week trip to Paris with friends to study the history of braille and current usage, and to visit the small town of Coupvray outside Paris where Louis Braille lived.

Exploring Coupvray was a trip highlight. She walked through Braille's neighborhood and took a two-hour tour of his home.

"I learned so much at Louis' home," Symington said. "So much was on display and the tour guide let us touch whatever we wanted. It was really magical."

Symington toured the school where he taught, which is still in operation today with 125 youth in elementary through high school studying and living there while exploring their career passions. Across the street is a school for adults with vision loss and Symington was struck by the number of residents with low vision walking on the streets.

"I've never seen so many blind people walking around a city," Symington said. "Everywhere I looked, there was someone with a guide dog or cane out there being independent. I was seeing Louis' legacy and it was really powerful."

Symington visited the church where Braille played the organ, went to his gravesite with wine and cheese and "just hung out with Louis."

"Sometimes, heroes can be larger than life," Symington said. "Visiting his grave reminded me he was a human and had his own struggles. He was an organist, teacher and inventor but he also was human."

Symington was fascinated with seeing how France is using braille and supporting individuals who are blind or have low vision in public spaces. There were braille boxes of painkillers on pharmacy shelves and braille and tactile models that viewers could touch at museum exhibits. The braille was accurate, the dots were in good condition and the creators



Elizabeth Symington of Rancho Cordova. Photo courtesy of Society for the Blind

knew how to communicate using texture, according to Symington.

Symington came home even more inspired to get individuals of all visual abilities excited about braille.

"Seeing how France is using braille and supporting people who are blind and low vision in public spaces really inspired me to want to make braille as cool as American Sign Language is," Symington said. "I want people to say, 'You read braille? Awesome!' Braille is literacy and so important, and I want to reduce the stigma around it."

Through the Braille Production program at Society for the Blind, Symington is seeing a high demand for braille. The program has about 30 transcribers nationwide with different specialties, from standard braille and varying language translations to tactile graphics, brailled music and proofreading. The program produces the Braille and Talking Book Library's newsletter, playbills for various theaters and more.

Eventually the program will include a training component where individuals with vision loss can train to produce braille as a career.

"You can spend a lifetime becoming an expert in one aspect of braille," Symington said. "I just love learning, and I love going to work every day. We have a strong and highly-skilled team working with everyone from preschoolers up to seniors. I'm really proud of all that we do at Society for the Blind."

Celebrating its 70th anniversary this year, Sacramento-based Society for the Blind creates innovative ways to empower individuals living with low vision or blindness to discover, develop and achieve their full potential. Since 1954, Society for the Blind has grown from a dedicated group of volunteers to a nationally-recognized agency and the only comprehensive rehabilitative teaching center that provides services for a 27-county region of Northern California and Nevada. The nonprofit organization provides low-vision eye care, life and job skills training, mentorship and access to tools to maintain independence for more than 5,000 youth, working-age adults and seniors experiencing vision loss each year.

To learn more or make a donation, visit online SocietyfortheBlind.org. ★

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Local Girl Scouts Reach Outer Space!



Girl Scout Ambassador Leia B. asks Jasmin Moghbeli a question.

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prepare the Girl Scouts for the big day by helping them practice their media and public-speaking skills. Garland told the crowd what to expect for the rest of the event and answered audience questions until playing a short video before the big moment arrived.

In the video, a pre-recorded Jasmin Moghbeli told a little bit about her story. “I still wake up every morning and it feels like a pinch-me moment to think that I am actually an astronaut right now,” she said. Also on the TV screen was a map tracking the progress of the space station, coming closer and closer.

The time finally came to contact the astronaut: 10:24 a.m. precisely (as planned). A hush fell over the room as Garland began the countdown. Loud static could be heard, and then Moghbeli’s voice broke through, all the way from outer space, and the questions began. Each Girl Scout had the privilege of asking two questions before time ran out.

