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Team Desmond Gets to Work



District 3 Supervisor Rich Desmond (second left) convenes staffers Terri Conde-Ortiz, Vanessa McCarthy Olmstead and Mark Cullum on the old Fair Oaks Bridge.

Story and photos by Susan Maxwell Skinner

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Rookie District 3 Supervisor Rich Desmond begins work next week flanked by an experienced team.

Chief of Staff Vanessa McCarthy Olmstead combines 20 years of legislative assistance with the pragmatism of a busy parent. Her Deputy, Mark Cullum, has already managed election campaigns for two supervisors and served the offices of two legislators. Administrative assistant Terri Conde-Ortiz kept five previous County Supervisors in line. She, McCarthy-Olmstead and Cullum will now crack the whip to steer Supervisor Desmond's first term. The staffers will also represent their boss at civic events and relay

concerns and gripes of constituents.

"I've much to learn about the district," admits former CHP Chief Desmond. "Vanessa is among the most experienced in her field in Sacramento. She'll help me fill in the gaps. With her amazing technical understanding of Government, she'll make sure I know who to talk to. We meshed well from our first meeting. We've both spent our lives in the community and care deeply about it. We share the philosophy that the District is more important than any partisan agenda. And she'll keep me smiling. I love her sense of humor."

Six generations of McCarthy-Olmstead's family have lived in the same Carmichael street. She attended St Francis High School (Sacramento), where she spent volunteer hours with Dave Cox during

a 1994 run for Senate. Her love for community led to political science studies at USF. The graduate then joined Assemblyman Roger Niello's office. She got serious about fellow-staffers Rob Olmstead as they volunteered for trash clean-ups in Carmichael. Her husband is now Chief of Staff for District 4 Senator Jim Nielsen and the couple has a daughter (13) and a son (10).

During 10 years in Supervisor Susan Peters' team, McCarthy-Olmstead worked on everything from corridor plans to PBIDS and election campaigns. One great job qualification, she feels, is being a working mom. "Raising kids makes you appreciate what people are constantly juggling," she explains. "If I can do anything that makes people's lives easier, I will. I immediately

Continued on page 3

Wells Fargo Donates \$75K for Women to Find Work

By Kristin Thébaud, Thébaud Communications

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Women's Empowerment has received \$75,000 from Wells Fargo to provide workforce development skills, paid job training, job search assistance and housing support during the pandemic for women who are currently homeless or have recently experienced homelessness. Wells Fargo has been one of Women's Empowerment's longest funders, giving \$442,450 since 2008.

"This profoundly generous gift from Wells Fargo will have a powerful effect on our community as we all work together to weather the storms of the pandemic, high unemployment and continued housing crisis," said Lisa Culp, executive director, Women's Empowerment. "We are grateful to Wells Fargo for its longtime leadership in our community and for recognizing the essential role of nonprofits like ours in addressing this triple threat that has the most devastating impact on women and children without homes."

Women's Empowerment's programs combine employment readiness, self-esteem courses, health services and education, counseling, housing assistance, job placement and paid job training to help women overcome homelessness across diverse ages, races and cultures. Women's Empowerment was featured on NBC's The TODAY Show in 2015 for offering the most comprehensive job-readiness program in the Sacramento area designed specifically for women who are homeless and their children.

"Women's Empowerment does more than provide women with the support, tools and resources needed to obtain a job and become self-sufficient," said Karen Woodruff, Wells Fargo vice president of social impact and sustainability in Northern California. "It also - and perhaps most importantly - helps its clients open their eyes to see their strength, worth and potential, and that's invaluable! We are honored to continue to support Women's Empowerment and the work it does to lift women in their time of need."

The award-winning organization has graduated 1,691 women and their 3,792 children. Last year, 70 percent of graduates found homes in the midst of the housing crisis, and 79 percent secured jobs or enrolled in school or training. Women's Empowerment is funded through private donations from the community and grants. To donate: Womens-Empowerment.org. ★

COVID-19 Vaccines Arrive at Mercy San Juan

By Patrick Larenas

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The 2020 year came to a close with news that the long awaited COVID-19 vaccine has now begun to be administered in hospitals in the Greater Sacramento area. Dignity Health Mercy San Juan Medical Center in Carmichael was among six Dignity Health hospitals receiving its first shipment of the first FDA approved emergency COVID-19 vaccine on Thursday, December 18.

External Communications Manager for Dignity Health Greater Sacramento Division, Yessenia Anderson, said, "Today marks a moment for the history books... This is a huge step forward in the battle against COVID-19."

In order to receive the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, the hospital prepared by



The lab team at Mercy San Juan Medical Center is now prepared for COVID-19 vaccinations. Photo: Dignity Health

acquiring equipment for cold temperature storage and developing all the safety processes to be implemented. As part of a pilot

volunteered on Friday, December 19.

Mercy San Juan Medical Center president Michael Korpiel said, "Our care team members... have answered the call of duty and beyond during this pandemic, and I am thankful to now be able to offer them an added layer of protection as they carry out their crucial life-saving work."

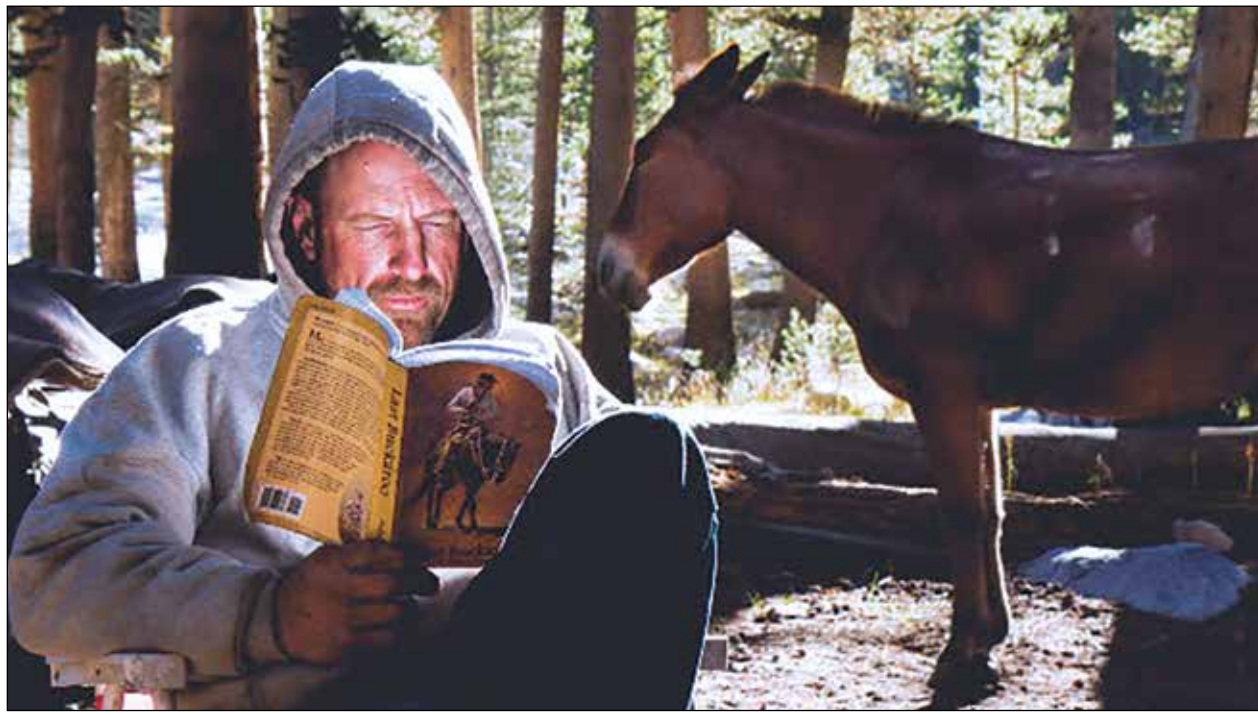
"While there are always unknowns when a new vaccine is developed..." Korpiel said, "Safety is our priority, and we only administer vaccines that are proven safe and effective."

Hospitals such as Mercy San Juan, Anderson said, "are expect[ed] to receive more doses of the vaccine every week, so the number of people who can get the vaccine will increase exponentially very quickly."

For more information visit www.dignityhealth.org/sacramento/locations/mercy-san-juan-medical-center. ★

More Than Just a Home

Women's Empowerment Receives \$15K from Union Pacific Community Ties



Today, Culcasi owns his own business, is stably housed, paid off his child support lien and is making victim restitution payments. He credits his caseworkers with helping him get his life back on track. Photo credit Sacramento County

Sacramento County Health & Social Services

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Since he was 14, Chris Culcasi's drug and alcohol addictions have led him in and out of prison and homelessness. While incarcerated at the Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center, he found his path to a better life: Horses.

"I could identify with them. It was probably the first time I ever had a feeling for something that wasn't drug-induced," said Culcasi, who worked in a program that offers inmates the opportunity to train wild horses for adoption. "I realized they were just looking for a leader and I started to feel like I could be a leader and I could do this."

After his release, Culcasi set out to start a new career as a farrier. To be accepted into a trade school, however, he had to prove he was able to stay sober.

"For the first time in my life, I was willing to do a program," he said.

