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AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

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JANUARY 13, 2023

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Flooding Continues



The state has established emergency shelters in Sacramento County and has stockpiled 3.7 million sandbags. Photo courtesy of DWR

By Julie Cart and Alastair Bland, CALMatters.org

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA

Raising questions about whether California's elaborate system of flood protections will hold, another dangerous storm is barreling toward the Sacramento Valley, where rains already punched through some levees and floods killed at least one person.

Last weekend's storms have already tested the flood-prevention infrastructure across the region, which sits at the confluence

of two major rivers and bears the brunt of heavy rains. "It's a bathtub, basically," said Beth Salyers, deputy district engineer for the federal Army Corps of Engineers in Sacramento.

An estimated 1.3 million people and \$223 billion worth of property in the Central Valley are protected by the state-federal systems of levees, dams and other structures.

California spends \$48 million annually for operating flood protections but needs much more — "\$3.2 billion over the next five years of implementation," according to the state's

Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, a document produced in 2012 and updated last month. Of that, the state's responsibility ranges from \$1.8 billion to \$2.8 billion.

An estimated \$25 to \$30 billion in funding over 30 years could help the state "avoid the astronomical cost of catastrophic flooding in the Central Valley estimated to be as high as \$1 trillion, in addition to an incalculable toll on lives and public well-being," the plan says.

So far, this winter's storms have been severe but not catastrophic: The

New Year's Eve storm "stalled out" over the watershed of the Cosumnes River. Portions of privately owned levees on the river gave way, flooding nearby areas. The levees, constructed to reclaim the land for agriculture, are generally rated only to handle a 10-year flood, according to Sacramento County officials. The breaching of the levees shut down Highway 99 and stranded motorists.

But the region's two major reservoirs held, and the Sacramento and American rivers did not experience major floods.

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Update on Outreach and Sheltering of Unhoused

Sac County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County opened a second location to shelter unhoused individuals coming off the American River Parkway due to flooding and park closures. The Howe Park Community Center (2201 Cottage Way) opened Wednesday, January 4, and currently has three individuals one dog sheltering there. This location has cots, blankets, water and snacks for guests, as well as crates for pets. Persons coming off the Parkway are being provided rides through transportation contracts managed by our non-profit partners.

In addition to an evacuation center, Howe is welcoming unhoused individuals in search of weather respite from the City of Sacramento. Regional Transit is providing direct service to the Howe Park Community Center for persons coming from downtown Sacramento and providing transport back to downtown when they are ready to leave.

Howe Park Community Center has capacity for up to 50 people, as well as pets. The duration these locations are open will be evaluated based on weather conditions.

Howe Park has been added to a list of other respite locations opened by the County and the City for unhoused that are either being evacuated off the Parkway, or in search of weather respite.

Additional locations will be opened as needed.

The County of Sacramento activated its motel voucher weather respite program ahead of the original storm on New Year's Eve and is currently sheltering more than 200 people.

In addition, the County increased capacity at its North A Shelter (Dec. 31) an additional 55 beds, which have been filled, but will welcome new guests as beds are vacated. Both these locations accommodate pets.

The City of Sacramento activated weather-respite operations at both its Outreach and Engagement Center and the North Fifth Street Shelter lobby on Wednesday through at least Saturday morning.

The Outreach and Engagement Center (3615 Auburn Blvd.) opened as a 24-hour weather respite center at 11:30 a.m. Wednesday. Walk-ups

Continued on page 2

Cookie Plug Offers a Hip-hop-themed Treat

By Thomas J. Sullivan

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - Fresh out of the oven! Created by using only the highest quality ingredients. Dropping a limited edition flavor every month, while servin' up the G.O.A.T cookie, the OG Chocolate Chip, nonstop. It's a vibe, combined with the finest cookies that you will find anywhere on the planet, that's the Cookie Plug.

Cookie Plug's new Fair Oaks location opens on Saturday, January 21, at 10:30 am in the Madison Marketplace at 5237 Hazel Avenue in Fair Oaks, according to franchise owner, Erik Martinez in a telephone interview.

"We're on track to open on January 21st", Martinez said. Three Cookie Plug locations are planned for the greater Sacramento area including one in Elk Grove which is scheduled to open this spring, he said.



Each four-inch-diameter cookie at the Cookie Plug combines graffiti, street art and hip-hop culture to create a unique twist on cookies. Photo courtesy of Cookie Plug

The three franchise locations will be locally owned and operated by Pam Fyock.

Founded in 2019 and actively franchising throughout the West since 2022, Cookie Plug is a fresh-baked cookie company that combines graffiti, street art and hip-hop culture to create a unique twist on cookies. Each local franchise location features a colorful design, with street art-themed graffiti on

the walls to create a vibe that is unmatched.

Opening day patrons at the new Fair Oaks Cookie Plug can enjoy one of 12 different stackable cookie flavors with a serving of purple ice-cold milk.

Each Cookie Plug location typically offers a dozen different flavors with names such as "SnooperDoodle" (snickerdoodle), "Bam Bam" (fruity cereal), "Pink Elephant" (strawberry

cheesecake), "Pixie Junkie" (sugar cookie), "Purple Haze" (purple velvet), The "Mac Daddy" (white chocolate chip macadamia nut) and of course, the "OG" (chocolate chip). Each cookie measures four inches in diameter and is one inch thick. Four Keto cookie options are available, including chocolate chip, peanut butter chocolate and dark chocolate, Martinez said.

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Newly Elected Members, Creason Elected President

SJUSD News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Zima Creason (Area 3), Tanya Kravchuk (Area 5), Ben Avey (Area 6) and Steve Miller (Area 7) were sworn in as members of the San Juan Unified School District Board of Education on Dec. 13. Creason was elected board president, while Pam Costa will serve as vice president and Miller as clerk.

Learn more about each newly elected board member:

Zima Creason - President (Area 3)



Zima Creason

Zima Creason is a parent, advocate, and businesswoman. She serves as the Executive Director of the California EDGE Coalition and she was elected as a San Juan Unified School District Governing Board Member in 2018. At EDGE, she works to address the skilled workforce shortage, create pathways to the middle class, and advance economic mobility for all Californians. She is committed to stakeholder empowerment and coalition building to establish and sustain thriving communities. Zima has worked in the policy field since 2001 and much of her work has focused on equity as it relates to mental health policy as well as stakeholder outreach and engagement. She is dedicated

to supporting students to have the tools and skills they need to access and secure good jobs in adulthood with family-supporting wages and benefits. She is also passionate about supporting people to avoid crisis outcomes, mental health, social justice, and for all Americans to have access and opportunity to achieve the American Dream regardless of their zip code, culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, health/mental health status, gender identification and/or who they love.

Tanya Kravchuk Member (Area 5)



Tanya Kravchuk

Tanya Kravchuk is a mom of four kids and a joint owner of a residential construction company. Born in Ukraine, Tanya moved to the US when she was five years old. She is an alumna of San Juan Unified and holds a bachelor of arts degree in communications from California State University, Sacramento. As an immigrant, she understands the hardships and nuances of navigating the school system from an "outsider" perspective. Tanya has devoted most of her career to serving children in both a volunteer and professional capacity at various nonprofits including the Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento where she later worked for nearly a decade. She served as vice president

of her school site council, taught Sunday school for more than 20 years and has been a board member and committee chair for various community groups and events including the Rotary Club of Sacramento, Planned Giving Forum of Sacramento and the extremely successful Night of Hope benefit concert. Tanya also worked with schools and local governments during the 2020 Census to secure support for an accurate count. Early in her career, she worked in marketing at Farmers Insurance and in public affairs at Intel Corporation. She then transitioned to nonprofit work as the resource development manager at PEACE for Families and later the director of development & communication at the Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento focusing on our communities most vulnerable - abused and neglected children.

