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# Grapevine Independent

VOLUME 57 • ISSUE 47 PROUDLY SERVING RANCHO CORDOVA & SACRAMENTO COUNTY SINCE 1968 NOVEMBER 24, 2023

**SEE  
INSIDE**

**"HOLIDAY FUN  
AND MEMORIES"**



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**SHOPPING WITH  
A PURPOSE**



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**TRUE  
THANKSGIVING**  
By Mary Jane Popp



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## ThermoGenesis Opens Labs



ThermoGenesis and the City of Rancho Cordova celebrate the opening of ReadyStart Cleanrooms and IncuStart Wet Labs for the Sacramento region. Matt Ceccato, Deputy Chief of Staff for Congressman Ami Bera M.D., Rancho Cordova Councilmembers Garrett Gatewood and Siri Pulipati, Haihong Zhu, COO Chris Xu, Chairman and CEO and Assemblyman Josh Hoover. Photo courtesy of ThermoGenesis

### City of Rancho Cordova News Release

**RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG)** - Gene cell therapy, which involves modifying the genetic material to treat or prevent diseases, is a growing field, and now, startups and companies specializing in this area, have access to medical-grade clean rooms, coworking spaces and offices right here in Rancho Cordova.

On October 26, ThermoGenesis Holdings, Inc. announced the opening of a new shared clean-room

and lab space, located at 2890 Kilgore Road. The company initially announced that it was expanding its headquarters to Rancho Cordova in March 2022.

"ThermoGenesis has made a long-standing investment, having been in Rancho Cordova since 1986. We're proud to have a pioneer in the automated cell processing and banking industry here, and we applaud them for being at the forefront of scientific innovation," said Mayor Linda Budge. "This next chapter - ReadyStart CleanRooms

and IncuStart Wet Labs - represents the transformation of the traditional office park into a thriving innovation hub, and I have no doubt it will produce the next important breakthrough in the life sciences field."

ThermoGenesis celebrated with a ribbon cutting event with the city, the Greater Sacramento Economic Council and others.

The following is a press release from ThermoGenesis:  
ThermoGenesis Holdings, Inc. a market leader in automated cell  
*Continued on page 4*

## Vital Signs Data Shows Improvements for FCUSD Students

By Sharon Pearce

**FOLSOM-CORDOVA, CA (MPG)** - Parents and students again took to the microphone Thursday night, November 16, 2023, at the Folsom Cordova Unified School District (FCUSD) meeting and spoke of needing new schools but this time the emphasis was on how the Board has spent money in the past, or didn't spend any, when time was of the essence to develop schools under Measures G and M, and generally.

One student asked the Board to redesign to build simpler looking schools that are less costly so schools can be developed in each community. Mathew R. said he had learned not all funds from Measure M are being used for schools. "Why is Measure M used for specific matters and not for its purpose?" he asked, "...build specific schools in Folsom and Rancho Cordova. Stick to the pre-approved plan; if we change the plan, expectations for the school system will fail."

Elena Wagner brought children to hear the meeting and commented on the \$540 million that is available. She credited the Board for the various constructions suggested, saying "Phased high schools are helpful when a community is still growing, and approved of mirroring schools." Wagner said Flex Campuses cannot be overlooked but we cannot wait on them. Diane Laney said "Sixteen years ago the plan was to build a high school. Some have paid for years for that and some at higher rates."

James Garcia summed up the continuous discourse by accusing the Board of overdesigning two elementary, and "now you lack funds for schools for both Folsom and Rancho Cordova. This was poor planning. If you design another monstrosity school, this funding will go away. We need proper schools that meet needs; get test scores up, and don't go design elaborate monstrosities."

Attention turned to the graphics display on the FCUSD 2023 Fall Vital Signs Data Report. The new approach was to look at data, and ask the question "How do we help our teachers?" Data revealed that in English Language Arts ("ELA") state standards were exceeded, with results being higher for females by 9.36%.  
*Continued on page 9*

## Current Proposal to Develop Kassis Property Found Inconsistent with City Standards

Story by Shaunna Boyd

**RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG)** - Trumark Homes has spent several years planning the development of the former Kassis property - 41 acres of undeveloped open space along the American River in Rancho Cordova. Their initial application was submitted in April 2019, proposing the development of 245 single-family homes. There was some opposition to the project because the property is beloved by many locals in the area, as public access easements traverse the site, and it provides habitat for various species of wildlife.

In December 2022, Trumark withdrew its initial application, citing "inaction" by the Planning Department of the City of Rancho Cordova. Rancho Cordova's Communications and Public Affairs Director Maria Kniestedt explained that City staff was "in the process of reviewing



The lower basin provides important habitat for local wildlife along the American River. Photo by Mark Berry

the technical studies and preparing the environmental document required by CEQA [California Environmental Quality Act] when the application was withdrawn.

Trumark then submitted a new application - now proposing 441 homes on the site (of which 242 would be designated as low-income housing): "The Kassis property's location near the river, regional recreation, and light rail direct to downtown Sacramento, makes the site ideal for

new home construction, bringing new families to an area that needs retail and community support."

The new formal application was submitted under the protections of Senate Bill (SB) 330 - State legislation that attempts to address the lack of affordable housing by mandating a streamlined review process for new housing. SB 330 restricts local governments from down-zoning properties and from attempting to apply subjective design standards when considering new projects.

Trumark also asserted that because the site was zoned to meet the City's low-income housing obligations under the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) as determined by the State, their application must be allowed "by right." Under that provision, Trumark proposed that while design review could still be required, the City could not require  
*Continued on page 3*

# Local Museums Encourage Shopping with a Purpose

**T-Rock Communications  
News Release**

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)**

- Complete with a variety of holiday specials and plenty of in-stock inventory on-hand, a number of Sacramento area museums are proud to participate in the 7th Annual Museum Store Sunday on November 26, 2023. In partnership with the Museum Store Association (MSA), more than 2,100 museum stores representing all fifty states, 25 countries and five continents will offer relaxing, inspired shopping inside favorite museum stores and cultural institutions. Museum Store Sunday offers an opportunity for the community to shop with a purpose while supporting the missions and programs of each participating museum and cultural institution.

A sampling of the unique products and specials available on Museum Store Sunday at local Sacramento area museum stores include the following:

**Aerospace Museum of California** – Perfect for those searching for the ideal holiday gift to delight aviation and space enthusiasts, the Aerospace Museum’s expanded gift shop offers a captivating array of treasures, including apparel, books, vintage model kits, space-themed toys, and more. Plus, holiday shoppers support a great local cause, as every dollar spent in the shop directly supports the museum’s mission. The museum store is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Museum Store Sunday, and visitors can enjoy an exclusive 25 percent discount on all purchases. For more, please call 916-643-3192.