Culcasi benefited from a 2017 initiative passed in Sacramento County aimed at reducing homelessness. The Flexible Supportive

Rehousing Program (FSRP) provides help with securing housing as well as intensive case management that supports clients in maintaining that housing through medical, mental and behavioral health care, employment assistance, expungement services and other supports. According to Neil Kurtz, Program Planner for the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance (DHA), these initiatives were the first by the County to specifically target frequent users of services.

"Our participants are building these relationships with their case managers who are going to look out for them and connect them with services," said Kurtz. "You're going to see less recidivism and lower costs over time because housing with services allows people to rebuild their lives and address issues."

According to Kurtz, the difference between past programs and these initiatives is more intentional collaboration with county departments and nonprofits. In addition to connecting people with county departments and the non-profit service provider, DHA works with the Sacramento Housing

and Redevelopment Agency, Sacramento Steps Forward, the Public Defender's office, child and adult protective services, probation departments and more.

"It involves additional support services that can address the long-term trauma and chronicity of somebody who has been on the street or in an encampment for a while," Kurtz said. "Those additional support services are equally important as the housing that's being offered."

Today, Culcasi owns his own business, is stably housed, paid off his child support lien and is making victim restitution payments. He credits his caseworkers with helping him get his life back on track.

"I had a team help me learn how to pay bills, they helped me rebuild my credit, build up renter's history and they gave me all the moral support I needed to get through it," he says. "I never fell through the cracks once. It takes a lot for somebody like me to get this far. I was in a hole that most people never get out of."

For more information, visit Sacramento County's Homelessness Response Website. ★

By Kristin Thébaud, Thébaud Communications

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Women's Empowerment has received \$15,000 from Union Pacific's Community Ties giving program to provide its job-readiness program, paid on-the-job training and other services for women who are homeless or recently have experienced homelessness.

"We are thankful to Union Pacific for providing much needed funds as we see a sharp spike in need from the pandemic," said Lisa Culp, executive director, Women's Empowerment. "In addition to women who are currently experiencing homelessness, we are helping more than 150 graduates of our program who have lost their jobs during the pandemic and need additional training and services to compete for jobs during this time of high unemployment so they can stay in their homes."

Women's Empowerment's programs combine employment readiness, self-esteem courses, health services and education, counseling, housing assistance, job placement and paid job training to help women overcome homelessness across diverse ages,

and cultures. Women's Empowerment was featured on NBC's The TODAY Show in 2015 for offering the most comprehensive job-readiness program in the Sacramento area designed specifically for women who have experienced homelessness and their children. The award-winning organization has graduated 1,697 women and their 3,792 children. Last year, 70 percent of graduates found homes in the midst of the housing crisis, and 79 percent secured jobs or enrolled in school or training. Women's Empowerment is funded through private donations from the community and grants. To donate: Womens-Empowerment.org.

Union Pacific's Community Ties giving program works to build safe, prosperous and vibrant communities by investing in nonprofits and programs in the cities and towns in which Union Pacific operates and its employees live and work. For more than 150 years, Union Pacific has been committed to serving as an economic engine and improving the standard of life for millions across the country. For more information: www.up.com/aboutup/community/foundation/index.htm. ★

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Team Desmond Gets to Work Livestreaming The of Best of Fair Oaks Awards Gala



Born and raised in Carmichael, Rich Desmond pauses at the community's iconic main street mural. Elected County Supervisor in November, the 50-year-old former CHP Chief has begun work for District 3.

Continued from page 1
 liked Rich's easy-going personality. He's 100 percent genuine. I appreciate his public safety background. I like that he was born here; he cares about our neighborhoods and about Sacramento as a whole.

"Our shared goal is to see the needs of this community met. My role is to make everything about his job flow, so he can focus on making a difference."

Deputy Chief of Staff Mark Cullum was raised in Elk Grove. After Valley Christian Academy (Roseville) he studied Public Policy at William Jessup University in Rocklin.

"I wanted my career to give back," he says. "Local government impacts people's lives. I'm happy behind the scenes, helping folks navigate bureaucracy and red tape." Before steering Rich Desmond's 2020 election campaign, Cullum worked as a district representative for Senator Jim Nielsen and campaign field manager for Congressman Tom McClintock. He also founded the election trail for Placer Supervisor Bonnie Gore and served as policy analyst for the non-profit Capitol Resource Institute. He and pre-school teacher Emma Cullum got

married straight out of college and live in Foothill Farms.

"I got behind Rich Desmond because I believed he'd be a voice – not for party interests – but for all constituents," he reflects. "When you sign on for a campaign, there's no guarantee you'll end up with a job. But Rich was such a great candidate, I was glad he asked me to continue on his staff. He's good to be around."

Most-seasoned of the new District 3 team is administrative assistant Terri Conde-Ortiz. During 16 years with the County, she has aided Supervisors Illa Collin, Don Nottoli, Phil Serna, Jimmie Yee and lately Susan Peters. Conde-Ortiz has delayed her own retirement to see Desmond's team transition through early stages. "A supervisor's staff is critical to the success of his or her office," the veteran considers. "It's all about cultivating relationships and trust. As Chief of staff, Vanessa puts Rich way ahead -- she's been intimately involved in three PBIDS and dozens of community agencies. She knows everyone and she'll make sure her boss is in the best position to bring positive change."

Contact The District 3 office E mail: richdesmond@sacounty.net telephone: (916) 874-5471. ★



By Dot Boyd, Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - If you're reading this, then pat yourself on the back for making it through 2020! It seems that collectively, we are excited to turn the page on the calendar to January 1st of any year, and this year is no exception. As I write this column each month, I reflect on the prior month and then look forward to what is coming next so that I can keep you up to date on Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce activities, milestones, and some information about various Fair Oaks organizations. Today, in addition to bringing you

what I know about our 5th Annual Best of Fair Oaks Awards Gala, I'm going to reflect on my impressions of our community over the past year.

What I have seen has been the amazing resilience of a community overall, and a can-do spirit of organizations such as the OV-FO Food Bank and the numerous community organizations and residents who pitched in where needed and still do. Countless numbers of donors gave what they could even if struggling a bit themselves. There has been an outpouring of sentiment to "shop and dine locally" which is so important to our small businesses and restaurants. Not all businesses are "brick and mortar" anymore, and they can be invisible in times like these. Some businesses have not been open for months or are closed permanently. Many of us have lost loved ones. Even with all of this heartache, I see the goodness in our humanity. In our town. People caring

for one another and trying to help in some way. Keep it going. We are not out of the woods yet.

Here's a happy thing to look forward to! The members of FOYO (Fair Oaks Youth Outreach) will be back again this year to host the 2020 Best of Fair Oaks aka the BoFOs! The "virtual" event is taking place on Thursday, January 21st, and will be live-streamed on YouTube beginning at 6:00 pm. To access the event, visit www.BestOfFairOaks.com/2020-event-info.

I'm sure FOYO and Executive Director Kim Pitllio have some fun surprises in store for everyone. How about a little fanfare for your business with a BoFO event sponsorship? If you hurry, you might still be able to grab a spot. Proceeds help to fund our youth scholarships. Please contact Kim at info@fairoakschamber.com. Thank you!

See you at the Best of Fair Oaks!! ★

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SACRAMENTO COUNTY

SMUD Extends Suspension of Power Shutoffs for Non-Payment

SMUD News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and growing economic challenges, SMUD announced it will extend the suspension of disconnecting power due to non-payment for residential and commercial customers through April 30, 2021, at the earliest.

"We remain committed to the well-being of our community through these unprecedented times," said SMUD CEO and General Manager Paul Lau. "The economic impact of the pandemic on our community is great and we'll continue to ensure that our customers, especially the most vulnerable, have access to safe and reliable power during these times."

The suspension of power disconnection due to non-payment began March 13 and will last through April 30, 2021, at the earliest, as SMUD continues to monitor the evolving situation.

Customers who are behind on payment will still owe SMUD for service, they will

just not lose power at this time. Customers are encouraged to contact SMUD to make payment arrangements or to enquire about energy assistance rates and other programs.

Since March, SMUD has suspended power shutoffs for non-payment and late fees, as well as adjusted its low-income rate so more people can qualify. SMUD is also offering flexible payment arrangement options.

In the midst of this COVID-19 pandemic, SMUD has taken a number of actions to keep its employees and the community safe. As an essential service provider, SMUD is proactively minimizing risk to employees to ensure reliable electric service and is asking the public to abide by the social distancing guidelines and not approach work crews. Their safety and well-being is key to keeping our community powered, so please thank them from afar. For information about our continued efforts, please visit smud.org/HeretoHelp.

For more information, visit smud.org. ★

Board Approves Declaration of Climate Emergency

By Kim Nava, Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors has adopted a resolution declaring a climate emergency and identifying the County's efforts to mobilize and contribute towards a safe climate.

The resolution, brought forward by Board Chair and First District Supervisor Phil Serna and Second District Supervisor Patrick Kennedy, declared climate change an emergency requiring urgent action to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

"With this resolution, we are pledging to build on the County's existing climate action commitments and take significant further steps to develop a climate plan that incorporates actions

necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve carbon neutrality by 2030," said Serna. "This is a lofty goal that we'll reach with regional collaboration involving multiple partners, including the engagement of community-based and grassroots organizations."

Sacramento County approved the Phase 1 Climate Action Plan Strategy and Framework document on Nov. 9, 2011, which is the first phase of developing a community-level Climate Action Plan. Subsequently, the County approved the Phase 2A Climate Action Plan for Government Operations on Sep. 11, 2012, and is now in the process of preparing for adoption the Phase 2B Community Climate Action Plan.

