



State Park Peace Officer Cadet Exam Period Opens

PAGE 12



A Failure to Communicate

PAGE 4

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SEE INSIDE

SACTOWN RUN RAISES \$210,800



PAGE 2

PLASMA CENTER OPENING



PAGE 2

KITTEN SEASON BEGINS



PAGE 11



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New Amphitheatre Takes Shape



Above and below: Dramatic progress is made on the new Veterans Memorial Amphitheatre, as the walls and roof trusses have gone up, allowing Village visitors to see the building take shape before their eyes. Photos by Tom Sullivan

Story by Shaunna Boyd

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - After many months of laying the groundwork, the much-anticipated renovations in the Fair Oaks Village are starting to take shape. The walls are up in the new Veterans Memorial Amphitheatre, and the roof trusses are going in. "It is very exciting to see the building taking shape, and we can now see how the lobby, bathrooms, storage, community rooms, and stage are going to look,"



said Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District (FORPD) Administrator Mike Aho. "It helps all of our staff have a better idea about the

size of the program space, and that allows us to begin planning for some of the rooms' uses and programs that could happen there."

In addition to the classic outdoor stage the amphitheatre is known for, the new design will allow for an interior Black Box theater that can be enclosed and used year-round, regardless of weather. The District is in the process of ordering the inside furnishings, as well as the risers for the 180 chairs that will be used for seating in the Black Box Theater.

Aho estimated that the amphitheatre building is about 20 percent done at *Continued on page 3*

Record Snowfall to Bring High, Fast Rivers and Streams

Cal Fire Press Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - With this season's state-wide snowpack at 227% of average as of March 27, California State Parks' Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW), the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) are urging the public to take extra precautions and to be aware of cold-water dangers this spring to avoid a tragedy. The series of winter storms is causing rising river and stream flow levels not seen in years. The eventual spring warm-up will bring fast flows and cold temperatures when all that snow starts to melt. All Californians are being encouraged to wait until summer to recreate in the water, when conditions are safer.

"After successive low-water drought years, it is imperative that Californians understand water safety in and around rivers, streams, lakes and Sierra reservoirs," said State Parks Director Armando Quintero. "As the temperature rises, snowmelt-fed waterways can quickly induce incapacitating cold-water shock to even the strongest swimmers. We encourage everyone to follow the advice of public safety officials and avoid entering waterways if asked to do so."

"California has one of the largest snowpacks on record," said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. "As this snowpack melts in the coming months, the waterways will be especially cold, fast, and running higher than normal. Be aware of fluctuating water levels. We want everyone to always make safety a top priority when recreating."

"This year is very different from the last several years, in that the excessive snowpack and rain will continue to create challenges for us in the weeks and months ahead. Rising water levels in rivers and streams will be very cold, very fast and can easily overwhelm those that aren't prepared or don't heed warnings," said CAL FIRE Chief Joe Tyler. "Our teams will continue to focus on localized flooding risks, potential for major flooding, water rescues and our operational capabilities to *Continued on page 6*

Carmichael Attorney Sentenced for Filing False Tax Returns

By Thomas J. Sullivan

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Scott Norris Johnson, 61, of Carmichael, an attorney known throughout Northern California for suing under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has been sentenced in federal court to 18 months of home detention after having pleaded guilty to filing false tax returns. Johnson was also ordered to pay \$250,000 in restitution and a \$50,000 fine.

The plea before U.S. District Judge John A. Mendez in Sacramento federal court closes the books on a three-count tax indictment against Johnson from 2019, when he was still operating at the height of his time visiting businesses and suing over alleged violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Johnson's attorney, Malcolm Segal, said his client's plea agreement involves a dispute over tax returns, not any charge involving his serial ADA lawsuits. Neither Johnson nor Segal responded to a request for comment.

Johnson, a quadriplegic who uses a motorized wheelchair, is well known in the Northern California business community for suing retailers for alleged violations of the federal disability-access law. His complaint letters frequently arrive in flurries at numerous businesses in a single town or neighborhood, leaving owners to settle or risk likely higher costs of litigating his allegations.

As of 2020, Johnson had filed approximately 4,000 suits, according to documents filed with the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California. The majority of those lawsuits were settled.

Under the ADA, someone suing for violations, particularly if the suit is settled, gets at least a portion of that settlement. Yet according to the plea agreement, from 2012 through 2014, Johnson did not declare some of that income to the IRS.

During those years, Johnson received settlements anywhere from \$93,000 to more than \$1 million. As such, he owed

more than \$250,000 to the federal government.

Johnson will have a year of supervised release, according to a previously announced plea agreement. While on probation, he won't be able to apply to be reinstated to the California Bar. During the period of home confinement, Johnson won't be able to file ADA lawsuits in federal or state courts.

News of Johnson's recent sentence came as no surprise to Carmichael attorney Catherine Corfee of the Corfee Stone Law Corp. (Corfee Stone) which has for years been actively cautioning local businesses in Fair Oaks and Sacramento County to be pro-active and responsive to potential ADA lawsuits which may be filed against them.

"His (Johnson's) sentence is just a slap on the wrist," she said. "This may take Johnson out of circulation for a while, and I suspect he'll be back."

In her observation, the number of ADA compliance cases filed in both federal and state court has been increasing

each year, she said.

Johnson and his corporation, Disabled Access Prevents Injuries Inc., filed approximately 4,000 lawsuits in California's Eastern and Northern district courts under the ADA and related California laws between 2003 and April 2020, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Signed into law in July 1990 by President George H.W. Bush, the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) aims to make buildings and transportation accessible for those with disabilities and to protect them from discrimination in employment. Store owners and restaurants can often face a fine of \$4,000 for each individual ADA violation.

In her blog, Corfee outlines active steps which local business owners and restaurants should be taking to protect themselves against serial ADA filings.

Corfee, a graduate of UC Berkeley and the McGeorge School of Law, has been in professional legal practice since 1991. She has practiced ADA and California disability access *Continued on page 10*

Plasma Center Opening Subject to Pending State Certification



The new CSL Plasma Center will be located at 7830 Macy Plaza across the street from Target in Citrus Heights.

Story and photo by Thomas J. Sullivan

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - Construction of a new CSL Plasma Center in Citrus Heights in the Sunrise MarketPlace that began last year is largely complete as announcement of a public opening date is dependent on the center completing required state licensing certification now in process, said a company spokesperson.

The center will open the site of the former Sacramento-based Dimples Records store at 7830 Macy Plaza across the street from Target and adjacent to the Dollar Tree store.

“We had hoped to open in early 2023... but it’s too early to comment on a more specific timeline,” said Rhonda Sciarra, director of communications for CSL Plasma, headquartered in Boca Raton, Florida.

“The state has two licensure processes any plasma donation center must go through before being able to open,” she said.

Sciarra referred specific questions concerning licensing to the California Department of Public Health licensing and certification department in Sacramento for further comment. The department’s Centralized

Applications Branch (CAB) provides standardization and consistency of state licensing and federal certification through the application process.

“We now anticipate the center will open through mid-year as we finalize construction and work through required state regulatory licensing,” Sciarra said.

CSL Plasma is a division of CSL Behring, a global biotech leader headquartered in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. The company operates more than 300 CSL Plasma collection centers across the U.S. and overseas, according to its website.

In early 2020, the building received an extensive exterior refresh with added parking spaces in anticipation of new commercial occupancy by the property owner. The 10,000-square-foot commercial building, built in 2005, had been vacant since September 2019.

Plasma typically collected at CSL Plasma collection centers is used to help manufacture life-saving therapies that are delivered to people suffering rare and serious diseases in more than 100 countries, according to the company.

CSL Plasma continues to post available jobs at the new Citrus Heights center

on its website for Assistant Manager of Quality, Assistant Center Manager and Center Medical Director (CMD).

“Additional positions will be posted as we get closer to opening on our careers section of CSL Plasma.com,” Sciarra said in an email response.

Specific roles at the new Citrus Heights center when it opens will include medical reception and support technicians, phlebotomists, nurses (LVNs, LPNs and RNs) and paramedics, as well as Operations and Quality management.