To highlight some of the questions, Girl Scout Avery T. asked her what she is most excited for upon her return to Earth, to which Moghbeli responded, “My children, my husband, a shower with running water, and normal food.”

On the other hand, Elsa W., another Girl Scout, asked what Moghbeli will miss about space. Moghbeli replied that she would miss her six crewmates who she has grown close to, floating and flying around in space, and looking back at Earth from her vantage point.

Then, Girl Scout Edie B. asked for what advice Moghbeli would give to a girl wanting to be an astronaut, and she replied that space exploration is very challenging to get into and that failing is inevitable but failing is also OK. And realizing that failure is OK is the best way to keep moving

forward with your dreams.

Next, Leia B., another Girl Scout, asked if Moghbeli believes in life beyond Earth and the astronaut said she does. “There’s just too much out there,” she said.

Moghbeli continued to answer questions about what she does in her free time up in space, what she eats there, what the average workday looks like and if she would live on Mars.

Alyssa S. asked if she listens to music or podcasts in space. Moghbeli highlighted a few of her favorite artists she listens to: Hozier, Whitney Houston, and Stevie Wonder.

Much was learned in such a short time span. Each question was well-executed, and the process went smoothly. The room erupted into cheers once the Girl Scouts wished Moghbeli a safe return to Earth and signed off.

After the call, each Girl Scout was handed a special badge to commemorate what they accomplished. Then, each Girl Scout, all in high school, took to the microphone to briefly discuss how this event might inspire them to study science and/or space exploration.

“Through events like this and other STEM programs, Girl Scouts is committed to helping our future female leaders become better problem-solvers, critical thinkers and gain the confidence to turn their ideas into breakthrough inventions to help others,” said Dr. Linda E. Farley, Chief Executive Officer, Girl Scouts Heart of Central California.

At the end of the day, it all comes down to helping young people see what they are capable of. Jasmin Moghbeli proved to the Girl Scouts that they can do anything they put their minds to...they can even go to outer space. ★

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.” ★



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 Pexels

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

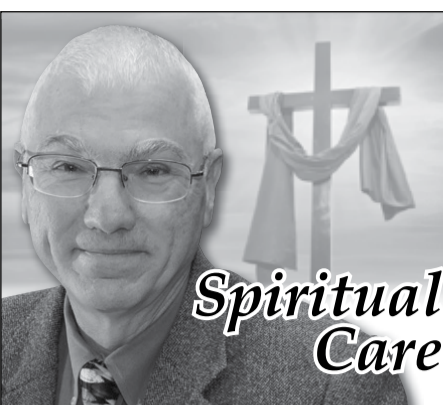
us makes people feel lonelier. In-person interactions make us feel closer to our loved ones.

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. ★

No Laughing Matter



BY NORRIS BURKES

Folks occasionally ask me how they too might become a hospital chaplain.

Some seem to hope I'll say they need only attend five Monday nights of training in a local church, and they can start making the big bucks.

The five-week program works for many volunteer positions, but for a chaplain career, college and graduate school is required. "But wait, there's more," I tell them.

Before they can bring home a chaplain paycheck, they must be accepted into something called Clinical Pastoral Education. CPE is a one-year internship program at a teaching hospital where wanna-be chaplains work forty-hour weeks.

I began CPE in the fall of 1990 at the University of California Davis Medical Center in Sacramento. The training involved multiple chaplain requests from the emergency room to visit with the victims of violence, accidents, and illnesses.

Many of the calls related to something medical folk called "risk-related behaviors." The most common high-risk behaviors include violence, alcoholism, tobacco use disorder, risky sexual behaviors and eating disorders.

While some patients avoided return visits by making lifestyle changes, others made numerous returns. Such patients were often called "Frequent Fliers."

One of our "Fliers" arrived one hot summer afternoon strapped to a gurney and screaming "Oh, God, it hurts! You gotta get me something for the pain."

Orderlies wheeled the woman into a treatment room where a nurse peppered her with triage questions. Just outside the room, a few staff members erupted into full-blown guffaws and horselaughs.