"The Communitywide Climate Action Plan will be

built on recommendations and analysis from community members and will be guided by science, data, best practices and equity concerns," said Kennedy. "The need for immediate action is urgent, and the County has already seen the impacts to the region's public health and safety, most recently with the extended wildfire season and resulting poor air quality and prolonged power outages."

The resolution also states the County will establish, within 60 days of approval, a permanent Climate Emergency Mobilization Task Force. The task force will be composed of climate experts, including representatives of the scientific and academic communities, to oversee the development and implementation of a climate emergency response plan. ★

Healthy Communities Resolution Adopted by Growing Number of Counties

By Joshua Hoover, North State Leaders

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - A growing number of counties have passed the Healthy Communities Resolution – a product of a collaborative meeting of 15 Northern California counties earlier this year – rejecting Governor Newsom's Blueprint for a Safe Economy as unscientific and counterproductive. The counties are insisting on a more data-based approach to the COVID-19 pandemic tailored to local communities.

The latest counties to pass a version of the Resolution are Placer, Orange, Siskiyou, San Luis Obispo, Lassen, and El

Dorado. Several more are expected to consider the Resolution in the New Year.

The Healthy Communities Resolution was drafted by Assemblymembers James Gallagher, Kevin Kiley and Megan Dahle, and Senators Brian Dahle and Jim Nielsen. Today, these Legislators released the following statement:

"We are encouraged to see different counties pass variations of the Resolution that are right for them. The consensus emerging across the state is that lockdowns from Sacramento cannot stay with us in the new year. California must take a different approach to the final phase of its COVID-19 response." ★

Felony EDD Fraud Charges Filed

By Shelly Orio, Office of Sacramento County District Attorney

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On January 4, 2021, nine felony counts of EDD fraud were filed against Walter Lee Dawson in Department 62 of the Sacramento Superior Court.

Dawson was arrested on December 3, 2020, when Sacramento Probation Officers and Sheriff's Deputies conducted a probation compliance search and recovered a Glock style pistol with no serial number, multiple rounds of 9 mm ammunition, approximately \$58,000 in cash, approximately 3.8 pounds of marijuana, and packaging material consistent with marijuana sales. Dawson was arrested and charged with felon in possession of a firearm, felon in possession of ammunition, and possession of marijuana for sale charges in Sacramento Superior Court case number 20FE019364.

During the search, nine EDD debit

cards issued in different names were also recovered as were approximately 20 additional EDD documents in various people's names. After Dawson's arrest, a joint investigation by the District Attorney, Probation Department, Sheriff's Office, and the California Employment Development Department Investigations Division revealed that approximately \$219,000 had been fraudulently acquired by Dawson when he obtained the nine EDD cards. Dawson, who has prior strike convictions for residential burglary and attempted residential burglary, was arraigned today on an amended felony complaint that added nine felony counts of EDD fraud. With the additional charges, Dawson faces a maximum sentence of 19 years, 4 months in state prison.

The Sacramento District Attorney will continue to investigate and prosecute EDD fraud, which cheats rightful recipients out of much needed assistance and costs Californians billions in lost tax dollars. ★



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Walmart Stores Commit to Fighting Hunger

By Kim Ericksen, Elevate

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The holidays are a time of giving, but they are also a time of great need. Food insecurity continues plaguing families and individuals across the country, with an estimated 1 in 6 at risk of hunger as a result of COVID-19. This is compared to a pre-pandemic number of 1 in 9 struggling with food insecurity, according to Feeding America®, the nation's largest hunger-relief organization. As a result, food banks and pantries are having difficulties keeping up with demand.

To help organizations meet the increased demand during the holidays and beyond, the Walmart Foundation is granting Feeding America \$12 million over two years and is encouraging its stores, clubs, and distribution centers in

the U.S. to commit funds and product donations to hunger-relief organizations through the end of the year.

"At our local Walmart stores, we want to ensure we are doing what we can to give back to our communities. The economic impact of COVID-19 has hit many families extremely hard, and food insecurity has become more common because of it," said Aubrey Swift, Vice President Regional Manager in Northern California. "We hope that with continued donations from our local Walmart stores, and from our corporate headquarters, we can help feed all families who face hunger this holiday season, and as long as food insecurity persists."

For years, Walmart and the Walmart Foundation have supported hunger-relief organizations and this year is no different. Last year, in California, Walmart and Sam's Club donated more

than 26,000,000 pounds of food to local food banks.

So far this year, more than 5,000 hunger-relief organizations in the U.S. have received support from Walmart and the Walmart Foundation through the donation of 480 million pounds of food and over \$55 million in grants for hunger relief. Complemented by these efforts, Walmart customers, Sam's Club members and suppliers have raised and donated nearly \$18 million for hunger relief.

Walmart.org is helping people live better by supporting programs that work to accelerate upward job mobility for front-line workers, address hunger and make healthier, more sustainably grown food a reality, and build strong communities where Walmart operates. To learn more, visit www.walmart.org or connect on Twitter @Walmartorg. ★

Election Shows Quick Consequences

By John Kabateck, NFIB

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Most salient in the release of the nation's premier measurement of its small-business economy is the decline by 19 points among small-business owners expecting better business conditions over the next six months.

"We have been taking the pulse of Main Street, America, since 1973, and although dips and rises occur throughout the 10 components of our Small Business Economic Trends (SBET) report, ones that spike or fall by a large percentage are the most arresting and worthy of serious public policy discussion," said John Kabateck, California state director for NFIB, the nation's leading small-business association.

"Although our monthly SBET polls are a national snapshot, not broken down by state, it takes no degree in economics to know what California must do to reverse course and that is to allow small businesses, which are some of the safest places

to work and shop, to re-open. We've commended the state for offering loans and grants and extending tax deadlines, but in the end, what good is it if small businesses are prohibited from opening their doors to customers? We're not claiming to have all the answers, but we think it clear enough that the state and counties could do a better job of containing the spread of COVID-19 by going after places where those spreads occur, which are not most small businesses which have done a great job of socially distancing their patrons and making sure other public health orders are obeyed."

From NFIB Chief Economist Bill Dunkelberg on Today's SBET Numbers

"Small business owners are still facing major uncertainties, including the COVID-19 crisis and the upcoming Georgia runoff election, which is shaping how they're viewing future business conditions. The recovery will remain uneven as long as we see state and local mandates that target

business conditions and disproportionately affect small businesses."

From the SBET Report's Analysis

"The economic indicators exhibited massive swings over a period of a few months this year that took years to complete in the Great Recession. This occurred because economic activity was not disrupted by the usual economic forces, but rather by a deadly virus and subsequent government directed shutdown of commerce that was completely unanticipated. When state government policies were relaxed, the economy tried to bounce back to where it was a few months earlier. The unemployment rate swung from under 4 percent in February, to nearly 15 percent in April, and now down to under 7 percent in November. GDP declines of 30 percent and gains of 33 percent a few months later (annual rates) left GDP more than 5 percent below year ago levels, a deficit that double-digit growth in Q4 might eliminate."

For more information, please visit nfib.com. ★

Status of Women and Girls Approved

By Laurie Slothower, Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - By a unanimous vote, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors approved establishment of a Sacramento County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls. The advisory council will help shape policy decisions that impact women and girls; act as a resource to advance economic opportunities for women and girls; and gather data on the status of women and girls, among other duties.

In July 2019 a Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on the Establishment of

a Sacramento County Women's Commission was initiated by First District Supervisor Phil Serna and approved the Board of Supervisors. The group's mandate was to research the merits of a Sacramento County Women's Commission by which the Board of Supervisors and public could better understand issues, opportunities and challenges unique to women in Sacramento County.

The group presented their recommendations before the Board of Supervisors on Dec. 8. The resolution was approved today.

"The establishment of this Commission on the Status

of Women and Girls is long overdue for Sacramento County, and that's why I proposed the formation of a Blue Ribbon Commission last year to explore the prospect of a permanent commission," said Board Chair and First District Supervisor Phil Serna. "I'm confident this commission is going to do great work, and I want to thank all the members of the BRC for their work in providing an outstanding report and their public outreach efforts."

The Sacramento County Commission of the Status of Women joins 26 other California city and county commissions dedicated to gender equity. ★

Sacramento Metro Chamber Celebrates 126th Annual Business Awards

By Traci Rockefeller Cusack, T-Rock Communications

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) -The Sacramento Metro Chamber is proud to salute regional leaders for their life-long dedication to service, inclusion and for creating more vibrant communities during the 126th Annual Business Awards to be held virtually on Friday, February 5, 2021. Sacramento County's District 3 Supervisor Susan Peters has been named as the 2020 Sacramentan of the Year and will be recognized along with many others on the front lines of the pandemic, including Cate Dyer of StemExpress as Businesswoman of the Year and Randy Sater of StoneBridge Properties as Businessman of the Year. In addition, a special Lifetime Achievement Award will honor the memory of PRIDE Industries CEO Michael Ziegler for his visionary leadership, service to the community, and lasting impacts to the region.

"We are extremely proud to honor these deserving leaders in our community at this year's 126th Annual Business Awards," said Sacramento Metro Chamber President & CEO Amanda Blackwood. "These awardees exemplify what it means to live a life of service and to use the precious time we are given to leave this world better than we found it. At this pivotal moment in our history, we applaud their tireless commitment to creating economic opportunity and community vibrancy for the Sacramento Region."