**The California Museum** – Shoppers are encouraged to get a jump start on holiday shopping with the Museum Store’s wide range of unique items, including books, games & puzzles, children’s products, jewelry, exhibit items, California-themed items and more. On Museum



The MOSAC gift store is a perfect place to shop for young scientists, engineers or loved ones with a natural curiosity. Photo courtesy of SMUD Museum of Science & Curiosity

Store Sunday, the Museum will offer 10 percent off store purchases for non-members and 20 percent off for Museum members, excluding food & beverage and clearance items. The store is open from noon to 5 p.m. and free California Museum totes will be available for the first 20 people with purchase of \$50+. More information is available at [www.californiamuseum.org/visit/events-public-programs/museum-store-sunday/](http://www.californiamuseum.org/visit/events-public-programs/museum-store-sunday/).

**California State Railroad Museum** – The Museum Store is a shopping destination for train gifts for every age, offering books and videos on railroad history, as well as tees for adults and youth, exclusive railroad dinnerware reproductions, and Northern California’s best selection of wooden trains from fan favorite brands such as BRIO and Thomas the Tank Engine. The Museum Store is celebrating Museum Store Sunday all weekend long, from Friday to Sunday, with two limited-time specials: exclusive California State Parks cotton totes at 50 percent off, and 20

percent off exclusive “California Poppy” reproduction china – produced specifically for the Railroad Museum Store – showcasing a beautiful pattern once used on Santa Fe Railway dining cars. For more, please visit [www.california-railroad.museum/store](http://www.california-railroad.museum/store).

**Crocker Art Museum** – Holiday shoppers focused on artful giving have plenty of options from which to choose at the Crocker’s Museum Store. Shoppers will discover beautiful pieces inspired by art on view and thoughtfully curated gifts that invite individuals of all ages to explore their creativity. The Museum Store showcases products crafted by local artists and makers, many created just for the Crocker. Plus, shoppers are encouraged to peruse a curated offering of catalogues and books related to exhibition and collection. Purchases in the Museum Store support arts access in the community and help the Crocker continue to provide outstanding exhibitions and engaging programs for all. On Museum Store Sunday, shoppers can enjoy 10

percent off storewide (excluding some artist consignment merchandise). For more, visit [www.crockerart.org](http://www.crockerart.org).

**Sacramento Children’s Museum** – Filled with merchandise geared for playtime for the little ones, Museum Store visitors will enjoy 10 percent off for all shoppers and 25 percent off for members, plus a free surprise gift with purchase. Want to give a gift to enjoy all year long? Museum memberships are \$10 off. The Museum Store is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Museum Store Sunday. For more information, please visit [www.sackids.org](http://www.sackids.org).

**Sacramento History Museum** – Holiday shoppers will find a variety of books that showcase the fascinating history of the local region, classic games and toys, holiday ornaments, beautiful minerals and rocks, and much more in the Museum Store. On Museum Store Sunday, the store is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and will offer 10 percent off all toys. Plus, the first 20 customers will receive a special print pressed in the Print Shop and signed by Howard and Jared,

the team that made the History Museum a social media sensation on TikTok. For more, please call 916-808-7059 or visit [www.sachistorymuseum.org](http://www.sachistorymuseum.org).

**SMUD Museum of Science & Curiosity** – For holiday shoppers hoping to find the perfect gift for young scientists, engineers or loved ones with a natural curiosity are encouraged to stop by the MOSAC gift store. Offering an inspired selection of items ranging from clothing to books, puzzles, games, plush and fun toys, shoppers who visit on Museum Store Sunday can take advantage of 10 percent off in the store. Store hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. for those wanting to encourage future minds with activities and toys that spur wonder and curiosity about the world around us. For more, please visit [www.visitmosac.org](http://www.visitmosac.org).

**Sutter’s Fort State Historic Park** – Friends of Sutter’s Fort invites the community to celebrate Museum Store Sunday and the grand reopening of the on-site Museum Store. Shoppers will enjoy free admission to Sutter’s Fort for self-guided tours. And, from 10 a.m. to noon, Friends of Sutter’s Fort will be treating customers to complimentary donuts and coffee (while supplies last). Shoppers will find unique stocking stuffers, gifts for teachers and history buffs on sale, up to 20 percent off plus browse the carefully curated selection of books (including many local authors, cookbooks and wide selection of books for elementary school aged children). For more, please visit [www.suttersfort.org](http://www.suttersfort.org).

For more information about the 7th Annual Museum Store Sunday happening on November 26, please visit [www.museumstore-sunday.org](http://www.museumstore-sunday.org). For more information about Sacramento area museums, “like” them on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/SacMuseums](http://www.facebook.com/SacMuseums), follow them on Instagram and X @SacMuseums or visit the user-friendly website at [www.SacMuseums.org](http://www.SacMuseums.org) ★

**Sacramento CHORAL SOCIETY & Orchestra**  
Donald Kendrick, Music Director

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3:00 pm Matinee

Sacramento Memorial Auditorium  
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**HIGHLIGHTS**

- > Star Carol
- > Still, Still, Still
- > Hallelujah Chorus
- > White Christmas
- > 'Twas the Night Before Christmas

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**MESSIAH SING-ALONG**

Tue, December 26  
at 2:00 pm

Ryan Enright, Organist

First United Methodist Church  
2100 J Street, Sacramento

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# Kassis Property Found Inconsistent with City Standards

Continued from page 1

discretionary approval for the project under CEQA.

Trumark's application package was deemed complete on August 25, 2023, which triggered an accelerated 60-day timeline for the City of Rancho Cordova to review the project and determine if it complies with the City's adopted objective standards.

While the City was conducting their review, a group of concerned homeowners adjacent to the site, Tiffany Farms Homeowners' Association, hired the law firm Soluri Meserve to assess the project proposal. Attorney Patrick M. Soluri submitted a letter on their behalf, outlining various instances of inconsistencies between the proposal and the City's codes and standards.

Specifically, and most glaringly, Soluri wrote, "The Project is inconsistent with the City's General Plan by constructing homes in a floodway and 100-year floodplain." The Trumark proposal acknowledges that the lower terrace of the site, closest to the American River, is within the 100-year floodplain, and they propose to use infill to raise the ground level, removing that section of property from the floodway. But Soluri contends first that the General Plan specifies that the City shall "preclude development within the 100-year floodplain," and further that the City will "discourage the use of fill to create buildable area within the 100-year floodplain, except in extreme circumstances consistent with all other applicable policies and regulations, and after review to determine potential impacts on wildlife, habitat, and flooding on other parcels." Soluri states that any such "'extreme circumstances' are not met by the Project."

In the City's Review, released on October 24, Senior Planner Arlene Granadosin-Jones wrote that Trumark's assertion that their proposal should be processed



A confusing array of signs on the Kassis property proclaim no equestrians, no trespassing, and also designate the area as trail access. Photo by Shaunna Boyd

by right was "incorrect," as Trumark was attempting to apply legal provisions for which the site was not eligible. "The City will process your application in accordance with the requirements of the Rancho Cordova Municipal Code, SB 330, and the Housing Accountability Act. As part of that process, the application is required to undergo complete and thorough environmental review as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)," wrote Granadosin-Jones.

The Review concluded that Trumark's proposal was inconsistent and not in compliance with many standards and policies of the City of Rancho Cordova.