"Hey," I called to a particularly tall, balding nurse, "Why are you guys laughing at

that lady? That isn't cool. I think she heard you."

The nurse laughed some more, taking my upbraiding in better stride than I'd expected. "Were you here last week?" he asked.

"No. I was on vacation."

"Then you wouldn't understand," he said, shaking his head at his "uniformed" chaplain.

"This lady was here last week with such convincing pain that we put her on an intravenous morphine drip," he said.

"Still not funny," I said.

He continued his account by telling me how the woman had excused herself for a brief smoke and failed to return to the ER.

"Campus police found her hitchhiking in her hospital gown on the boulevard out front. She had an IV needle in one arm while holding the morphine bag with the other," he said.

"Why would she ...?" My puzzled voice faded to barely audible from inside my naive cocoon.

"She wanted to sell our morphine, Chaplain," he said, reversing the upbraid.

I studied the mop-streaked floor between his feet as I felt the currents of emotions swirling about us.

I had to admit that I saw the humor in the case but laughing at the woman's condition felt like a sellout to the gallows humor emergency-room workers often used to insulate themselves.

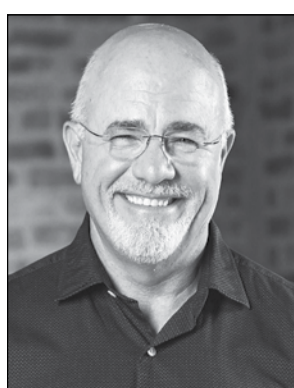
Jesus once encountered a woman with real pain, unlike our patient. She had an incurable blood disorder that drained her of energy, money and dignity. Her search for a physician's cure only made her situation worse. By the time she came seeking Jesus, she was looking only for a human touch, a caring touch.

I learned a lot that year, but this event, more than most, taught me that while not every patient sought healing, Jesus demonstrated that everyone deserves a caring touch.

As I approached the hospital gurney and offered our patient a prayer, I did my best to also bring her the human touch she deserved. A few minutes later, a caring doctor referred our patient quality psychiatric care in a rehab facility.

Unfortunately, not everyone will accept a caring touch. This time, she laughed at us.

A few moments later, she left our ER against medical advice, without drugs or a hospital gown — only a prayerful touch from her hospital chaplain. ★



Dave Ramsey Says

If You're Not Going All In, Stay Out

Dear Dave,

I have an idea for a small business I think would be a huge success in my area. How do you feel about me keeping my current day job, and hiring a full-time manager for the business to handle the day-to-day operations, while I do the accounting and oversee things? If it doesn't break even or better, I can always close it. In my mind, I equate my plan to being like selling real estate on the side, while keeping my regular, full-time job. What are your thoughts?

– Victor

Dear Victor,

To be honest, I don't think there's a high likelihood of success using this model. Unless, of course, you're willing to devote 40 to 50 hours a week to this

new business, in addition to the time you spend at your current job. In my mind, you'd have a better chance of making it work if you bought an existing business in place. That way, at least you wouldn't have to be so entrepreneurial and constantly involved in things like adjusting the business model, checking prices and dealing with customers.

Honestly? This idea isn't a lot like real estate at all. Real estate will run itself—for the most part—once you find a tenant. Also, the number of hours you'd have to put into selling real estate on the side is nothing like the time you'd spend getting a new business off the ground.

Here's the deal, Victor. The secret ingredient to your small business success is you. You are the ideas, the passion and the energy. The problem with your plan is that you are only a small part of the equation. Franchises and chains try to train this kind of stuff into people with pep talks and other forms of motivation, but when something's your

baby, it's really your baby. You're going to do your best, days, nights and weekends, to grow it properly. You're going to worry over it constantly, and treat it almost like it's your very own child.

I love your entrepreneurial spirit, but I'm sorry, Victor. I just don't like this plan. It sounds like your idea is to swing by once in a while, eyeball things and crunch a few numbers. And if that's the case, I wouldn't waste my time or money if I were you. You'd probably benefit your community more by just giving what you'd invest in the venture to a good charity.