A complete list of 2020 honorees to be recognized for their ongoing contributions to the region includes the following:

Sacramentan of the Year – Supervisor Susan Peters, County of Sacramento; **Businesswoman of the Year** – Cate Dyer,

StemExpress; **Businessman of the Year** – Randy Sater, StoneBridge Properties; **The Al Geiger Memorial Award** - Faith Whitmore, Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center; **Small Business of the Year** – Savory Café; **The Business Hall of Fame Award** – El Dorado Savings Bank; **Young Professional of the Year** – Dr. Lenora Lee, MD, Kaiser Permanente; **Lifetime Achievement Award** – in memory of Michael Ziegler, PRIDE Industries

In addition to celebrating the 2020 honorees, Leigh White (retired Vice President & General Manager of FOX40) will conclude her term as Board Chair and install Dave Roughton CEO of SAFE Credit Union as the 2021 Board Chair.

Hosted first in 1895, the Annual Business Awards is the Metro Chamber's longest running event and will be held virtually for the first time in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since its inception, business leaders, community stakeholders and members come together annually to salute board leadership, recognize the changemakers in our region, and celebrate the Capital Region.

For more information about the 126th Annual Business Awards is available at www.metrochamber.org/events/annual-dinner. Tickets to the 126th Annual Business Awards virtual event are available via metrochamber.org/events/annual-dinner/. For more information about the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, please visit www.metrochamber.org.

The Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce advocates for and supports the inclusive economic prosperity of our Capital Region by leading efforts for business. For more information, please visit www.metrochamber.org. ★

Social Security Matters

Did My Wife Get A "Notch Baby" Benefit Increase?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I was born in May of 1930, and my wife was born in April 1931. My wife claims she received an increase in her Social Security benefit due to the "Notch Baby" provision. Is she correct about this? **Signed: Inquisitive Husband**

Dear Inquisitive: Allow me to clarify for you what your wife is referring to, and you can use your own judgement on how to present the information to her.

So-called "notch babies" are those Social Security recipients who were born between the years 1917 and 1921. Folks born in those years were affected by a Social Security issue which had to do with how Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) were computed. Here's what happened:

In 1972, when the Social Security Administration switched to automatic COLA increases based on the Consumer Price Index, they made an error in the automatic COLA computation formula which wasn't discovered for several years. During



those several years they awarded COLA increases using the incorrect formula which paid COLA at a higher level than appropriate. After discovering the error, and in an attempt to fix the issue, in the mid-1970s, Congress decided that those born before 1917 would be allowed to stay on the incorrect (more generous) formula, but COLA for those born after 1917 would use a corrected formula. However, that didn't sit well with SS beneficiaries born after 1917 because they were receiving less COLA than their counterparts born before 1917. So, in an attempt to mollify those Social Security beneficiaries born after 1917, Congress created a special "notch" formula for those born between 1917 and 1921. And those who were born between those dates were called "notch babies."

The new "notch baby" formula was not quite as generous as the incorrect formula being enjoyed by those born before 1917, but yet a bit more generous than the corrected COLA formula which applied to anyone born after 1921 (and still exists today). Thus, "notch babies" do

enjoy a slightly better COLA formula than other Social Security beneficiaries born after 1921.

Over the years, various attempts have been made to extend the notch baby end-year definition from 1921 to, for example, those born before 1927. And even as recently as 2019, a Congressional bill called the "Notch Fairness Act" attempted to provide restitution by extending the end date of the "notch" to 1926. But none of those attempts in Congress have ever succeeded in changing the definition of "notch babies" beyond the original 1970s Congressional definition to apply only to those born between 1917 and 1921. So, anyone born after 1921, including your wife, has COLA computed using the corrected formula, not the "notch baby" formula.

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 ssadviser@amacfoundation.org. ★

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By Marlys Johnsen Norris, Christian Author

After a person has accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior is born-again *“The fruit of the Spirit (develops within them) is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5: 22-23)*

God IS Love, Gentle, Kind, Thoughtful, All Knowing, Suffering Servant, Patient, Friendly, Merciful, Giving, Good, Faithful, Joyful and Peaceful. He is the Creator/Father-God of Miracles!

There most likely is no believer who is “perfect”

Qualities And Gifts Given to a True Believer

and has all of these wonderful qualities. However if they are faithful in their personal journey to know and love God with their whole heart, God promises these qualities will develop within them. The Holy Spirit of God leads Gods children in their individual walk with God to help them grow into a personal and intimate relationship with their earthly father and Heavenly Father.

Note: Earthly fathers are significantly important to the development of their children and they need to take note that they are to be a living and powerful example of these qualities in their life as well.

Once a person is aware of an area in their life that does need positive change, they will repent of the area that needs the touch of God’s loving merciful

hand. They pray for His Will to be done in their life!. Then they will listen to that still small voice that gives direction and they follow by acts of obedience.

The Holy Bible records the following verse of promise: **“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that “if” we ask anything according to “His will for our lives”, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us –whatever we ask – we know that we will have all we asked of Him.” (1 John 5:14-15)**

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The Kiwanis Corner

By Sal Arrigo, Jr.

Resolutions

Oaks Food Bank; we promise to collect even more pajamas at our 3rd annual pajama drive to assist needy kids; we promise to have a successful once-a-month Trivia Night to raise funds to help others; we promise to embark on new projects in 2021 (I hear a tree planting is in the works), but the biggest promise of all can be found in the mission of Kiwanis worldwide: “Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to improving the world one child and one community at a time.”

I am thinking at this moment how many New Year’s resolutions may already have been broken by the time you read this.

My resolutions going into 2021 are probably like most people, – good health and peace. A young man said to me recently that he makes it a practice to get out of bed in a happy mood no matter what he has planned that day, and if he can make one person smile, he feels good about himself. I told him, “we need more people like you around!”

This is the goal of the Kiwanis Club of Orangevale – Fair Oaks – to make someone’s day brighter through our community efforts. So, what are the resolutions for the Club in 2021?

We promise to continue to assist the Orangevale – Fair

mentioned the 2nd annual Kiwanis Club Pajama Drive and all the community support we received I should have stated that Perry Air, in addition to collecting pajamas, also collected monetary donations to help us reach our goal. Way to go, Perry Air!

When we can gather again, come and visit Kiwanis at El Gallo Mexican Restaurant, located at 11773 Fair Oaks Blvd., on the 2nd Tuesday of every month. Meetings begin at 6:30 pm. We also have social gatherings on the 4th Tuesday of every month (the location varies). Find us on facebook. com/KiwanisclubofOFO or email us for more information at kiwanisclubofOFO@gmail.com.

The Kiwanis Club of Orangevale – Fair Oaks is a tax exempt, nonprofit organization. Our tax I.D. # is 85-0549857. ★

You may be thinking that these are big promises to keep, and you’re correct. However; when you know the heart of our club, the new members we recruited in 2020 and the new members we are about to induct early in 2021, the Kiwanis Club of Orangevale – Fair Oaks is up to the challenge. Note: in my last article I

Stuck between a Virus and a Varmint

By Rev. James L. Snyder

Normally, I’m not a superstitious sort of a person. But then again there is a good case to be made that I am really not normal.

Several things happened this past week emphasizing this feeling of mine, and I am not at all convinced that it is simply coincidental.

It all started when the computer at the church was viciously attacked by a computer virus. Who do you call when your computer has a virus? And, what in the world is a virus doing inside my computer? Doesn’t it have something better to do?

I do not know all that is associated with this computer business but I do know the outcome of a computer virus. I was merrily working along on my keyboard when suddenly, out of nowhere (what is cyberspace anyway) my computer screen began to disintegrate before my eyes. By the time I had closed my mouth the whole business was over.

Then I had a brilliant idea. Actually, I am not sure it was a brilliant idea because I get so few ideas they all seem brilliant. I remembered something on the computer called the “restore point.”

After some finagling with the thingamajig (pardon the technical terms) I managed to find the Restore Point and in a few minutes, voilà (pardon my French), the computer was back to where it was before the virus hit it. I do not know how it works, all I know is it worked and I was elated.

I was back to my work schedule and quite pleased with myself and was riding pretty high when suddenly the lights flickered and then went out completely. There was no electricity in the church building.

It was my privilege to call our friendly energy company and request a service call. To my delight within an hour, the service truck from the electric company arrived on the scene. After a thorough investigation, the repairman discovered the trouble. I was rather worried that there was a major problem inside the church building that would cost thousands of dollars to repair.

But I was to be delighted for the second time that day when the repairman informed me of the nature of the trouble. It seems the trouble was on the outside of the building. As everyone knows, that is the responsibility of the electric company.

The problem turned out to be of the varmint kind. A nut-challenged squirrel had eaten through one of the major electric lines on the outside of the building thus cutting off all electricity from going inside the building.

“Here’s your problem, Rev,” the repairman said with a big grin smeared on his face. With that, he held up a nicely fried squirrel.

With the electric back on and at my computer purring like a kitten, I thought of a verse of Scripture. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28 KJV).

Sometimes little things can frustrate us. But no person is defined by any one day or one incident. These little problems are usually temporary and serve only as a reminder that we are not in charge of anything at all.

Does anybody have a recipe for fried squirrel?