Ben Avey - Member (Area 6)



Ben Avey

Ben Avey is a parent of school-age children and nonprofit leader that has dedicated his career to improving local neighborhoods through public policy, advocacy, and community engagement. A graduate of Del Campo High School and San Diego State University, Ben has served in the State Capitol, as civilian public affairs officer for the

U.S. Navy in Japan, and with state and local non-profits. He is currently the chief public affairs officer at WellSpace Health, a non-profit community health system serving the underserved. A lifelong community volunteer, Ben is president of the San Juan Parents Association (an independent community group) and past president of his kids' school site council. Ben has been awarded the U.S. Navy's Meritorious Civilian Service Medal, recognized as 40 Under 40 by SD Metro Magazine, and in recognition of his service to teens and adults with disabilities, honored with a community service award. Ben lives in Fair Oaks with his wife and kids.

Steve Miller - Clerk (Area 7)



Steve Miller

Steve Miller brings a history of active community service in Citrus Heights and the Sacramento region to the board of education. He previously served on the Citrus Heights City Council from December 2005 through 2022 during which time he served four terms as mayor. Steve also represented Citrus Heights on the Sacramento Regional Transit Board of Directors for 15 years, serving as board chair in 2010 and again from 2020 to 2022. He helped introduce SmartRT Ride, the citywide

door-to-door transit service to Citrus Heights in 2018. Steve also represented the Sacramento region for the Capitol Corridor nine-county rail system operating from Roseville to San Jose. Over the years he has also represented Citrus Heights on the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), Sacramento Regional Sanitation, Sacramento County Library Board and Metropolitan Cable TV Commission. Prior to becoming a Citrus Heights City Council member, Steve was vice chair of the city's Law Enforcement Community Advisory Committee, served as vice president of Citrus Heights' Neighborhood Area 10 for many years and served as president of the Resident's Empowerment Association of Citrus Heights in 2005. Steve worked in the construction industry for 42 years as an electrician, inspector and construction manager for the County of Sacramento. He started his own construction consulting business in 2000 before joining KMM Services, an electrical and technology engineering firm, in 2010 and he also worked for San Juan Unified as a construction manager for one year. He retired from full-time work after winning his battle with cancer. He has been active in community service as a member of the Rotary and Lions Clubs, Mesa Verde Boosters Club, Sunrise Girls Softball, PONY Baseball and the Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce. He currently serves on the U.S. Army Community Relations Advisory Board - Rhino Battalion. Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, Steve moved to Citrus Heights 36 years ago at the urging of his wife Nanette, a Sacramento native. They are very proud of their two adult children and nine grandchildren. ★

Update on Outreach and Sheltering of Unhoused

Continued from page 1

are accepted, and the space can accommodate 50 people, with families and pets welcome.

The North Fifth shelter lobby (700 North Fifth St.) is operating

from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. It also will accept walk-ups and has space for up to 20 people. (Please note that North Fifth is for adults only and is unable to accommodate pets.)

Regional Transit is providing

free shuttle transportation to both the Outreach and Engagement Center (OEC) and the North Fifth Street Shelter. The pick-up location is City Hall on 10th Street between I and H streets, with shuttles

arriving at 2, 4 and 6 p.m. The route includes a stop at the North Fifth Shelter, which also is serving as a pick-up location for the OEC (shuttle space permitting).

In addition, people can use

SacRT light rail and buses for free to go to and from any weather-respite location. The SacRT light rail station at Watt/I-80 station connects to bus Route 1, which has a stop near the City's OEC. ★

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Gifts from the Heart



Gifts from the Heart seeks volunteers throughout the year to aid the work culminating during the holiday season. Photo courtesy of Sac County

Sac County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Each year, tucked away inside a Sacramento warehouse, you'll find a different kind of Santa's workshop. Instead of elves, volunteers are spending long hours wrapping presents. And in place of Santa, people of all ages spare their time to deliver gifts to those who otherwise might not get anything during the holiday season. It's all part of Sacramento County's Gifts from the Heart program.

Gifts from the Heart is a gift-giving program developed to provide presents for babies, kids, teens, disabled adults, and seniors. The program serves individuals in Sacramento County's Child Protective Services and Senior and Adult Services. This holiday season marks 34 years for the program. At the head of it all is Volunteer & Student Intern Services Coordinator Tonja Edelman.

Gifts from the Heart works with community partners, religious organizations, and professional groups to help thousands of people each year. Dozens of volunteers dedicate their time to help pick up toys, organize donations, and drop off gifts. Tonja estimates the program will provide gifts to about 3,500 clients this year.

While people get to see the magic during the Gifts from the Heart holiday giving campaign, the program begins well before winter. Each year, Tonja starts recruiting volunteers in late summer.

After more than 30 years, there are still needs to be met. Tonja wants people to remember that it's not just children who need holiday gifts but also teens, babies, seniors, and those aging out of foster care.

"The need is always there," said Tonja.

Gifts from the Heart volunteers say they always need delivery drivers to drop off the presents. Several of their elderly clients do not speak fluent English, so they would love to see multilingual volunteers help out.

"People really just want to feel that connection and share their culture with someone who can relate," said one volunteer.

Kendra Flin has volunteered for the program for several years in a row. After finishing a busy master's program, she still found time to help out this year. She hopes sharing her experience will encourage others to give back.

"The people that volunteer are so fun and amazing and supportive," said Kendra.

A volunteer shift starts with Kendra receiving her delivery route. Each person who is receiving a gift is marked down on a sheet of paper. When Kendra goes on a delivery route, she drops off a gift for half a dozen to ten people, sometimes delivering a couple of gifts per person.

During a recent volunteer shift, Kendra's list included several seniors living throughout south Sacramento. She loaded up a car with gifts – many so large she had to use both hands to carry them while she walked slowly to

houses and apartments.

"You are delivering directly to the client and they are just really grateful," said Kendra.

Despite juggling large boxes and sometimes driving by homes several times before coming to the right stop – Kendra kept a smile throughout her route. And everyone smiled back. She wished each person a happy holiday as she dropped off their gift. And with each gift, she gave them something else – a joyful experience that made many of their days.

"You got me something but I didn't get you anything," one elderly man joked when Kendra placed his present down in his living room.

But, he did give her something. He reminded her why she loves participating in Gifts from the Heart.

"It's about being able to give to people around the holidays," said Kendra.

And that was not the only rewarding experience on her route. Kendra knocked on the door of an apartment where a woman with white hair and a Christmas sweater answered. When Kendra explained that she had been referred to the program by her social worker, the woman broke out into tears. She was beyond grateful that anyone had thought of her this holiday season.

"Thank you so much and bless you," she told Kendra while pulling her in for a hug.

"That's why we do this," said Kendra.

After Kendra finished up her day of delivering presents, she had a message for anyone who is thinking about giving back during the holidays.

"It's so rewarding. It's so much fun. So, just do it," said Kendra.

So, next year, whether it's volunteering your time or donating, consider giving a gift from your heart.

For more information on Gifts from the Heart, including how you can become involved, visit the GFTH Questions and Answers webpage at Sac County. ★

Wreaths Across America Observed at Mount Vernon



Community members in the Sacramento region celebrated the National Wreaths Across America Day at Mount Vernon Memorial Park and Mortuary on Saturday, December 17th.



The U.S. Air Force Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) from Del Campo High School in Fair Oaks joined in saluting those resting at more than 3,400 additional locations throughout the U.S. on December 17th.

Story and photos by Thomas J. Sullivan

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Each Saturday, December 17th, on National Wreaths Across America Day, throughout the United States at 10 am in every time zone, the mission to "Remember, Honor and Teach" is carried out by coordinated wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as at more than 3,400 additional locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea and abroad. In all, some 2.7 million evergreen wreaths were placed at cemeteries across the nation.

The annual remembrance was observed in the Court of Honor at the Mount Vernon Cemetery at 8201 Greenback Lane in Fair Oaks.

The ceremony, which was held in front of the Court of Honor at the Mount Vernon Cemetery, included the placement of individual wreaths in honor of each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, including the U.S. Space Force, with a shared message related to the importance of veterans in the history of the United States.

Members of the U.S. Air Force

Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) from Del Campo High School in Fair Oaks presented the national colors. A moment of silence was observed before opening remarks by Wreaths regional Coordinator Celeste Cox which were followed by guest speaker, Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost and member of the local Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) General John A. Sutter Chapter, who honored the sacrifice and service of service men and women throughout the world to preserve, protect and defend the freedoms we enjoy today.

