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Annual Key Hunt an Adventure



Above: Fair Oaks youth got in on the action, testing their keys to see if they unlocked any prizes. Right: Kaidon, 9 years old, found a winning key in this year's Key Hunt.

Story and photos
by Shauna Boyd

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - Fair Oaks residents enthusiastically participated in the second annual Key Hunt from June 11-14, hosted by Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District (FORPD). Over the course of four days, more than 400 keys were hidden throughout the District's 10 parks—under benches, along walkways, in tree hollows, and in various other locations. Three of those keys unlocked prizes.

The keys weren't hidden all at once, so many participants visited the parks often, hoping to find as many keys as possible. This also gave

participants a good reason to venture out from their neighborhood parks to others they might not have visited before.

FORPD Recreation Supervisor Sabrina Bernardo said the Key Hunt was started last year as a way to get people out enjoying the parks while following COVID restrictions. The District wanted to offer a way for residents to socially distance while having fun. Bernardo was out hiding the keys each day and she loved seeing people out searching: "It's become my favorite event."



On the evening of June 14, the event concluded with participants queued up to test their keys. The long line of cars looped around the parking lot at Fair Oaks Park, with everyone hoping one of their keys would be a winner. The prizes

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4th of July Reminder: Keep it Safe, Keep it Legal

By Janna Haynes,
Sacramento County
News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - With Independence Day just around the corner, COVID restrictions rolling back and anticipated parties, please remember to know the risks of fireworks, only use legal fireworks and stay safe when using. If you see or suspect illegal firework usage, please report it!

The County has teamed up with our cities, fire and law enforcement jurisdictions to educate our community members on how to celebrate safely, how to spot a safe and sane firework and how to report illegal fireworks usage. In addition, many jurisdictions are enforcing stricter penalties this year for illegal fireworks usage.

Calls for service throughout the county increase dramatically on July 4th and emergency response resources are stretched extremely thin. During the holiday weekend, please use 9-1-1 for emergencies only – like an active fire or injury. Each jurisdiction has provided an alternative method to report illegal fireworks sale and usage.

Together, we can ensure that Independence Day celebrations are fun, safe and do not cause undue injury or fire in our communities.

Know the Risks: The unsafe use of fireworks can cause severe burns, amputations, blinding and even death; Damaging fires occur when children use fireworks unsupervised by adults; Parents are responsible for any property damage or injuries caused by all fireworks.

Keep it Legal: All legal fireworks in California are called Safe and Sane Fireworks and must bear the State Fire Marshal's seal; Safe and Sane Fireworks may only be used and sold from noon June 28 through midnight on July 4; Any firework that goes up in the air or explodes is illegal and dangerous.

Keep it Safe: Always have a bucket of water to dispose of fireworks and leave in the water overnight before disposing; Always have a hose connected to water available in case of fire; Do not use fireworks near dry grass or other flammable materials; Do not use fireworks while under a canopy, covered balcony, covered patio or under a tree or bushes.

How to report illegal sale and usage:
Continued on page 3

California Reopens

Things you need to know about COVID-19



California is opening, for now. Everyone hopes that the worst days of this virus are behind us. Photo courtesy Tim Douglas

By Ana B. Ibarra,
CALMatters.org

Fifteen months after Californians faced their first COVID-19 stay-at-home order, most mandates will be lifted on Tuesday. And what a journey it's been – just months ago, hospitals were overwhelmed with severely sick people seeking scarce beds.

But while California's outlook is brighter, COVID-19 remains a very real threat. Even though the state's infection rate and hospitalizations are at an all-time low, the pandemic isn't over. People are still dying from COVID-19, just at lower rates than six months ago.

Restrictions like physical distancing and

mask-wearing offered some protection to people who have not yet been vaccinated, and now that most of those are going away, infections are expected to start rising, said Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, an epidemiologist at University of California, San Francisco.

As of Friday, (June 11) 54.6% of eligible

Californians – everyone 12 and older – have been fully vaccinated. Another 11% have received one dose.

But as vaccine demand fades, public health officials worry how new infections will play out among those not yet protected. Will the state see another uptick in cases? Who is vulnerable and where?

Continued on page 4

Elder Abuse on the Rise in Sacramento County

By Kathleen Newton, Northwest Media Consultants

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - In the past year, Sacramento County officials received more than 18,000 reports of elder abuse, up 81% compared to just five years earlier.

According to Irene Chu, program planner for Sacramento County Adult Protective Services, elder self-neglect, financial abuse, psychological abuse and neglect by others make up the bulk of APS cases.

The 2020-21 abuse reports generated nearly 5,500 formal investigations. Of these, 41% involved self-neglect, followed by financial abuse, at 22%.

Chu said financial abuse can include internet or telephone scams involving identity theft, investment swindles, computer virus schemes and charity or family-member-in-need scams. Even worse may be swindles and theft by caregivers, which may leave the victims destitute.

Self-neglect cases can range from elderly people failing to take their medication to not being able to maintain healthful conditions in their homes or suffering from physical or mental disabilities that make it difficult for them to care for themselves. Homeless individuals are particularly vulnerable to self-neglect and abuse by others, she said.

Chu stressed that in nearly all cases of elder abuse and neglect, isolation is the key risk factor.

"It's not just for those people living by



To spot financial abuse, look for sudden changes in the older person's financial situation, such as: Suspicious changes in wills or powers of attorney; Financial activity the person couldn't have done herself; Bills not being paid; Significant withdrawals or unusual purchases. MPG file photo

themselves. Even if an elder is living with family members or friends, he or she can be isolated. In some extreme situations, caregivers may take away their Social Security checks, block their contact with outsiders or keep them confined to the house because they don't want people to know what they are doing."

Chu said it is critical that people maintain constant contact with their elderly loved ones. "Keep calling them," she said. "Make sure when you talk to your loved ones that you don't sense

any hesitation when they are talking to you. Without communication, you won't be able to see the signs of possible abuse."

She urged people to learn and watch for the signs of elder abuse in their loved ones. She noted that APS social workers can link clients to services to help them live safely in their own homes.

If you have questions or suspect a problem, contact Sacramento County Adult Protective Services at (916) 874-9377.

To learn more about how

to prevent elder abuse, visit the Sacramento County Adult Protective Services website at <https://dcfas.saccounty.net/SAS/Pages/Adult-Protective-Services/SP-Adult-Protective-Services.aspx>. or go to <https://elderabuseawareness.ca.info/>.

Watch for these signs of elder abuse: Lack of basic amenities; Cluttered, filthy living environment; Unexplained or uncharacteristic changes in behavior; Harassment, coercion, intimidation, humiliation; and caregiver

isolation of elder.

To spot financial abuse, look for sudden changes in the older person's financial situation, such as: Suspicious changes in wills or powers of attorney; Financial activity the person couldn't have done herself; Bills not being paid; Significant withdrawals or unusual purchases.

How to report suspected cases of elder abuse

If you believe an elderly person is in immediate danger, call 911. Otherwise, Sacramento County Adult Protective Services

(APS) has a 24-hour hotline for reporting abuse of older adults and disabled adults who may be physically or financially abused, neglected or exploited. Call (916) 874-9377.

To report suspected abuse of an elder in a nursing home, residential care facility for the elderly, or assisted living facility, contact California's CRISISline at (800) 231-4024. During business hours call the local Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program of Agency on Aging Area 4 at (916) 376-8910. ★

To report suspected abuse of an elder contact California's CRISISline at (800) 231-4024.

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4th of July Reminder: Keep it Safe, Keep it Legal

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Unincorporated – (916) 874-5115 or reportfireworks@saccounty.net; Sacramento: 916-808-5471 or “Nail ‘Em”

App; Folsom: 916-355-7231; Elk Grove: fireworks@elkgrovepd.org or “Nail ‘Em” App; Rancho Cordova: 916-362-5115; Citrus Heights: 916-727-5500; Galt: 209-366-7000
Aren't sure who or how to report? Call 3-1-1 to be connected to the right place! ★

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Orangevale Woman's Club

ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG) - The Orangevale Woman's Club has found another gem in the neighborhood for our “Loyal 2 Locals” promotion - Tonno's Sports Bar and Grill at 9267 Greenback Lane.

Andy Tonnorelli and his dad, Steve, used to have an upscale appliance business but decided they were tired of moving refrigerators and wanted a fun retirement plan. So, they pooled their money and opened up Tonno's 9 years ago in 2012. The name of the establishment comes from a nick name: Tonno's is short for Tonnorelli. Andy says the benefits of opening their business in Orangevale is the support from the community. He noted that people love to support local and he is very grateful for that. Although Covid definitely took a hit to their business monetarily, Andy used this time



Andy Tonnorelli announced he is incorporating Taco Tuesdays, Wing Wednesdays, and live bands. Photo: Orangevale Woman's Club

to do a face lift on their property along with spent quality time with his wife and 2 daughters.