Dr. James L. Snyder, pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, lives with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage in Ocala, FL. Call him at 352-687-4240 or e-mail jamesnsnyder2@att.net. The church web site is www.whatafellowship.com. ★

County Appoints Acting Director of Health Services

By Kim Nana, Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The County has appointed Jim Hunt as Acting Director of the Department of Health Services. His appointment is effective Monday, Dec. 21.

Hunt has extensive experience with Sacramento County. He was the Director of Health and Human Services from 1997-2006 and was Deputy Administrator for what is now the Social Services Agency (the agency that oversees Health Services), from 2006-07. Prior to that, he was the Chief of Administration and Deputy Director for Health Services from 1992-97, Workers’ Compensation Manager from 1991-92, and served in a series of increasingly responsible positions with the County from 1973-91.

“Jim is extremely familiar with the importance and operation of the programs

and services provided by Health Services, and has a strong background in the administration of the department, including management of fiscal, budgetary, contract, personnel and other administrative services,” said Bruce Wagstaff, Deputy County Executive for Social Services. “Jim’s experience will allow him to transition into the role and seamlessly continue the department’s operations.”

While Hunt was the Director of Health and Human Services, he oversaw Child Protective Services, Mental Health Services, Alcohol and Drug Services, Services for Seniors and Dependent Adults, Public Health and Primary Health Services. He also directly supervised the Public Health Officer and eight managers.

Hunt will serve in the Acting Director of Health Services role while the County conducts a nationwide search for the permanent position. ★

Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians Donates \$15,000

By Doug Elmets

JACKSON, CA - The Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians is pleased to announce the donation of \$15,000 in matching funds towards this year’s Amador Giving Tuesday event sponsored by the Amador Community Foundation to benefit local nonprofit organizations throughout the community.

“On behalf of the Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians, it is an honor to have the ability to support this giving campaign and our local

nonprofits who do such important work in Amador County,” said Crystal Jack, CEO of Jackson Rancheria. “This year has been particularly challenging for these organizations and we are hopeful that the donation will positively impact our local communities while providing vital services to those who need it most.”

This is the Amador Community Foundation’s sixth year coordinating its Amador Giving Tuesday event. In 2019, the Amador Community Foundation raised \$214,769 for local

charities.

The Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians own and operate Jackson Rancheria Casino Resort, which includes the Casino, Hotel, RV Park, General Store & Gas Station. Jackson Rancheria is one of the largest employers in Amador County. The tribe is committed to supporting charitable programs, protecting the environment, and contributing to the county. The Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians was first recognized by the Federal Government in 1898. ★



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Ask Toni

Does Medicare Pay for a Long-Term Care Need?



Toni King

Toni:
Recently my older sister had a stroke and needs extra care at home. I was told from friends at church that Medicare will help to pay for her at-home care. I cannot find any information about Medicare paying for at-home care in the Medicare and You Handbook and have heard that she could use Medicaid or even receive help from home health agencies.

Please help me understand what her options can be because she does not qualify for a long-term care policy and now her savings is being eaten up and her family is having to sell her house.
~ Thanks, Cindy from Bellaire, TX

Great question, Cindy:

As you are aware Cindy the cost of long-term care has gone through the roof. Today the average cost in a nursing home nationwide is \$93,000 for a semi-private room or \$105,000 in a private room. In Texas, where I live the average cost is \$60,000 to \$77,000 depending on either a semi-private or private stay. This is what your sister is experiencing.

On page 51-52 of the Medicare & You handbook, it states that "What's not covered under Parts A and B and that you will have to pay for long-term care yourself. Also states on page 52 is that "one may be eligible for care under Medicaid or by purchasing a private long-term care insurance."

Let's discuss a few of the myths surrounding choosing one's long-term care insurance options which keep America confused. These myths leave someone like your sister without a long-term care insurance plan and then must pay 100% out of pocket.

• Myth #1: *A government program will help take care of my LTC needs when it happens.* It is not easy to qualify financially for a government program for a long-term care need. Medicare, Medicaid, and certain VA programs

may help to pay for some illness needs in certain circumstances. Each program has specific rules and qualifications for that program. It is important to note that government programs are generally qualified based on financial resources. The more assets one has the less likely to qualify.

• Myth #2: *Don't need LTC because I have a health policy that takes care of my medical.* Medical insurance plans such as group or individual health insurance, Medicare supplement or Medicare Advantage plans only take care of your medical needs. Long-Term care plans take care of one's activity of daily living such as bathing, dressing, continence, or moving around which are caused by chronic illnesses, accidents or advanced aging and cognitive impairments over time.

• Myth #3 *LTC plans are only for nursing home care.* LTC benefit plans let you design how you wish to receive your help for daily care whether at home, in an assisted living facility or a skilled nursing facility. Without a LTC plan, most needs are provided at home by unskilled family members. LTC benefits can provide caregiver training, care coordination, respite care and even hospice care in end-of-life situations.

• Myth #4: *My family will take care of me.* An individual does not realize the emotional and financial burden that taking care of an ill family member creates on the whole family whether it is the wife or husband taking care of their spouse or the family members who take care of their elderly parents.

Take your time and explore what you, your spouse's, or elderly parent's LTC options are. Waiting too long may keep one from qualifying due to health issues.

2021 Confused about Medicare Zoom webinars begin Thursday, January 28 th at 4:00 PM.

Visit www.tonisays.com to sign up for Toni's new event.

Toni King, author of the *Medicare Survival Guide®* is giving a \$5 discount on the *Medicare Survival Guide®* Advanced book. ★

Aerojet to be Acquired by Lockheed

Aerojet Rocketdyne Press Release

EL SEGUNDO, CA (MPG) - Aerojet Rocketdyne Holdings, Inc. (NYSE: AJRD) announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement to be acquired by Lockheed Martin Corporation (NYSE: LMT) in an all-cash transaction with a total equity value of \$5.0 billion.

Under the terms of the agreement, which has been unanimously approved by each company's Board of Directors, Lockheed Martin will acquire Aerojet Rocketdyne for \$56.00 per share in cash, representing a premium of approximately 33% to Aerojet Rocketdyne's closing stock price on December 18, 2020 and a premium of approximately 42% to the Company's volume weighted average

stock price ("VWAP") for the last 90 trading days.

As part of the transaction, Aerojet Rocketdyne declared a \$5 per share pre-closing special dividend to holders of its common shares and convertible senior notes, on an as-converted basis. The special dividend will be paid on March 24, 2021, to holders of record as of March 10, 2021. The payment of this special dividend, unless revoked, will adjust the consideration to be paid by Lockheed Martin to \$51 per share at closing.

"We are pleased to bring together our complementary companies in a transformative transaction that will provide premium cash value for our shareholders and tremendous benefits for our employees, customers and partners," said Eileen P. Drake, CEO and President of Aerojet Rocketdyne. "Joining Lockheed Martin

is a testament to the world-class organization and team we've built and represents a natural next phase of our evolution. As part of Lockheed Martin, we will bring our advanced technologies together with their substantial expertise and resources to accelerate our shared purpose: enabling the defense of our nation and space exploration. On behalf of the Aerojet Rocketdyne Board and management team, I'd like to thank all of our employees for their unwavering dedication and focus in helping us achieve this great milestone."

The transaction is expected to close in the second half of 2021 and is subject to the satisfaction of customary closing conditions, including regulatory approvals and approval by Aerojet Rocketdyne's stockholders. ★

The Only Relief from Lockdowns is to End Them

Commentary by Congresswoman Tom McClintock

Every American needs to see Angela Marsden's tearful video as she pours out her frustrations as a small restaurant owner in Los Angeles. Forced to drastically curtail her business during California's brutal shutdowns, she took out an \$80,000 loan to meet all the expensive requirements to move her dining outside and salvage what was left of her life's work. Instead, authorities arbitrarily changed the rules, and shut her down again – a death sentence for her ten-year-old restaurant. Yet the same authorities permitted a film production company to offer the very same outdoor dining across the very same parking lot the day she had to close her business.

"I'm losing everything," she says through her tears, "Everything I own is being taken away from me."

In Staten Island, police hauled a restaurant owner away in handcuffs for desperately trying to re-open his establishment just across the tracks from other restaurants where dining was allowed under precisely the same conditions.

When asked to explain these capricious standards, California Gov. Gavin Newsom smirked, "I'm deeply empathetic." That must be a load off their minds.

The Fifth Amendment in our Bill of Rights specifically protects Americans from being deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law. Where are those rights today?

Congress is now discussing

how to provide relief for the thousands of small business owners, their employees, and the families that depend on them, who have been crushed by these reckless edicts. As usual, politicians measure their empathy by how much they're willing to spend of other people's money. But the fine point of the matter is this: government cannot support the economy for any significant time because government does not finance the economy. The economy finances the government – and when you shut down the economy, you shut down the revenues that go to government.

The only genuine relief from the Covid lockdowns is to end the Covid lockdowns. Why is that so hard for some people to understand?

By now, it should be obvious that the lockdowns have failed to contain this virus. After nine months of this unprecedented experiment in social engineering, the virus continues to spread. Common sense should tell us that the more infectious a virus and the deeper it has already penetrated into a population, the less effective mass isolation will be.

The plight of Angela Marsden and countless victims of these policies tell us clearly what we are very effectively accomplishing: we are destroying our society. We have set in motion countless, avoidable deaths by suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, deferred health treatments and health screenings and poverty that will stalk us for many years to come. We have cost our youth a year of their educations. Nearly half of American retailers say they are now in imminent danger of

permanently closing. Forbes magazine reports (quote) "the number one worry on most small business owners' minds now is the threat of more government mandated business closures." Eleven million Americans who had jobs in February don't have them today.