Some 400 wreaths were individually placed beside memorial stones by family members, local Scout troops, the DAR and other community groups who sponsored them, said coordinator Celeste Cox, a regional location coordinator for the nonprofit.

"In many homes, there is an empty seat for one who is serving or one who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country," she said. "We are proud to show our veterans and their families that we will not forget. We will never forget." ★







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Girl Scouts Heart of Central California Hold STEM Expo



Girl Scouts build a toolbox out of wood during the STEM Expo on November 6 at Camp Pollock in Sacramento. Courtesy photo



Girl Scouts problem solve how to build a structure with the pieces provided during the STEM Expo on November 6 at Camp Pollock in Sacramento. Courtesy photo



A Girl Scout looks through a microscope during the STEM Expo on November 6 at Camp Pollock in Sacramento. Courtesy photo

Girl Scouts HCC News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Girl Scouts Heart of Central California held their annual STEM Expo on November 6, 2022 at Camp Pollock in Sacramento with 142 participants in attendance.

The event featured a variety of hands-on activities designed to foster curiosity and confidence in participants with an eye toward the future in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math.

Highlights from the array of experiences provided include:

Solar bracelet making: Provided by event

partner SMUD, this creative project centered on understanding energy. (The beads used could change depending on light.)

Ecology and botany learning: Highlighting the Girl Scouts and UC Davis Arboretum's Public Garden Program, living plants were used in captivating games designed to teach plant identification while having fun!

Robot programming and play: Provided by event partner Code Ninjas, this hands-on experience encouraged problem-solving and analysis skills essential to tomorrow's thinkers.

Paper rockets and DNA bracelet making: Provided by event partner



A Girl Scout makes a solar bracelet during the STEM Expo on November 6 at Camp Pollock in Sacramento. Courtesy photo

Americorps Fellows and the Girl Scouts Heart of Central California's Mobile STEM Center,

these tactile projects engaged while learning. One highlight of the day

was feedback received from a newly established local Daisy Troop. Having formed just one week prior, the STEM Expo was the troop's first Girl Scouts event. They arrived early and were some of the last to leave! Their enthusiastic troop leader made connections for future activities inspired by both the event itself and by other leaders in attendance. The troop is especially interested in working more with Code Ninjas.

Over the last 30 years, employment in STEM occupations has grown 79% with the promise of continued growth in the fields. Women comprise only 34% of the STEM workforce and have lower

median salaries than their male counterparts.

The future for women in STEM is far brighter, however, thanks to events like this that inspire tomorrow's thinkers and leaders. STEM is a foundational part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, the four-pillar framework around which all our activities are built. Along with the other pillars (outdoors, life skills, and entrepreneurship) Girl Scouts is committed to providing opportunities for growth through STEM-focused learning.

For additional information about this impactful event, please contact: Andrea Fruchier, MarComm Senior Director. ★

Get in the Mode with Mode Brewing



Owners Randy and Tracy Davis gathered with family, friends and Orangevale Chamber members on December 9, 2022, to celebrate Mode Brewing's official ribbon cutting! Orangevale's newest brewery with Pasta a la Mode Cuisine. Located at 9110 Greenback Lane. Open Wednesday-Sunday. Visit modebrewing.com for details! Photo courtesy of Heidi Lettau

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How Environmental Law is Misused to Stop Housing



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

It's well known that the California Environmental Quality Act, signed by then-Gov. Ronald Reagan in 1970 and meant to protect the natural environment in public and private projects, is routinely misused to stop or delay much-needed housing construction.

Anti-housing NIMBYs in affluent communities misuse it to stymie high-density, multi-family projects, arguing that their neighborhoods' bucolic ambience would be altered. And construction unions misuse it to extract wage concessions from developers.

It's a long-running civic scandal and a major factor in California's chronic inability to reduce its severe housing shortage, one that cries out for CEQA reform, which former Gov. Jerry Brown once described as "the Lord's work." But neither Brown or any other recent governor has been willing to take on the task, which would mean confronting environmental groups and unions, two of the Democratic Party's major allies.

In the absence of comprehensive reform, governors and legislators sometimes grant CEQA exemptions for particular projects, such as sports arenas, or narrow categories of housing. However, CEQA misuse continues

and the courts have become venues for battles over its application.

Two recent state appellate court actions in the crowded San Francisco Bay Area – one expanding the use of CEQA by those who oppose housing projects and another that restricts its use – underscore the law's chaotic role.

Just before Christmas, one panel of the First District Court of Appeal issued a preliminary ruling that could open a new avenue for using CEQA to halt projects. It declares that a University of California student housing development in Berkeley violates the law because UC didn't consider the impact of having more people – 1,100 students – in the neighborhood, citing the potential of late-night parties and other gatherings that could worsen a "persistent problem with student-generated noise."

In other words, the court said that the presence of more people is an environmental impact – a novel theory that could hand anti-housing groups everywhere a potent weapon.

As UC law professor Chris Elmendorf tweeted about the draft decision, "The court's reasoning is devastating ammunition for racist white homeowners who would leverage CEQA to keep poor people and minorities out of their neighborhoods."

For example, he continued, "using the court's statistical-associations logic, white homeowners could argue that CEQA requires affordable housing developers to analyze and mitigate putative 'gun violence impacts' from any lower-income housing project in an affluent neighborhood. The homeowners would point to statistics

showing that poor people, and African Americans and Hispanics, are statistically more likely than affluent people and whites to be victims of gun violence."

A few days later, another panel of the same appellate court rejected efforts by a group opposing a 130-unit project in downtown Livermore, called Save Livermore Downtown, to employ CEQA. Attorney General Rob Bonta had interceded in the case, supporting the city's approval of the project and its win in Superior Court.

"Timing is critical for affordable housing projects, which often rely on time-sensitive funding sources like tax credits to finance development," Bonta said while intervening, adding, "Our state is continuing to face a housing shortage and affordability crisis of epic proportions. CEQA plays a critical role in protecting the environment and public health here in California. We won't stand by when it is used to thwart new development, rather than to protect Californians and our environment."

After the appellate court action, Bonta tweeted, "CA's housing crisis is dire. We won't stand by and let people misuse our laws to avoid being part of the solution."

The outcomes of both cases underscore the need for a fundamental CEQA overhaul to reinstate its original purpose, rather than continuing wasteful project-by-project skirmishes.

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



By County Supervisor Sue Frost

Through the generosity of the American River Messenger, this column serves to provide an update about matters affecting the unincorporated community of Orangevale.

You may have seen some news recently about a controversial vote at the Board of Supervisors involving a debate between releasing more inmates and expanding the current jail facility. As we had an unprecedented amount of public input into this discussion, I feel compelled to use this opportunity in my monthly article to explain to you the details of what happened, and why I voted the way that I did.

Back in 2014, Sacramento County was notified by advocates about concerns regarding conditions of confinement in the jails. Then in 2019, a class action lawsuit against the County was filed to address those concerns. In 2020 a Federal Judge approved a court order (Consent Decree) resulting from the class action settlement. The concerns centered on medical care, mental health care, Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance. As a result of this, the County was left with an open ended question of how to proceed forward. The court order issued specific requirements within a timeline, but they allowed us flexibility in working within our budget and circumstances to satisfy the Consent Decree. They wanted to see that we were making a concerted effort,

Orangevale Community Update Should Sacramento County Build a New Jail or Let Inmates Out Early?

and our progress was monitored by Class Counsel to ensure progress.

Over the years, the board would routinely meet to discuss how we should proceed. I was regularly of the mindset that the best path forward was to make updates to the jail as opposed to simply releasing inmates - something that I have very negative views on due to the State utilizing this method to disastrous effect locally. However, every time this came up for a vote, to my great frustration, the only people who would make public comments were those who did not want updates to the jail, and simply wanted inmates released - and a majority of the Board of Supervisors would vote to essentially kick the can down the road and defer action to a later meeting.