Now that life is beginning to get back to normal, Tonno's is incorporating Taco Tuesdays, Wing Wednesdays, and live bands. Now let's talk about their food. They have a great variety of craft bar foods that are amazing. Everything from burgers (check out the Monstrosity Burger if you dare), a variety of tacos, chilis, salads

and tater tots with toppings. There is also something I had never heard of: Peanut Butter Fries (I hear they are wonderful). There is something for everyone. Tonno's is fortunate to have an outdoor patio that accommodates large groups of people as well.

Tonno's will be offering 15% off of your tab as long as you let them know where you saw this article. Check out their website at www.tonnosbg.com or give them a call at 916-989-8666. ★

Construction Begins on Emergency Drought Barrier

California Department of Water Resources

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - In response to worsening drought conditions in California, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) began construction on a temporary emergency drought barrier on the West False River in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The barrier will help slow the movement of saltwater into the central Delta and prevent contamination of water supplies for Delta agriculture and municipal supplies for millions of Californians.

“California is experiencing a second consecutive dry year and snowpack runoff into our state reservoirs has been far less than anticipated, so we are taking emergency actions to protect the state's water supply and environment now,” said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. “DWR along with partner agencies is looking at all options to bolster the state's drought response and mitigate drought impacts.”

The barrier will help prevent saltwater contamination of water supplies used by millions of Californians who rely on Delta-based federal and state water projects for at least some of their supplies. The emergency barrier will also help conserve critical water supplies in upstream reservoirs for later use by avoiding the need to send large volumes of water into the Delta to repel salinity this summer.

“Keeping saltwater from intruding into the central Delta is essential as a large portion of the state's fresh water for urban and agricultural use goes through this part of the Delta,” said Ted Craddock, Deputy Director for the State Water Project.

On June 1, a temporary urgency change petition to modify State Water Project and Central Valley Project water rights conditions was approved by the State Water Resources Control Board, which will allow for water to be conserved for later instream uses and water quality requirements. These modifications are needed to help protect cold water pools for salmon and steelhead and maintain water quality while ensuring some water supplies are maintained if drought conditions persist next year.

Simultaneous to the drought barrier's construction, DWR is pursuing long-term planning and permitting in anticipation of



Rock is loaded onto barges at the California Department of Water Resources Weber Rock Yard near the Port of Stockton, California. The purpose of the rock barrier is to prevent the Delta from becoming too salty for irrigation, drinking water, or fish. Photo by Florence Low/California Department of Water Resources

future drought conditions. There will be opportunities for public involvement during this process, which will continue into 2022.

DWR is working to get the temporary emergency drought barrier in place as soon as possible. The approximately 800-foot-wide temporary barrier consisting of nearly 90,000 cubic yards of rock will span the West False River and prevent salty tides and slower moving salinity from intruding into the interior Delta. Construction is expected to be completed by July 1. The barrier will be removed no later than November 30.

The barrier will block watercraft passage on West False River until its removal and will be marked by warning signs, lights, and buoys. Alternative routes between the San Joaquin River and interior Delta will be available.

On April 21, Governor Gavin Newsom signed an emergency order directing state agencies to take immediate action to bolster drought resistance across the state. The installation of a West False River drought salinity barrier during the 2012-16 drought proved to be an effective tool for reducing the intrusion of salt water into the central and south Delta and helped preserve fresh water supplies for future critical uses including drinking water and the environment. The West False River drought salinity barrier is just one of many actions DWR is taking to mitigate drought impacts consistent with the emergency order.

For more information, visit DWR's drought webpage at water.ca.gov/Programs/All-Programs/Drought ★

Annual Key Hunt an Adventure



After exploring parks throughout the District, kids were really eager to try their luck.

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included a Starbucks gift card and Trader Joe's goodie bag (donated by Trader Joe's of Fair Oaks); a Jamba Juice gift card, FORPD swag, a Jigsaw power tool (donated by Lowe's Home Improvement in Citrus Heights); and a two-night stay for nine guests at The Nest at Big Trees in California's Stanislaus National Forest (donated by TheNestAtBigTrees.com). The gift cards were donated by the Fair

Oaks Youth Advisory Board. Everyone who returned a key was also eligible to enter a drawing for a Mountain Mike's gift certificate, donated by Mountain Mike's Pizza in Fair Oaks.

Win or lose, residents all agreed that the Key Hunt was a wonderful event. One participant declared, “This was a blast.” Another said that it was a fun experience to do together as a family, and they're “hoping this stays a tradition for a long time.” ★

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County Shelter Dog Recruited into Search Dog Rescue Program

By Allison Harris,
Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County's Bradshaw Animal Shelter intakes thousands of pets in the community each year. Most of these pets are reunited with their owners or are able to find loving forever homes to be adopted into. However, some shelter pets have a difficult time finding a normal adoptive home which is where the shelter's foster and rescue program steps in. The foster and rescue program works with local foster and rescue providers in the community to help shelter pets that need a little extra assistance on the way to their happy ending.

Foster care providers provide temporary care outside of the shelter to animals such as those too young for adoption, needing to recover from an illness or injury, for behavior modification, or just because they need a break from the stresses of shelter life. Rescue group partners are also a huge help as they pull shelter animals who otherwise have a difficult time being adopted due to age, medical condition or the need for behavioral modification that cannot be resolved in a foster home.

Recently, a shelter dog named Chapo was having a difficult time finding the perfect home to suit his mental and physical stimulation needs. After a month of no luck with potential adopters, shelter staff soon realized the Belgian Malinois would never be happy in a pet-only home due to his high energy,



Bradshaw Animal Shelter dog Chapo is a Belgian Malinois. Photo: Sac County

drive and intelligence. So, they reached out the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation (NDSDF). NDSDF is an organization based in Santa Paula, California that strengthens disaster response across America by rescuing and recruiting dogs and partnering them with firefighters and other first responders to find people buried alive in the wreckage of disasters.

"Groups such as NDSDF give dogs that have no chance of placement in a normal pet home an opportunity for a great outcome and a chance to truly thrive in the world," said Shasta Stratton-Quirk, the shelter animal care attendant who reached out to the rescue. "Because some dogs are not able to be adopted out through normal routes, it is the job of the foster and rescue team to find an outlet where they can reach their true potential. We cannot wait to see what the future holds for Chapo!"

After viewing videos of Chapo's amazing agility skills, drive and personality, NDSDF quickly arranged for a flight to

recruit him and he was on his way to Santa Paula. Thanks to the shelter's rescue partners and the care and dedication of our shelter staff, Chapo is on the path to have a greater purpose to help save the lives of others. In the meantime, NDSDF is letting him settle into his new environment. They report that Chapo is working on obedience training and manners, learning fitness exercises, playing with and meeting his trainers, and will enjoy a trip to their "doggy day spa" where he will receive a well-deserved bath and nail trim.

To learn more about the shelter's foster and rescue program or becoming a foster care provider, visit the fostering webpage. To watch Chapo's recruitment video, visit the Bradshaw Animal Shelter's Facebook page.

Bradshaw Animal Shelter is located at 3839 Bradshaw Rd, Sacramento, CA 95827. For more information visit animal-care.sacounty.net/Pages/default.aspx ★

California Reopens

Continued from page 1

Here are six things you should know about where infections, deaths and vaccinations stand today.

At the peak of the pandemic, 17% of people in California tested for COVID-19 were infected. For about a month now, it's been under 1%.

Last week, California recorded between 792 to 1,136 new infections every day. That's comparable to the early days of the pandemic last spring.

Hospitalizations also have been on a downward trend for several months. As of Friday, 1,263 people statewide were hospitalized with COVID-19 and another 261 were in intensive care. During the mid-January peak, more than 22,000 infected people were hospitalized and more than 4,800 were in ICUs.

It's a new record low: Hospitalizations are now less than half what they were in mid-October, when around 3,000 infected people were hospitalized, according to the 14-day average.

At one point in the winter, nearly two dozen counties had fewer than 10 available ICU beds. In many cases, hospitals had to turn away patients or transfer them to hospitals hundreds of miles away.

The tragedies, however, remain. Fifty-five more people were added Friday to California's pandemic death toll, which now includes 62,593 people.

In the past few weeks, California has recorded among the lowest numbers in daily COVID-19 deaths, with numbers similar to April 2020.

About two-thirds of eligible residents have received at least one dose of the vaccine. And as the governor likes to remind us, California has administered almost 16 million more doses than the next most populous state, Texas.

State health officials don't set a vaccination goal for

herd or community immunity, since children under 12 – 15% of the population – cannot yet be vaccinated and previously infected people may already be protected.

But experts say that 70% to 85% of the total population must be fully vaccinated to reach large-scale protection against the virus.

The state tracks vaccination progress for those eligible by county. As of last week, Marin County led with 75% vaccinated among its 12 and older population. Lassen County ranked last with 22%. The top six counties with the highest percentage of vaccinated populations are in the Bay Area.