A mature center (operating for about three years) employs approximately 60 full-time equivalent roles, or nearly 75 total jobs, including full- and part-time positions, Sciarra said in an earlier interview.

To donate at a CSL Plasma collection center, donors must be in good health, between the ages of 18-74, weigh at least 110 pounds, have no tattoos or piercings within the last 4 months, meet our eligibility and screening requirements and have valid identification and a permanent address, Sciarra said.

“It’s still too early to comment more on what (donor compensation) payment rates will be at the new center,” Sciarra said.

A complete list of donor requirements is available on the web at: www.cslplasma.com/become-a-donor

For a complete list of donation requirements, donors should contact a local CSL Plasma Center and ask to speak to a member of their medical staff. Here is additional information about a first donor visit: www.cslplasma.com/become-a-donor. ★

Credit Union SACTOWN Run Raises \$210,800 for CMN Hospitals



The Annual Credit Union SACTOWN Run held on Sunday, April 2, 2023, raised over \$210,800 for Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals (CMN) and included 69 credit unions and 1,800 runners. Photo courtesy of California and Nevada Credit Union Leagues

California and Nevada Credit Union Leagues News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Annual Credit Union SACTOWN Run – which took place Sunday (April 2) in Sacramento – raised more than \$210,800 for the 11 Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals (CMN) to help local kids across California and Nevada.

More than 1,800 runners participated in this year’s Credit Union SACTOWN Run, including nearly 1,200 credit union employees and members from across California and Nevada. The event, which started and ended on the Capitol Mall in front of the California State Capitol, featured a 10-mile race, 5K run, and “Miracle Mile Fun Run and Fitness Walk.”

The run was hosted by the Sacramento Running Association (SRA) and also served as the USA Track and Field (USATF) Masters 10-Mile National Championship.

“Once again, we were honored to work with the Sacramento Running Association to host such a great event to raise much needed funds for Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals throughout California and Nevada,” said Diana Dykstra, president and CEO of the California and Nevada Credit Union Leagues (Ontario, CA). “These donations will help kids receive the care and treatment they need, thanks to a number of credit unions and businesses in both states.”

John Pamer, chair of the Credit Union SACTOWN Run and CEO of Diablo Valley Federal Credit Union (Concord, CA), said the annual race has become a cherished rite of Spring for credit unions and business partners. “Each year since 2012, we run, jog or walk our course on the first Sunday in April,” Pamer said. “But the real benefit is that the \$210,800 we raised this year — and the \$2.5 million we’ve raised since day-one — brings healing and hope to patients and their families every day of the year. Credit unions and our business partners are committed to helping people in our local communities, and the Credit Union SACTOWN Run is a strong demonstration of this commitment.”

Larry Palochik, executive vice president of the Leagues (Ontario, CA), said that every child deserves the chance to live a happy and healthy life. “Supporting

Children’s Miracle Network hospitals in our two states is our opportunity to help make that a reality,” Palochik said. “Together, with our credit unions and sponsors, we are helping provide hope and healing to children and families in need.”

Joe Franklin, vice president of brand and experiential marketing for Co-op Solutions (Rancho Cucamonga, CA), thanked all of the runners who participated in this year’s Credit Union SACTOWN Run. “The partnership between CMN Hospitals and credit unions is a truly synergistic one,” Franklin said. “The two things that determine physical and mental health are access to health care and solid financial wellness. When members of society and their children are physically healthy or have access to quality care, and they feel financially secure, it builds a stronger community.”

Kevin Miller, president and CEO of Travis Credit Union in Vacaville, Calif., said his credit union believes in “people helping people” — and the annual race is just one more example of this unique industry philosophy. “I’m proud of our staff and their families who are running and volunteering with that spirit to benefit the Credit Union SACTOWN Run,” Miller said.

Bill Cheney, chief executive officer of SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union (Tustin, CA), said his credit union’s team looks forward to participating in the race each year. “They’re eager for the physical challenge of the race while supporting a cause that aligns with our credit union values,” Cheney said. “We are proud to participate and support children and their families in local hospitals, including UC Davis Children’s Hospital. Thank you to our team and all runners and volunteers — you make a difference in the lives of others.”

Amanda Merz, community impact manager for SAFE Credit Union (Sacramento, CA), said her leadership and team are pleased to be a part of the Credit Union SACTOWN Run. “Seeing all of our fellow credit union employees and leaders come together to help raise money for children’s health is so inspiring,” Merz said. “Credit unions are all about ‘people helping people,’ and it is so rewarding to see all of us working together for a greater cause while also having some fun.” ★

MEMORIAL

WALTER JOSEPH ECCLES • 4/23/1949 – 4/12/2023

Walter Eccles passed away on April 12, 2023, at the age of 73, after suffering a long illness. He was born on April 23, 1949, and a loving son to parents John A. Eccles, Jr. and June N. Eccles.

Walter served our country during the Viet Nam War. Walter was a long-time resident

of Orangevale, CA, and father of 6 to Joe, Chris, Jason, Shannon, Eric and David. He was a big brother to Deborah Jensen of Sacramento, and uncle to her two boys, Matthew and William Jay.

Sister Deborah says “You will forever be my hero. I love you.”

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New Amphitheatre Takes Shape



Bobo Construction workers set the trusses for the FORPD Measure J bond-funded construction project. Photo by Tom Sullivan

Continued from page 1

this point. Once framing is completed, the roof will go on, and then they'll be working on the exterior doors and windows.

The amphitheatre site is currently undergoing the most dramatic transformation, but upgrades are also ongoing throughout the Village, as this Measure J bond-funded project also includes upgrades to the Community Clubhouse and significant improvements to Village and Plaza parks. Current work at the Community Clubhouse includes electrical and duct work improvements – and lighting installation preparation, storm drain trenching and placement, electrical installation, and other utility work is happening throughout the site. When all the work is complete, the various Village amenities will be transformed into an interconnected park complex.

With the ongoing construction, visitors

to the Village have had to deal with necessary parking closures. The south parking area on Temescal Street is currently closed and will not reopen until late fall since there is extensive road grading that needs to be done in that area. And sometime this fall the District will have to close the west parking area on California Street as well as the parking area on Fair Oak Blvd.

The original estimate for construction completion was December 2023, but the severe weather events this year have caused delays. But Aho explained that Bobo Construction has worked hard to maintain forward momentum despite the storms, and they were always ready to get right back to work as soon as conditions allowed for equipment to move around the site. Aho said the current estimate is for full project completion by early February 2024. ★

Taste of Fair Oaks on May 19



Judy Andrews. Photo courtesy of Chrysti Tovani

By Judy Andrews, Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce

Tickets are on sale for the chamber's 28th annual Taste of Fair Oaks happening Friday, May 19 from 6-9:30 p.m. at North Ridge Country Club. Get your tickets early! This event is expected to sell out soon.

Taste of Fair Oaks is the chamber's biggest fundraiser of the year. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank. More than 60 local area and regional restaurants, wineries, and breweries will be on-hand to serve up great food and beverages.

Guests can also participate in a golf putting contest with a chance to win a \$5,000 grand prize, a silent auction, mystery wine wall, key contest,



Get a taste of all the best Fair Oaks has to offer next month at North Ridge Country Club. Photo by Judy Andrews

dancing, and much more!

Tickets are \$75 and includes a souvenir glass and plate – and all you can eat and drink! (Fair Oaks Chamber members save \$10.) Attendees must be 21 or older to attend.

For a complete list of exhibitors and to buy your online tickets, please visit FairOaksChamber.com and follow the prompts to "register" for the event.

In other exciting event news, Concerts in the Park is returning to Fair Oaks Park (11549 Fair Oaks Blvd) this summer! Mark your calendars

for the following band lineup:

June 29, 8-10 p.m. – Tom Rigney and Flambeau

July 27, 8-10 p.m. – Mullet Mechanix

Aug. 24, 8-10 p.m. – Keep on Truckin'

Concerts in the Park is a free event and presented by the Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce, the Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District, and The Fair Oaks Foundation for Leisure and the Arts.