Fast forward to 2022, and the plaintiffs are justifiably getting frustrated at our lack of specific actions to satisfy their complaints. County legal staff have told us that if we do not act immediately, that we could risk being out of compliance and the Federal Government could come in and take over our ability to manage this issue. That would mean they make decisions with local taxpayer dollars without any input from the Board of Supervisors. This is not something that any of the Board of Supervisors were willing to allow to happen, and it forced us to finally take action earlier in December.

In the meeting on December 7th our Board was presented with a variety of options for ways to solve this problem. They ranged from building an entirely new jail, to adding a jail expansion building for mental health services, to releasing inmates into a variety of community programs,

or some combination of the above. While I would possibly be supportive of building a new jail, from a financial perspective we simply do not have the money needed to do this, and the impacts it would have on our budget to get a loan for the money we need would have extremely negative effects on other essential County services.

In the end, on December 8th the Board decided to do two main things. First, we agreed to build a jail expansion downtown specifically for mental health, medical services and inmate intake. And secondly, we agreed with county staff's recommendations that give alternatives to incarceration for some low level offenders. While I am not supportive of letting dangerous inmates out early, this was supported by

the Sheriff's Department and the District Attorney's Office, and I believe these programs serve a community benefit.

I am overjoyed that the Board of Supervisors finally made progress on solving these issues so we could begin to satisfy the consent decree. While there is still more work to be done, this is real progress that until this point has seen nothing but delays. I will keep you updated in the future as more progress is made, but this is a great start that is extremely needed.

Thank you for reading – and as always, if you want to contact me, call me at 916-874-5491, or e-mail me at SupervisorFrost@saccounty.net.

Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost represents the 4th District, which includes the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, North Highlands, Rio Linda, Elverta, and Rancho Murieta. ★



What's to be in '23

Another year passes and we begin anew. What better time to check in with the stars to see what's to be in 2023. So where do we start? Born of a Greek background and firmly grounded by her astrological studies in Greece, **Constance Stellas**

has been an astrologer for over twenty-five years and written some thirty books. She has been featured in countless newspapers and magazines as well as being the astrologer for the Huffington Post. I invited her to my POPPOFF Radio Show and here's her star insight.

After 25 years of studying astrology, I am keenly aware that predictions yield possibilities and, depending on many factors, can change. With the most positive mindset possible for 2023, let's look at what the stars suggest. The economic problems that we are facing globally will remain. Supply chain delays along with a general malaise about commerce remains. Statistics say we are doing better, but people don't feel that is true as they shop for groceries. This is what I call the Stress Dome. It's a bubble of cumulated stress that interferes with the feeling of optimism. The cause of this, astrologically speaking, is the Pluto return for the USA. On Feb 21, 2022, Pluto directly connected with the position of Pluto when this country was founded July 4, 1776. We have never experienced this planetary event. Pluto was, in mythology, the god of the Underworld and reigned over power and uncovering dark secrets and corruption. Pluto was also the ruler of spiritual transformation



which could help a person or a nation to face trauma and heal. This is not a quick process. And we have been in a tug of war politically, economically and personally between the desire for society to remain the same, and the imperative to move forward. The time

period from January 11th to January 21st 2023 will be fraught with angry protests, the random crime we have been facing in our cities, and enraged media headlines. The crimes will diminish as 2023 progresses. So what's going to happen? Pluto will move in Aquarius on March 24th through June 11th. We will start to see new ways of handling societal problems. The focus for 2023 will be on domestic issues. I predict new discoveries in health care and emphasis on healthy living. Who knows, maybe the food shortages we could experience will encourage people to eat better. 2023 will bring new businesses where employees have a stake in the company. Changes in architecture, fashion, urban planning, and preserving nature areas will bring an "eco" sensibility to the arts. New safer housing construction will bring protection from the dramatic weather events we will continue to experience. Our attitudes and feelings will change. There will be a feeling that all of US will create a better society. If we heed these attitude adjustments, 2023 will begin to enlighten us. As dark as some of the days have been, the coming times can be equally as light!

You can check out **Constance Stellas** at www.ConstanceStellas.com. **HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!**

Cookie Plug Offers a Hip-hop-themed Treat

Continued from page 1

While the Cookie Plug brand uses cannabis slang to name all of its cookies, Cookie Plug's cookies are 100% kid-friendly and do not contain any cannabis, THC or CBD. Individual cookies cost \$5 each, four for \$15; seven for \$25; and 12 for \$35.

Headquartered in Irvine, Calif., Cookie plug has 23 corporate locations open in southern California, and 98 additional franchise

units in development.


Local staffing in Fair Oaks will include five to 10 employees who will bake cookies fresh on site, Martinez said.

Look for the grand opening of Cookie Plug at 5237 Hazel Avenue in Fair Oaks on Saturday, January 21 at 10:30 am in the Madison Marketplace near the corner of Madison and Hazel Avenue.

Now active on social media at Cookie Plug

Sac County on Facebook, Martinez invited customers to "stop by and checkout the 'fattest and thickest' cookies in town." Visit a sample menu at: <https://cookieplug.com/menu/>

Business hours will be Monday through Thursday from 10 am to 8 pm; Friday and Saturday from 10 am to 9 pm and Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm. Phone (916) 844-7122 for more information or email: CookieTreatSac@gmail.com ★



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Out & About

with MaryAnne Povey



Happy New Year! Are you ready to kick it off doing something great? If giving back and volunteering is on your list of things to do, then you'll definitely want to come to the 3rd Annual Community Open House, on January 21, 2023, 9 am - 11 am, at the Orangevale Grange, 5807 Walnut Avenue, Orangevale.

Over 20 clubs and organizations will be there to answer questions and share information about volunteering opportunities and how YOU can get involved!

"We are bringing together every club and community organization in Orangevale to provide a 'one stop shop' for those interested in getting more plugged in," said organizer Brad Squires, "It's our volunteers and contributors who make our little town so great."

Bring a friend and join one of the many great clubs and organizations! And...as an added incentive, everyone who attends will receive a free raffle ticket for a chance at winning an EPIC raffle prize!

Speaking of epic, it's that time of year

again to vote for your favorite businesses, service groups and individuals in the 7th Annual Best of Orangevale Awards 2022!

It's never been easier to nominate, vote and recognize those who think have done an amazing job in the community! Simply go to www.bestoforangevale.com, register with your name and email so organizers can verify that you aren't a robot, then click through the various categories voting for your favorites! If you don't see your favorite listed, nominate them! You must vote in at least three categories for your votes to count. Nominees are encouraged to use the available promo tools to help get the word out. Winners will be announced at an awards banquet on February 11, 2023, at the Orangevale Community Center. Be sure to get your tickets early to this sell-out event!

You can bet this new year will be packed with great fun and activities for all to enjoy! Be sure to stay tuned for all the fun at www.orangevalechamber.com or follow Orangevale Live on Facebook! Hope to see you "out and about"! ★

Kiwanis Clubs Annual PJ Drive Sets New Record



Kiwanis Club PJ volunteers and coordinators Amy Bahm, Shellee McAsey and Kathleen Massae organize the pajamas gathered during the holiday season for the club to distribute to Orangevale-Fair Oaks and other Sacramento region kids. Photo courtesy of Heidi Lettau

By MaryAnne Povey

ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG)

The Kiwanis Club of OV-FO hit a new record collecting over 600 pairs of new pajamas to help kids in need this holiday season! This is the 4th year running for the club whose mission is "to improve the community one kid at a time".

"My heart is full of love from our community," said Kiwanis Club PJ coordinator, Amy Bahm, "We collected over 200 pairs of pj's in one day along with 45 turkeys and food for the Food Bank!"

The Kiwanis Club has partnered with the About Kidz organization since

starting the annual drive to assist in their Christmas program that provides gifts and pajamas for families struggling during the holidays. This year they will be helping nearly 300 families in the area.

"The involvement of the community was amazing," said Shellee McAsey, Kiwanis Club PJ co-coordinator, "We are so thankful for the outpouring of support!"

Special thanks to everyone who donated and the community business partners for being pj collection sites including: Scotty's Hideaway, Rebel Rhythm, Badfish Coffee & Tea, Dairy Queen, The Last

Tangle, Unbound Yoga & Fitness and Jan's Lounge.