Experts say another wave of infections is possible. But they add that it probably won't be as severe as the past surges, when labs were overwhelmed with tests and hospitals exceeded their capacity.

Dr. Mark Ghaly, the state's health and human services secretary, said he expects to see outbreaks, especially in counties with lower vaccination rates. "It's at those moments of an outbreak that we need to be ready to vaccinate additional people," he said.

About 56.5% of Black residents and 55% of Latinos have not been immunized, compared to 38% of white residents and 15.5% of Asian Americans, according to the state's vaccination breakdown.

That means the groups that were harmed the most by the virus are still facing the most risk. Mistrust in the health system and vaccine hesitancy are barriers, but experts say access issues, like the inability to take time off work and lack of transportation are likely the bigger issue.

A significant portion of California's seniors – about 1.5 million of them – have not yet been vaccinated, despite being among the most vulnerable to the virus.

Seniors make up almost 16% of the state's population,

but 73% of COVID-related deaths. Still, 22% of them have not been vaccinated.

People 65 and older have been eligible for shots since mid-January, although the first few weeks were riddled with confusion and supply issues.

Many seniors may be facing access issues. If they don't drive, they likely rely on family members' schedules. If they are ill or homebound, they might be waiting for public health departments and providers to come to them.

Experts say it also will be important to see how infections play out among kids, many who will be heading back to the classroom soon for the first time in a long time. About 34% of children ages 12 through 17 have received at least one dose.

Vaccines for the approximate 6 million children in California younger than 12 years may not be available well until the fall. Last month, Pfizer said it expects to seek emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration for its vaccine for kids 2 to 11 years old in September.

Ghaly said there are two reasons people may need booster shots – waning immunity and the need for additional protection because of a more dangerous variant.

"I pray that it is very unlikely that it's the variant problem," Ghaly said. But if needed, California is ready to re-up mass-vaccination efforts, he said.

Like with many other diseases, immunity from vaccination can decrease eventually, but because COVID-19 is new, it's unclear how long protection will last.

Ana is a Sacramento-based health reporter. She joined CalMatters in 2020 after four years at Kaiser Health News, where she covered California health care and policy. ★

14TH ANNUAL

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Dare to Live Without Limits

by Bryan Golden

Nice People Finish First



Chances are that you've heard the expression, "nice guys finish last." Nothing could be further from the truth. This statement is used by many to justify less than ethical treatment of others.

Under the guise of not wanting to finish last, people engage in inconsiderate conduct. At best, this type of behavior will give the illusion of short-term gains. These apparent gains come with a high price; the forfeiture of building a solid foundation of living which will last a lifetime.

Being nice is not synonymous with subjugating your dignity or your right to assert yourself. Don't allow yourself to be used as a doormat. Everyone, at one time or another, has been in a situation where they felt obligated or pressured to agree to do something that they didn't want to.

Being nice entails being considerate, polite, respectful and thoughtful. Being nice means not elevating yourself by stepping on others. Being nice requires understanding that you are not better than someone else and no one is better than you. Being nice compels you to help people without expecting anything in return.

Unfortunately, there are those who view being nice as a sign of weakness and as an invitation to take advantage. However, no one can take advantage of you without your permission and

participation.

Your response when someone tries to take advantage of you sets a precedent that determines how you are subsequently treated. Unless you make your limits clear, people will continually try to push your boundaries.

Your limits will be tested on several fronts: at work, by family, and by friends. Each situation requires a different approach. At work you have an obligation to perform certain services in return for your pay. But when requests fall outside your normal job responsibilities, you must decide whether you want to or should comply.

It's not uncommon to experience direct or implied pressure that your employment or advancement might be affected if you say no. This is a very uncomfortable position to be in, but it happens.

Be clear in your own mind what your limits are. Don't allow yourself to be held hostage because you are afraid to say no to unreasonable or inappropriate requests.

If you are so concerned by job security that you won't say no, you essentially broadcast that you have no limits. As a result, you will continually be taken advantage of. When appropriate, say no, and you will usually find that nothing bad happens and you are treated with more respect.

Requests from family and friends are somewhat different. Guilt and peer pressure

is used to cajole you into doing what someone else wants. Exceed your boundaries and you will be taken advantage of repeatedly. Decline requests with politeness and a smile.

Be diplomatic by saying things like "Thank you for asking, but I have a prior obligation" or "I've already made other plans" or "If you had only asked me sooner" or "Thanks for thinking of me but that's not something I'm interested in."

Sometimes you will decline a request because of the way you've been treated. If this is the case, don't express it as your reason for saying no. Take the high road and don't get caught in the trap of retribution. All that matters is that you don't do what you don't want to do. You are not obligated to justify your actions or explain yourself.

If you don't respect your own limits, no one else will. Demand respect and you'll receive it. Get in the habit of not allowing others to take advantage of you.

NOW AVAILABLE: "Dare to Live Without Limits," the book. Visit www.BryanGolden.com or your bookstore. Bryan is a management consultant, motivational speaker, author, and adjunct professor. E-mail Bryan at bryan@columnist.com or write him c/o this paper. © 2021 Bryan Golden ★

Ask Toni

Why Did COBRA Cost Me \$40K in Medical Expenses?

Reader Alert: Many employer benefit group plans terminate the day you are no longer working full-time. Explore employer group medical plan rules and options with Medicare if you or your spouse are 65 or older.



Toni King

Toni:

I need your Medicare guidance because this March, I was rushed to the ER because of kidney failure caused from stage 4 of prostate cancer that has now spread to my pelvic bones.

Because I was working full-time, I took a leave of absence with short-term disability in January for 60 days while receiving my cancer treatment. Short term disability ended on March 15th and so I was placed on long term disability.

I was informed, while in the hospital for cancer treatment, that I had qualified for long term disability and would no longer be part of the company's health plan since I was not a full-time employee. COBRA would begin immediately.

My wife and I enrolled and paid for COBRA, so that I could continue with medical care where I am having cancer treatment. It took 6 weeks to get the paperwork to Social Security for me to enroll in Part B, since I was not working full-time, and my Medicare Part B began June 1st.

Now my Cobra nightmare begins... because COBRA

is only paying the 20% of medical/doctor bills and I was billed the 80% because I was not enrolled in Medicare Part B which has totaled over \$40K.

Please help me solve this COBRA financial nightmare.

~ Thanks, Robert, San Diego

Robert:

The Toni Says team will do all that we can to help you solve this problem with your \$40K Medicare Part B medical bill fiasco.

Those reading this article need to realize the seriousness of Medicare and insurance rules.

The Medicare & You handbook discusses topics such as "Special Enrollment Period" and "Should I Get Part B". It states that COBRA is not considered coverage based on current employer benefits.

You have **8 months** to sign up for Medicare Part B without a penalty if you are not "working full-time or have lost your company benefits whichever comes first. The 8-month period will run whether you choose COBRA or not. If you choose COBRA, do not wait until your COBRA ends in 18 months to enroll in Part B. This time period is past the 8-month period, and one will receive the famous "Medicare Part B penalty which go all the way back to when one enrolled in Medicare Part A.

Robert, you did everything correctly to enroll in

Medicare Part B by contacting Social Security and faxing the CMS-L564 form "Request for Employment Information" signed by your company's HR and CMS-40B form "Application for Part B". You were within the correct time limits.

You are in a Medicare "glitch" and the insurance plan is using "Coordination of Benefits" as their ruling.

Group health insurance plans are a state regulated plan not a Medicare regulated plan. Since you are past 65 and already enrolled in Medicare Part A, the health plan is passing the 80% of the doctor/medical bills on Part B to Medicare. You were not enrolled in Medicare Part B yet to pick up the difference.

It will take time to straighten this out but there is hope for you. The Toni Says® Medicare team is here to fight for you!

The good news is that COBRA plans are a creditable prescription drug coverage plans and you are eligible for a Special Enrollment Period for Medicare Part D without receiving a Medicare Part D penalty.

Toni King, Medicare author/advocate is giving a \$5 discount to the Toni Says® readers on the new 2021 Medicare Survival Guide® Advanced book at www.tonisays.com. Have a Medicare question? Call 832/519-8664 or email info@tonisays.com. ★

How Should California Confront Wildfire Threat?



By Dan Walters
CALMatters

Physicist Albert Einstein is widely, albeit erroneously, thought to have said that "insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results," but regardless of its source, the aphorism accurately reflects California's attitude about wildfires.

Year after year, destructive fires whip through communities in the "wildland-urban interface," often killing those who cannot or will not leave their homes and causing untold billions of dollars in property losses.

The frequency and severity of wildfires appear to be increasing as our climate changes, droughts persist and greenery dries and becomes explosive fuel. What was once a relatively brief fire season in late summer and early fall has morphed into a year-around peril.

And yet, more often than not, burned-over land soon sprouts new housing whose owners and tenants once again place themselves in harm's way.

A new study by UC Berkeley's Center for Community Innovation, commissioned by the think tank Next 10, attributes this seemingly loony practice to misguided state and local policies that incentivize reconstruction in

fire-prone areas.