For info on these events and more, please visit FairOaksChamber.com ★

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A Failure to Communicate

Newsom, California government cuts back press access

By Alexei Koseff, CALMatters.org

Like so much else about California, its state government is large: A \$300 billion budget. More than 230 departments and agencies. More than 234,000 employees.

Keeping the public apprised of everything that's happening in that massive bureaucracy requires its own small army of communications staff, who craft messages, write press releases and answer questions from journalists covering everything from the governor to welfare programs, prisons to water policy.

Lately, however, the information isn't flowing as freely — raising transparency concerns among the press corps that acts as a watchdog for Californians.

Last month, the Capitol Correspondents Association of California, which represents journalists who cover the state Capitol and advocates for improved press access, distributed guidelines to its members about how to handle some of the increasingly common hurdles they encounter, including government agencies asking for questions in advance and refusing to attribute information to their spokesperson.

Ashley Zavala, president of the correspondents association who covers state government and politics for Sacramento television station KCRA, said the extraordinary step was prompted by years of complaints from Capitol press about problems reporting on Gov. Gavin Newsom,



Gov. Gavin Newsom addresses the media after a meeting with local leaders on homelessness in Sacramento on Nov. 18, 2022. Photo by Rahul Lal, CalMatters

his administration and the Legislature. These have been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, which accelerated a shift to digital communication that has transformed how the state government discloses its work.

"The pandemic did cause some bad behavior," Zavala said. "It let some of these agencies and some of these offices get lackadaisical in how they handled the media."

Many of the standard features of government beat reporting — including in-person press conferences, with an opportunity for follow-up questions, and media phone lines where journalists could talk to a live staffer — disappeared three years ago with the shutdown orders and have been slow to return, if at all.

Changes that reporters and public information officers adopted to do their

jobs virtually in a strange new stay-at-home world became ingrained, encouraging practices, such as written statements instead of interviews, that offer less clarity and greater distance between state government and the people it serves.

This tension — between journalists seeking accountability and a bureaucracy that does not always welcome scrutiny — is not new. Covering state government has grown more difficult in recent years with fewer reporters covering the Capitol and social media offering politicians new ways to reach constituents and voters without speaking to the press. Those trends were exacerbated by restrictions applied during the pandemic.

The risk is a decline of "open, honest and transparent communication" essential to the functioning of democracy, said David

Loy, legal director of the First Amendment Coalition, a nonprofit that advocates for a free press and government disclosure.

Media outlets across the state note rejected interview requests, challenges obtaining public records or the lack of any official response in their stories (see this story online at CalMatters.org for specific details).

"These message control practices do real harm to the public interest," Loy said. "Because the people need to know the full story, not just the official story."

No standard communications policy

There is no shortage of people responsible for the state government's communication of public information: 435 employees in the executive branch, to be exact, according to a count conducted for CalMatters by the Department of Human Resources. An analysis of salary ranges based on job titles found that the annual cost to taxpayers is between \$36.5 million and \$44.8 million.

There are even more press aides working for other branches, such as the Legislature, the judiciary and public universities. The jobs of these communications officials extend beyond answering reporters' questions and can include duties such as developing public relations strategies, writing speeches and managing social media accounts. Yet, besides laws mandating open meetings and the release of public records, California does not have standards for appropriate public communications. Policies are at the discretion of those hundreds of individual agencies and departments.

Emails, not interviews
The obstacles and troubling behavior highlighted by the Capitol

Correspondents Association of California are broader and more pervasive.

Many offices have moved nearly entirely toward written communications, directing a reporter who does reach someone by phone to instead send their questions by email.

During the pandemic, Julie Watts of television station CBS Sacramento spent two years investigating health and safety failures at a state-funded COVID-19 testing lab. She was never allowed to speak with Health and Human Services Secretary Mark Ghaly, who oversaw the state's coronavirus response, or Department of Public Health officials about her findings, even after Newsom directed her questions to Ghaly.

Watts said she was forced to rely on written statements, which documents and reports often later revealed to be inaccurate or untrue. Was California getting false information about the effectiveness of the lab, or covering up negligence?

"The answers they were sending us in writing were disingenuous," Watts said, adding that it made her question whether the state had something to hide. "We were talking about complex, scientific issues. And it's difficult to convey that to the public when it's hundreds of back-and-forth emails."

The written responses crafted by communications staff are often sent anonymously from a general email account, as though coming from the entire faceless bureaucracy rather than a particular spokesperson. For example, media inquiries fulfilled by the state Department of Justice, which is overseen by Attorney General Rob Bonta, are generally signed only "Press Office."

Demanding better practices

In the guidelines it shared with reporters last month, the correspondents association recommended that media describe the rejection of an interview request in the story, alongside the written statement that an agency provides instead.

The association urged journalists not to provide questions in advance of an interview, other than a general description of the information they are seeking, writing: "Journalism ethics requires us to maintain our objectivity, and by giving these questions in advance you would be providing the office or agency an opportunity to rehearse for a basic function of their job and take control of the messaging."

Speed vs. accuracy
State communications officials said they aim to provide timely and accurate information to the media and the public, but those values are not always aligned.

Complex inquiries from reporters can require consulting multiple subject-matter experts for thorough answers and obtaining many layers of approval, sometimes in conjunction with other agencies.

Officials said they generally ask for questions in advance because it helps them determine who is best equipped to handle the inquiry. Providing interviews with agency staff can require a lot of preparation and coordinating schedules, so they often prefer to send written responses instead.

Because many state employees are still primarily working from home, some large communications offices do everything by email so that their staff can collectively track and respond to the media inquiries they receive throughout the day.

These policies are generally not unlawful, noted Loy of the First Amendment Coalition, because public officials and state agencies are not legally obligated to speak to the press.

But many of them are nevertheless antithetical to the spirit of open government, he said, preventing journalists from obtaining the public information that they need to hold the government to account.

"Is the government there to serve the people or is the government there to be a spin machine?" Loy said. "It may seem inconvenient to the government, but at the end of the day, a government that is most accountable to the people is the best government." ★

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Scouts Collect 55,000 lbs of Food for Foodbanks



The Golden Empire Council of the Scouts of America collected food for local foodbanks during their "Scouting for Food" drive on March 11, 2023. Photo courtesy of Boys Scouts of America

Boys Scouts of America News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The Golden Empire Council of Scouting BSA, hosted the annual "Scouting for Food" drive on March 11, 2023, with more than 3,000 scouts and family members participating. The food collected was distributed amongst 16 counties in Northern California.

The program "Scouting for Food" has been operated by the local council for at least 20 years. Every year, scouts and their families coordinate to pick-up food in their neighborhoods and drop-off at local foodbanks. These efforts provide seniors, children, and low-income families with nutritious food in their time of need.

"The annual Scouting for Food is a fantastic

event which our scouts can help many families across Northern California. Once again, I am proud to be part of this organization and see the amazing work our scouts and their families are doing to make an impact in their communities," said Scouting for Food Director and District Executive, Jose Zavala.

Golden Empire Council's 2023 Scouting for Food drive collected more than 55 thousand pounds of food as well as \$3,162 in monetary donations.

"Scouting for Food is such a wonderful opportunity for scouts in our area to come together and make a direct positive impact on the community. While partnering with food banks across the state, thousands of youths and adult volunteers

work cheerfully to help those in need, even in the rain!" said James Rhodes-Dreyer, Scout Executive, "It is the commitment to the 'Scout Law' which includes being helpful, friendly, kind, and cheerful that enables the Scouts to be successful."

GEC has been providing leadership development for youth and their families since 1920 while serving over 7,000 youth in 16 counties. Their mission is to prepare young people to make moral and ethical choices over their lifetimes, by instilling them with the values of the Scout Oath and Law. Their program hosts camps, events, and many exciting activities for boys and girls. For more information, visit www.gec-bsa.org and join Scouting today. ★

Californians Spring into Action to Remove Litter, Beautify Neighborhoods

Caltrans News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Thousands of Californians took part in more than 600 "Spring into Action" Clean California Community Days events throughout the state during an 11-day period to clean up roadways, local streets and public spaces.