In particular, the Review found Trumark's proposal to be inconsistent with adopted General Plan policies because part of the site is located within the 100-year floodplain, where development is precluded by the City and infill use is discouraged.

The Review also found that the project is not consistent with the City's objective zoning, development, and design standards – citing 40 different issues with parking allowances, bicycle facilities, outdoor lighting, walls and fencing, pedestrian pathways, seating, various landscaping guidelines, etc. Further issues were identified in the proposal's street standards, bicycle standards, drainage requirements,

and traffic standards – all of which were not consistent with the City's objective design standards.

The Kassis site is located within Erosion Zone 4 of the Parkway Overlay Zone, and the City's Review found that the proposal did not meet various building requirements that would ensure erosion risks are mitigated. The proposal was also inconsistent with the City's requirements for the preservation and protection of trees, because the proposal did not include an updated arborist report or meet the necessary tree replacement guidelines. The project would require a conditional use permit from the City, for which

Trumark has not applied. And finally, the project did not comply with the City's parkland dedication requirement for new developments.

Trumark still has the option of modifying their proposal to bring it into compliance with the City's applicable standards, as specified in their Review. Then the City would again have 60 days to review a modified application. If the proposal were deemed consistent, the CEQA review is still required to determine the project's environmental impacts; as Granadosin-Jones wrote in the Review, "Complete environmental review is necessary before the City will make a decision regarding the project." ★

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Food Court: 7 Days: 11am - 7:30pm  
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Russet Potato 10 lbs <b>\$2.79/bag</b>	Satsuma Mandarin <b>99¢/lb</b>	English Cucumber <b>99¢/ea</b>	Kiwi <b>\$1.29/lb</b>

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Clamato <b>\$5.99/ea</b>	Cajun Seasoning <b>\$1.99/ea</b>	Dole Pineapple Juice, Chunks & Slices 20 oz <b>\$2.99/ea</b>	Pearl Milling Co. Syrup and Pancake Mix 24 oz, 32 oz <b>\$4.99/ea</b>	Reynolds Aluminum Wrap Full 75 sq. ft. <b>\$1.99/ea</b>	Chickadee Hawaiian Style Beef Jerky 2.25 oz <b>\$1.99/ea</b>
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## ASIAN GROCERY

Noodle Happiness w/ Vermicelli Bean Thread 16 oz <b>\$3.99/ea</b>	Lee Kum Kee 30 Sauces Regular & Extra Hot 7.5 oz <b>\$1.79/ea</b>	Martin Chunks Beef w/ Natural Juices 11.5 oz <b>\$6.99/ea</b>	JASMINE RICE <b>\$1.79/ea</b>	Dynasty Thai Jasmine Rice 20 lbs <b>\$1.99/ea</b>	Bamboo Tree Coconut Water 1 Liter <b>\$1.99/ea</b>
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## EUROPEAN GROCERY

Inci Sunflower Oil 5 liters <b>\$19.99/ea</b>	Zergut Mild Peppers 575 gr <b>\$3.49/ea</b>	Ahmad Tea Green Tea 100 T/B <b>\$6.99/ea</b>	Al Amin White Sunflower Seeds 150 gr <b>\$2.99/ea</b>	Khutrook Ginger Bread 500 gr <b>\$3.49/ea</b>
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## FROZEN & FISH DEPT

Crispy Seaweed Rolls 1.1 lb <b>\$3.99/ea</b>	Dumpling Wrappers 360 g <b>\$1.99/ea</b>
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## WEEKLY MEAT SPECIALS

Beef Ribeye Roast - Boneless <b>\$6.99/lb</b>	Beef Ribeye Steak - Boneless <b>\$7.99/lb</b>
Pork Baby Back Ribs <b>\$3.99/lb</b>	Pork Tenderloin Boneless <b>\$2.99/lb</b>
Chicken Thighs Boneless <b>\$1.99/lb</b>	Pork Loin Roast Boneless <b>\$2.99/lb</b>

## KOREAN/JAPANESE GROCERY

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Korean Pancake Frying Mix 1 kg <b>\$1.99/ea</b>	Senoupe Seaweed Orig. 60 g <b>\$2.49/ea</b>	Pacific Seaweed Mackerel Boiled 400 g <b>\$3.99/ea</b>	Danee Coffee Mix 2 kinds 100 x 12 g <b>\$1.49/ea</b>	Baked Onion Ring 120 g <b>\$3.99/ea</b>	Unggi Soup 11.5 oz <b>\$2.99/ea</b>
Kiple Mix Jelly Candy 9.17 oz <b>\$7.99/ea</b>					

## HOUSEWARES

ELECTRIC BBQ GRILL <b>\$39.99</b>	BIKER SPEED HAIR COLOR (REFILL ONLY) <b>4.99/ea</b>	HAZEN WORK PAN 30 CM <b>14.99/ea</b>	WATERMELON SLICE KNIFE <b>3.99/ea</b>
ELECTRIC RICE COOKER (4 CUPS) <b>\$4.99</b>	ELECTRIC RICE COOKER (6 CUPS) <b>\$5.49</b>	ELECTRIC RICE COOKER (10 CUPS) <b>\$5.99</b>	

## FROZEN & FISH DEPT

Chapatti 10 pcs 14 oz <b>\$1.29/ea</b>	Columbus Honey Ham <b>\$8.79</b>
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## EUROPEAN DELI

Olive Medley <b>\$4.99</b>	Hot Pined Green Olives <b>\$4.39</b>
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## Rancho Cordova RCCB Presents "Holiday Fun And Memories"



An assortment of Green Valley Puppetry puppets posing for the camera. Photo courtesy of Rancho Cordova RCCB

### Rancho Cordova RCCB News Release

#### RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG)

The Rancho Cordova River City Concert Band will present two concerts of "Holiday Fun And Memories," the first on Sunday, December 3rd, 2023, at Koreana Plaza, and the second on Sunday, December 10th, 2023, at The Cordova Performing Arts Center, Rancho Cordova. Both concerts begin at 3 p.m.

The concert at Koreana Plaza on December 3rd will also feature vocalists from The Silver Lining, and the December 10th concert at the Cordova Performing Arts Center will feature the same vocalists, plus puppets from Green Valley Puppetry, and jazz pianist Jim Martinez.

Under the direction of Tom Seaton, the Rancho Cordova River City Concert Band will

celebrate the season with selections including "Jing Jing Jingle," "African Holy Night," "Winter Milky Way," and "I Saw Three Ships."

At the December 10th performance, puppets from Green Valley Puppetry will perform with the band on "The Toymaker's Workshop," "Mah Na Mah Na Christmas" and "Twas The Night Before Christmas." Sacramento jazz pianist Jim Martinez will join the band on "It's A Wonderful Christmas" and perform some selections with his trio from Vince Guaraldi's Classic, "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

Martinez has performed/recorded with jazz notables Lionel Hampton, Christian McBride, Roy Hargrove and many others. Martinez worked as pianist/musical director for Joan



Jim Martinez performing on the piano. Photo courtesy of Rancho Cordova RCCB



The Rancho Cordova River City Concert Band performs uniformed in a concert hall. Photo courtesy of Rancho Cordova RCCB

Rivers and Bob Newhart at Harrah's in Lake Tahoe. Jim's annual jazzy holiday concert, "A Charlie Brown Christmas," has been featured with symphony orchestras around the U.S., from California to Florida.