"Wildfire threatens the lives and homes of more than one-quarter of California's population," F. Noel Perry, the founder of Next 10, said in a statement that accompanied the report. "We must overhaul local and state policies and planning procedures to ensure that we are not incentivizing actions that elevate wildfire risks."

The study found that replacing current homes in high-risk areas would cost at least \$610 billion and that huge number scares insurers. As they pay out huge sums to burned-out policyholders and the danger of future catastrophic losses increases, insurers either shun coverage altogether or impose steep hikes on premiums.

"With climate-fueled wildfires scorching hundreds of thousands of acres, causing the loss of life and property, wildfire insurance availability has shrunk while the premiums charged have increased," a commission appointed by Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara declared recently.

Insurance is required by mortgage lenders and many property owners, unable to purchase coverage in the private market, have turned to a statewide insurance pool of last resort that has high premiums and limited coverage.

The Next 10 study recommends that the wildfire risk be approached by overhauling land use policies that lack "incentives to avoid building in fire-prone areas" and thus are "contributing to the persistent and increasing risk of significant economic and human costs associated with wildfires."

Land use in California is

largely controlled by state and county governments through zoning and construction permitting. The state's housing crisis has demonstrated that those governments are often reluctant to approve high-density housing, especially that meant for low- and moderate-income renters, within urban areas.

However, as the Next 10 study points out, they tend to be more supportive of housing, especially single-family homes, in urban peripheries, which also tend to be the areas of the highest wildfire risk.

The report proposes "moving homes out of the WUI (Wildlands-Urban Interface), incorporating greenbelts and wildfire buffers, increasing density in existing commercial cores, adding gentle density in the form of 'missing middle' housing and accessory dwelling units to areas not in the WUI, and embracing manufactured housing as an affordable-by-design approach."

Lara's commission, meanwhile, suggests insurance premiums based on forecasts of future peril, rather than past experience, blanket policies that spread risk, rewards for making homes more resistant to damage and other steps that can mitigate not only wildfire impacts but the less obvious risk of destructive flooding.

Both studies underscore a fact we ignore at our existential peril: Despite its many attributes, living in California means living with constant threat of catastrophe.

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

SAFE CU Adds New Board Members

By Micah Grant,
SAFE Credit Union

FOLSOM, CA (MPG) - SAFE Credit Union is pleased to announce two new board members have been appointed to its Board of Directors. Sonia Lewis and Donald Ball bring decades of experience in leadership positions to support SAFE's mission and serve its members.

SAFE board members serve on a voluntary basis and work with SAFE's executive management to ensure every decision is made with members' financial well-being in mind and that SAFE complies with all credit union bylaws and government regulations. Directors lead SAFE's commitment to helping our region thrive.

"Don Ball and Sonia Lewis will bring fresh perspectives and welcome insights from their years of executive-level leadership," says Terrance Tremelling, chair of the SAFE Credit Union Board of Directors. **"I look forward to working with both of them as we position SAFE to be a leading financial institution and influence in the Greater Sacramento region."**



Sonia Lewis

Sonia Lewis is a highly skilled collaborative leader known for adeptly navigating challenges to achieve better results. Her expertise includes executive leadership development; diversity, equity, and inclusion; performance management, and finance. With nearly 20 years of multinational company

experience across high-tech, management consulting and financial services, plus years of board and public sector service, Sonia brings deep executive-level experience and broad perspective to the SAFE Credit Union Board.

She previously served as Board Vice Chair for an education nonprofit and chaired the Strategic Planning Committee. She also was a member of Intel's Black Leadership Council and its Black Network of Executive Women – both focused on fair representation, inclusion, career development, progression and retention of African American employees to accelerate business impact and results.

"I'm passionate about SAFE's mission to look out for the financial security of our members by ensuring they are well taken care of," says Lewis. **"Financial literacy is a passion of mine. SAFE is an opportunity for me to give back, learn, and share my knowledge with (the) membership."**

Lewis is also committed to being a steward of SAFE's initiatives to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace and in serving its members. "DEI is something that's very important to me as well," she says.

Lewis earned an MS in Business with concentrations in Finance & Management from Johns Hopkins University and a BA in Economics/Business from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), graduating Phi Beta Kappa with Honors.

Don Ball has had a distinguished career in finance. He was recently the chief financial officer for family-owned Foster Poultry Farms LLC, the leading chicken and poultry provider for the Western United States and currently serves on the



Don Ball

Board of Directors for Crystal Creamery-Foster Farms' Dairy. He was also the chief financial officer of VSP Global, a fully integrated eye care company operating in 100 nations and \$5.3 billion in revenue.

"Being on the board is about service to SAFE's members," Ball says, **"and I look forward to that opportunity to serve. I have focused much of my career in family-owned or private companies, which has allowed me to broaden (my) financial experience while also being more customer focused. I look forward to bringing that experience to SAFE."**

As a senior executive with 40 years of experience, Ball has led all aspects of finance, accounting, tax, treasury, audit, and underwriting. He also has extensive corporate governance experience, serving as a representative of the VSP Global Board of Directors, Finance, Retirement, Public Policy, and Audit committees. Prior to his work with VSP Global, Mr. Ball was SVP and CFO of Raley's grocery stores, including the Sunnyside and Bayview brands.

Ball also extends his leadership and insights to area nonprofits, including as a former board member of Make-A-Wish Foundation Sacramento and Northern California. He has been a frequent guest lecturer at CSU Sacramento. He earned his MBA from Pace University in New York City and a BS from Marist College. ★



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By Marlys Johnsen Norris, Christian Author

Being Perfected in the Faith

No one is "perfect"!!! Some people think they are. One day they will "fall from their high peek of self-importance".

Even as people of faith, none of us have come into a place of perfection. However, we are getting better with the help of God. Depending on our avenue of seeking and learning in the "walk of new faith" to learn and understand the Holy Words of God, then apply it them to our lives, we do grow and change in many areas of our lives. Certainly not to please ourselves but to please God!

In the beginning we had no faith at all but as our new faith and trust in God is established we are miraculously healed, transformed, and delivered from areas where we needed to be changed. Nothing is a surprise to God about us! God knows all about our weaknesses and sin natures that needed to be corrected. His Holy Spirit is constantly at work in our lives to teach us a better way of life and to help us find victory over them.

Christian growth becomes evident in our lives when we **"Delight thyself in the Lord and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in him: and he shall bring it to pass."** (Psalm 7:4-5)

The testimony of ones life and what God has done becomes real to them on a continued regular basis

throughout a lifetime. Eventually, as one discovers a personal and intimate relationship with God, they learn the following: **"That we (you) might (and will) walk worthy of the Lord into (being) all pleasing (to God), being fruitful in every good work and (constantly) increasing in the (personal) knowledge of God. (and His love for all mankind)"** (Colossians 1:10)

The love, grace and mercy of God are TRULY AMAZING as they become the reality in a Christian's life. It is the abundant life God promises in His Holy Word, the Bible. Don't put off making this important decision another day! Join US!

Marlys Johnsen Norris
Christian Author and ARM Columnist since 2006
Stephen's Minister
Marlysjn@gmail.com
PO Box 114,
Orangevale, CA 95662 ★



First Ladies

There has been such a diversity of First Ladies in the White House. Do you have a favorite? There have been 47 officially recognized as America's First Lady from contributors to game changer campaigners. Amy Russo discovered much about these ladies in the 230 year history of our country. They had as much personality as their President spouses. Amy shared a few of those stories with me from her book "Women of the White House" on my POPPOFF Radio Show. Amy is a city reporter for the Providence Journal, but has written for the Washington Post, USA Today, and NBC News to name just a few. Take a look.

- MARTHA WASHINGTON DIDN'T WANT THE JOB.** Neither did her successor Abigail Adams. Both were reluctant to take on the role, feeling that it would constrain their behavior and make life dull. There was a handful of women who recoiled at the title FLOTUS.
- LONG BEFORE MELANIA TRUMP, LOUISA ADAMS WAS AMERICA'S FIRST FOREIGN-BORN FIRST LADY.** Born in London, just one year before the U.S. would claim its independence. Louisa's birthplace became political ammunition for John Quincy's foes.
- WELL BEFORE BECOMING FIRST LADY, JULIA TYLER'S FIRST MAJOR PUBLIC APPEARANCE WAS IN AN AD FOR A NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT STORE AT AGE 19.** The image used her nickname, "Rose of Long Island," rather than her real name. The publicity was a scandal for her family which sent her to Europe for a while to shake off attention.
- LUCY HAYES APPEARS TO BE HAVE BEEN THE FIRST WOMAN WITH A COLLEGE DEGREE.** She graduated from Cincinnati's Wesleyan's Female College in 1850.
- HELEN TAFT WAS CREDITED**

FOR PROMOTING HER HUSBAND TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT. She helped William Taft to network during highbrow social gatherings where he would discuss local politics, and long-supported his career development from law school to the white house.