The club is also very thankful for Perry McGuigan of Perry Air, the Shifted Society Car Club, and Marvelous Tint for coordinating a car show/pj donation drive at Dairy Queen, and Scott Lacy of Scotty's Hideaway for hosting a PJ party which brought in the final donations to exceed the goal! Way to go!

The Kiwanis Club meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6 pm

at El Gallo in Fair Oaks. All are welcome to come or go to Kiwanisclubofovo@gmail.com for more information! Happy Holidays! ★



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Flooding Continues

Continued from page 1

"The investments we've made to the flood system have absolutely helped," said Gary Lippner, the Department of Water Resources' deputy director of flood management and dam safety. "At the larger scale, our system is much more ready for high-water events."

The Central Valley has a long, painful history of deluges: The Great Flood of 1861-2, triggered by weeks of rain and snow, is still remembered as the worst disaster to ever befall California, inundating the entire valley, killing thousands of people statewide and devastating the economy.

The state's capital city was built in a floodplain and requires an extensive system of dams and levees to protect it. Even now, federal, state and local authorities are in the midst of upgrading those defenses, particularly in the Sacramento region, where multi-year, multi-billion-dollar projects are underway.

Major improvements have been made in the region and more are underway, thanks to about \$1.8 billion in state and federal funds. The Army Corps and state have been upgrading about 45 miles of levees over a 5-year period, and work on the final 2.8 miles is scheduled to begin in the spring.

Among the structural upgrades are raising levee heights, boring as deep as 150 feet to reinforce levees to prevent seepage and piling rocks on riverbanks to reduce erosion.

"All of the work that we've done along the American and Sacramento Rivers are helping the current situation. We are not seeing flooding off these rivers," Salyers said. The completed projects are now weather-tested, she said, and "performing the way we wanted them to."

State officials expressed confidence that the Central Valley's



Another dangerous storm is barreling toward the Sacramento Valley, where rains already punched through some levees. Photo courtesy of DWR

levees and bypasses will contain the deluges coming tonight and next week.

"We do have a significant amount of capacity within the bypass system in that 1,600 miles of levee, and I don't anticipate ... there to be emergency management needs," Lippner said.

But every flood-protection system has its limits.

Michael Anderson, a climatologist with the California Department of Water Resources, noted that impacts from the upcoming storm system could escalate to a "worst-case scenario" if it "becomes an unrelenting series of storms."

Forecasters are warning residents in the Sacramento region and the Bay Area to prepare today and Thursday for yet another assault, this time from a "bomb cyclone" spinning in the Pacific that will not make land-fall but will amplify rain, wind and frigid temperatures along the coast and foothills.

Forecasters are expecting more atmospheric rivers — the powerful streams of tropical moisture that deliver most of California's winter rainfall.

In the mountains that supply California's reservoirs, snow levels are now above average. The Department of Water Resources' first snow survey of the season took place on Tuesday at Phillips Station, in the Sierra Nevada, west of Lake Tahoe. Scientists measured 55.5 inches of snow and a snow water equivalent of 17.5 inches. That's 177% of average for that date.

Statewide, this is the best start to the snow season in 40 years, according to Department of Water Resources officials.

It would be hasty, though, to assume the ongoing storms and wet forecast mark an end to the prolonged drought. In 2021, record rains and heavy snowfall arrived between October and December. Then, California experienced its driest January-through-March — typically the state's wettest months — in recorded history.

Experts say consecutive storms are made more dangerous by an already-soaked landscape's inability to absorb more water. In addition to creating swollen

creeks and mudslides, incessant rain reduces soils' ability to hold vegetation, and California's millions of drought-ravaged trees can easily fall over. Areas with wildfire burn scars are at risk of flash-flooding, officials said.

The state has established emergency shelters in Sacramento and San Mateo Counties and has stockpiled 3.7 million sandbags.

Some experts think the flooding from the incoming storms could be tempered by the fact that the developing system is relatively cold. This will translate into more snow and less rain, at least at high elevations.

Last weekend's storm was relatively warm and produced rainfall at high elevations, where the liquid water fell on several feet of snow, melting it and magnifying the runoff into streams and rivers.

The flood board updated Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, released last month, warns of "1,000-year storm events ... and the need to act with renewed urgency and purpose before the next large flood event occurs in the Central Valley."

The plan calls on nature-based

solutions, like restored floodplains, and infrastructural improvements, like fortified levees near urban areas, to help reduce the impacts of higher-energy storm systems expected as a result of the warming climate.

Most of the historic floodplains along the Central Valley's rivers have been separated from the water by levees. Scientists now say that restoring floodplains can be an effective flood control strategy by allowing surging rivers to spill their banks and shed their energy on unpopulated flatlands, rather than bursting through aging levees surrounding populated areas. Floodplains also provide fish and wildlife habitat and serve as groundwater percolation beds.

"It takes a lot of time for that water to find a way out," said Mark Dickman, associate director for data at the U.S. Geological Survey in Sacramento. "There's just nowhere for it to go."

It's a persistent and familiar challenge: What to do with water when there's too much and how to manage when there isn't enough.

"We are built for this," said Jeffrey Mount, a water specialist at the Public Policy Institute of California. "We built the system around the notion that we get occasionally wet years and mostly dry years. But, unlike the Colorado River Basin, where they can capture and control four years of runoff, we are full after one year. Our ability to store surface water is limited."

The ongoing rains are already boosting California's water storage system. Major reservoirs are rising, some rapidly. Folsom Lake was 29% full on Dec. 20, and as of Jan. 2 it jumped to 61%. The much larger Lake Oroville jumped from 29% to 38% in the same window — an increase of more than 300,000 acre-feet. ★

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SMUD Crews Respond to Storm Outages

SMUD Special Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento region was hit by heavy rains and 70-mph winds by the latest storm that ripped through Northern California overnight. Storm damage knocked out power to more than 345,000 SMUD customers at its height around 2 AM. As of 3:45 PM, approximately 60,000 customers remain without power.

The most recent storm was the worst storm in more than 30 years, eclipsing last week's New Year's Eve storm. So far, SMUD has identified more than 80 downed power poles and dozens of downed trees impacting utility equipment. These numbers will grow significantly as assessments are completed.

SMUD line crews, troubleshooters and other field personnel will work 24/7 to restore power to customers if it's safe to work. Crews made steady progress throughout the day Sunday to assess damage, make repairs and restore power. Thanks to partnerships with other local utilities and contract crews, SMUD has nearly doubled the typical number of crews in the field working to restore power from 16 to 30. Additional mutual aid crews are incoming, which will bring total crew count to approximately 40 on Monday.

Due to extensive damage, many customers will experience lengthy outages that last overnight, and many will last well into the coming week. SMUD is contacting customers we



SMUD crews were out in full force to repair damage caused by the high winds. Photo courtesy SMUD.

expect to be out of power overnight directly so they can make arrangements.

When storms knock out power, SMUD works around-the-clock to restore electric service as safely and as quickly as possible, but restoration efforts can be slowed when winds are too high for crews to safely work, or access is limited or not possible due to floods.

SMUD prioritizes where crews will be sent during a storm: Public safety hazards (power lines down, poles down); Hospitals and critical flood control pumps; Areas with large numbers of customers out of power; Scattered, smaller outages.

Safety is a top priority and SMUD is providing tips for customers to stay safe.

If the power goes out: Check to see if the lights are out in neighboring homes — if so, it's likely a larger outage; Report the outage at smud.org/outages.

If you are the only one without power, visit smud.org/storms for instructions on safely checking/resetting your main breaker.

If stormy weather knocks down a power

line; Stay away and call SMUD at 1-888-456-SMUD (7683) or 911 immediately; Assume the line is "energized" and stay away and warn others to do the same; Do not remove fallen tree limbs or other debris from power lines. Tree limbs and other objects can conduct electricity that can shock anyone coming in contact with them.

SMUD urges people to check on family, friends and neighbors who may experience outages. For those experiencing prolonged outages, SMUD is working with its customers on an individual basis to provide for specific needs during the storms. In case of extended outages or for those with medical needs, SMUD urges customers to have a back-up plan for accommodations if needed.