The series of events from March 17-27 were part of the Clean California initiative, Governor Gavin Newsom's \$1.2 billion, multiyear cleanup effort led by Caltrans to remove trash, create thousands of jobs and engage communities to transform public spaces.

"Clean California is empowering communities and restoring pride in our shared spaces up and down the state, and I thank the thousands of Californians who banded together for the Community Days events to beautify and transform their neighborhoods," said Governor Newsom. "By making a difference at the local level, we are helping create a cleaner, more beautiful California for all."

Clean California Community Days included:

Hundreds of local events including: 58 tree planting/gardening events with 363 trees planted; 265 community trash collection events; 202 public community cleanups; 39 educational and entertainment events; and six temporary public art installations;

1.64 million pounds of trash collected during the 11-day period – five times the weight of the Statue of Liberty;

More than 10,500 volunteers participated in



Volunteers pick up trash along the beach at a Clean California Community Days event in the City of Ventura on March 25. Photo courtesy of Caltrans

community beautification efforts.

"The overwhelming response and participation from Californians throughout the state to transform community spaces demonstrates the power of Clean California," said Caltrans Director Tony Tavares. "With the support of Governor Newsom and the commitment of our communities, we are reducing litter and making lasting positive change."

"Californians are looking for ways to engage in their communities to green and beautify neighborhoods, and Clean California is a powerful way for them to take action," said California Chief Service Officer Josh Fryday.

Clean California will continue to engage communities and raise awareness on the negative impact litter has on natural resources, waterways, public safety and public health, driving a cultural shift of shared responsibility and instilling community pride for the cleanliness of our roadways and public spaces. The recently launched "Zero Litter is the Goal"

campaign focuses on volunteerism, community activation and grassroots partnerships to maintain the positive momentum of Clean California Community Days.

To encourage local-level engagement, Caltrans is also developing a program in which communities throughout the state can earn a special Clean California designation by meeting criteria centered around preventing and cleaning up litter, promoting recycling, and greening or beautifying neighborhoods.

To support communities with tools and resources, Caltrans will be providing downloadable public education materials on topics such as litter prevention, volunteer recruitment, and K-12 materials. Additionally, members of the community are encouraged to continue to organize their own cleanup events and can get started by visiting CleanCA.com.

Since launching Clean California in July 2021, Caltrans and local partners have removed 1.45 million cubic yards of litter from state highways – the equivalent of more than 24,400 tons or enough trash to fill the Rose Bowl over 3½ times. Caltrans has hired more than 850 team members as part of Clean California. Clean California grants have funded 231 projects to revitalize and beautify underserved communities, some of which are already complete and now sources of community pride. In February, Governor Newsom announced a new round of \$100 million in grants for local beautification projects. ★

Pursuing Happiness in the Age of Reason



Professor Caroline Winterer, Photo courtesy AHP

American Heritage Special Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - American Heritage Partners, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Nevada, is proud to sponsor a luncheon featuring Professor Caroline Winterer, Chair of the History Department at

Stanford University, who will speak about her book "American Enlightenments: Pursuing Happiness in the Age of Reason". In her book, Professor Winterer provides a thought-provoking account of how Americans in the 18th Century came to be "enlightened" - not as the European Enlightenment envisioned it, but in our own American way, with a powerful emphasis on the "pursuit of happiness" - a concept literally written into our Declaration of Independence. What did that mean to Americans? Why did we fight a war against the greatest army in the world to gain it? How did our first settlers in the 17th and 18th

centuries think about freedom? How is the "pursuit of happiness" relevant to today's American experience? Professor Winterer will offer her unique perspectives on these critical questions.

This event is co-sponsored by The Sons of the American Revolution, The Mayflower Society, the Jamestown Society, and the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, among others. The luncheon is being held at the Sheraton Grand Sacramento on April 22, starting at 11 am. The three-course plated lunch is priced at \$45 per person. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit americanheritagepartners.org. ★

Do You Have an Uncashed Sacramento County Check?

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Currently, the County has more than 7,600 uncashed checks, totaling more than \$3.6 million. How does this happen, and could this be your unclaimed money?

If a Sacramento County-issued check goes six months without being cashed by the rightful payee, the information becomes available in a PDF document on the Unclaimed County Warrants (checks) webpage. The data is also searchable on the County's Open Data portal.

Think you might have an uncashed check with Sacramento County? Here are quick and easy ways to find out:

Search through the Unclaimed Warrant listing PDF document (use the Find feature [Ctrl+F]) to search names or other terms in the PDF);

Search through the "County Outstanding Checks" section of the Open Data Portal using either the "filter" cone-shaped icon for specific value sorting or the column headings for alpha/numeric listings to get ascending or descending sorts.

If you find your name or business on the data listing, go to the Unclaimed County Warrants webpage to find out about the

documentation and information needed to validate that you are the rightful payee to receive the funds.

More Unclaimed Monies

The Revenue Recovery Division of the Department of Finance has unclaimed payments that are a result of not having a current address for the recipient. On the Open Data portal, under the Finance category, check out the Revenue Recovery Unclaimed Payments data and search for your name. If you locate a claim due to you, contact Revenue Recovery at (916) 875-7815, and provide the following information:

Claimant's Name, Date of Birth, Address (Current and Previous), Phone Number, Amount of the claim, DRR Account Number, Court Docket Number, Date of Order, Defendant's Name, Proof of Identity (Driver's License or ID Card), Proof of Payment: Copy of check, money order receipt or credit card confirmation number, Information regarding the incident (case information)

Sacramento County makes this data easily available on its websites, Open Data Portal and other measures to ensure the information is accessible and the monies go to the rightful payees. ★

Boomers Weigh Health Insurance and Medicare Costs in Retirement

By Tim Coughlin



Baby Boomers are retiring in droves! It's estimated that in 2023 about 10,000 Baby Boomers will reach retirement age every day. As they reach this milestone, Baby Boomers must each face the costs of accessing healthcare, whether it be through health insurance or Medicare. Planning for healthcare costs at this stage in life is a crucial part of the retirement plan puzzle, particularly given the importance of maintaining good quality care and access to providers as we age.

"Health insurance and Medicare coverage costs can be a bit of a shock or surprisingly affordable," says Tim Coughlin, an independent insurance broker in Gold River specializing in health and Medicare insurance planning. Health Insurance costs can vary from practically nothing to over \$1,000 a month or more for individuals and up to \$2,000 a month for couples under the age of 65. For people on Medicare, the costs of Medicare and plan premiums can range from around \$165 a month to over \$700 a month depending on plan choice and household income. On top of premium costs, there are potential deductibles, copays, and coinsurance that can add to costs.

It pays to compare all available options you may have: "COBRA," retiree coverage, Covered California and/or Medicare Supplement, Medicare Advantage, and Prescription Drug Plans. Prescription drug plans can be an important factor for Medicare beneficiaries as deductibles, copays, and coinsurance are often higher for anyone taking expensive, brand-name medications. Another consideration that can impact cost is what doctors and hospitals you want to maintain access to.

Comparing costs and benefits for Covered California Health Insurance and Medicare can be a bit confusing at first. That's where a good independent broker comes in. A dedicated agent can help you understand the costs and benefits of different plan options, the enrollment process, and timing, and help you get coverage that is appropriate given your objectives, provider preferences, and budget.

Many people who are retiring and have never worked with a health insurance broker before don't realize that the broker's services are free to the client since independent agents are paid by the insurance companies they represent.



LOCATED IN GOLD RIVER, CA

Tim Coughlin, located in Gold River, CA, is an award-winning independent agent specializing in Medicare planning for over 35 years. He can be reached at (916) 346-4417 or by email at tim@summitindins.com or through the agency website, www.summitindins.com. (LIC. # 0669552)

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Rock Your Midlife

Have you kept your New Year's resolutions or have they gone by the wayside by now? Let's go for some real solutions, and do away with that doom and gloom with Dr. Ellen Albertson, a psychologist, registered Dietitian, Nutritionist, and Board-Certified Health and Wellness Coach. She shared some great ideas on my POPPOFF Radio Show from her book "Rock Your Midlife." She's written for "Self," "Better homes and Garden," and "Good Housekeeping." Now it's time for the REAL story!