- EDITH WILSON CAME VERY CLOSE TO WIELDING REAL POWER.** When Woodrow Wilson was incapacitated by a stroke, Edith liaised with politicians, studied papers and briefed her husband. There is speculation she overstated her role.
- LOU HOOVER SPOKE CHINESE WHICH SHE HONED LIVING ABROAD WITH HERBERT HOOVER.** He worked as a mining engineer. She also spoke Latin.
- FLORENCE HARDING AND BETTY FORD DIVORCED HUSBANDS BEFORE MARRYING MEN WHO BECAME PRESIDENT.** Rachel Jackson had attempted to divorce her husband who was abusive, but it was never finalized.
- HILLARY CLINTON'S DEBUT IN NATIONAL NEWS OCCURRED AFTER HER GRADUATION FROM WELLESLEY COLLEGE.** She was the first student to give a commencement speech. Following a speech from Republican senator Edward Brooke who presented what Hillary deemed a defense of Richard Nixon's presidency, she scrapped her prepared speech and publicly scolded him. It earned her a mention in LIFE Magazine and a dismissive review from THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE.
- THE FIRST LADYSHIP IS A CEREMONIAL POSITION.** Neither the role nor its duties have ever been officially defined and it doesn't pay.

You can follow Amy on Twitter and enjoy her perspective on these women in "Women of the White House." Love insider info!!! ★

Will We Be Served Coffee in Heaven?

Dr. James L. Snyder

The last several weeks have truly been hectic in every sense of the word. Trying to catch up can be a never-ending job. When I think I'm caught up, I see another thing I need to do.

This week I reached a three-week milestone. I was delighted.

That milestone was, I had accomplished every job that I needed to do. I don't have to tell you that that doesn't happen very often; in fact, this may be the first time it has ever happened to me.

Reaching this milestone, I was utterly exhausted. I came home and sat in my easy chair, hoping I'll never have to get up again.

As I got comfortable, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage asked, "Would you like a cup of coffee?"

I can't think of any time or place I would say no to that offer.

She got herself a cup of coffee and joined me in the living room to sit back and relax after all of this work.

As I'm sipping that first sip, I just feel the weight of the world lifting off my shoulders. What would my life be without coffee?

As we were sitting there, she asked a question, "Do you think they will serve us

coffee in heaven?"

All the good my coffee does for me would cause me to hope there is coffee in heaven.

No matter what my day is like or how stressed I am, a nice hot cup of coffee takes my focus off of the problems I'm having.

Quite often, when I'm out doing things, I try to find a little place where they serve coffee so that I can sit down and relax.

In one little café I visit, I have a strict rule, "Refill my coffee every five minutes." That takes care of my anxiety.

Back to my wife's question, "Do you think they will serve us coffee in heaven?"

For one, there is no stress in heaven like we have in our world today. Just when you think our world can't get any more stressful, surprise! It does.

Just when you think you have seen the worst, surprise! You haven't.

Without stress in heaven, it would not be necessary to have coffee. However, I would be delighted to sit down somewhere with the apostle Paul and have a cup of coffee together. You learn things over a cup of coffee that you can't learn anywhere else.

There's a whole list of people I would like to sit down with and have coffee in heaven.

The coffee there would not be for taking care of stress but rather enjoying fellowship together. That is another aspect of a hot cup of coffee.

Imagine if you would, a bunch of us in heaven sitting around the table enjoying a cup of coffee when at the head of the table is none other than Jesus Christ.

Drinking coffee with friends releases a spirit of fellowship like none other.

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

I'm not sure about the coffee in heaven, but I do know we will have a stress-free time of fellowship with other believers as well as with Christ himself. I'm looking forward to that.

Dr. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, 1471 Pine Road, Ocala, FL 34472. He lives with his wife in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 352-687-4240 or e-mail jamesnyder2@att.net. The church web site is www.whatafellowship.com. ★

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STATEPOINT CROSSWORD • THE 4TH OF JULY

- CLUES**
- ACROSS
- Steps to the river, in India
 - Hot springs resort
 - Meal in a shell
 - Driver's misbehavior?
 - *Grilling technique
 - Medal of Honor descriptor
 - Cracked open
 - What Knave of Hearts stole from Queen of Hearts, sing.
 - Raise one's rank
 - *July 4th pyrotechnic display
 - Hubble Space Telescope operator, acr.
 - Chip dip
 - i topper
 - *Main Street tradition on the 4th
 - Superlative of fummy
 - Ribonucleic acid
 - Store as fodder
 - Moonfish
 - Rose oil
 - Number cruncher
 - Fairytale garden dweller
 - Indian Lilac tree
 - Extinct type of zebra
 - Steampunk decoration
 - Did 2 + 2 (2 words)
 - Crocheted blanket
 - Swedish shag rug
 - Ancient port city in Israel
 - Smiley face
 - *First President to hold July 4th celebration at the White House
 - Snoop Dogg's "Gin and"
 - Medicinal succulent
 - Hit the bottle
 - Earthenware pots
 - View from a high-speed train?
 - Observer
 - "Glengarry ____ Ross"
 - G. in solfa
 - "The Fountainhead" author
- DOWN
- Former tennis pro Steffi
 - One who's made the pilgrimage to Mecca
 - Petri dish filler
 - Mother of Calcutta
 - Roebuck's partner
 - a.k.a. anorak
 - A in B.A.
 - **No ____ without representation"
 - Unfortunately, exclamation
 - *Drink to wash down burgers and hot dogs?
 - Table scrap
 - Steal, past participle
 - What haters spew?
 - Crane or heron
 - Expecting woman's date
 - Life force in Sanskrit
 - Chipped in
 - What Motion Picture Association of America did
 - *Most popular July 4th decoration
 - Notable period
 - Polynesian island country
 - Feudal lord
 - Fish a.k.a. porgy
 - Beer acronym
 - *Lee Greenwood's "Proud to Be

Crossword Puzzle Solutions on Page 7

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13			14			
15				16			17			
18				19			20			
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62				63			64			

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4	7	8								
8							1			
				3	8		6			
6			8	5	3		1			
5	7	1								
	2									

Solutions on Page 7

Find Puzzles on Page 7

G	H	A	T		S	P	A		T	A	C	O					
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G	L	E	N			S	O	L			R	A	N	D			

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Sudoku Puzzle on Page 7

6	4	1	3	9	8	7	5	2
5	7	8	4	1	2	9	6	3
2	3	9	5	7	6	1	4	8
4	1	7	8	6	9	2	3	5
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Sacramento County Recommended Budget Approved

By Kim Nava, Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously on June 10 to approve the \$6.5 billion recommended budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22.

"We are fortunate that in spite of the pandemic, the County is in relatively good fiscal shape for the upcoming fiscal year," said Board Chair Sue Frost, District 4 Supervisor. "This budget avoided significant reductions in programs and included new investments in a number of important areas."

The \$6.5 billion budget consists of \$2.437 billion in Enterprise and Special Revenue Fund expenditures (funded through utility rates, fees and other dedicated revenue), \$3.147 billion in General Fund, and \$947 million in Restricted Funds (funded with federal, State revenue dedicated for a particular purpose).

"We have been faced with many profound challenges both locally and nationally this past year," said Interim County Executive Ann Edwards. "The County was able to weather fiscal challenges last year and as we look forward to the next fiscal year, I am excited to implement initiatives, plans and processes to accomplish real change and advancement in the County."

"In this next fiscal year, we will sharpen the County's focus on diversity, equity and inclusion across County departments and in the community. Additionally, we will have a more robust community engagement element to our budget processes for FY 2022-23."

In addition to maintaining existing services, the budget reflects a commitment to:

- Address equity and inclusion issues; **Address the needs of homelessness** on our community; **Provide an alternative to police response** to people experiencing mental illness; **Address critical needs for capital improvements in the Parks system** and at the Mather Community Campus; and, **improve the condition of County roads.**

The budget recognized new areas of growth, including annual commitments of:

\$12 million to fund a non-law enforcement Alternative Emergency Response to people experiencing mental health issues in the unincorporated County and all cities except for the City of Sacramento;

\$5.9 million to fund a Homeless Encampment Initiative designed to get people without housing in the unincorporated County off the streets and into temporary and eventually permanent housing;

\$5 million to fund the Probation Department's Monitored Pre-trial Release Program;

\$6.8 million to fund continued efforts to meet the County's obligations under the Mays Consent decree regarding conditions of confinement in the County's jails;

\$6.4 million in grant funding for the epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) Enhancing Detection Expansion Program in Public Health that supports epidemiology and laboratory services for COVID-19 and to prepare and address other emerging infectious diseases;

\$2.5 million to fund an additional Foster

Care Unit, two additional Emergency Response Units and two additional Public Health Nurses in Child Protection Services, which will reduce caseloads per social worker;

\$2.2 million for increased processing costs related to organic solid waste;

\$1.2 million to fund the Public Defender's Pre-Trial Release and Expungement programs, which assists offenders who have served their term expunge their records in order to get housing and jobs.