– Dave

Dave Ramsey is an eight-time national bestselling 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 Ramsey Solutions ★



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<p>LIFEPONTE FAMILY OF CHURCHES 7200 Rio Linda Blvd. lifepointnaz.com (916) 991.4624</p> <p>SUNDAY 9:30AM COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP 10AM ALL AGE CONNECTION GROUPS 11AM WORSHIP SERVICE NURSERY (0-3YRS) KIDZ CLUBHOUSE (4YRS - 6TH GRADE)</p>	<p>ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH 3644 Bolivar Ave. North Highlands (LCMS) (916) 332-4001</p> <p>ZionLutheranNH.org Sunday Schedule 9 a.m. Traditional Worship 10:30 a.m. Praise Band Worship</p> <p>OR, if you prefer, you can worship in your car in the parking lot Tune your radio to 88.7</p>	<p>Calvary Lutheran Church 5th and L Streets Rio Linda Pastor Kirsten Moore</p> <p>Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>Children's Bible stories & crafts during adult worship (916) 991-2135 www.clcr.org Mail@clcr.org Open Arms, Open Hearts</p>
<p>Church of Christ Worship God's Way Minister Eric Smith</p> <p>6818 4th Avenue Rio Linda, CA 95673 (916) 991-2668</p> <p>Church 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO WORSHIP?</p> <p>Check out one of these churches in your community.</p>	<p>NEW BEGINNINGS FELLOWSHIP Pastor Deonte Walters</p> <p>10th and O Streets (916) 991-2918</p> <p>Sunday School 9 a.m. Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.</p>
<p>Rio Linda Seventh Day Adventist Church 7535 - 10th St. and U Rio Linda</p> <p>Sabbath School 9:15 a.m. Worship Services 11 a.m.</p>	<p>North Metro Church of Christ 4191 Norwood Ave., Sacramento 95838 (916) 923-1147 Minister Pete Savage</p> <p>SUNDAY Bible Classes: 10 a.m. Worship: 11 a.m. Worship: 6 p.m. Wed. Bible Classes: 7 p.m.</p>	<p>LIBERTY MINISTRIES CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP Pastor Shannon Fannin Liberty Ministries extends an invitation to come and join us for Celebration Worship Sunday 9 a.m.</p> <p>Youth Extreme & Food Closet</p> <p>(916) 922-6442 4840 Marysville Blvd. www.libertymcf.net</p>
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NOTICE OF VACANCY

Interested persons are hereby notified that pursuant to Government Code 1780 there is (1) one vacancy on the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District Board of Directors

The position shall be appointed by the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District Board of Directors and will serve until December 1, 2024. This seat will be up for election at the November 5, 2024 general election to serve a two-year term.

Interested persons should submit a statement of qualifications and the reasons they wish to be appointed to the Board. Participation in Board Training and Community Relations through programs offered by the California Special District Association and the California Association of Recreation and Park Districts is offered to all Board Directors. In order to be considered for appointment you must be registered to vote within the District.

Please submit your statement of qualifications and letter of interest to:


Mike Heller, General Manager Director Appointment
Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District
810 Oak Lane | Rio Linda, CA 95673
Phone: (916) 991-5929
Website: www.rleparks.com

Applications are due by: 4:00pm on March 8, 2024

This district has 60 days from the date the board is notified of the vacancy or the effective date of the vacancy, whichever is later, to fill the vacancy by appointment or call a special election.

Gov Code § 1780

Pursuant to Government Code 1780, this notice will be posted for 15 days in 3 or more conspicuous locations in the district
from February 21, 2024 to March 8, 2024.