The band is pleased to be sponsored by the City of Rancho Cordova, and is enthusiastically affiliated with the Sacramento Valley Symphonic Band Association (SVSBA) and the Association of Concert Bands (ACB). Performing an average of ten concerts a year, Rancho Cordova RCCB remains true to the American community band tradition - all of their concerts and performances throughout their yearlong season are free to the public. Therefore, there is no admission charge.

The Rancho Cordova River City Concert Band is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization made up of approximately 50 volunteer musicians who donate their time and musical talents to present concerts with a broad audience appeal. The band can be followed on Facebook, and their web page can also be visited at [www.rconcert-band.org](http://www.rconcert-band.org). Videos of live and virtual performances can be viewed on the band's YouTube channel.

Come join the Rancho Cordova River City Concert Band on Sunday, December 3rd, at 3 p.m. at Koreana Plaza, and/or on Sunday, December 10th at Cordova Performing Arts Center, 2239 Chase Dr., Rancho Cordova, CA 95670. ★

## ThermoGenesis Opens Labs

Continued from page 1

processing and cell and gene therapy services, announced the grand opening of its new state-of-the-art facility, housing ISO 7 cGMP cleanroom suites, along with research and development labs. The Grand Opening Celebration for the ReadyStart Cleanrooms and IncuStart Wet Labs was held on October 26, 2023, at the facility located at 2890 Kilgore Rd., Rancho Cordova, CA 95670.

The state-of-the-art ReadyStart cGMP Cleanrooms and IncuStart Wet Labs will be an incubator facility which will provide the cleanroom environment, equipment, and services needed for R&D and cGMP manufacturing of cell and gene therapies and other life science products. The rollout of the ReadyStart Cleanroom suites is part of ThermoGenesis' previously announced plan to transform from a medical device company to a cell and gene therapy services company and, eventually, a contract development and manufacturing organization (CDMO).

The ReadyStart Cleanrooms consist of twelve leasable cGMP compliant ISO 7 cleanroom suites. Each private cGMP suite comes fully equipped and can be configured to meet the client's specific needs. Within the cGMP facility are the IncuStart Wet Labs. The facility will be maintained and supported by ThermoGenesis' operations, quality, regulatory and scientific staff, with more than 25 years of industry experience.

"We launched the innovative, flexible ReadyStart cGMP Suites and IncuStart Wet Labs to better support the research and clinical development of cell and gene therapy products. Early-stage life science and cell and gene therapy companies face a long and complex path to product commercialization, often while being constrained by limited budgets," stated Chris Xu, Ph.D., Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of ThermoGenesis. "Our all-encompassing facility will provide a flexible

option, enabling companies to achieve their anticipated milestones faster and more efficiently. Additionally, our team's strong expertise in regulatory affairs and product commercialization can help accelerate the development of our customers' products, allowing them to focus on their science, while ThermoGenesis will manage the regulatory and quality compliances associated with running a cGMP facility."

Keep life science talents and dollars in the Greater Sacramento Area

The Sacramento region has tremendous economic and human value when compared to other life sciences hubs like San Diego, Boston, and the Bay Area. Greater Sacramento offers significant operating cost advantages for R&D companies, produces a high percentage of bachelor's degrees in STEM fields, and is a top market for diversity, with over 52% of the population being of a diverse ethnic background...

Greater Sacramento is experiencing an accelerated growth in its life sciences industry. ThermoGenesis' multi-million-dollar investment is proof of the Company's commitment to expanding the life sciences footprint and access in the area. Altogether, recent biotechnology investments in the region will create over 1,000 science-related jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in economic impact.

"We are thrilled ThermoGenesis is in our market, specifically in Rancho Cordova, building the world-class ReadyStart Cleanrooms and IncuStart Wet Labs for the Sacramento region," Greater Sacramento Economic Council President & CEO Barry Broome said. "This incubator facility will allow scientists to develop and commercialize their product providing new cell and gene therapy technologies."

For more information, visit [ReadyStartCleanRooms.com](http://ReadyStartCleanRooms.com) or visit [thermogenesis.com/thermogenesis-to-open-a-new](http://thermogenesis.com/thermogenesis-to-open-a-new). ★



With Mary Jane Popp

## True Thanksgiving

When you are loosening that belt after all those tasty treats and settling in to watch a game or two or three, do think about that first Thanksgiving and what it really meant for those settlers. They survived a treacherous journey, a cold winter and were just happy to be alive. The feast was more like surf and turf with venison, mussels and scallops. Makes sense since they were so close to the ocean. And yes, they had turkey too, but not the fat platter filled with stuffing, but wild turkey and not a libation of course. No pumpkin pies either, just pumpkins. Desserts were most likely cornmeal breads and puddings. And the pilgrims actually did have a true day of thanksgiving with a day of prayer and fasting, not feasting. Oh, and the pilgrims did not call themselves by that name. They referred to themselves as "Saints" and "First Comers." Of the 102 people on board the Mayflower, only 50 were so-called pilgrims. The others were members of the Church of England who signed on as laborers, soldiers or those who were looking to gain property in the "New World." The pilgrims called them "Strangers."

After thinking back to that time, I got to thinking. Sure it's a great day to celebrate with family and friends, but there is so much more to being thankful. It has really hit Rick (my husband) and I this Thanksgiving. He has been battling stage four lung cancer since March of 2020, just

before the pandemic really impacted all of us. He has been a real trooper through clinical trials and meds and hospital stays, but I am thankful I have had him for whatever time the good Lord has given us. How long will that be? We don't know, so each day is precious. We have had 52...almost 53 years of a wonderful marriage. Ups and downs? Of course. But we made it this far with true love to carry us through. So, for me, THIS Thanksgiving is very precious. As for the trappings of good food and football games, we will enjoy every taste of happiness. Life is indeed precious, but so is the quality of that life. We must look back and hope that we made a difference, and we must look forward with great hope in our hearts. I am taking some time off from hosting my POPPOFF Radio Show on FM-104.5 & AM-950 KAH1, but it will continue with some wonderful archived shows I think you will enjoy. I have been so lucky to have all of you in my life too. Since it is Thanksgiving, my real thanks is that I have my dear husband with me still, and will look only forward for better days, but still grateful for the days we have NOW!

I wish all of you a wonderful Thanksgiving filled with love and joy and family and friends. Enjoy every minute of every day. Don't forget to take a moment and say a little prayer for life and love. ★

HAPPY THANKSGIVING  
AND BLESSINGS!



WE SUPPORT  
FIRST RESPONDERS



## SMUD Giving Monday Personal Care Drive at Cal Expo

### SMUD News Release

#### SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)

In partnership with the Homeless Assistance Resource Team (HART) and its ongoing community efforts to address homelessness across the region, SMUD is sponsoring Giving Monday on December 4, 2023, at Cal Expo, in an effort to collect needed personal care items, including:

Socks, hand/foot warmers, ponchos, gloves, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss,

water, snacks, deodorant, tissues, hand wipes, bandages, lip balm, cotton swabs.