One-time growth included:

Transfer of \$22.5 million from the General Fund and the Roads Fund to spend on County road pavement rehabilitation projects where the road is on the verge of needing much more costly full reconstruction;

\$4.4 million to cover the cost of the special gubernatorial recall election that is likely to occur in FY2021-22;

Transfer of \$4.4 million from the General Fund to the Parks Construction Fund to begin addressing the \$72 million backlog in Regional Parks capital needs;

Transfer of \$1 million from the General Fund to the Capital Construction Fund to start addressing the \$11 million backlog in Mather Community Campus capital needs. If resources are available, the plan is to transfer an additional \$4 million in the September Final Budget.

The recommended budget included approximately \$5.3 million in program expenditure reductions. The reductions were primarily categorical reductions, meaning the reductions are due to a reduction in State or federal

revenue. There are also non-categorical reductions, which are reductions that departments have indicated that the reduction will improve efficiency or not have a negative impact on services provided by the department. The departments with the largest reductions include:

Probation, with a \$4.4 million reduction due to completion of the Monitored Pre-trial Release Pilot Program, which had been funded for two years with State grant and Realignment revenue. However, funding for this program, which is no longer a pilot, is restored by a recommended growth request funded by \$3 million in County costs and \$2 million in remaining State grant funds.

Sheriff, with a \$428,000 reduction in expenditures due to the end of the Department of Justice Tobacco Grant funding. This will eliminate the Tobacco Abatement Team, which worked to mitigate juvenile tobacco use through education and proactive enforcement.

For details, read the County Executive's Budget Letter or view the budget documents on the Office of Budget and Debt Management website.

The numbers on the Recommended Budget will change between now and September, when the County receives new information, including the impact of the State Budget and updated revenue totals. The Final Budget will come back to the Board of Supervisors in September for review and adoption.

By the Numbers: \$6.5 B: Total Budget; \$3.1 B: General Fund; \$2.4 B: Enterprise and Special Revenue; \$947 M: Restricted Funds; 12,760: Number of Employees. ★

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Two Arrested for EDD Fraud Totaling More Than \$600,000



By Shelly Orio, Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - On February 2, 2021, the Sacramento Police Department North Gang Enforcement Team conducted a traffic stop on 24-year-old Adrian Sykes and found him to be in possession of a fully automatic Glock handgun. Officers conducted a probation search of his residence and seized drugs, body armor and five additional firearms. Those firearms included a loaded Masterpiece Arms Mac-9 with no serial number, an Anderson Manufacturing AR-15, and an unregistered loaded ABC Rifle AR-Pistol. Officers also found six Employment Development

Department (EDD) debit cards. At that time, Sykes was charged with six counts of being a felon in possession of a firearm, one count of possessing drugs with a firearm, and one count of being a felon in possession of ammunition. Sykes posted bail on these offenses and was released from custody.

The Sacramento County District Attorney's Office, Sacramento Police Department, and EDD conducted a joint investigation into the six EDD cards that were located. They found that Sykes and his girlfriend, 26-year-old Brittney Murchison, had filed multiple fraudulent EDD claims. In total, 35 different fraudulent claims were filed using the personal identifying information of victims from across the country and over \$600,000 was illegally obtained.

The Sacramento Police Department North Gang Enforcement Team arrested Brittney Murchison on May 27, 2021 for committing EDD fraud. Murchison was charged with 16 counts of EDD fraud and one count

of identity theft. Sykes was located and arrested in Las Vegas, Nevada on June 7, 2021 by agents of the Las Vegas Metro Police Department and agents from the Federal Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms. Sykes is currently in custody in Las Vegas pending extradition to Sacramento, California where he will face an additional 35 counts of EDD fraud and one count of identity theft.

According to District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert, "Law enforcement across the state has witnessed staggering EDD fraud committed by criminals and their accomplices. At the same time, we have witnessed an alarming increase of illegal firearms in our communities. This dangerous combination undoubtedly has fueled a dramatic increase in violent crime throughout the state. Sacramento's law enforcement agencies will continue to partner together to investigate EDD fraud and the additional havoc it brings to our community." ★

Update on Specialty Team Deployment of Body Worn Cameras

By Sergeant Rod Grassmann, Sacramento Sheriff's Office

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Sheriff's Office has completed its field-based personnel body worn camera implementation as of May 31, 2021, just slightly ahead of schedule and after a 3 year long process of requesting, budgeting and testing with the County Board of Supervisors. North, Central, East Patrol and Rancho Cordova Police Department, as well as the specialty teams of North POP, North HOT, Major Crimes, Special Enforcement Detail (SED) Gang Suppression Unit and Community Service Officers are utilizing body worn cameras during the duration of their shift. Additional Sacramento County Sheriff's Office personnel will be outfitted with body cams pending Board of Supervisor budgetary approval.

The Sacramento County Sheriff's

Office is proud of how our deputies provide service to the community they serve. We look forward to our new ability to showcase our deputy's professionalism and are confident recording their everyday activities and interactions with the community. The Sacramento Sheriff's Office is a leader in our profession, innovation and best practices. Body worn cameras will allow the Office of the Sheriff to remain on the cutting edge of technology while providing quality "Service with Concern" to the citizens of Sacramento County.

The Sacramento County Sheriff's Office is cognizant of the privacy concerns of our community. Our Deputies have been trained regarding the recording of victims of crimes. Victims can request the camera be turned off and the investigating deputy will in most instances honor that request. All body worn camera videos will be in compliance with the Public Records Act. ★

All Adults Should Get Tested for Hepatitis C

By Brenda Bongiorno, Sacramento County News

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - An estimated 2.4 million people are living with hepatitis C in the United States. However, many don't know they are infected because chronic hepatitis C does not have symptoms for 20 years or more. By that time, serious damage can occur to your liver and can lead to death. The good news is that life-saving treatments can cure hepatitis C in 8 to 12 weeks to prevent further liver damage, cirrhosis and liver cancer. Getting tested for hepatitis C is the first step.

"We want to educate the community that lives can be saved just by getting tested for hepatitis C. This virus is the leading cause of liver cancer and liver transplants," said Sacramento County Health Officer Dr. Olivia Kasirye.

The liver is a vital organ that processes nutrients, filters the blood and fights infections. Hepatitis causes inflammation of the liver that can affect its function. Although hepatitis is caused by a virus and exposure to the blood of an infected person most often, toxins, some medications, certain medical conditions and heavy alcohol use can also cause hepatitis. The most common types of viral hepatitis in the U.S. are hepatitis A, hepatitis B and hepatitis C. Although all types of viral hepatitis can cause similar symptoms, they are spread in different ways, have different treatments, and some types of hepatitis are more serious than others.

Hepatitis C is caused by the hepatitis C virus. When someone is first infected with the hepatitis C virus, they can have

a very mild illness with few symptoms or could require hospitalization. Less than half of people who get hepatitis C are able to get rid of the virus without treatment. Those who get infected will likely develop a chronic lifelong infection, which left untreated can cause serious health problems including liver disease, liver failure, liver cancer and death.

CDC recommends you get tested for hepatitis C if you: Are 18 years old and older; Are pregnant (get tested during each pregnancy); Currently inject drugs (get tested regularly); Have ever injected drugs, even if it was just once or many years ago; Have HIV; Have abnormal liver tests or liver disease; Are on hemodialysis; Received donated blood or organs before July 1992; Received clotting factor concentrates before 1987; Have been exposed to blood from a person who has hepatitis C; Were born to a mother with hepatitis C.

The hepatitis C test is a blood test that looks for HCV antibodies to find out if someone has ever been infected with the hepatitis C virus. Test results can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks to come back. Rapid anti-HCV tests are available in some health clinics and the results of these tests are available in 20 to 30 minutes. If you are positive for the HCV antibodies, a follow-up test called NAT/PCR test will be done.

Learn more about hepatitis C and talk to your doctor about getting tested for hepatitis C - it could save your life. You can also contact the Sacramento County Sexual Health Clinic for testing, call 916-875-1551 or go to www.SacSexualHealth.org for more information. ★

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Tips for 2021 Graduates to Prepare for a Fiercely Competitive Job Market

Commentary
by Krista Wignall

Colleges may return to normalcy in a few months as the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines continues. Meanwhile, in sharp contrast to that positive news, millions of college students will graduate this spring facing bleak employment prospects.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused unemployment to soar in 2020 and is expected to affect the job market for graduates again this year. Some labor analysts see the pandemic perhaps having this ripple effect on graduates for years to come. These sobering trends are why students should expand their preparation for the job market and know what action steps they need to take, says Vince Thompson (www.meltatl.com), founder and CEO of the marketing agency MELT and author of Building Brand You: How To Use Your College Experience To Find And Win Your First Job.