1. KNOW YOURSELF. Rocking your midlife starts with becoming authentic. When you know yourself, you trust yourself and can say yes from the bottom of your heart and the top of your soul to the life you are creating. Begin by discovering your strengths (yes, you've got those), weaknesses (yes, you have those too, we all do), passions, desires, and dreams too. Stay curious.

2. LOVE YOURSELF. Partners, parents, children, friends will come and go, but you'll spend on average about thirty thousand days with yourself. Unfortunately, we're often nicer to others than ourselves. Flip the script to treat yourself like a good friend by practicing self-compassion...the "how-to" of self-love.

3. ENERGIZE YOURSELF. Riding the waves of menopause and midlife can leave you dizzy and exhausted. You can change daily habits and behaviors to feel more energized. Examine your lifestyle and ask: what changes would feel more expansive? Move more and sit less? Prioritize your sleep? Scheduling self-care? Eat more produce and less junk? Start meditation, breath work, or yoga practice? Then set SMART goals.

4. REPROGRAM YOUR BRAIN. Due to neuroplasticity, you can change

brain structure and chemistry. Here are five strategies. 1) Unplug. 2) Enjoy brain-boosting activities like reading, listening to music, or doing puzzles. 3) Exercise. 4) Be mindful. 5) Declutter mentally to reduce stress and overwhelm and enhance focus.

5. ENPOWER YOURSELF. The Oxford Dictionary defines empowerment as "authority or power given to someone to do something" and "the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights." Nourish your empowerment muscles by facing your fears and doing what's challenging. As a result, you feel more confident and in control.

6. REHAB YOUR RELATIONSHIPS. As you show up authentically, love yourself, and bust out focused, energized and empowered, not everyone will like the new you. Revisit Step 2 and follow this three-part Relationship Rehab Process: 1) Check out your good girl, 2) Set healthy boundaries, and 3) Communicate powerfully so you can use rather than lose your voice.

7. ENLIGHTEN YOURSELF. Jesuit priest, Pierre Teiland de Chardin said, "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience, we are spiritual beings having a human experience." Wherever you're at in your relationship with God or Spirit, let that statement infuse your self-concept. You don't have to strive to be perfect or spiritual! You already are a spiritual being!

You can check out more good advice from **Dr. Ellen Albertson** at www.midlifewhisperer.com. So ditch those resolutions and start rocking your midlife and let joy be your guide. ★

HAPPY LIVING!!!



By Marlys Johnsen Norris,
Christian Author

There is no contradiction in the Old and New Testaments regarding the instructions and laws of God. He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow and His Word is Holy. God calls mankind to forsake their sins and have a personal relationship with Him. "He that covers his sins shall not prosper; but who confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13) If we confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him

To God Be The Glory

from the dead, you shall be saved." (Romans 10:9)

Enter God's presence with honesty and a pure heart! "If you regard iniquity in your heart, the Lord will not hear you" (Psalm 66:18) AND "If you confess your sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9)

If you have done this or are now considering this! If so, you have begun the greatest adventure of your life. You can now resist God's enemy (Satan) as well recognize him as he tries to destroy your life or someone you love. Because of the Cross and God's mercy and grace -- All you need to do is "Rebuke God's enemy in the name of Jesus and through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and he will flee."

The following Scriptures

will come alive in your personal journey to know your God.

All power and authority come from God. (Romans 13:1)

He establishes governments (Romans 13:2-6 : 1 Peter 2:13-14)

He knows how to humble proud rulers. (Daniel 4:37)

He uses wicked rules to chasten His people. (Jeremiah 5:19-22)

He requires leaders to give an account to Him. (Hebrews 13:17)

He commands Christians to be respectful to all authorities. (1 Peter 2:17)

To God Be The Glory,

Marlys Johnsen Norris,
Christian author of seven books; American River Messenger Columnist since 2006. Marlysjn@gmail.com. ★

How Will Newsom and Legislators Deal With Growing Revenue Shortfalls?



By Dan Walters,
CALMatters.org

When Gov. Gavin Newsom proposed a 2023-24 budget in January, he acknowledged that the revenue estimates made six months earlier were way too optimistic and that the state had evolved from a nearly \$100 billion surplus to a \$22.5 billion deficit.

Never mind. Nine months into the current fiscal year, it's evident that revenue, principally from personal income taxes, will fall well short of that downward revision. The deficit could hit \$30 billion as he and legislative leaders begin to focus on a final version for adoption in June.

Through February, the administration reported, revenues were running nearly \$5 billion below expectations and they fell short by nearly \$1 billion more in March.

The numbers bolster contentions by the Legislature's budget analyst, Gabe Petek, that the state's fiscal situation was unhealthier than Newsom was admitting. In his initial response to the January budget, Petek said, "Our estimates suggest that there is a good chance that revenues will be lower than the administration's projections for the budget window, particularly in 2022-23 and 2023-24."

The next stop for the annual budget process will come in May, when Newsom must unveil revised revenue estimates and appropriations. The worsening revenue data set the stage for what could be contentious negotiations with a June 15 constitutional deadline for passing a budget.

The essential problem is that when Newsom was forecasting an immense surplus and bragging that "no other state in American history has ever experienced a surplus as large as this," he and the Legislature spent much of it on rebates to taxpayers and expansions of programs, especially those benefiting the poor.

Although Newsom insisted at the time that much of that spending was one-time in nature and therefore wouldn't make unsustainable long-term commitments, it nevertheless raised expectations of permanency. Thus, when Newsom offered a new budget in January, he clawed back many of those allocations, particularly those that hadn't yet been spent, sparking complaints from would-be recipients.

As revenues continue to fall short, expectations will have to shrink further, the competition for money among budget stakeholders will become more intense and the pressure on Newsom and legislators will increase.

They may be tempted to do something that Newsom says he doesn't want to do and that Petek says would be foolhardy: tap into the state's "rainy day" reserves to relieve stakeholder pressure.

The reserves are meant to be used during a severe

economic downturn, but California's fiscal problem is occurring during a relatively prosperous post-pandemic recovery. The shortfall in revenues is occurring because of the state's narrowly based revenue system, one that is largely dependent on earnings of high-income taxpayers, particularly in the shaky technology sector.

The stock market has reacted negatively to the Federal Reserve System's interest rate increases, which are meant to combat inflation. Declines in the market manifest themselves in lower taxable earnings by investors who are such a large factor in the revenue stream. The system is so narrowly based that lower incomes for just a handful of wealthy Californians can have a big effect on revenues.

Dipping into reserves to cover the revenue shortfall would weaken their ability to cushion a recession if and when that occurs, which is why Petek strongly discourages Newsom and legislators from succumbing to stakeholder pressure by using them.

A deficit north of \$30 billion, which is a real possibility, is no joke and coming after such huge – and probably irresponsible surplus estimates – poses a serious political dilemma for politicians who would much prefer to be showering money on their constituents as they did last year.

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

Record Snowfall to Bring High, Fast Rivers and Streams



Record snowfall anticipated to bring high, fast rivers and streams this spring. State parks, Dept. of Water Resources and Cal Fire urge the public to take extra precautions as snowmelt increases. Image courtesy of Curt Squires from Pixabay

Continued from page 1 support our communities moving into the spring and summer months."

All three departments hope to educate not only regular water enthusiasts but occasional visitors to high, fast-running waterways who may venture near the edge to test the water or take selfies. Just one slip or unwatched child can become a devastating drowning statistic.

Here are some key safety points to know before heading outdoors:

Plan Ahead

Prior to leaving home, check the status of the park unit you want to visit to find out what restrictions and guidelines are in place. Know your GPS coordinates so you can provide your location in case of emergency. Alert someone where you are going and your expected return time. Be sure to let them know when you return safely.

Know the Water

Do not enter cold, fast-running water. It can be dangerous not only to you but also for first responders. Many unseen obstacles can be lurking below the water's surface, this is especially the case with this year's expected high runoff following low water years. Drought-stricken forests and storm-driven landslides have filled rivers with submerged trees and rocks. Swift water can make these obstacles even more treacherous. Sudden immersion in cold water can stimulate the "gas reflex," causing an involuntary inhalation of air or water and can start the drowning process immediately. It can even trigger

cardiac arrest, temporary paralysis, hypothermia and drowning. Never enter the water to rescue a victim. Throw something that floats and call 9-1-1.