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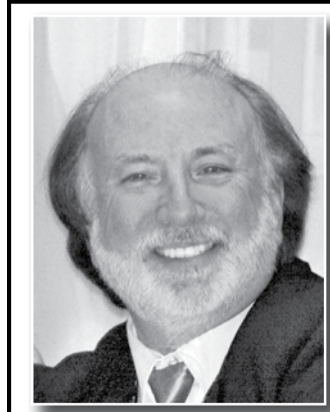
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Social Security Matters About Medicare's Dreaded "IRMAA" Provision



**By Russell Gloor,
AMAC Certified Social
Security Advisor**

Dear Rusty: My wife is on Medicare and receiving Social Security benefits each month. We built a house and used money from our investments to pay for it. We knew we would pay taxes on that withdrawal, but my wife got a letter from Social Security saying that because the money we withdrew was listed as income, her 2024 Medicare premium went up over \$500. And since Medicare is taken out of her Social Security, that results in a \$6,000 loss to our budget.

Is there anything that can be done about this situation? We sent a letter to Social Security, but they responded that unless her situation was one of only a few categories (loss of house, divorce, etc.) nothing could be done for the year.

The money was used strictly on another investment - our new house. It wasn't like we took it out and spent it wildly. Can you please advise? **Signed: Frustrated Homeowner**

Dear Frustrated: Unfortunately, it sounds like your wife is a victim of the Medicare provision

known as "IRMAA" - the "Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount." Each person's Medicare Part B premium (coverage for outpatient healthcare) is determined yearly from their income from all sources as reported to the IRS two years prior. IRMAA sets income thresholds, depending on your IRS filing status, and if those thresholds are exceeded you must pay a higher Medicare Part B premium (and also a higher Part D premium if you have prescription drug coverage).

Assuming you file your taxes as "married/jointly," if your combined 2022 income as a couple was between \$206,000 and \$258,000 your wife's 2024 Part B premium is \$244.60 (instead of the standard \$174.70); if your combined 2022 income was between \$258,000 and \$322,000 then your wife's Part B premium for 2024 is \$349.40; if your combined in 2022 was between \$322,000 and \$386,000, her Part B premium is \$454.20; if your combined 2022 income as a married couple was between \$386,000 to \$750,000 then your wife's 2024 Part B premium is \$559; and if your 2022 income as a married couple was over \$750,000 your wife's Part B premium is \$594. If your wife also has private Part D prescription drug coverage, IRMAA also increases those premiums. Note that the IRMAA thresholds are different for other income tax filing statuses.

As the Social Security office has already explained, you could appeal your wife's IRMAA premium increase if she had a "life changing event," but the list of acceptable life changing events is quite small (see form SSA-44). The only good news is that your wife's Medicare premium will be calculated anew for next year, so her Medicare premium for 2025 will - if your 2023 joint income is less than the first IRMAA threshold - revert to the standard 2025 premium.

FYI, it doesn't matter what you used the money for. Your withdrawal was reported to the IRS as taxable income, which is what caused IRMAA to apply to your wife's Medicare premium for 2024. Many people don't realize that Medicare premiums are higher for those with a higher income, but since your withdrawal was a one-time event, your wife's Medicare Part B premium next year should be much less and her Social Security benefit correspondingly higher.

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. ★

Sacramento, California's Capital, Is Also The Capital Of Official Sneakiness



**By Dan Walters,
CALMatters.org**

Sacramento is California's capital, but that distinction is quickly being overshadowed by the city's penchant for official sneakiness.

City officials' hide-the-pea tendencies first became obvious in December when the city council, after adjourning its regular meeting, reconvened for a special meeting to ratify new contracts with two employee unions.

Then, without any advance notice, it voted to give City Manager Howard Chan, already the state's highest paid city administrator, and several other top officials hefty salary raises.

Doing so was a blatant double violation of California's Brown Act, which requires local governments to do their business openly. One section of the law requires 24-hour public notice of special meetings and another bars local governments from considering salary increases for their executives in special meetings.