Donations from members of the community of everyday essentials to support the homeless are welcome from 6 a.m. until 7 p.m. at the Cal Expo Main Gate. Just drive on through and drop off your items or donate via Amazon at SMUD Giving Monday.

"From our canned food donation drive to our efforts to collect school supplies, SMUD Giving Mondays are an important part

of our commitment to supporting all communities," said Rhonda Staley-Brooks, director of Community Engagement. "This winter, we are partnering with HART to help gather crucial assistance and resources, especially during the holidays, for our most vulnerable community members. The overwhelming spirit of giving shown by our employees, partners and customers is truly inspiring."

SMUD has led successful e-waste, coat and school supply drives at Cal Expo. These drives

have benefited non-profits such as the Sacramento Children's Home, the Sacramento Regional Conservation Corps and the Elk Grove Food Bank.

For more information about SMUD Giving Monday, visit [calexpostatefair.com](http://calexpostatefair.com) and to learn more about SMUD's community work, visit [smud.org/community](http://smud.org/community).

As the nation's sixth-largest, community-owned, not-for-profit electric service provider, SMUD has been providing low-cost, reliable electricity to Sacramento County for more

than 75 years. SMUD is a recognized industry leader and award winner for its innovative energy efficiency programs, renewable power technologies and for its sustainable solutions for a healthier environment. Today, SMUD's power supply is on average about 50 percent carbon free and SMUD has a goal to reach zero carbon in its electricity production by 2030. For more information on SMUD's Zero Carbon Plan and its customer programs, visit [smud.org](http://smud.org). ★



## And Another Thing Happy Thanksgiving to Everyone!

By Bob McGarvey

Congress approved a stop-gap government funding bill so they wouldn't avert our government's shutdown until January. The fight over the federal budget will now pass on until January. The stop-gap bill got through the House and then it passed through the Senate. The citizens of the country are fed up with their elected officials not doing their jobs. It seems to me that it doesn't matter what you do, people find out that they will have to compromise. They may have to compromise in their jobs, in their marriage, or in their government position.

People are so different that they will not be able to get exactly what they want in life. We can hope that the people we have hired in Congress will be able to pass our government's budget and get past their pettiness and their political party positions. They need to remember that they are in their jobs and were placed there by their fellow citizens. I know I said that before, but we the people must come first. Now we must wait until January and February for them to get their responsibilities completed.

Thanksgiving is a wonderful holiday which allows us to join together with families. We have will have a couple of our children and one of them will bringing his wife and their children. Thanksgiving doesn't seem to be all that was said in history, but I believe that it

is still important for families of today to get together and think about how fortunate we are in our country. I am really thankful for what we can do for others who truly need some help and can eat together while we are feeling blessed for what we have in the City of Rancho Cordova, California.

Thanksgiving is a national holiday which is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November in our country. Other countries celebrate on different dates like in Canada, Grenada, and Liberia, and I found out that it is unofficially celebrated in Brazil and the Philippines. Many other countries are thankful for being able to share their lives and their homes.

In the Declaration of Independence there are many reasons for our founding fathers to say why our country is truly fortunate. Part of that declaration says, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator which certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Some countries are not as fortunate as we are in the United States of America. I hope, like many people, that the many people who need help and don't have a roof over their heads will be able see a future that will be much better for them and their families. Happy Thanksgiving to everyone.

From Bob McGarvey, God bless, and see you next time. ★



## Dave Ramsey Says

Dear Debbie,  
You've been making great progress, and you obviously have a good income to be able to pay off debt that quickly. But it shouldn't take you two a year to build up an emergency fund, considering the rate at which you've been paying off debt.

Yes, you need a fully funded emergency fund of three to six months of expenses set aside before you start saving a down payment for a home. Maybe in your case, you could lean a little more toward the three-month side with your emergency fund. Then, after you're all moved in, you could revisit the emergency fund and beef it up to six months.

Fifty isn't old, Debbie. Just stay on course and stick with the plan. You two have plenty of time to get your finances in order and find a great home!

- Dave

*Dave Ramsey is an eight-time national bestselling author, personal finance expert and host of "The Ramsey Show." He has appeared on "Good Morning America," "CBS This Morning," "Today," Fox News, CNN, Fox Business and many more. Since 1992, Dave has helped people take control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for the company Ramsey Solutions.* ★

### Don't Panic, You Have Plenty of Time

Dear Dave,  
My husband and I have just \$12,000 to pay off before we're debt-free. We've paid off almost \$70,000 in debt in the last two years, and we both just turned 50. We would like to buy a house soon, but we know we need an emergency fund. It would take us over a year to build up an emergency fund, so since we're getting older, should we make adjustments to the Baby Steps?  
- Debbie



## Employment Opportunities

### Employment and Independent Contractor Positions at Messenger Publishing Group

We publish ten local newspapers in the Sacramento Region. Our main office is in Carmichael. We have been publishing for fifteen years and are seeking new qualified employees.

#### CURRENT WORK OPPORTUNITIES

**Office Administration** – We are seeking a full-time administrative support person for our newspaper group. This position works in the Carmichael office and works directly with the Office Manager. Work hours are between 8:30 to 5:00 Monday through Friday. Previous office management experience is required.

**Production Layout/Graphic Design** – This part-time position assists with the layout of the newspapers and works with the production staff to create our weekly newspapers. Must have good working knowledge of InDesign production programs. Must be able to work within our current system and be able to take direction to meet our deadlines. Previous layout experience is a must. This is an entry level position. Work hours are between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm.

**Copy Editor** – We are seeking a part-time copy editor for our newspaper group. This position works in the Carmichael office and works directly with Editor. Work hours are flexible between 8:30 to 5:00 Monday through Friday. Previous editing experience is required.

**City Reporter** – We are seeking a part-time City Reporter for our newspaper group. This position may be assigned to work in the Carmichael office or another area office and works directly with the Editor. Work hours are flexible depending on assignments. Previous reporting experience is required.

**Advertising Services Support** – We are seeking a part-time Advertising Services Support person for our newspaper group. This position works in the Carmichael office and works directly with the owner of the company and the advertising/graphics staff. Work hours are flexible between 8:30 to 5:00 Monday through Friday. Previous office experience is required.

**Delivery Driver** – We are seeking a part-time Delivery Driver for our newspaper group. This position would transport newspapers from our Carmichael office to our offices in Marysville and Gridley. Work hours are from 8:30 to 4:00 every Thursday. Must be able to lift and move bundles of newspapers without assistance. Must have your own reliable cargo van. This is an independent contractor position and pays a flat rate for your service.

**Newsstand Delivery Driver** – We are seeking a part-time Newsstand Deliver Driver for our newspaper group. This position works from the Carmichael office and delivers to our locations in the West Sacramento/Sacramento Region. Work hours are from 8:30 to 5:00 Thursday and/or Friday. Must be able to lift and move bundles of newspapers without assistance. You must have a reliable vehicle. This is an independent contractor position.