Modern science and its many breakthroughs in immunology, epidemiology and virology has given us advanced treatments and vaccines unparalleled in human history. But science is grotesquely incompetent to reorder human societies or to change the laws of human nature. Nor does it give officials the omniscience to know what is best for every person in every circumstance. Nor does it give them the right to wantonly destroy people's lives and livelihoods. After all, medicine's most ancient command is "First, do no harm."

We have arbitrarily and indiscriminately destroyed the life's work and life's dreams of millions of Americans like Angela Marsden. We have made the most sacred right of Americans to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," into a hollow and bitter mockery.

The American people don't need the governor's empathy and they don't need politicians' handouts. They need a government that protects their right to make a living and to lead their own lives according to their own best judgment. They need their Bill of Rights back. And above all, they need their freedom back.

Congressman McClintock represents California's 4th Congressional District. ★

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Pandemic Priorities

Yes, we wear masks, practice social distancing, and wash our hands. But while we wait for vaccines, we need more help. That came from Dr. Daniel Monti who I had on POPPOFF. He is the Founding Director of the Marcus Institute of Integrative Health and author of "Tapestry of Health" weaving wellness into your life. So listen up.

- 1. GET SUFFICIENT VITAMIN D.** We're entering the cold and flu season amidst this pandemic, and there's enough data to suggest that having enough D could potentially provide some immune resilience from respiratory illness including covid 19. Diet may not be enough so the good Doc suggests starting with 1000-2000 I.U.'s daily. Good if it has Vitamin K to help with assimilation.
- 2. EAT ENOUGH FOODS RICH IN VITAMIN C.** People usually correctly associate it with oranges, but he reminds us about lemons that can be spread on salads, veggies, soups, sparkling water and tea.
- 3. INCREASE CONNECTION TO OTHERS.** It's called isolation compounded by the pandemic and socially distancing. Then comes depression, anxiety, and loneliness. We are social creatures. Face time or skype and zoom with family and friends.
- 4. DECREASE CONNECTION WITH THE NEWS.** During times like this, the brain is hardwired to scan environment for solutions which makes many people "news junkies." It's important to stay informed, but the actual news can be reviewed in a few minutes. The rest...you fill in the blank.
- 5. SEPARATE WORK AND HOME.** Many folks are working from home and home schooling their kids. It's a lot and you need a clear boundary

between the two. Back in the old days...nine months ago or so...you would leave your work at work. Now you need to leave "work from home" mode and transition to just "home mode."

- 6. MAKE YOUR BEDROOM A NIGHTTIME SANCTUARY.** Even if you are working from home, go to bed at the same time every night, preferably before 11 PM. Don't let sleep blend with the rest of the house...devoid of artificial light (smart phones, laptops, television etc).
- 7. BREATHE.** Hey, we breathe all the time. Focus on it a moment. Are you taking short halting breathes. When we're stressed, some people hold their breath a few seconds before the next breath. Pay attention and take some deep breathes several times a day. It can reset the nervous system.
- 8. LAUGH.** Nothing resets the nervous system like a deep belly laugh. Laughing disconnects us out of that fight or flight mode of stress.
- 9. DOUBLE YOUR VEGGIES.** Your diet can be bad during this time. Don't judge yourself. Phytonutrients in plants, especially veggies, nourish us like nothing else. Ideally, plants would be the majority of your diet.
- 10. TRIPLE YOUR ACTIVITY.** For heart health, sitting is the new smoking. But it goes way beyond the heart. It includes immune function and everything else. Order some exercise bands and carve out a half hour every day to use them. There's yoga online or invest in a piece of equipment you might enjoy.

Check out Dr. Monti at www.TapestryofHealth.com.

STAY WELL!!!

Employment Development Department Another Name For Titanic Disaster



By Dan Walters
CALMatters

"Rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic" is an overworked cliché, but it certainly applies to California's Employment Development Department.

The name itself is a farce. There's no evidence that EDD ever developed any jobs, other than employing thousands of bureaucrats to pay out unemployment insurance benefits — and that's been a titanic disaster.

This week, EDD suspended payments to many Californians in its latest effort to deal with massive fraud that erupted when Congress pumped many billions of dollars into the unemployment insurance system for workers who lost jobs due to COVID-19.

"As part of ongoing efforts to fight fraud, EDD has suspended payment on claims considered high risk and is informing those affected that their identity will need to be verified starting this week before payments can resume," the agency tweeted on Sunday.

The suspensions were ordered a few days after EDD's much-criticized director, Sharon Hilliard, abruptly retired — whether voluntarily or otherwise — and Gov. Gavin Newsom replaced her with veteran

apparatchik Rita Saenz.

The fraud scandal is doubly embarrassing for Newsom because the agency was already on the hot seat for failing to deliver timely payments to hundreds of thousands of legitimate claimants and still has a massive backlog of unprocessed claims.

The Los Angeles Times, in a lengthy examination of the fraud scandal, pointed out that EDD had failed to adopt "precautions implemented in other states, including using sophisticated software to identify suspect applications, keeping Social Security numbers out of official mail and cross-checking benefit claims against personal data on state prison inmates."

The agency had a contract with a firm, Pondera Solutions, that had successfully used publicly available data to flag potentially fraudulent claims, but cancelled it when federal funds for the fraud-prevention program expired.

So EDD fell hugely behind on legitimate unemployment claims and approved billions of dollars in fraudulent claims. What else could possibly go wrong?

Two years ago, state Auditor Elaine Howle advised the Legislature that EDD was exposing people to identity theft by placing Social Security numbers on mail. The volume of such mail has exploded during the pandemic but EDD ignored the warning and "has continued to place Californians at risk of identity theft," Howle said in a recent letter to Newsom.

Finally, the surge of unemployment claims has created a gigantic debt.

California borrowed more than \$10 billion from the federal government to pay benefits during the recession that began in 2007. The feds hiked taxes on California employers to pay off the debt and by the end of 2019, a year of low unemployment, the unemployment insurance fund had a \$3.3 billion balance.

However, during 2020, the state paid out more than \$100 billion in benefits, about a quarter in employer-financed regular benefits and the rest in emergency federal aid. The state unemployment fund was more than \$20 billion in the red at the end of 2020 and, EDD projects, will end 2021 with a negative balance of nearly \$50 billion.

When state unemployment funds dry up, benefits continue with federal loans that states must repay. California's previous \$10 billion debt took years to repay, and it now could face a \$50 billion debt. The state may hope for loan forgiveness, but if it's not forthcoming, employers will be saddled with new taxes that would make recovery from recession even more difficult.

If there's a political price to be paid for EDD's seemingly endless crises, it will fall on Newsom, especially if a pending recall drive places his career on the ballot later this year.

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

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- CLUES**
- ACROSS**
- *Timothy Q. Mouse's friend, in Disney classic
 - River in Germany
 - Bridle parts
 - Whatsoever
 - Like tuna tartare
 - Forearm bones
 - Plural of #3 Down
 - Hardware store
 - "Gladiator" setting
 - *Ferb Fletcher's stepbrother
 - *Mr. White's unfortunate student
 - Welcome spot for weary traveler
 - It shall, for short
 - Cul de _____
 - Young herring
 - Dieter's cuisine, for short
 - Gator's cousin
 - French "place"
 - Chunk of iceberg
 - St. Louis monument
 - Like new TV set
 - Front of ship
 - Singular of loci
 - Additional
 - Reality TV's Spelling
 - *Assistant to regional manager Michael Scott
 - Missing a limb
 - More, in Madrid
 - Like acne-prone skin
 - Pimple fluid
 - *Shirley's roommate and fellow bottle-capper
 - *Rory Gilmore's mom
 - Make an effort
 - Legal org.
 - Long stories
 - Scottish valleys
 - Doctor Dolittle, e.g.
 - *One of The Carpenters duo
 - Bone-dry
 - Opposite of WSW
 - Red or orange announcement

Crossword Puzzle Solutions on Page 8

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13					14			15			
16					17			18			
19					20		21	22			
23					24						
25	26	27		28	29		30	31	32	33	34
35		36		37		38		39			
40				41		42		43			
44			45		46			47			
48				49		50		51		52	
53				54		55		56			
57	58	59	60			61		62	63	64	
65				66	67			68			
69				70				71			
72				73				74			

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- DOWN**
- Slightly wet
 - *Malone and Stockton of the _____ Jazz
 - Skirt length
 - Shrovetide dish
 - *Mary-Kate and Ashley
 - Geologists' studies
 - *_____ and cheese
 - Moved under the rug
 - "All _____, no bite"
 - Footnote word
 - *Amy Poehler's comedic partner
 - Welsh alternative to Siobhán
 - Was almost out of gas, e.g.
 - Source of indigo dye, pl.
 - "_____ Be Home For Christmas"
 - In the best possible way
 - Coffee burn, e.g.
 - *Bow and _____
 - Spherical bacteria
 - *Corona's main squeeze?
 - What willow did
 - Read-only chip
 - Greek bazaar
 - *Clark's fellow traveler
 - College party chant
 - Celestial bear
 - Dancer's deuk
 - Daisy dukes, e.g.
 - "Wizard of Oz" man
 - Archimedes' exclamation