While homes can get cold without power, SMUD warns customers **not** to heat homes with propane heaters, grills, hibachis or BBQs. They produce carbon monoxide, a clear, odorless gas that can be fatal to humans and animals. ★

ASK THE DMV



Veterans Day is November 11. The DMV honors all those who serve or have served. The DMV offers some tips for active-duty military personnel, veterans, and loved ones

The DMV salutes active-duty military and veterans. With Veteran's Day right around the corner, there's no better time to get informed about veteran ID designation, handling IDs for armed forces away from home, and the benefits of a REAL ID for extended family and friends of active military personnel.

Q: How do I add the veteran designation to my DL/ID?

A: Eligible veterans can add the word "VETERAN" to the front of their DL/ID card to indicate that they have served in the United States (U.S.) military. Having this designation on your DL/ID can play a critical role in enabling access to certain privileges, benefits, or compensation associated with being a veteran without having to carry a certificate of release or discharge from active duty.

To apply for the veteran designation on your DL/ID card, you will need to:

1. Complete a Driver's License & Identification Card Application (DL 44/eDL 44) form.
2. Visit a County Veteran Service Office (CVSO) to obtain a Veteran Status Verification Form (VSD-001). (This form is not available from DMV.)
3. Bring the completed VSD-001 to a DMV field office.
4. Pay the nonrefundable application fee.
5. Pay an additional \$5 fee to add the veteran designation to your DL/ID card (applicants who qualify for a reduced fee, or no fee driver license or identification card may waive the \$5 fee).

Note: SB 837 will take effect on January 1, 2023, and will eliminate the one-time \$5 fee to add a veteran designation to a driver's license or identification card. Visit dmv.ca.gov/online to get started.

Q: Can my friends and extended family visit me at a military base without a REAL ID?

A: Starting May 3, 2023, everyone will need a federally approved form of identification, such as a REAL ID or passport, to enter military bases and other federal facilities. Military IDs will meet this requirement, but civilians who wish to visit bases will need to ensure they have federally compliant identification, such as a REAL ID.

You can start your REAL ID application online now to beat the rush as the enforcement date draws closer. After completing your online application and uploading your documents, visit your local DMV office with your documents to finish the application process. Visit dmv.ca.gov/REALID to get started.

Q: How is licensing handled for U.S. Armed Forces and Foreign Service personnel away from home?

A: If you are out of state on active military service in the U.S. Armed Forces or U.S. Foreign Service, you and your spouse's California DLs will continue to be valid beyond the normal expiration date. DMV will send you an Extension of License for Person in Armed Forces (DL 236) card to carry with your DL. The DL 236 card shows CVC §12817, which authorizes the extension of your and your spouse's DLs.

It is important to update your driving record to prevent it from being purged. If your DL has expired and you are out of state, call (916) 657-7790 to update your driving record.

For more information or answers to questions specifically for veterans, active military, and their family members, please visit our website.

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

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 9. Cleopatra's necklace
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 11. Boundary line
 12. Looker or ogler
 15. Capable of movement
 20. One of the Muses
 22. Shoshonean
 24. Railyard worker
 25. Gabbana's partner
 26. Relating to bees
 27. Edward Teach's facial feature
 29. *Prepared food department
 31. Contributes
 32. Get ready to drive (2 words)
 33. Type of wheat
 34. *Ricotta and eggs section
 36. Semiaquatic tetrapod, for short
 38. Sips from a flask?
 42. Bar by estoppel
 45. Novelist Honoré de
 49. Blackbird dessert
 51. Paragons
 54. Galactic path
 56. Pomp
 57. Be unsuccessful

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The Misconception of a New Year

Dr. James L. Snyder

Christmas is the best time of the year, especially when it involves family. It's the one time of the year that families get together to celebrate together.

This year, we had a special new family member, our second great-grandchild, born a week before Christmas.

That night my wife and I sat together reflecting on our family get-together.

Sighing deeply, I said, "It sure has been a great year, hasn't it?"

"It was a great year." Then, after more deep thought, my wife continued, "But the New Year is going to be so much better."

Not learning from the past, I replied, "What's so new about the new year?"

She looked at me as though she had never seen me before, and with one of her sarcastic tones, she said, "It's a new year, and everything is going to be new."

Pausing for a moment, she then said, "Last year, we didn't even know at this time that we were going to have a great-granddaughter. She is new in our family."

"So," I said rather slowly, "what will be new this coming year?"

"Everything is going to be new this

coming year." She said with a smile dancing on her face.

"Except for a new family member," I said to her, "everything this next year is going to be the same."

I had her just about where I wanted her and was very careful in my next steps.

"So, tell me, how many months will there be this coming year?"

Looking at me, she smirked and said, "There will be 12 months this coming year. What are you talking about?"

"Well," I stuttered, "weren't there 12 months this past year? This next year we will have the same 12 months as we had last year."

Looking at me, she said, "I think you're getting a little goofy here."

"And," I pursued a little more, "how many days of the week will there be in this new year? Will there be any more than last year?"

She stared at me, not knowing what to say. "Also, there will still be 24 hours in every day. That's not going to change either."

I paused for a moment and then said, "When is your birthday this coming year?"

She told me and said, "It's the same as it was the

last year, you silly boy."

"Oh," I said rather thoughtfully, "your birthday this year is the same as last year, so your birthday isn't new this year."

"But," she replied, "I will be a year older."

Looking at her I replied, "Weren't you a year older this year?"

Finally, she began to understand what I was saying, and looking at me very quizzically, she said, "You sure have a stupid way of looking at things, don't you?"

Then she said something rather startling, "I guess you are right in this."

Well, I was rather stunned because that was new.

Pondering this conversation, I was reminded of what wise old Solomon said. "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

The secret to a happy life is enjoying what I have right now.

Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala, FL with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, e-mail jamesnyder51@gmail.com, website www.jamesnyderministries.com. ★



By Marlys Johnsen Norris, Christian Author

This past Sunday, our Pastor Luke Miller at Sunrise Community gave one of the most significant and powerful messages to our church gathering. It was a message we all should live by! Each of us is taught an called to exemplify the "love of Jesus Christ" in all circumstances to others throughout our lives.

A Christian is one who has personally repented

'United – One In Christ'

of all their wrong actions (sin) and have invited Jesus Christ, God's beloved Son into their heart and lives. They have become a part of the whole church all over the world, which makes us "ONE IN CHRIST".

All human beings are just a little bit different and God has allowed many different protestant religions to grasp hold and for many to experience His personal love. Each of us therefore, can find a church we enjoy and go to learn the Bible, worship God and have fellowship with one

another. We are to drop the words like "my church is the right one or it's the best one" Those words do not honor the God we claim to know, love and worship on Sunday.

A new believer may not understand it at first but "we are to be united and a part of one another = united in Christ's love to be expressed to the world all around us".

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

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FACTS

Another Covid Winter?

By Katy Grimes, California Globe

It appears some politicians and members of the media are trying to foist another Covid winter on America. In California the pandemic never really ended. California Gov. Gavin Newsom still clings to his autocratic emergency powers under his March 4, 2020 Covid State of Emergency order, so why not perpetrate another crisis?

Hysterical and misleading headlines from mainstream media tell the story:

SacBee: California hospital ICU's see 20% jump in COVID-19 patients since last week, state data show. "As of Wednesday, there were 346 patients in hospital intensive care units, accounting for roughly 13% of available beds," the Sac Bee health care writer reports, but she omits what the 346 ICU patients are hospitalized for.

A quick look at Sacramento County Public health Covid statistics (below) shows about 12-13 Covid "cases" a day are reported, 13 Covid patients in the ICU and 13 recent deaths. It took 3 minutes to look this up.

Here is another headline from the SacBee health reporter: California's 'triple-demic' of viruses is on the rise. Here's how to care for a sick loved one.

The advice in this 605 word article is useful to anyone who hasn't ever had the flu: drink plenty of fluids, take Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen for the fever, and get plenty of rest.

What is this "triple-demic" of viruses? COVID-19, the flu and respiratory syncytial virus.