“Thanks to COVID-19, if you’re in college right now or recently graduated, you’re facing the toughest job market in our lifetime,” Thompson says. “With so many people unemployed and displaced, people will be willing to take a lesser job for a lesser salary just to get back in the market.”

“To use a fishing analogy, it’s going to take a lot of casts to get a few bites for interviews and ultimately land the job. But don’t let that discourage you. Instead, let it inspire you to grow and learn what you need to know to set yourself apart from other candidates. It’s all about positioning yourself



The COVID-19 pandemic caused unemployment to soar in 2020 and is expected to affect the job market for graduates again this year. Some labor analysts see the pandemic perhaps having this ripple effect on graduates for years to come. Photo by Sora Shimazaki from Pexels

by building your resume, brand, and your network. And being enthusiastic about the process.”

Thompson suggests the following tips for soon-to-be graduates as they prepare for a fiercely competitive job market:

Build your brand. The job market is so competitive that companies are looking for far more than candidates with a high GPA. “Hiring managers often seek well-rounded young people who can communicate, collaborate and create,” Thompson says. “They’re looking for people who have been active outside the classroom as well – in clubs, the community, volunteer work, etc. All of these aspects are part of your

brand. Also, the new litmus test in the job market will be, ‘What did you do to improve yourself and others during COVID? Or did you do nothing and feel sorry for yourself?’ Employers are going to be looking for those intangibles.” Organize your marketing playbook. “Utilizing a complete marketing playbook means leveraging your abilities and interests on social media platforms,” Thompson says. “This is where you display your public brand. Your profile, posts, photos, and videos reflect what you’re about. It’s key that your presentation and message are consistent on each platform that you use.”

Expand your networking. “Today, about 75

percent of new hires happen through networking,” Thompson says. “Build a target list of people to contact at companies that are hiring. Join discussion groups on LinkedIn that can expand your contacts and your knowledge. Connect with thought leaders and ask them questions to gain insight.”

Upskill. “Companies want young people who are versatile and able to learn new skills quickly,” Thompson says. “Research skills required in fields that you’re pursuing and get credentialed through online training programs. If opportunities are fewer in your chosen field, research where your best skills apply in other industries.”

Prepare for virtual interviewing. “When you interview in person, your body language, enthusiasm, handshake and small talk help build a connection with the interviewer,” Thompson says. “Being interviewed on a screen demands that you be fully engaged, establish a rapport, have continual eye contact and express yourself clearly.”

“How you stand out from the crowd has always been the differentiator in hiring,” Thompson says. “It’s much a bigger crowd now for fewer jobs, so the importance of preparation in all facets has never been more important.”

Vince Thompson (www.meltatl.com) is the founder, chairman and CEO of

MELT, one of America’s most successful sports marketing and branding agencies, and author of Build Brand You. An award-winning brand builder and sports marketer, Thompson has worked on brand strategies for some of the most famous brands in the world, including The Coca-Cola Company and Aflac. Thompson has been named one of Atlanta Business Chronicle’s “Most Admired CEOs,” among the “500 Most Influential Atlantans” by Atlanta Magazine, the American Diabetes Association’s “Father of the Year,” one of Sports Business Journal’s “Power Players,” and was listed by BizBash as one of the top 1,000 people in the event industry. ★

Assembly Education Vice Chair Responds to Passage of Anti-Charter School Legislation

By Joshua Hoover,
Office of Assemblyman Kevin Kiley

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Assembly Education Committee Vice Chair Kevin Kiley (R-Rocklin) released the following statement in response to the passage of Assembly Bill 1316 (O’Donnell) on a 5-2 vote: “Our political leaders and the Special Interests they serve have taken another step towards their goal of abolishing charter schools in California. “This attack on hundreds of thousands of families is orchestrated by the same Special Interest responsible for our state being last in the nation in returning students to school. It’s also the same Special Interest responsible for California ranking 49th out of 50 for education outcomes in poor communities prior to COVID.”

Tellingly, in responding to a question from

Assemblywoman Megan Dahle, the Chair of the Committee was unaware of one of the most damaging provisions of his own bill.

The following anti-charter school bills have been passed and signed into law under Governor Gavin Newsom’s watch: **AB 1505** (O’Donnell, 2019) – Made it easier for a local governing board to deny a charter petition, limited review of charter denial appeals, and placed a moratorium on nonclassroom-based charters. **AB 1507** (O’Donnell, 2019) – Limited or removed access to resource centers for charter school families across the state. **SB 126** (Leyva, 2019) – Added burdensome and costly new requirements to charter schools, which Governor Jerry Brown had previously vetoed. **SB 98** (Budget, 2020) – Penalized growing charter schools by capping their funding while many traditional public schools remained closed. ★

Social Security Matters Update my Mother’s Social Security Benefits?



By Russell Gloor,
AMAC Certified Social
Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: When my father passed away and we went to update my mother’s Social Security benefits, a question arose that I was confused by. We were asked “Do you want to claim just your father’s benefit (which was larger) or claim my mother’s benefit and the difference between the two?” Either way it would come to the same amount. Is there a reason to claim one way over the other? Perhaps a caveat that we are unaware of? Is there a loophole that we are missing that may potentially benefit the survivor? We are soon to face this question again as my father-in-law is very ill. **Signed: Curious**

Dear Curious: Well, they are basically the same amount but there is a nuance in the rules that many survivors aren’t aware of. Here’s why Social Security asked that question: It is possible for a surviving spouse to claim only the survivor benefit and defer claiming their own SS benefit until a later age if their personal benefit would be more than the survivor benefit would be. A



But the choice to claim the survivor benefit only is an option if the survivor has not yet reached 70 and if their own benefit could later be more than their survivor benefit.

So, the question is – which option did your mother choose? And is your mother-in-law under age 70? If your mother’s own benefit at age 70 would not have been higher than her survivor benefit from your father, then it doesn’t matter which way it was recorded. And if your mother-in-law is over age 70, it doesn’t matter either. But if not and either personal benefit at age 70 would be more than their earlier survivor benefit, then opting for the survivor benefit only and waiting to claim their own later would be (or have been) a better choice.

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

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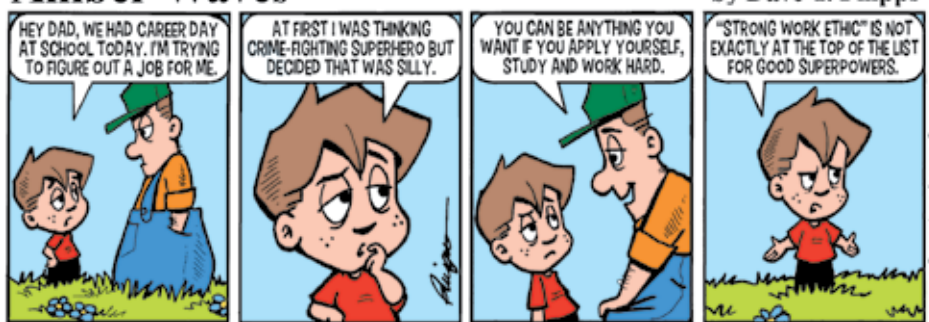
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WEEKLY COMICS

Amber Waves



by Dave T. Phipps

The Spats



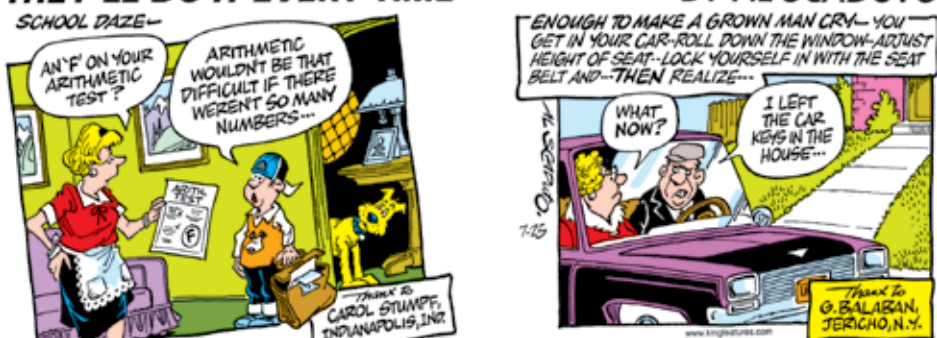
by Jeff Pickering

Out on a Limb



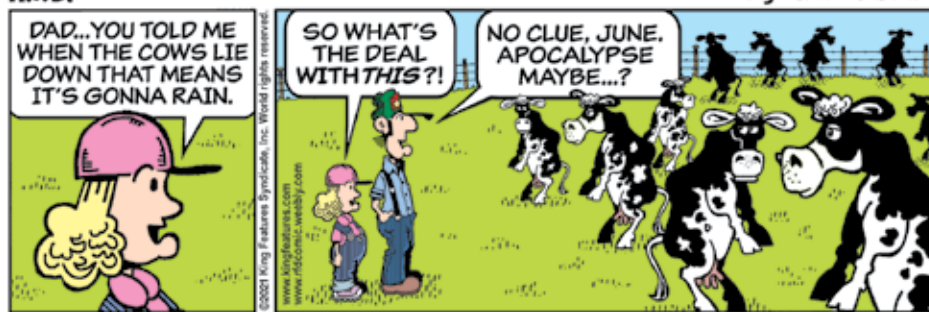
by Gary Kopervas

THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



BY AL SCADUTO

R.F.D.