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 8

		1						
5	2				3	8		
8	9		2	5	4			
		2		7	3			
7			1		8			5
			9	4		2		
			8	3	2		1	9
	3	6					2	8
							7	

Find Puzzles on Page 8

D	U	M	B	O		E	M	S		B	I	T	S
A	T	A	L	L		R	A	W		R	A	D	I
M	A	X	I	S		A	C	E		A	R	E	N
P	H	I	N	E	A	S		P	I	N	K	M	A
S	A	C		S	I	L	D		L	O	W	C	A
C	R	O	C		L	I	E	U		W	E	D	G
A	R	C	H		S	M	A	R	T		P	R	O
L	O	C	U	S		E	L	S	E		T	O	R
D	W	I	G	H	T		L	A	M	E		M	A
L	A	V	E	R	N	E		L	O	R	E	L	A
E	X	E	R	T		A	B	A		E	P	I	C
G	L	E	N	S		V	E	T		K	A	R	E
S	E	R	E			E	N	E		A	L	E	R

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Sudoku Puzzle on Page 8

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5	2	7	6	1	9	3	8	4
8	9	3	2	5	4	1	6	7
9	1	2	5	7	3	8	4	6
7	6	4	1	2	8	9	3	5
3	5	8	9	4	6	2	7	1
4	7	5	8	3	2	6	1	9
1	3	6	7	9	5	4	2	8
2	8	9	4	6	1	7	5	3

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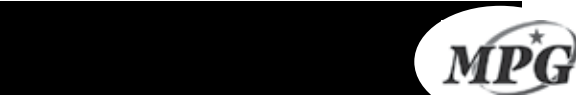
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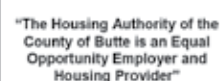
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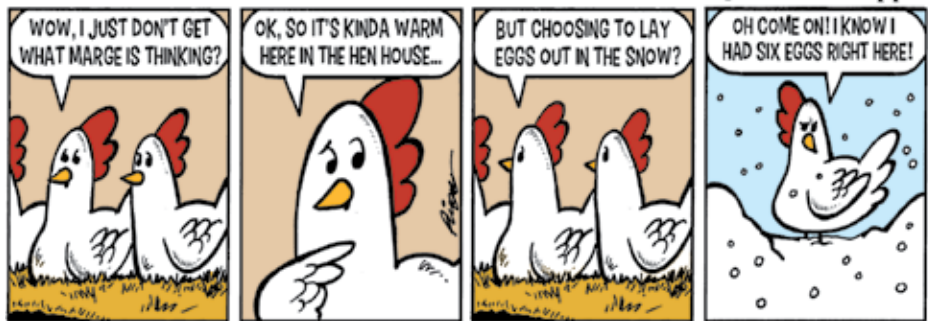
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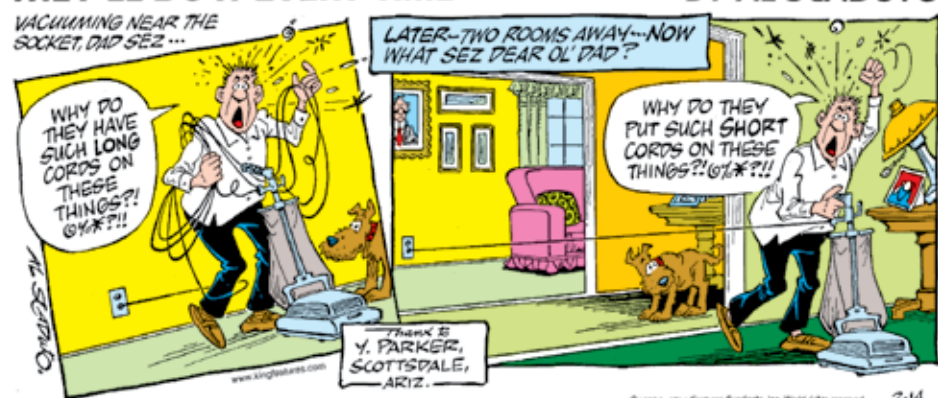
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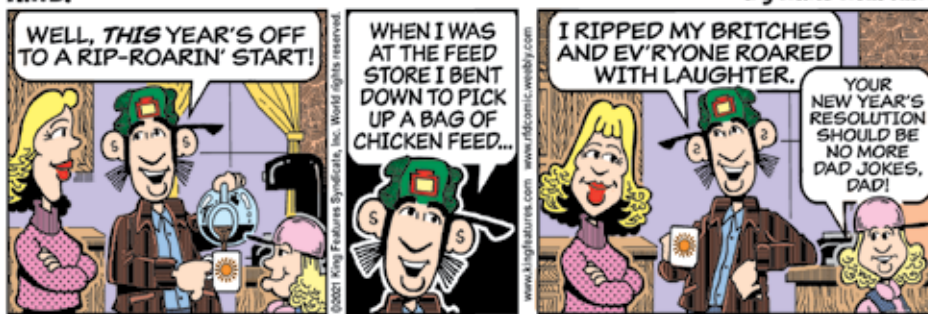
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THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



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"The jury's verdict in the Michael Jackson case is noted. However, this is the Figgy case."

LAFF-A-DAY



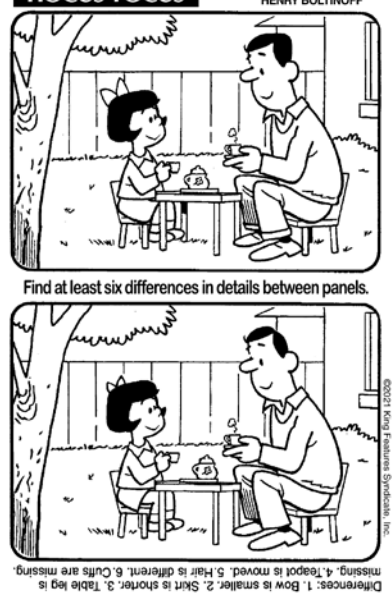
"That sure WAS a surprise party. She actually gave her right age!"

Just Like Cats & Dogs



by Dave T. Phipps

HOCUS-FOCUS



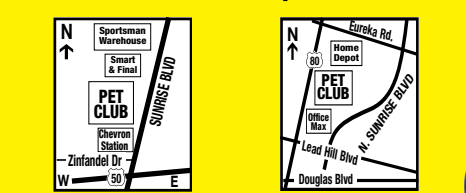
BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Bow is smaller. 2. Shirt is shorter. 3. Table leg is missing. 4. Topaz is moved. 5. Hair is jaggier. 6. Cuffs are missing.

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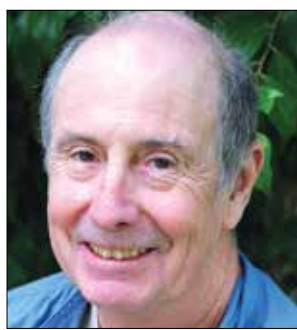
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 •All Varieties 3 Oz.
 Limit 2 Pkgs with Coupon
 Limit One Coupon Per Family
 Price Valid Only With Coupon
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 CHM PLU 569

BONUS COUPON
FANCY FEAST GOURMET CANNED CAT FOOD
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 Limit 1 Case Per Family
 Limit One Coupon Per Family
 Price Valid Only With Coupon
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 CHM PLU 361

A Discovery at UC Davis May Lead to New Treatment of Alzheimer's Disease



Bruce Hammock, UC Davis distinguished professor.
Photo by Kathy Keatley Garvey

Continued from page 1
treatment for Alzheimer's disease." DeCarli, who was not involved in the Baylor-UC Davis study, is a distinguished professor of neurology in the Department of Neurology and the Center for Neuroscience. He serves as the Victor and Genevieve Orsi Chair in Alzheimer's Research and directs the Imaging of Dementia and Aging laboratory.

The team, including three researchers from the Hammock lab – Hammock, Sung Hee Hwang and Debin Wan – and five from Baylor – Zheng, Anamitra Ghosh, Michele Comerota, Fading Chen, Nicholas Propson – identified a lipid metabolic pathway regulating neuroinflammation. Further development of sEH inhibitors may lead to a potential treatment for AD, they said.

In their abstract, the scientists explained that epoxy fatty acids "are derivatives of the arachidonic acid and omega-3 fatty acid metabolism pathways and have anti-inflammatory activities. However, their beneficial efficacy is limited because of their rapid hydrolysis by the soluble epoxide hydrolase (sEH)."