To find out more or to apply:

Email your questions or resume to [Publisher@MPG8.com](mailto:Publisher@MPG8.com)

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We are proud members of these newspaper associations.



# The Veteran Homeless Crisis



Homeless Veteran on the street. Photo by Larry White from Pixabay

By Shreya Agrawal, CALMatters.org

California has poured billions of dollars into finding homes for unhoused veterans, but the number of former military service members living on the street has held steady for almost a decade. Today, a third of the nation's unhoused veterans are in California.

Gavin Newsom proposes a significant change in the state's strategy for ending veteran homelessness. His plan, included in a \$6.4 billion mental health bond he's sending to voters in the March primary election, would set aside funding specifically for veterans with serious behavioral health conditions.

That's a shift from California's last two major efforts to fund housing for veterans, both of which created units for a general population of former military service members.

The first effort began in the late 1990s, when the state built seven new veterans' homes over a period of 17 years. Today those veterans' homes are underused. They were built to house about 2,400 people, but only 1,575 veterans live in them. The 300-unit veterans home in Barstow was so underutilized in 2020 that Newsom moved to close it as he braced for a pandemic recession, although lawmakers blocked him from shutting the site.

The second push centered on a pair of ballot measures voters approved in 2014 and in 2018 that allocated \$4.6 billion to build housing specifically for former military service members. The money created the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program, which has supported the construction of about 3,250 housing units for veterans to date.

Veterans advocates and state officials view the programs — along with federal efforts led by the Department of Veterans Affairs — as successful in reducing homelessness among former military service members. In the last 12 years, veteran homelessness in California has decreased by more than 30%.

But the trend in California mostly accounts for gains made during the Obama administration, when veteran homelessness peaked nationwide and the Department of Veterans Affairs moved aggressively to place former troops in housing. Since 2014, the number of homeless veterans in California has mostly plateaued around 10,000 to 12,000 people, according to annual counts released by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Alex Visotzky, senior California policy fellow at the National Alliance to End Homelessness, said the high numbers of veteran homelessness result from the challenges veterans face on returning home in California's competitive housing market.

"When housing markets are unaffordable and incredibly competitive, those with the greatest needs are going to be more likely to fall out," he said.



The money in the bond would go to the state's Department of Housing and Community Development, which would work with CalVet "to focus specifically on housing veterans experiencing behavioral health challenges," said Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin. Photo courtesy of RDNE Stock Project - Pexels

Newsom's new strategy in the mental health bond, advocates say, should help those most in need. The California Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that half of the state's unhoused veterans suffer from some kind of behavioral health issue.

The money in the bond would go to the state's Department of Housing and Community Development, which would work with CalVet "to focus specifically on housing veterans experiencing behavioral health challenges," said Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, the Thousand Oaks Democrat who wrote the bill that ultimately put the bond on the ballot.

Studies have shown veterans are over-represented in the nation's homeless population. They may experience personal challenges, such as post-traumatic stress disorders or other mental health issues as well as disabilities related to their military service.

"Transitioning from that very specific culture and society to civilian life is a lifelong process," said Amy Fairweather, director of policy at the veterans advocacy group Swords to Plowshares. "If you do have any physical or mental disabilities, dealing with those and trying to re-enter civilian life can be very difficult."

California's long history of providing housing to former military service members dates to 1884, when it opened an estate in Napa County as the state's first veterans home. That site is still in operation, housing around 600 veterans on a picturesque property in wine country.

Altogether, the state now has eight veterans homes. The two largest homes are in fairly remote communities — one is in Napa County's Yountville and the second is in Barstow in the Mojave Deserts. Moving to them can mean living at a long distance from a veteran's family. That geography somewhat limits interest in the homes.

The homes account for the lion's share of CalVet's \$650 million annual budget. Some advocates have called on the state to put money into programs that would

benefit people who don't necessarily want to live in a veterans home.

"The state should keep its promises to the current home residents, but as things change, the program needs to be less structured on just providing room and board for a very limited number of people and more structured on providing skilled nursing facility care for those who need it," said Ethan Rarick, executive director at Little Hoover Commission, which published a report on the veterans homes in 2017.

Outside of the veterans homes, California approved a series of bonds meant to help military service members find housing beginning in 2008. The Veterans Bond Act, passed that year, provided \$900 million to veterans through the CalVet Home Loans Program.

In 2014, California passed an initiative creating the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Program, which put \$600 million toward building multi-family homes for veterans. A second ballot initiative in 2018 gave another \$4 billion to the program.

The federal Department of Veterans Affairs, meanwhile, has kept up steady funding for housing vouchers that can provide a place to live for former troops. The Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program, commonly known as HUD-VASH, was a centerpiece of the Bush and Obama administration's efforts to curb veterans' homelessness. It provides rental assistance to over 100,000 veterans nationally.

The number of homeless veterans in the U.S. peaked in the Great Recession, when the VA in 2007 reported some 154,000 former troops were homeless.

At that time, Fairweather of Swords to Plowshares said many of those deployed in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars were starting to come back home "to a society that wasn't prepared for it."

On top of that, they and older veterans struggled in the economic downturn, which led to more unemployment and homelessness.

"It all came together in a way that was really disadvantageous to the veterans," she said.

Last year, the VA estimated about 33,000 veterans were homeless nationwide. According to the 2021 annual homelessness assessment report by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, more than half of them are over age 55. The data also shows that Black veterans are more likely to be homeless than veterans belonging to other races.

Advocates say veterans can be reluctant to ask for help.

"When veterans ultimately fall down that hole into homelessness, what is happening along with that is that they're losing connection with friends and family, because they're ashamed that their life is falling apart and it's hard for them to ask for help," said Stephen Peck, president of the veterans support organization U.S. Vets.

Putting the money into the mental health bond comes with a tradeoff.

In advancing Newsom's mental health plan, lawmakers amended an early version of Assemblymember Irwin's veterans' housing bill that would have issued more bonds for the existing veterans' housing program. Without new funding, the program that supports construction of multi-unit veterans' housing is expected to run out of money in 2024.

Still, representatives for Newsom's ballot measure in a written statement said the bond would create more capacity to help former troops.

"Proposition 1 adds new money for California's most vulnerable veterans without any redirection or reprioritization from the current program. Without Proposition 1, there would be zero funding for homeless veteran housing moving forward, which is why the measure is so critically needed," the statement read.

Altogether, the ballot measure going to voters includes \$6.4 billion to fund projects for behavioral health issues and those at the risk of homelessness. It also includes a proposal to adjust how the state spends money it collects for mental health services from a tax on personal income over \$1 million, aiming to direct more of the money to housing.

The \$1 billion for veterans housing will be distributed in the form of loans and grants by the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Representatives from veterans' groups say the program's success could hinge on getting the word out, and providing services that provide a path out of homelessness.

At U.S. Vets, Peck said the nonprofit strives to create a community where veterans help veterans.