"According to CDC data, the hospitalization rate in all kids for the week of Nov. 12 was twice as high as any other flu season on record," ABC 7 reported. "The American Academy of Pediatrics



Politicians and Media are Trying to Foist Another Covid Winter on America. Photo courtesy of Yuri Arcurs Dreamstime.com

and the Children's Hospital Association say cases of the flu, COVID-19, and RSV are overwhelming the health system."

However a look at the CDC Covid dashboard shows hospitalizations are static. Of the 331.9 million Americans, there are 19,480 hospitalizations:

Here's part of the motive: "Declaration of a national emergency would give providers additional funding as well as more flexibility from regulations to deal with what they call a 'crisis.'"

The COVID-19 pandemic is over and has been over except for political motivations – and government funding.

Taking a page from Dr. Anthony Fauci who warned families to get Covid tested ahead of Thanksgiving gatherings, California Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly said, "I think there's ways that we can really improve how we do it, rather than spend our time talking about whether we should or shouldn't," referring to family gatherings.

The Los Angeles Times reporters took the hysteria one step further:

"In California, however, coronavirus-positive hospitalizations have been increasing. As of Wednesday, there were 2,782 coronavirus-positive patients in hospitals, up 84% from the autumn low of 1,514 on Oct. 24."

There are 40 million residents in California, and 2,782 are Covid-positive in the hospital?

"Nationally, hundreds of Americans are still dying every day of COVID-19, which remains a leading cause of death. And there are signs that transmission is once again on the upswing," the LAT reports.

But the CDC reports, COVID-19 was the third leading cause of death after heart disease and cancer.

For perspective, on any given day, approximately 740 Californians die of all causes, totaling about 270,000 California deaths annually.

According to the California Department of Public Health, as of

November 21, 2022, there are zero deaths from Covid.

But at the top of their chart, the CDPH shows 96,701 total Covid deaths. This is the cumulative total since February 1, 2020, through November 22, 2022, according to the CDPH's data.

The state of California wants people to believe that Covid patients are dropping like flies at 12 per day. But that is the average over the entire almost 3-year Covid pandemic since February 2020.

It's feeling like Groundhog Day with public health officials and media breathlessly talking about Covid "cases," rather than focusing on the vulnerable groups of people.

Throughout the pandemic, there was too heavy of a focus on an uptick in cases, as Stanford's Dr. Scott Atlas reported, "especially in places where governors either have reinstated or have further enforced restrictions. When we see this focus on more cases, it doesn't really matter how many cases – it only matters who gets the cases. We know that the infection-fatality rate for people under 70 is 0.04

percent – that's less than or equal to the seasonal flu," he said.

A physician told the Globe that because doctors even can have a difficult time getting good data through their hospitals, trends are far more important numbers than raw numbers to study, as it gives more context.

For the average American, faith in government authority was significantly eroded because of how Covid was handled, managed and grossly mismanaged. It's still going on with politicians and the State of California inundating the people with advertisements pushing Covid vaccines and masks by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). These ads are everywhere – radio, television, online ads, social media, iHeart radio, Sirius radio – even radio hosts are being paid to read the CDPH ads... it's difficult to escape the commercials.

The governor and Legislature are also seeking to punish physicians and surgeons for "unprofessional conduct" for advocating for the potential benefits of early treatment with off-label drugs, or those who dare to ask questions about COVID vaccine safety. Under AB 2098 doctors will be subject to disciplinary actions by the Medical Board of California and the Osteopathic Medical Board of California if they do not adhere to the "approved COVID treatment consensus."

Fortunately, a group of California physicians has filed a complaint and motion for a preliminary injunction in *Hoeg, et al. v. Newsom, et al.*, asking the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California prevent AB 2098 from going into effect.

Will there be another Covid Groundhog Day? The Californians I talk to say "oh, Hell no."

Katy Grimes, the Editor of the California Globe, is a long-time Investigative Journalist covering the California State Capitol. ★

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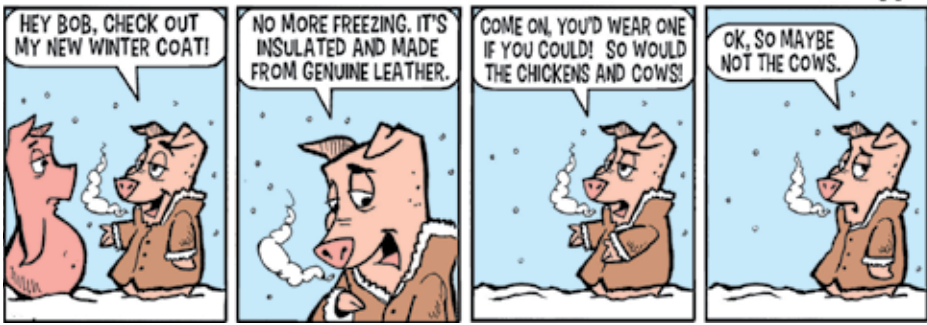
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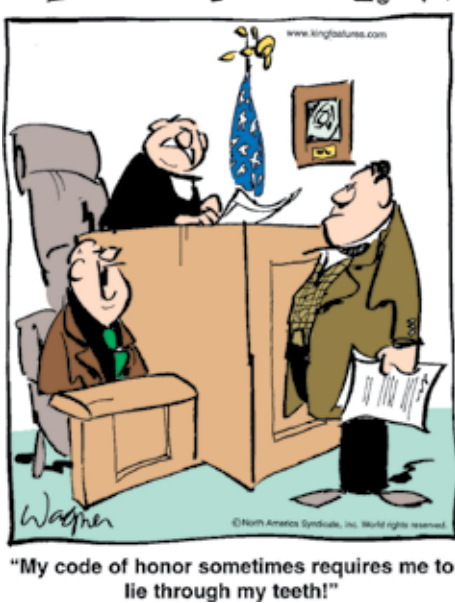
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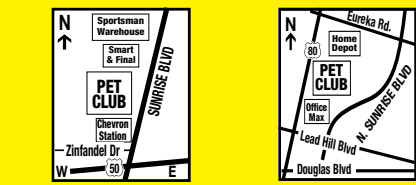
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•ES Unscented •US Ever Fresh
25 Lb. Box Limit 2 Boxes
\$15.99

PESTELL CLUMPING CAT LITTER
40 Lb. Bag
Limit 2 Bags
\$10.49

WELLNESS CANNED DOG FOOD
Natural 12.5 Oz Full Case
•Regular •Stew •Core Limit 2 Cases
15% OFF
OUR REGULAR PRICES

9 LIVES DRY CAT FOOD
•Grilled Tuna & Egg 12 lb Bag
Limit 2 Bags Per Family
\$10.99

FRESH STEP CAT LITTER
21 Lb Bag
(14 Lb Bag - \$5.49)
\$7.49

CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE SOUL CANNED FOOD SALE
Dog Cans 13.2 Oz (Reg & Grain Free)
Cat Cans (5.5 Oz) Limit 1 Case Selected Varieties
10% OFF
OUR REGULAR PRICES!