Moreover, the council voted for those raises even though Chan and other city officials knew that Sacramento had a \$50 million hole in its budget, although that was not publicly announced

until a month later. The Sacramento Bee blew the whistle on the illegal meeting and the city quickly retrenched. "The city agrees that an item regarding the salaries of its charter officers should be voted on at a regular meeting of the council," city spokesman Tim Swanson told the Bee. "The city will bring this item back at the next regular meeting of the City Council on Jan. 9."

When the \$50 million deficit was finally revealed in January, Chan said it resulted from union contracts and other spending that outstripped revenues.

"What you all approved we can't afford," Chan told the council. "It's not sustainable." He ordered city departments to freeze hiring, travel and purchases to save money.

The obvious implication is that Chan and other officials wanted to lock down their salary increases before revealing the big gap in city finances.

However, it was not the only example of municipal sneakiness.

This month, after materials for the March 5 election were distributed to voters, Sacramento's small businesses and professional service providers were surprised to learn that a city-sponsored ballot measure, if passed, would increase their city business license fees by 70%.

Why, one might wonder, were those affected by the fee increase so surprised?

It turns out that the city council, with little discussion, had voted to place Measure C on the ballot way back in November, but

city officials failed to honor a provision of the city charter requiring that a notice of the action be published in the city's official newspaper within 10 days.

In fact, it didn't publish it until Feb. 7, much too late for opponents to submit ballot arguments against it, and "only after The Bee Editorial Board had repeatedly requested a copy," the newspaper reported.

There are late-blooming efforts by business groups to mount a campaign against Measure C, the Bee has editorialized that it should be rejected due to the sneaky process and if it passes, its validity will certainly be challenged in court.

City officials continue to insist that the delay in publication was an innocent mistake that should not invalidate the measure because the city published it on its own website.

During a city council meeting this month, Mayor Darrell Steinberg acknowledged the error but insisted "it was not a mistake ... that in any way was attempting to mislead, and I think the best evidence of that, again, is the fact that the ordinance and the deadlines for filing the arguments were published online the very same night."

The message to Sacramentans from these two incidents is that sneakiness is now official policy and they cannot rely on its officials to reveal what they are doing.