Know your Limits

Swimming in open water is more difficult than in a swimming pool, people tire more quickly and can get into trouble. Never go on the water alone. If available, guided trips for solo or inexperienced floaters or paddlers are recommended.

Know about Life Jackets

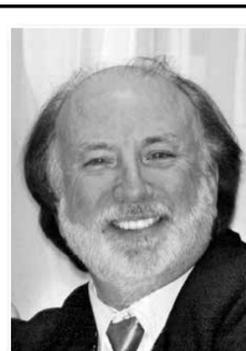
Although life jackets are strongly recommended when recreating in or near waterways, this year's expected high runoff in rivers can be dangerous even with the use of life jackets. Conditions change quickly in open water and even the best swimmers can misjudge the water and their skills when boating or swimming. Wearing a properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket can increase survival time.

Learn more about life jackets at www.BoatCalifornia.com.

Know how to Supervise

Actively supervise children in and around open bodies of water, giving them your undivided attention. Do not assume that someone is watching them. Appoint a designated "water watcher," taking turns with other adults.

Teach children that swimming in open water is not the same as swimming in a pool: they need to be aware of uneven surfaces, river currents, ocean undertow and changing weather. ★



Publisher,
Paul V. Scholl

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Be sure to place in the subject field "Attention to Publisher". If you do not have email access, please call us at (916) 773-1111.

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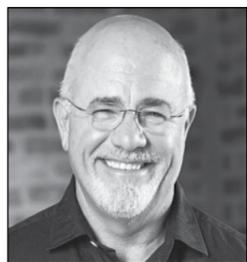
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Gen Zers and Millennials? I Love 'Em!

Dear Dave,

I am the managing partner of a family business. We would like to add to our team, but I'm worried we can't try to hold millennials and Gen Zers to the same standards as other generations without losing them. How do you feel about this?

– Sarah

Dear Sarah,

Listen, I've got a building full of Gen Zers and millennials – and I love them. If you hire the rights ones, you're getting people who love calluses on their hands and on their brains. They make the interview process easy too, because there are just two types from these generations: the ones who are unbelievably awesome and the ones who aren't. But the great ones are not afraid of hard work. They're passionate, intelligent and mission driven. I mean, they'll charge the gates of hell with water pistols for something

Dave Ramsey Says

they believe in.

But that means you have to provide meaning in the work they do. They want to see that their work connects to something that matters. They want to be treated with dignity, not like units of production. And they have inquiring minds. Most of them want to know why you do things the way you do them. All that is perfectly okay with me and always has been.

Now, they're the worst two generations to work for someone who's just a boss. That's because bosses push while leaders pull. If you're going to pull, you have to inform, communicate and share a vision that draws people into your mission. Bosses, for the most part, have a "do it this way because I said so" attitude. That's not going to last long with Gen Zers and millennials.

I get where you're coming from though, Sarah. I've still got friends and business associates who tell me we're going to lose everyone from these generations if we don't cave in and give them things like "the flexibility to work from home" – which really means, "I don't want to work much" or "I want to work all the

time." Listen, I understand not everyone who works from home falls into one of those two categories, but some of them do. There are folks who put in 80 hours a week because they can't put their screens down and live a life. Or they work three hours a day and call it "working from home." That's not working from home – that's working part-time hours for full-time pay. And that's called stealing.

But millennials and Gen Zers? I'm a huge fan of these generations. I truly, personally like them. They are, for the most part, genuine, real people and hard workers. If you give them what you should as a leader, they'll blow you away with their smarts and what they're capable of achieving!

– Dave

Dave Ramsey is an eight-time national bestselling author, personal finance expert and host of "The Ramsey Show," heard by more than 18 million listeners. He has appeared on "Good Morning America," "CBS This Morning," "Today," Fox News, CNN, Fox Business and many more. Since 1992, He also serves as CEO of Ramsey Solutions. ★

Important, Costly Lessons for California Taxpayers from the COVID Pandemic



Commentary by Jon Coupal

As it did with citizens throughout America, the pandemic caused massive disruption to the lives of virtually every Californian.

Tens of thousands lost their lives, many now have long-term health problems, and countless others lost their jobs or businesses. Moreover, the disastrous handling of the pandemic for school-aged children will likely leave a scar on an entire generation that may never heal.

More unique to California, however, is the extent of government waste associated with the pandemic. Outright fraud, mismanagement, opportunistic consultants, ineffective media campaigns, and simple incompetence put California way ahead of all other states in felony-level stupidity with the spending of taxpayer dollars.

Because this is a column, not a book, we can only review a few of the most egregious examples.

Of course, the big Kahuna is the jaw-dropping amount of fraud in the Employment Development Department

(EDD). Originally thought to be "only" \$11 billion in "improper" payments, we now know that the fraud exceeded \$31 billion. To put that in perspective, that is 10% of the entire budget for the state of California. More insulting is where the money went. Transnational organized criminal groups from China and Africa have made off with billions of dollars, with who knows how much of it used for child trafficking, drugs, and terrorism.

A close second, the waste and incompetence of California's public education establishment probably engendered more anger, especially among parents, than even the EDD debacle. Taxpayers were obligated to continue paying their full taxes as though our public schools were fully open with students attending in person. The public employee unions were running the show during the pandemic, and that was bad news for both taxpayers and students.

According to a report last July, California school districts had spent \$40 billion in COVID-related funds, but very little went to addressing learning loss. That may be due in part to the failure of the federal government to specify with more particularity how the money should be spent.

According to EdSource, "Most districts appear to have listed most of the money they spent in [an] all-but-the-kitchen-sink category, which could include raises and bonuses to retain staff." Finally,

there remain billions more in unspent funds at the same time public school enrollment has plummeted in the state.

Not all of the waste was the result of fraud or negligence but rather a simple miscalculation of the severity of the pandemic.

One example of COVID spending "overkill," was the conversion of Sacramento's professional basketball facility, then called Sleep Train Arena, into a COVID hospital in April 2020. According to the L.A. Times, the conversion cost millions of dollars and yet only nine patients were treated there.

Far less justifiable than an arguably good-faith response by sending a massive hospital ship to L.A. "just in case," was Gov. Gavin Newsom's decision to spend almost \$1 billion in taxpayer funds to purchase masks from a sketchy Chinese company known for building electric cars. Two years after the fact, there remain many unanswered questions.

Finally, California had a golden opportunity to use some of the billions in federal COVID relief to pay down its debt to the federal Unemployment Insurance Fund. That is precisely what virtually all other states did. But California's failure means much higher costs to the state's business community.

Taxpayers would like to hope that government agencies learned much from the pandemic. So far, there's no indication of it.

Jon Coupal is president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association. ★

STUDENTS MAKING THE GRADE

We recognize the following local students who have achieved scholastic honors at their institutions of higher learning.

❖ **AMBER CARROLL** (*Orangevale*) was initiated into the Arizona State University Circle of Omicron Delta Kappa, the National Leadership Honor Society.

❖ **JUSTIN HEBERLEIN** (*Fair Oaks*) was named to the Fall 2022 Dean's List at Washburn University (Topeka, KS)

Southern New Hampshire University (*Manchester, NH*) named the following students to the Fall 2022 President's List (P)/Dean's List (D)

❖ **GARRISON BOTTS** (*Antelope*) (P) ❖ **CAROL BUANTELO** (*Fair Oaks*) (P)
❖ **WENDI COOK** (*Fair Oaks*) (P) ❖ **JAMES FERRIGNO** (*N. Highlands*) (P)

American River Messenger, Jan. 2023

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ASK THE DMV



Don't count on being lucky, get your REAL ID ahead of time.

If you haven't already upgraded your driver's license to a REAL ID don't count on being lucky, save yourself the stress and get your REAL ID ahead of the enforcement date!

Q: How is a REAL ID different from my driver's license?