IAMS DRY DOG FOOD
•Mini Chunk •Large Breed •Lamb & Rice
•Weight Control 30 Lb Bag Limit 2 Bags
\$39.99

CANIDAE ACTIVE GOODNESS DRY DOG FOOD
30 Protein/20 Fat
•Multi-protein •Salmon Meal 30 Lb Bag
NEW \$39.99

FRESH STEP SCOOPABLE CAT LITTER
42 Lb Bag
Limit 2 Bags
\$19.99

MILK-BONE DOG BISCUITS
Large 10 Lb Box
Flavor Snacks 7 Lb Box
\$13.99 **\$11.99**

ÖKOCAT CLUMPING CAT LITTER
•Regular 11-12 Lb
•Soft Step 16.7 Lb 19.8 Lb
\$13.99 **\$19.99** **\$19.99**
Dust Free

ASPEN/PETMATE PET BEDDING
•Pillow •Self Warming •Lazy Bot
•Orthopedic Foam Beds •Snoozzy All Varieties
20% OFF
OUR SUPER LOW PRICES

MARINELAND POWER FILTER SALE
MODEL TANK SIZE PET CLUB SALE
PENGUIN 100B 20 Gal. \$24.99
PENGUIN 150B 30 Gal. \$33.99
PENGUIN 200B 50 Gal. \$40.99
PENGUIN 350B 75 Gal. \$55.99

POLKADOG DOG TREATS
•Chicken Strips •Cod Skin
•Haddock •Crunchy Treats
•Soft & Chewy Bits All Varieties
20% OFF
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REGULAR HI-SIDES
Large CP2 \$3.99 Large CP2HS \$5.99
Giant CP3 \$6.99 Giant CP3HS \$7.99

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) \$122.99
55 GALLON (Pre-Priced \$229.99) \$199.99

REPTILE SUPPLY SALE
Zoo Med Reptibark 8 Qt. \$7.99
Tetra Reptomin 3.7 Oz. \$4.99
Tetra Reptomin 10.59 Oz. \$10.99

BOODA DOME CLEAN-UP STEP COVERED LITTER BOX
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STOKES SELECT MORE BIRDS
Hummingbird • Wild Bird
Feeders & Nectar All Varieties
20% OFF
OUR SUPER LOW PRICES

MARINELAND PREMIUM FISH FOOD
ALL VARIETIES
•Goldfish •Cichlids
•Tropical •Wafers
20% OFF
OUR SUPER LOW PRICES

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 1/11/23 - 1/17/23
ON SALE
Everyday
CHM PLU 361

BONUS COUPON
JONNY CAT PREMIUM CAT LITTER
10 Lb Bag
Limit 2 Bags Per Family
Limit One Coupon Per Family
Price Valid Only With Coupon
Effective 1/11/23 - 1/17/23
\$27.99
CHM PLU 365

BONUS COUPON
WHISKAS TEMPTATIONS CAT TREATS
•All Varieties 3 Oz.
Limit 2 Pkgs with Coupon
Limit One Coupon Per Family
Price Valid Only With Coupon
Effective 1/11/23 - 1/17/23
\$1.99
CHM PLU 569

Is the Drought Over?

Water providers still predict shortages this year

By Alastair Bland,
CALMatters

December has delivered a powerful punch of storms to California. But the wet weather comes with a dry dose of reality: The state's largest reservoirs remain badly depleted, projected water deliveries are low, wells are drying up, and the Colorado River's water, already diminished by a megadrought, is severely overallocated.

Throughout California, urban water managers are bracing for a fourth consecutive drought year. Nearly one out of every five water agencies — 76 out of 414 — in a recent state survey predict that they won't have enough water to meet demand next year. That means they are likely to impose more severe restrictions on customers, with some Southern California providers considering a ban on all outdoor watering.

While December's rain and snow show promise, water managers remember the same thing happened last year — epic early storms followed by the driest January through March in California's recorded history.

Last week the state announced an emergency regulation extending its ban on "wasteful water practices" through 2023. Included are watering while it's raining, running decorative fountains without recirculating flows and washing vehicles with hoses not fitted with automatic shutoff nozzles, among others.

Some regions of California have more water than they need. Sacramento reported a 173% surplus for 2023 to state officials. City spokesperson Carlos Eliason said Sacramento has a healthy system of community wells to draw from in addition to the Sacramento and American rivers.

The Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District, serving 90,000 people in and around Eureka, reported an 834% surplus for 2023. Its main reservoir typically fills to the brim every year.

"Unfortunately, our system isn't connected to other systems, so we can't do anything to help our neighbors in other parts of the state, but we'd like to," said General Manager John Friedenbach.

Sonoma County's major reservoir was at just 39% of capacity last week, its lowest level ever recorded, but Don Seymour, the county water agency's deputy chief engineer, said there is no reason to panic. "That's still a lot of water," he said. "We could stretch that out into the spring of 2024."

But other regions of the state — mostly in Southern California — aren't as fortunate. Millions of Southern Californians will likely face outdoor watering restrictions or even bans, with probable exceptions made for the hand-watering of trees.

Most Southern Californians — 27 million people — rely at least partially on the State Water Project, a system of dams and canals that moves water from the Sacramento Valley to Southern California. On Dec. 1, the Department of Water Resources



Oroville, which is one of California's largest reservoirs, is only 59% of capacity as of December 12 — despite recent rains and snow. The reservoir is shown here in May 2022. Photo by Andrew Innerarity, California Department of Water Resources



Bidwell Canyon Marina showing Lake Oroville with a reservoir storage of 1,663,134 acre-feet (AF), 47% of the total capacity. Lake Oroville is located in Butte County, California. Photo taken July 6, 2022, by Florence Low/California Department of Water Resources

announced it will initially allocate just 5% of the supply that water districts requested from the state — bad news for those with no other water source.

Fort Bragg, on California's North Coast, nearly ran out of water in 2021, forcing management into a stage 4 "water crisis" mode. A small desalination unit, capable of processing 200 gallons per minute, was revved up to meet basic needs for the 7,500 local residents. Meanwhile, outlying communities, like the seaside bluff town of Mendocino and isolated inns, restaurants and homes, saw wells run dry. Fort Bragg delivery trucks, carrying water provided by the city of Ukiah, brought relief.

Things have improved for Fort Bragg. In 2022, late spring rains recharged its reserves, said John Smith, the city's director of public works. Its small reservoir is brim-full, and the desalination unit is ready to go if needed.

The city asked residents to use 20% less water, which they did — plus some.

"We asked for 20%, and they conserved 30%," he said.

Earlier this year, Californians were slow to respond to drought warnings. In fact, their usage went up last spring. Californians emerged from the driest January, February and March on record with the biggest jump in water use since the drought began: a nearly 19% increase in March compared to two years earlier.

But many Californians have stepped up since then. In October, statewide urban water use dropped 12.6% compared to October of 2020.

Still, the cumulative savings (only 5.2% compared to 2020) fall far short of Gov. Gavin Newsom's request for a 15% voluntary cut.

Santa Rosa's water director, Jennifer Burke, said water use in the city of 180,000 is down 18% of average since June of 2021, thanks in part to rules limiting outdoor watering to nighttime hours when evaporative losses are less.

In Sacramento,

residents have curbed water use by more than 20% by limiting residents to watering twice weekly from March through October and once per week the rest of the year. This ordinance, Eliason said, is permanent.

"We wanted to make sure water conservation is a way of life," Eliason said.

For many Californians, it already is. The state's residents have streamlined their water use and reduced waste for decades. Daily residential water use statewide in October decreased to 88 gallons per capita, compared to the five-year average of 97.

Jeffrey Mount, a senior fellow with the Public Policy Institute of California, said California's overall water consumption has remained the same since the 1980s even though the population grew from 30 million to 40 million.

"That is a good indication that adjustments can be made as things get drier," Mount said.

An even steeper trend toward conservation has

been logged by the East Bay Municipal Utility District. The customer population has grown by 35% since 1970 while overall water use has declined by 45%.

In recent years, residents have increasingly swapped out grassy lawns for drought-smart landscaping, and they are currently limited to watering outdoors no more than three days per week. These measures have reduced water use during the ongoing drought by 14 to 15% — what Pook describes as "conservation on top of conservation."

Green grass will go brown next year, and in the long run, vast areas of lawn will probably disappear permanently as Californians adjust to aridification.

In October, the Metropolitan Water District passed a resolution encouraging communities "to reduce or eliminate irrigation of non-functional turf with potable water." This followed a May, 2022 emergency order from the State Water Resources

Control Board banning non-functional turf irrigation with potable water on commercial, institutional and industrial properties statewide. The Pacific Institute has calculated that such efforts could save California as much as 400,000 acre-feet of water annually.

But no matter how tight the state's water supplies get, keeping urban trees alive will probably be a priority.

"We're seeing, in all urban areas, a frantic effort to conserve urban forests," Mount said, noting that urban trees provide shade, reduced ground-level temperatures and natural water treatment services.

Mount, who recently eliminated most of his own backyard turf — sparing just a narrow strip for his dogs — said he takes some solace in the fact that green grass remains a prominent feature of institutional landscaping, for it means there is still room to improve.

"That makes me more sanguine than most about the future," he said. ★