"Building that community is really important," he said. "A federal veteran who's been through the process already is probably more effective than we are as social workers."

Visit [www.chcf.org](http://www.chcf.org) to learn more. ★



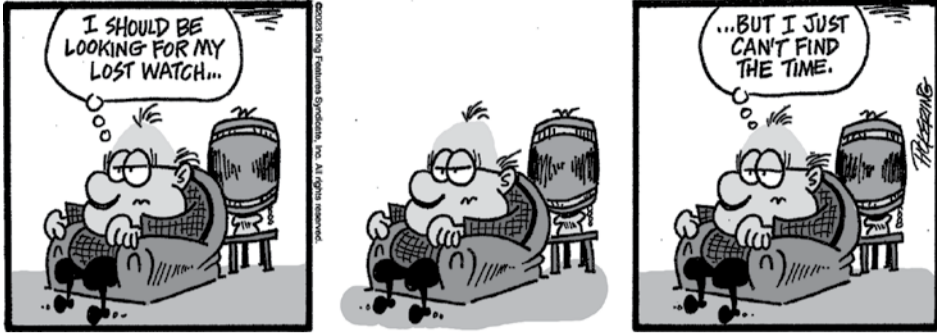




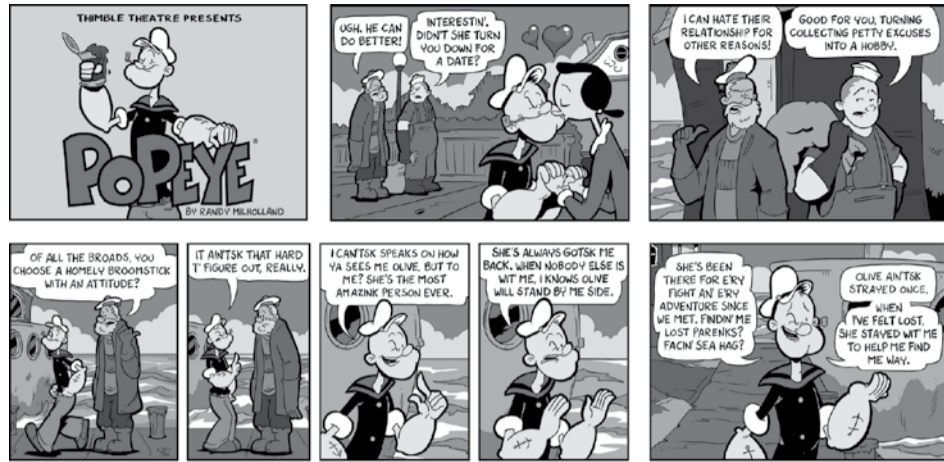


# COMICS & PUZZLES

## The Spats



by Jeff Pickering



## Amber Waves



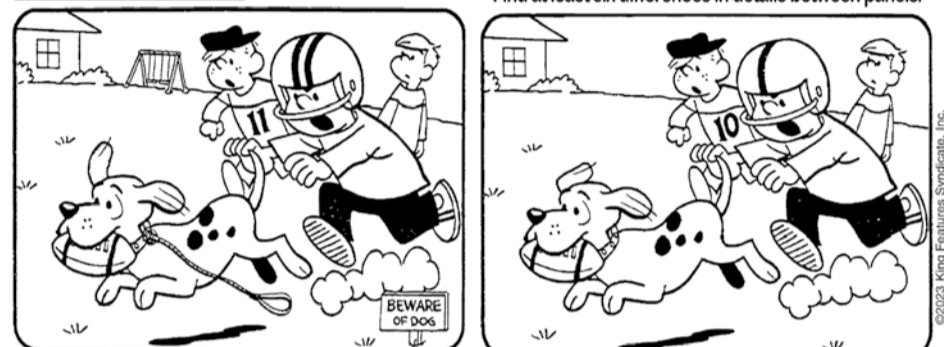
by Dave T. Phipps



## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

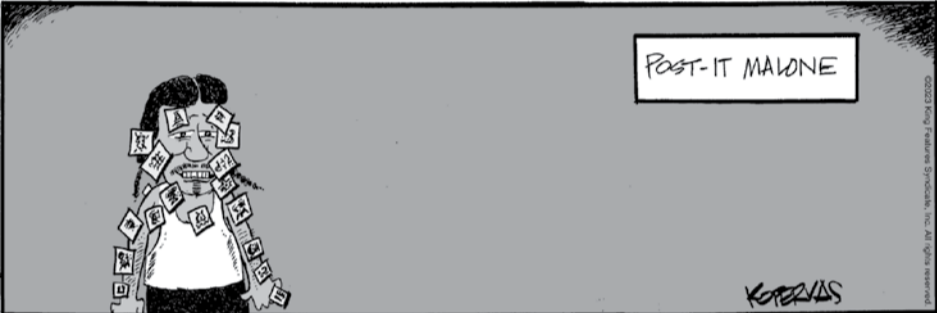
Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Leash is missing. 2. Dog's ear is different. 3. Number is missing. 4. Leash is missing. 5. Helmet stripe is missing. 6. Sign is missing.

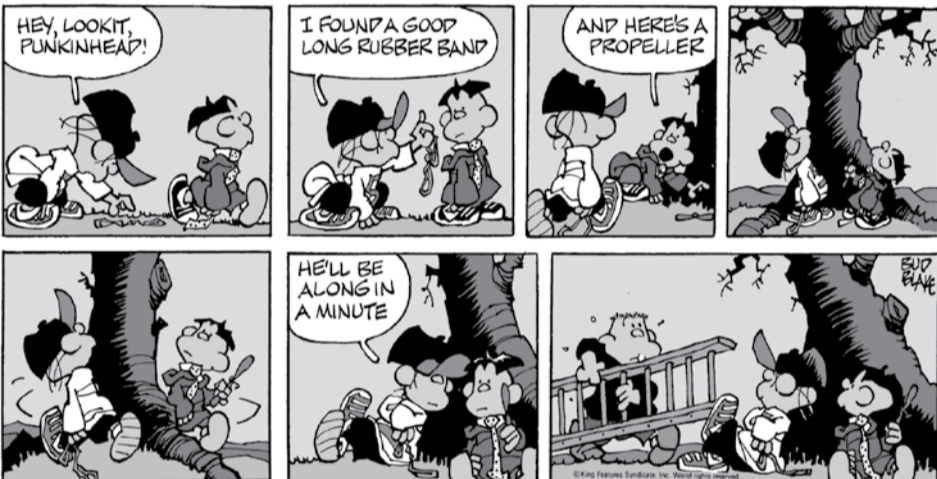
## Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



## GRIN AND BEAR IT

## Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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**CLUES**