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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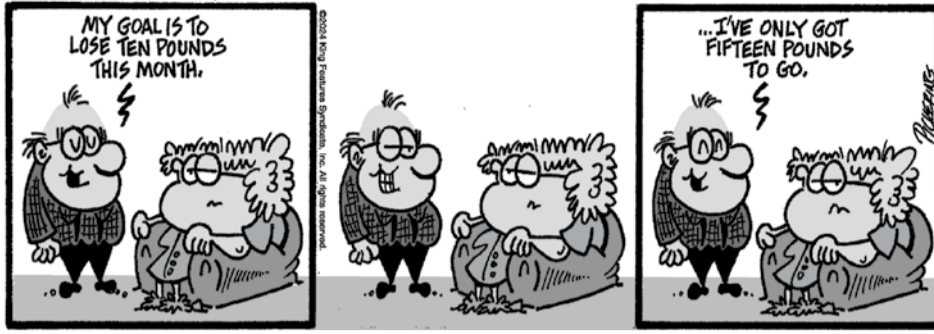
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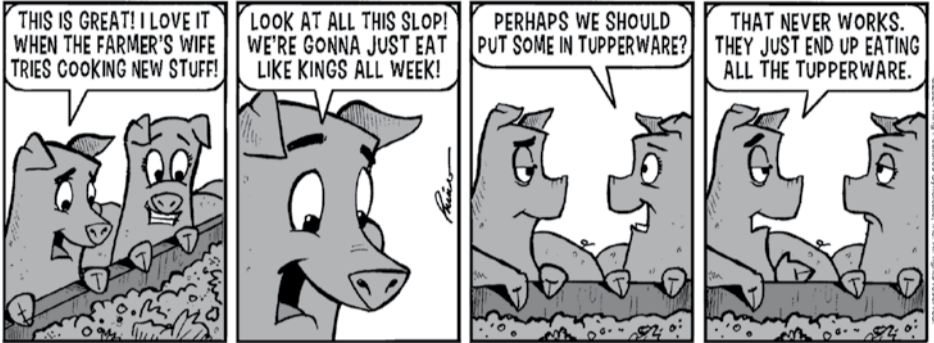
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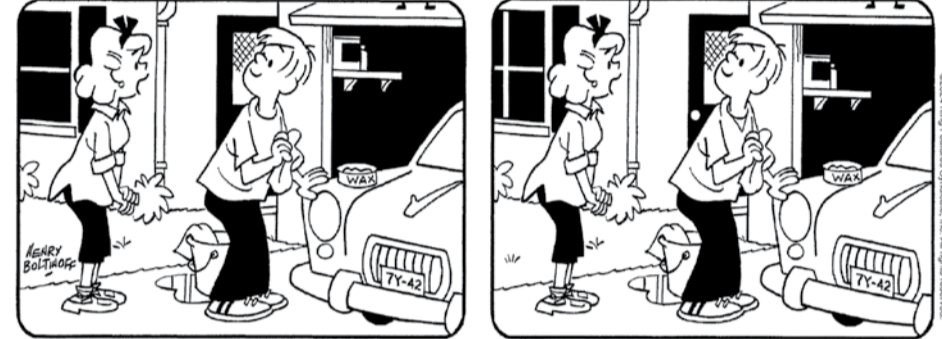
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- Light bulb, in comic book
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- Fabled racer
- Take care of debt (2 words)
- *He wore a white leisure suit on the dance floor
- It can be pleasant or unpleasant
- Buenos _____
- Dove's sound
- *She wore a white dress above a subway grate
- Get house ready for living
- Rap sheet acr.
- Famous fictional canine
- Brussels org.
- Not Astro turf
- Take the gold
- Certain cigarette
- Speed of object divided by speed of sound
- Lord's subordinate
- Ann Patchett's novel "_____ Canto"
- Made by Bayer
- Friskily
- Long period of time
- Repeat, in music
- Cough syrup balsam
- *She wore a meat dress
- What cobbler does
- Good's foe?
- Muddy road grooves
- Waltz, in France
- White House "sub"
- Red light action
- Layer
- Marching insect
- Sports award

DOWN

- Ebay click
- Miners' passage
- *Kim Kardashian exposed it on the cover of Paper in 2014
- *Harper's _____, famous fashion magazine, launched in 1867
- Fossil fuel rock deposit
- Fractions
- Atlas stat
- Egg salad ingredient
- View from high-speed train?
- High mountain
- Uncontrollable movement disorder
- Animal trail
- *Singer who sported a cone bra
- Viola da Gamba, pl.
- Pool tool
- Molten rock
- Southern cuisine pods
- Civil rights org.
- Jimmy Buffet: "You got _____ to the left..."
- Many iambs
- Iron/carbon alloy
- *Gleefully of little black dress and sunglasses fame
- Tchaikovsky's fowl
- Bro's sib
- *Nothing came between her and her Calvins
- Loud noise
- Car's unique identifier, acr.
- Diamond on a sweater
- Awaken
- Rough
- Type of juniper
- Proclamation
- Bluish green
- Billy Joel's "_____ the Good Die Young"
- Bulgarian money
- Glory prerequisite
- Above
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- Done with "my little eye"?

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KP International MARKET
FOOD COURT NOW OPEN
10971 Olson Drive Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
916.853.8000
Market - 7 Days: 8am - 9pm
Food Court - 7 Days: 11am - 7:30pm
Korean/Mex/Viet: 7:30pm last call
Chinese/Japanese: 7:00pm last call

NOW OPEN
ENJOY OUR FRESHLY BAKED BREAD & CAKE
10971 OLSON DR RANCHO CORDOVA, CA 95670



FROZEN & FISH DEPT

Korean Style Salted Mackerel 2.2 lbs REG. \$15.99/ea \$10.99 /ea	Imitation Crab Stick 1.1 lbs REG. \$5.99/ea \$3.99 /ea
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WEEKLY MEAT SPECIALS