A: Good question! Your driver's license is issued by the DMV; it gives you the ability to operate a motor vehicle and acts as a form of identification. A REAL ID is a federally accepted form of identification that can be used to board domestic flights nationwide and enter secure federal facilities, such as military bases, federal courthouses, and other secure federal locations. If you already have your driver's license, make sure to upgrade to a REAL ID before the May 2025 enforcement date.

Q: I'm ready to upgrade my driver's license to a REAL ID, can I apply online?

A: You can start the application process online to expedite your DMV office visit at dmv.ca.gov/realid

Getting your REAL ID is as easy as 1,2,3!

Begin by gathering your documents, one (1) original or certified proof of identity, and two (2) different printed proofs of California residency are required. Check out the DMV's interactive document checklist to see what qualifies.

Complete the online application and upload your documents.

Make an appointment online to visit your local DMV office and complete your application. Be sure to bring printed copies of any documents uploaded online and bring your confirmation code to your DMV appointment.

Q: What happens if I don't obtain my REAL ID by the May 2025 enforcement date?

A: Starting May 7, 2025, if you don't have a REAL ID you will not be able to board domestic flights using your driver's license or identification card within the U.S. or enter secure facilities, such as military bases, and federal courthouses. Make your REAL ID your lucky charm and upgrade your license before the rush.

Note: DMV offices are closed on weekends.

For more information or answers to questions not listed here, please visit www.dmv.ca.gov/online

COMICS & PUZZLES

The Spats



by Jeff Pickering



Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



Out on a Limb

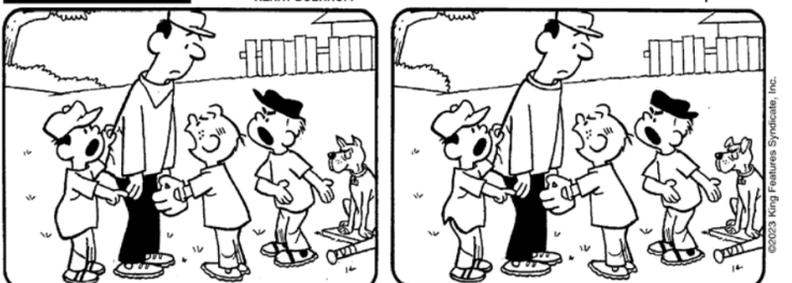
by Gary Kopervas



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Strubbery is shorter. 2. Shirt is shorter. 3. Collar is different. 4. Fence is shorter. 5. Cap is shorter. 6. Ears are different.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



GRIN THE BEAR IT.

Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



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STATEPOINT CROSSWORD • FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

CLUES

ACROSS

- Centrally localized
- Tube in old TV
- Precedes drab
- Giraffe's cousin
- Big Island flower necklace
- Icelandic currency
- Grating sounds
- Software program, for short
- Tool with toothed wheel
- *Mellow ___ or ___ ribbon
- Butter ___ or ___ tape
23. a.k.a. Common Market
- Printer cartridge color
- Toothy fish
- *Battle ___ or ___ tissue
- *Ninja ___ or ___ dove
- Oil group
- *Drug ___ or ___ friendly
- Old TV episode
- Nobel Peace Prize capital
- *Amazon ___ or ___ valley
- Ages and ages
- Earth shaking
- Hokkaido language
- *Odd ___ or ___ soup
- Stay clear of
- Vegetative state
- Olden day "your"
- Olden day "you"
- Sib
- Park bench friend?
- *Rose ___ or ___ variety
- LDS missionary
- Cacophony
- Goodbye, to amiga
- Gaelic-speaking Celts
- Mozart's "L ___ del Cairo"
- Courage to go on
- Fitness centers
- Drenched
- Not a trick

DOWN

- On behalf of
- "Fine by me"
- *Basket ___ or ___ study
- *Adam's ___ or ___ pie
- Finely-spun cotton threads
- Eagle's foot
- Workout unit
- Slightly drunk
- "Doggone it!"
- College drilling org.
- 1/36th of a yard
- " ___ humbug!"
- #15 Down, pl.
- Come to pass
- Feline
- Fissure
- *Silly ___ or ___ down
- Church part, pl.
- Antiquity of the past
- *Southwest ___ or ___ Minor
- Lou of The Velvet Underground
- Rainbow swimmer
- *Free ___ or ___ hour
- Glorify
- Weighted weapon
- Nevada Wolf Pack's home
- Cuban dance
- 1.094 of a yard, pl.
- *Doctor ___ or ___ knows?
- Description of a fool
- Give qualities or money
- More eccentric
- Theatrical performance
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- *Easter ___ or ___ salad
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Kitten Season Begins, Fosters and Donations Needed



The Bradshaw Shelter's Foster Care Program helps save lives and space during this hectic season. Photo by Jan Mallander from Pixabay

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Animal shelters around the country are gearing up for what is known as "kitten season," when cats begin to give birth to countless kitten litters. Typically beginning in late spring and continuing throughout summer, kitten season stretches the already-thin resources animal shelters and rescues have when the influx of unwanted cats and kittens crowd shelter and kennel space.

The Bradshaw Shelter's Foster Care Program helps save lives and space during this hectic season.

"We call our foster care providers 'life-saving heroes' because they give animals who are too young, sick, or injured to be available for adoption a second chance," said Annette Bedsworth, Director of Sacramento County Bradshaw Animal Shelter. "Fosters provide

safe and loving temporary homes where animals can thrive until they are ready for adoption."

Residents interested in becoming fosters should submit a foster application to foster@saccounty.gov. The shelter provides all food, bedding, supplies, toys and more at no cost to the foster. Fostering is a great way to help alleviate the impact of kitten season at your local shelter and can provide temporary companionship for those still working from home.

The shelter is most in need of fosters for bottle babies: kittens who have been orphaned or abandoned and are too young to eat on their own. If you've never fostered a bottle-fed kitten before, the foster team will teach you everything you need to know. Fosters are also needed for kittens that just have a little bit of growing left to do, as well as for sick or injured kittens and cats. The time commitment for fostering

can be anywhere from one to eight weeks, depending on the kitten's size at the time of fostering.

For more information about fostering, including fostering FAQs, visit the Sacramento County Bradshaw Animal Shelter website. To learn more about what to do if you find a kitten or litter of kittens, visit the feral cat information webpage.

Donations of essential kitten season supplies are also needed, including: Small litter pans, Heating pads, Small nursing bottles, Miracle nipples, Kitten dry food and wet food.

Donations are accepted at the Sacramento County Bradshaw Animal Shelter's Animal Admissions Door at 3839 Bradshaw Road, Tuesday through Sunday, between 12 p.m. and 5 p.m. For a complete list of supply needs, visit the shelter's Amazon Wishlist or the donation website. ★

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State Park Peace Officer Cadet Exam Period Opens

California State Parks
News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - California State Parks invites individuals to "Live the Parks Life" as rangers or lifeguards in the nation's largest state park system. Starting March 24 and through June 10, 2023, individuals can apply for the State Park Peace Officer Cadet exams. Cadet academy graduates can serve the state as rangers and lifeguards to safeguard both visitors and the historical, cultural and natural resources found in 280 state park units. Offices are located near beaches or waterways, or in deserts, parks, museums, historic parks and state vehicular recreation areas.

"Serving as a ranger or lifeguard in California's State Park System is a unique opportunity to make an everlasting impact on the state's natural landscapes and the millions of people who visit them," said California State Parks Director Armando Quintero. "I know firsthand how rewarding it is to provide natural and cultural resource protection and ensure public safety."

The minimum age to be a peace officer is 21 years old. Candidates are required to have a valid California driver's license and have 60 units of college credits, with 21 units being general education.

The entire selection process for becoming a ranger or lifeguard takes approximately 15 months. The first step in the selection/examination process is to mail, email or hand deliver an application during the open application period. The application is used to determine if the candidate meets the minimum qualifications for admission into the examination, which consists of the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Entry Level Law Enforcement Test Battery written exam. This exam is used to admit the candidate into the next phases of the selection



Serving as a ranger or lifeguard in California's State Park System is a unique opportunity to make an everlasting impact on the state's natural landscapes and the millions of people who visit them. Photo courtesy of California State Parks

process, which include the physical agility test, background investigation, oral interview, and medical and psychological evaluations. Successful applicants will be sent a notification to attend the eight-month-long POST-certified law enforcement academy.