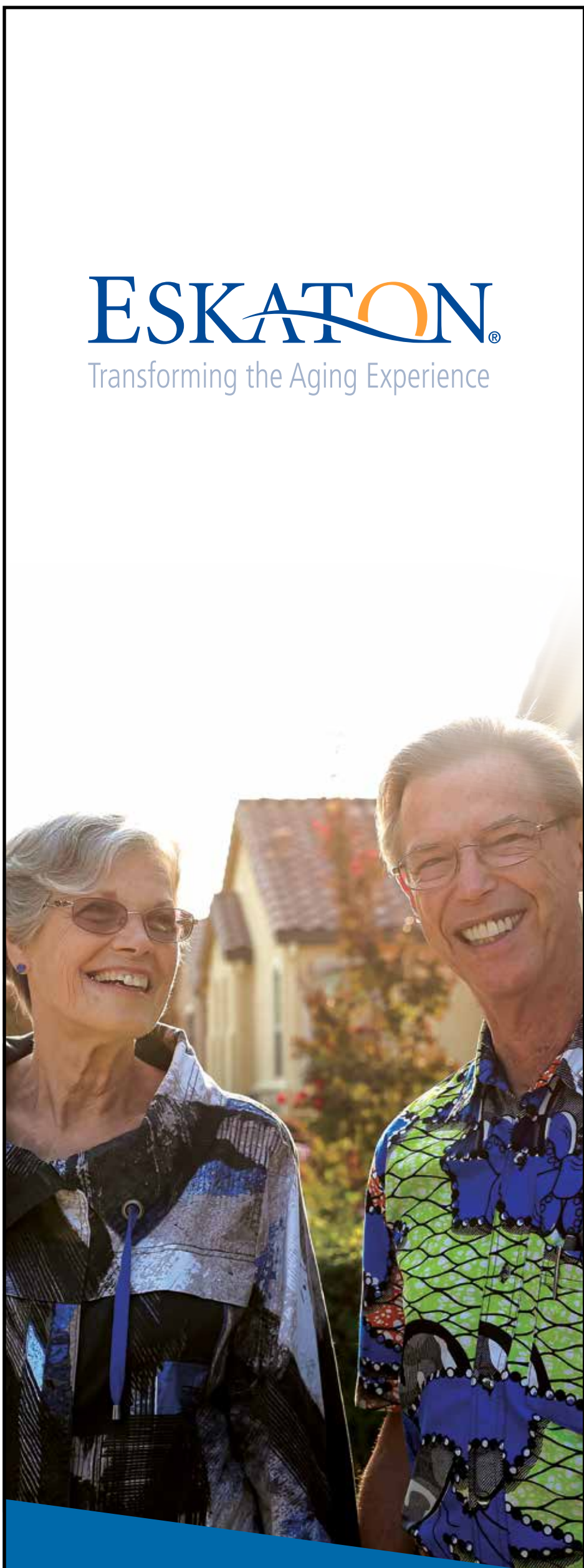
Zheng, director and professor of Baylor's Huffington Center on

Aging, also holds joint appointments with Baylor's Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology and the Department of Molecular and Human Genetics. Her laboratory focuses on basic and translational research on Alzheimer's disease. "Our expertise is mouse genetics, and we are known for using sophisticated mouse models and innovative approaches to probe the biology and pathophysiology of AD," she writes on her website.

Hammock added: "We have been lucky to collaborate with the scientists from Baylor and others around the world to find ways to resolve inflammation and reduce chronic diseases of aging. One of our sEH inhibitors is in human safety trials on a clinical path to treat chronic pain, we are hopeful that the compound also can be repurposed to ameliorate symptoms of diseases in the central nervous system." Of the 5.8 million Americans who have Alzheimer's, around 5.3 million are 65 and older, according to the Alzheimer's Association. About two-thirds are women. "African-Americans are about twice as likely to have Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia as whites. Hispanics are about 1.5 times as likely to have Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia as whites."

The National Institute on Aging indicates that the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease doubles every five years beyond the age of 65. At present, someone in the U.S. develops Alzheimer's disease every 66 seconds. Worldwide, some 44 million people have Alzheimer's. ★

The abstract: "Neuroinflammation has been increasingly recognized to play a critical role in Alzheimer's disease (AD). The epoxy fatty acids (EpFAs) are derivatives of the arachidonic acid metabolism pathway and have anti-inflammatory activities. However, their efficacy is limited because of their rapid hydrolysis by the soluble epoxide hydrolase (sEH). We report that sEH is predominantly expressed in astrocytes and is elevated in postmortem brain tissue from patients with AD and in the 5xFAD β amyloid mouse model of AD. The amount of sEH expressed in AD mouse brains correlated with a reduction in brain EpFA concentrations. Using a specific small-molecule sEH inhibitor, 1-trifluoromethoxyphenyl-3-(1-propionylpiperidin-4-yl) urea (TPPU), we report that TPPU treatment protected wild-type mice against LPS-induced inflammation in vivo. Long-term administration of TPPU to the 5xFAD mouse model via drinking water reversed microglia and astrocyte reactivity and immune pathway dysregulation. This was associated with reduced β amyloid pathology and improved synaptic integrity and cognitive function on two behavioral tests. TPPU treatment correlated with an increase in EpFA concentrations in the brains of 5xFAD mice, demonstrating brain penetration and target engagement of this small molecule. These findings support further investigation of TPPU as a potential therapeutic agent for the treatment of AD." ★



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Cheers! To Tower Brewing and a Happy 2021!



Tower Brewing's new head brewer, Alex Tonello. Photo: Tower Brewing

By Kasey Kaleel, Tower Brewing

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Tower Brewing Company is very excited to announce new, fun things happening in the brew house as well as the taproom here in East Sacramento, CA. We have partnered with new distributors, and we're brewing amazing new beer thanks to our new head brewer, Alex Tonello.

Alex has an especially strong passion for brewing beer; he spent nearly five years brewing for Knee Deep Brewing Company in Auburn, CA before relocating to the Sacramento area and excelled as the head brewer for New Helvetia Brewing. In October 2020, he joined us here at Tower Brewing to take his skills and our offerings to the next level. Alex plans to experiment with new, out of the box brewing concepts while continuing to make consistent, well balanced beer. His favorite styles to brew are West Coast IPAs, Kettle Sours and a wide range of crushable Lagers. Outside of the brewery, he enjoys golfing, fishing and sharing the fruits of his labor with friends and family. We are proud to welcome Alex to the Tower Brew Crew!

With a great new brewer, of course, comes great new beer. The newest members of the Tower Brewing family of beers are the Crannibalism Tart Ale and Runnin' with the Double West Coast Double IPA. The tart ale was brewed with over 500 pounds of cranberries – that's a quarter-ton of flavor! – and offers moderately tart characteristics to perfectly pair with your holiday feast. Runnin' with the Double is a fruit-forward double IPA, perfectly bitter with delicious tones of orange candy and lemon.

Our taproom is also wonderfully decorated by the talented AJ Kute! We have a beautiful new mural outside, and some great art inside as well. AJ found his love for art about 15 years ago and began working on murals in 2010. He has also been partnered with a local mural festival titled "Wide Open Walls" for the past three years. Drop in to see his beautiful art and stay tuned as he continues to add to our décor!

We have also purchased a new canning line that will help Tower can our beer more efficiently for quick grab-and-go service at the tap room, as well as help ensure our beer is readily available for our new distributors! We are now partnered with Superior Products (Northern CA), Chrissa Imports (South Bay Area) and Mussetter Distributing (Greater Sacramento) as well as Bay Area Distributing. Thanks to our greater outreach, Monkey Knife Fight and our other fine offerings are now available all over California. Superior Products serves counties including Arbuttle, Colusa County, Williams, Willows, Corning, Red Bluff, Cottonwood, Anderson, and Redding. Bay Area Distributing serves Contra Costa and Alameda County.

2020 has been a tough year for all of us, but new beer, new art, and a revitalized Tower Brewing tap room point to a 2021 that will be worth welcoming. Cheers!

Tower Brewing is located at 1210 66th St Unit B Sacramento CA 95819. Email TowerBrewingCompany.com

Visit TowerBrewingCompany.com for schedule and to learn more. ★

Reducing African American Child Deaths the Goal

By Erin Maurie, First 5 Sacramento Commission

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County continues to see dramatic results in the community-wide effort to reduce African American child deaths. In a recent report compiled by Applied Survey Research (ASR), the results for FY 2019-20 show progress in addressing the longstanding issue of African American children dying at twice the rate of children of other races. The top four causes of the disparity in preventable child deaths are perinatal conditions, infant sleep-related deaths, child abuse and neglect homicides, and third-party homicide.

Using Child Death Review Team and Public Health data, the following decreases in the rate of African American child deaths and changes in disparity compared to other races was determined. When comparing 2012-14 to 2016-18, for African Americans in Sacramento County there was a 19 percent reduction in infant death rate and a 33 percent

reduction in disparity; 51 percent reduction in infant sleep-related death rate and a 58 percent reduction in disparity; 88 percent reduction in the rate for child abuse and neglect homicides for children ages 0-17 and a 95 percent reduction in disparity.

"Our community began this critical work with the goal of reducing African American child deaths 10-20 percent by 2020. Data through 2018 indicate that due to thoughtful, community-led partnerships, programs and interventions, we have hit the lofty mark we set, and in fact, when it comes to specific types of child death, we've far exceeded our goal," said Phil Serna, Chair of the County Board of Supervisors and First 5 Sacramento Commission. "Now, however, is not the time for complacency, but it is time to double-down and build on the progress we've made, especially given the uncertainty the pandemic presents, including the myriad associated increases in violence, mental health needs and pronounced racial inequities. It is more important than ever to

support African American families and invest in the health and safety of our youngest residents, and that's exactly what I and others will continue to forcefully advocate."

"In a year when the impact of disparities has been made painfully clear, we are heartened by ongoing evidence that community-led and whole-family strategies to reduce the leading causes of African-American child deaths are proving effective. The results of these efforts demonstrate the importance of long-term commitments to preventive supports for families – particularly black families and those from other underserved communities," said Chet P. Hewitt, president and CEO of Sierra Health Foundation and The Center, which manages the Black Child Legacy Campaign, and co-chair of the Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths. "We will continue in partnership to push hard for the safety, true equity and support our communities need to lead healthy and meaningful lives." ★

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