Beef Cross Rib/Shoulder Roast - Bnls Castillo Cruzado de Ternera Asada Deshuesada \$4.99 /lb	Beef T-Bone Steak Filet Chateaux de Ternera \$4.99 /lb	Beef Porterhouse Steak Filet Bistes de Ternera \$5.49 /lb
Boneless & Skinless Chicken Thigh Meat Carne de Muslo Deshuesada \$1.99 /lb	Pork Butt's Boneless Cochillas de Cerdo sin Hueso \$2.99 /lb	Pork Loin Chops Boneless Chinos de Lomo de Cerdo Deshuesados \$2.99 /lb

FRESH PRODUCE

Mission Fig 8 oz \$5.99 /ea	Russet Potato 10 lbs \$2.79 /bag	Rainbow Bellpepper 2 lbs \$4.59 /bag	Black Grape \$3.49 /lb
Mexican Papaya 79¢ /lb	Italian Squash \$1.49 /lb	Baby Spinach Popeye 10 oz \$1.79 /ea	Young Thai Coconut 9 ct \$14.99 /box

AMERICAN/HISPANIC GROCERY

Knul Coconut Milk Drink 16.4 oz 99¢ /ea	Rosarita Refried Beans 16 oz \$1.99 /ea	123 Vegetable Oil 1 gallon \$14.99 /ea	Hawaiian Punch Fruit Juice 1 gallon \$3.49 /ea	Naked Earth White Wine of France 750 ml \$2.99 /ea
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ASIAN GROCERY

Excellent Canton 16 oz \$2.99 /ea	PRB Golden Label Soy Sauce 16.9 oz - 145 g \$3.99 /ea	Golden Crown King Topshell 16 oz \$9.99 /ea	Twin Fish Tapioca Starch 14 oz \$1.29 /ea	Sunlee Coconut Cream 13.5 oz 89¢ /ea
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EUROPEAN GROCERY

Colchin Pure Grapeseed Oil 1 liter \$7.99 /ea	Zeytin Imam Bayildi Eggplant Appetizer 530 gr \$3.29 /ea	Ahmed Darjeeling Tea 200 gr \$10.99 /ea	Zeytin Double Cream White Cheese 800 gr \$10.99 /ea	Goodwill Buckwheat 3 kg \$13.99 /ea
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KOREAN/JAPANESE GROCERY

Premium Sushi Rice 44 lb \$6.99 /ea	Imam Banch Soybean Paste 3000 ml \$7.49 /ea	Korean BBQ Sauce 840 g \$3.99 /ea	Korean Pancake Frying Mix 1 kg \$2.49 /ea	Choco & Peanut Pie 216 g \$1.99 /ea	O'Food Mild Seaweed 500 g \$2.99 /ea
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HOUSEWARES

MODAMODA SHAMPOO 300 G 29.99 /ea	ELECTRIC BBQ GRILL 39.99 /ea	ELECTRIC RICE COOKER 14.99 /ea	ELECTRIC RICE COOKER 15.99 /ea	ELECTRIC RICE COOKER 15.99 /ea
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FROZEN & FISH DEPT

Fermented Soy Beans 170.1 g \$1.99 /ea	Columbus Seasoned Roast Beef REG. \$3.99/ea \$1.99 /ea
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EUROPEAN DELI

Pitted Olive Stuffed w/ Blue Cheese \$13.19 /lb	Pitted Olives Garlic Salad \$12.49 /lb	Pork Loin Chops Boneless \$7.39 /lb	Pork Loin Chops Boneless \$4.99 /lb
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Advertised items good at KP International Market - Rancho Cordova location ONLY. We reserve the right to LIMIT QUANTITIES. Not responsible for TYPOGRAPHICAL OR PICTORIAL ERRORS. All advertised items are SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. Sorry NO RAINDHECKS. PRICES EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 05, 2024.