The academy instruction prepares cadets physically, mentally and emotionally to enter the workforce as a state park peace officer ranger or lifeguard. Rangers and lifeguards are sworn officers equipped with a firearm and badge. Cadets will learn how to conduct investigations, make

physical arrests, use firearms and perform emergency responses. Training also includes how to actively protect park resources, assist visitors and run interpretive programs.

Below are some frequently asked questions regarding the State Park Peace Officer Cadet Academy:

Do I have to carry a firearm to serve as a ranger or lifeguard?

Yes. Cadet training includes how to conduct investigations, make physical arrests, use firearms and perform emergency responses.

What is the age minimum and age maximum to apply?

Candidates must be at least 21 years of age to become a peace officer. State Park Peace Officer's mandatory retirement age is 65 years, but there is no maximum application age.

I have not completed two years of college yet. Can I still apply while I am still taking classes?

Candidates may be enrolled in college at the time of application but must have at least 21 units of general education credits satisfying general education curriculum standards with courses

(which may include courses in natural science, social science, mathematics, language and humanities). By the time of appointment, a candidate must have completed 60 semester units of study at a state-accredited college or university. A degree in park administration, natural sciences, social sciences, law enforcement or a related field is desirable.

Where is the Cadet Academy located?

Most cadets attend training at Butte College Law Enforcement Academy (Butte County). However, the department may utilize several academy sites, including Mott Training Center at Asilomar in Pacific Grove, South Bay Regional Public Safety Academy at Fort Ord in Monterey, and the Ben Clark Law Enforcement Training facility in Riverside. It is at the department's discretion to determine an academy location for each class.

Do I get paid while at the academy?

Yes. Cadets earn a salary; currently, the monthly salary range is \$3,930 to \$5,300. Most cadets start at the low end of the range unless they are a current state employee with a salary within the range.

To hire a workforce reflective of California's diverse population, California State Parks is committed to ensuring equal access and connecting all job seekers to opportunities through fair hiring and employment practices. For more information on the cadet exams, minimum qualifications, additional frequently asked questions and a timeline of the recruitment cycle, please visit LiveTheParksLife.com.

Please send questions regarding other employment opportunities at California State Parks to the Workforce Planning and Recruitment Office at recruiting@parks.ca.gov

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ON SALE

Effective 4/19/23 - 4/25/23

ARM & HAMMER SUPER SCOOP CLUMPING CAT LITTER

20 Lb Box •Unscented •Double Duty (Clump n Seal 19 lb, Slide 19 lb **\$13.99**)

•Absorbx 15 lb **\$18.99**

Limit 2 Boxes Per Family

\$8.99

Effective 4/19/23 - 4/25/23

SCOOPAWAY CLUMPING CAT LITTER

42 Lb Bag •Multi-Cat Formula

Limit 2 Bags Per Family

\$14.99

Effective 4/19/23 - 4/25/23

PURINA PRO-PLAN CANNED CAT FOOD

•Selected Varieties 3 Oz (Focus & Selected Varieties **\$1.35**) Limit 1 Case **\$1.19**

Limit 2 Cases

EARTHBORN HOLISTIC CANNED CAT FOOD

Including •Catalina Catch •Harbor Harvest •Monterey Medley •Chicken Catcator 3 Oz. **\$1.25**

5.5 Oz. **\$1.79**

ACANA DRY DOG FOOD

All Sizes **10% OFF**

OUR REGULAR LOW PRICES

CORE GRAIN FREE DRY DOG FOOD

•Original •Reduced Fat •Ocean 22-24 Lb bag **\$6 OFF**

OUR REGULAR PRICES

NATURE'S MIRACLE PREMIUM ORGANIC CORN COB LITTER

Bio-Enzymatic Formula 10 Lb Bag Limit 2 Bags **\$7.49**

MEOW MIX CAT FOOD

Market Fresh 2.75 Oz Cup Limit 1 Case **69¢**

DIAMOND PRO 89 DRY DOG FOOD

•Beef, Pork & Ancient Grains 40 Lb Bag (89% Protein from Animal Sources) **\$44.99**

9 LIVES DRY CAT FOOD

•Grilled Tuna & Egg 12 Lb Bag Limit 2 Bags Per Family **\$10.99**

EARTHBORN HOLISTIC DRY DOG FOOD Limit 2 Bags **\$43.99**

•Primitive Feast •Great Plains Feast •Meadow Feast •Coastal Catch •Weight Control •Large Breed 25 Lb Bag

NATURALLY FRESH CAT LITTER 100% Natural

14 Lb Bag **\$5.99** Pellets **\$9.99** Multi-Cat Clumping **\$10.99**

Limit 2 Bags

•Probiotic •Gently Scented •Scent Free (Natural & Extra Strength)

BOXIE CAT CAT LITTER Veterinarian Recommended Limit 2 Bags

16 Lb **\$2.00 OFF** 28 Lb **\$3.00 OFF**

ODOR LOCK ULTRA PREMIUM CLUMPING CAT LITTER **20% OFF**

•Unscented •Multi-Cat 25Lb bag Limit 2 Bags **NEW** OUR DISCOUNT PRICE

ASPEN/PETMATE PET BEDDING

•Pillow •Self Warming •Lazy Boy •Orthopedic Foam Beds •Snoozzy All Varieties **20% OFF**

OUR SUPER LOW PRICES

SAVORY PRIME PET TREATS

•Chicken Jerky **\$19.99** 2 Lb Pkg

•Duck Jerky **\$23.99**

•Sweet Potato and Chicken **\$17.99**

•Monterey Potato and Duck **\$3.99**

MAMMOTH PET PRODUCTS TIRE BITER PAW TRACKS

•Squeaky Freaks •Soft Pet Toys All Varieties **20% OFF**

OUR SUPER LOW PRICES

SWEET HARVEST Small Animal Food Sale

•2 Lb •4 Lb •6 Lb Pkg Selected Varieties As Marked **15% OFF**

OUR SUPER LOW PRICES

PET SAFE SCOOP FREE LITTER TRAY CARTRIDGE (Automatic Litter Box - \$129.99) **\$19.99**

BOXED GLASS TANK WITH STARTER KIT

10 Gal Tetra LED Deluxe... **\$66.99** 29 Gal Tetra LED Deluxe... **\$136.99**

20 Gal Tetra LED Deluxe... **\$113.99** 55 Gal Tetra LED Deluxe... **\$224.99**

AQUEON PRE-PRICED AQUARIUM KITS

10 GALLON (Pre-Priced \$79.99) **\$59.99**

20 GALLON (Pre-Priced \$124.99) **\$99.99**

29 GALLON (Pre-Priced \$139.99) **\$109.99**

55 GALLON (Pre-Priced \$229.99) **\$169.99**

TETRA FISH FOOD SALE

Tetrafin Goldfish 7.06 oz. **9.99**

Tetrafin Staple 7.06 oz. **13.99**

Tetra Color 7.06 oz. **13.99**

REEF CRYSTALS 50 Gal. Salt Mix **\$22.99**

BONUS COUPON

FANCY FEAST GOURMET CANNED CAT FOOD

3 Oz - All Varieties Except Elegant Medley Limit 1 Case Per Family Limit One Coupon Per Family Price Valid Only With Coupon Effective 4/19/23 - 4/25/23

ON SALE Everyday CHM PLU 361

BONUS COUPON

FRISKIES PARTY MIX CAT TREATS

2.1 Oz •Selected Varieties Limit 2 Pkgs With Coupon Limit One Coupon Per Family Price Valid Only With Coupon Effective 4/19/23 - 4/25/23

\$1.49 CHM PLU 573

BONUS COUPON

JONNY CAT PREMIUM CAT LITTER

20 Lb Bag Limit 1 Bag With Coupon Limit One Coupon Per Family Price Valid Only With Coupon Effective 4/19/23 - 4/25/23

\$5.39 CHM PLU 362