by Mike Marland



GRIN and BEAR IT



LAFF-A-DAY

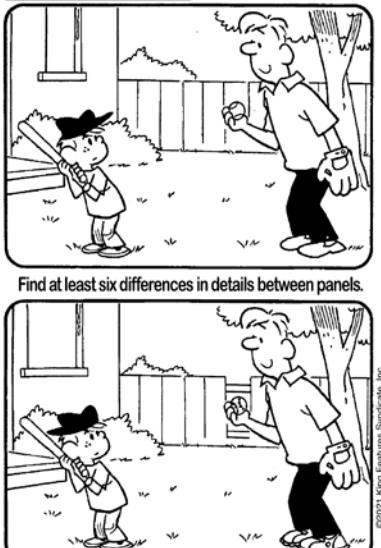


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CANNED CAT FOOD
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Family
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(Reg & Lrg Breed) •Senior •Lite
30 Lb Bag
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Per Family
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PURINA
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•Regular •Indoor 15 Lb Bag
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Bags Per
Family
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Price Valid Only With Coupon
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FIREWORKS BUYERS GUIDE

Get the Most Bang For Your Buck!

By David Dickstein

Fireworks are a symbol of America's independence, but with so many state and local limitations placed on them it's hard for Californians to feel all that liberated when celebrating Independence Day.

Reasons for that generally pertain to safety concerns. Authorities contend that injuries and fires are minimized by allowing the sale and use of only safe and sane fireworks in certain communities and for no

more than seven days a year. Not helping matters is the fact that our founding fathers signed the Declaration of Independence during one of the hottest months of the year.

"With California entering warmer weather with drought conditions in place, it is important to remember that fireworks are illegal in certain areas of California," State Fire Marshal Mike Richwine told Messenger Publishing Group. "Each year serious injuries and millions of dollars in property loss occur

from wildfires sparked by fireworks."

Adding to this season's challenges, the domestic fireworks industry is dealing with another type of drought – as in the potential lack of product due to unprecedented delays in receiving ordered products from suppliers in China, maker of nearly 100 percent of product for the U.S. market.

As a result, according to Linda Hass, Sacramento-based Phantom Fireworks West Coast operations manager, "Our industry shipping costs have dramatically increased

from a year ago. In addition, space on the container ships is limited, and we are experiencing delays and backlogs in the Western U.S. ports."

Phantom and its largest California competitor, TNT Fireworks, which also owns most Discount Fireworks Superstore stands in the state, are expecting product to arrive much later than usual at their distribution centers.

"This is a very challenging year for the entire industry," Hass said. "Fingers crossed! Shop early!"

Prices, promotions and product new for the 2021 season will likely not be determined until right up to when non-profits kick off their fundraisers where fireworks are allowed. Due to all the uncertainty and lack of new product to test by press time, our 20th annual buyer's guide covers the highest-rated fountains likely to return this season at TNT, Phantom and Discount Fireworks Superstore locations in this region. Listed alphabetically by recommended show order are state-approved fireworks that have earned at least 4 1/2 stars on a 5-star scale judged on performance, duration, distinctiveness and value.

Opening Acts

- **Crickets** (DFS) – If hearing crickets indicates silence, this colorful little powerhouse is sorely misnamed. Has more snap, crackle and pop than a milky bowl of Rice Krispies. 42 seconds.
- **Flaring Stars Fountain** (Phantom) – Virtually noiseless beauty featuring swarming fish effect in red, gold and green. 54 seconds.
- **Kool Kat** (TNT) – Pint-sized dynamo is packed with crackle, color and longevity

for the price. 43 seconds.

- **Luck of the Irish** (TNT) – Performance of gold and silver spray, red and green balls, crackles and four super-loud whistles. 75 seconds.
- **Main Squeeze** (TNT) – Rookie sensation from last season sports insane sparks at the 1-minute mark. 83 seconds.
- **Phantom Dragon Slayer** (Phantom) – Solid pick with white, blue and lemon chrysanthemums, rowdy crackles and red stars. 66 seconds.
- **Retro** (DFS) – Former "Best in Show" and "Best New Fountain" winner is perhaps the most exciting one minute in fountains ever. 58 seconds.
- **Serenity** (Phantom) – Noiseless fountain opens with lovely lava lamp-like lumps and peacefully pleases with seven colors and white chrysanthemums. 59 seconds.
- **Toxic Barrel** (TNT) – Green toxic sludge blobs and loud crackles make this pretty poison despite the fleeting duration. 45 seconds.

Middle Acts

- **Crazy Bug Fountain** (TNT) – Amazes with triple swarm



Fiery Meadow is a wise buy if your legally lit fireworks show needs a solid fountain-novelty hybrid item; photo courtesy Phantom Fireworks. TNT Torch is one of the best fountains being sold this season along with Kool Kat, a pint-sized dynamo for the price at TNT Fireworks stands; photos courtesy TNT Fireworks.

- effect. Great crackles, reds, greens and palms. Was 2020's "Best New Fountain" runner-up. 95 seconds.
- **Flower Pot Fountain** (Phantom) – Low-noise fountain enralls with multicolored droplets against a near-constant shower of silver glitter. Use of blob-producing nitro-cellulose reduces burn time, but worth it. 52 seconds.
- **Illuminati Triangle** (Phantom) – Long-lasting fountain features multi-color pearls, sprays, flying stars and titanium crackle. 184 seconds.
- **Moondance Premier** (Phantom) – Super-sized version of Phantom's little Moondance Fountain. 100 seconds.
- **Power On** (TNT) – Former

- "Best New Fountain" electrifies with towering crackling sparks and unique fusing that moves from end to end. 85 seconds.
- **Psychedelic** (DFS) – Non-stop crackle, ice-white palms, multi-colored showers – crowd-pleasing fan fountain. 96 seconds.
- **Quiet Riot** (DFS) – This oldie but goodie features a rainbow of colors, crackles and boisterous finish. Long lasting and 500 grams, but not enough oomph for finale status. 180 seconds.
- **Red White & Blue Jubilee** (Phantom) – Patriotically pleasing with white chrysanthemums, and red and bluish fish and pearls. 110 seconds.

- **Tasmanian Cyclone** (TNT) – Crackling sparks, lots of reds, greens, blues and yellows, fish effect, smokeless globs and wide and wild finish. 106 seconds.
- **TNT Torch** (TNT) – Shimmering golden stars are reminiscent of cones from the early 1970s. Earned "Best New Firework" honors last season. 72 seconds.
- **War Fountain** (Phantom) – Colors change with each stage of fiery crackles. Great duration and intensity. 82 seconds.
- **Wild Side** (TNT) – Like watching the super-charged final half-minute of TNT's Opening Show for a full minute. No climax because it's all climax. 60 seconds.
- **Whimsy** (DFS) – Identical to TNT's Power On.
- **Wicked Wizard** (DFS) – Love the height, purple droplets and titanium added for sharper crackles and a brighter white. 74 seconds.

Finales

- **Brew Haha** (Phantom) – Let's toast to this beer stein-shaped fountain with vibrant colors, wide spread and loud opening whistle. 145 seconds.
- **Coral Reef** (Phantom)

- Must-buy 500-gram fan emits radiant colors and clamorous whistles and crackles. 105 seconds.
- **Delirium** (TNT) – Granddaddy of California's fan fountains, it's the must-buy senior identical cousin of Phantom's Coral Reef.
- **Fiery Meadow Flower Fountain** (Phantom) – Proving that hybrid fireworks often make for big crowd pleasers is this combo fountain-wheel featuring titanium crackles and spinning finale. 68 seconds.
- **Living the Dream** (TNT) – Like ordering TNT's exquisitely named Wild Side (see above) and saying, "make it a double." Super-charged crackles give punch to this 500-gram winner. 120 seconds.
- **Opening Show** (TNT) – Budget permitting, this envy-inducing finale is a 500-gram must-have. Back up a few feet at the minute-40 mark. Trust us. 130 seconds.
- **Pyrotastic** (DFS) – Five-hundred grams are brilliantly distributed among 12 tubes bearing diverse effects and memorable performance. 181 seconds.

For stand locations and additional product information, visit the retailers' websites: tntfireworks.com, fireworks.com (Phantom); and dfsfireworks.com (Discount Fireworks Superstore). Check local laws and take all safety measures before buying and lighting.



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STOP BY YOUR LOCAL STANDS to see all the Buy One Get One Free, Mix & Match and Assortment options available