**ACROSS**

1. "Heaven's on Fire" band
5. "Setting of "Cheers" TV show
8. Derive
13. "I'm \_\_\_ you!"
14. Gas station brand
15. Affirmatives
16. Image in Orthodox Church
17. "Robert Wagner or Stephanie Powers, on TV
18. "Vote for H.W. Bush, e.g.
19. "Weird Al's last name
21. Forum, pl.
22. Dog-\_\_\_ book
23. Clingy plant
24. Spiky succulent
27. Accumulates (2 words)
31. Turkish military leader
32. Consequence
35. "Wintour of Vogue
36. Zoroaster follower
38. E in B.C.E.
39. #53 Down, third person singular
40. Do like exhaust pipe
41. Hertz' offering
43. Extra cost
44. Expert, in U.K. (2 words)
46. "Ricky Martin's boy band
48. Arrival time acronym
49. "Piano player Lee Currier on "Fame"
51. "Baltimore player
53. "Mikhail Gorbachev's policy
56. Recipient of money
57. "Umberto Eco's "The \_\_\_ of the Rose"
58. Oration station
60. Some tournaments
61. In the thick of
62. Place, in French
63. Not at all good
64. Bitty
65. Other than what is

**DOWN**

1. Ornamental pond dweller
2. Deep black
3. Greek promenade
4. Shakespeare's output
5. "Lou Reed's "Home of the \_\_\_"
6. Like thick smoke
7. Campus military org.
8. Attractive to look at
9. "Back to the Future" car
10. One on drugs
11. Cecum, pl.
12. Is, in Paris
14. "A horse is \_\_\_ of course, of course"
20. Resin-producing tree
23. Took the bait
24. "Christopher Reeve's sartorial style in "Superman II"
25. Old World lizard
26. Indigenous person from Suriname or Guyana
27. Surveyor's map
28. Mix-up
29. Not married
30. Promenade in Spain
33. Tournament ranking
34. Remains container
37. "Washington's volcano
39. "Close of "The Big Chill"
41. Genetic initials
42. Entertained
45. Affirm to be true
47. Cavatappi or udon, sing.
49. Scapegoat's deed
50. Fiber crop variety
51. Head of family
52. Deed hearing
53. Chew on
54. Schooner canvas
55. "TV's "Family \_\_\_"
56. Sound of explosion
59. "Peggy \_\_\_ Got Married"

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## Dare to Live Without Limits

by Bryan Golden

### How Do You Treat Waiters?



The way you treat others offers a window into the type of person you are. Your interaction with people, whose job it is to serve you, reflects on your character and offers a glimpse into the way they will react to you.

When you behave in a condescending manner, you are sure to elicit a negative reaction. Immediately, the person you are talking down to will be put off, even if they don't show it. You will squelch any inclination for the other person to go out of their way to help you. At most, they will do no more than the bare minimum necessary to keep you mollified.

Corporate CEOs like to observe how job candidates treat waiters. These corporate captains have found that how a prospective employee treats a waiter offers a clear picture of the type of person he or she is. Someone who is polite to you but discourteous to a waiter does not have desirable interpersonal skills. They tend to be abrasive, causing friction among coworkers and subordinates.

Your treatment of waiters isn't just significant in business settings. A survey by a dating service discovered that being rude to waiters tops the list as the worst dining etiquette. It is a real turn-off to be in the company of someone who is mean spirited.

Anyone can treat a waiter well when there are no mishaps or mess-ups. The real indication of a person's true nature is how they react when there are problems. What do they do when a waiter makes a mistake or their meal is not what they had hoped for? Do they get indignant, make a scene, and jump down the waiter's throat? Or are they gracious and magnanimous?

No one likes to be berated when they make a mistake. Some waiters are better than others. Some are more conscientious. You can't manage their behavior, but you do control yours. If you can't handle a problem when you are eating out, how can you be depended on to handle life's

real predicaments?

People, who are rude to waiters, erroneously believe they are displaying power and authority. They mistakenly think their behavior will impress others. Anyone who attempts to elevate their status by stepping on others will ultimately fall flat on their face.

People with integrity and character treat everyone with courtesy and respect, regardless of their occupation, financial, or social status. They don't view themselves as being above or below anyone else.

The way you treat people determines to a large part how they treat you. Not everyone will respond to kindness and consideration. But everyone will react negatively to berating. Your best bet for bringing out the best in people is to treat them with respect.

If you expect the worst from people, your attitude will project this and your low expectations will usually be met. If you anticipate the best, people tend to try to live up to those expectations so as not to disappoint you.

People crave approval and recognition. If you start out rejecting someone, they will feel there is no chance to please you and won't even try. However, when you say please, thank you, and can you help me, others will make an extra effort to accommodate you.

Treat waiters, and everyone you encounter, with dignity. In so doing, your relationships with people, even strangers, will improve. You will still find some individuals you just can't deal with. But they will be much more of an exception. You can never go wrong by treating another person well.

**NOW AVAILABLE:** "Dare to Live Without Limits," the book. Visit [www.BryanGolden.com](http://www.BryanGolden.com) or your bookstore. Bryan is a management consultant, motivational speaker, author, and adjunct professor. E-mail Bryan at [bryan@columnist.com](mailto:bryan@columnist.com) or write him c/o this paper. ©2023 Bryan Golden ★

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# Roller Derby Community Has Bright Future Ahead

By Tamara Warta

## SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

- While speaking with Amanda Dunham and Christina Watts from Sacramento Roller Derby, one theme was consistent throughout the entire conversation – Roller Derby isn't just a sport – it is a family with so many positives for Sacramento youth and women.

The two skaters, who always go by their derby names LOLZ Lemon and Jessamine Killawatts at the rink, are passionate about roller derby in a way that is so contagious it compels the listener to want to strap on some skates and give it a go.

Now, Sacramento Roller Derby is gliding towards a new era of excellence – rebuilding its teams post-COVID, and looking forward to their future home facility.

Sacramento Roller Derby was founded in 2018 as the result of two different leagues merging after skating as separate entities for over ten years. The leagues realized that they were better together both functionally and financially, and united to form the current team. The current league welcomes over 100 participants, of which approximately 50 are adults and the rest children and various officials including referees.

The group currently uses the Andy Morin Sports Complex in Folsom for their practices, but there are big dreams ahead.

"We have a facility in downtown Sacramento that we are working on," says Dunham. "We purchased it with a donation someone made to us."

That donation was no small gift – the donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, gifted the group up to \$2 million to build their facility. The excitement and relief of finding a permanent home was evident from both women.

"It's been a struggle – Sacramento doesn't have a lot



Roller derby players become family at Sacramento Roller Derby games and practices. Photo by Liz Marchiondo

of affordable facilities. The landscape of Sacramento has changed – the town is so much larger and venues we have rented in the past have quadrupled their prices," said Dunham.

The new rink will be located near the Blue Diamond almond factory.

Both the generous donation and influx of new participants post-COVID are two examples of how the Sacramento community is embracing a sport that once had a reputation in popular media for being aggressive and less than ladylike. Today, roller derby carries a reputation of strength, togetherness, and courage for many.

Watts, who is a board member for the team, recently lost her husband and found support within the derby community.

"The whole derby community helped me to find a new normalcy," says Watts. "Everybody

has been really positive and will check up on me. Everybody in the community binds together to help people in a time of need."

Dunham seconds the fact that roller derby isn't just about the game. "That's the most rewarding thing – the growth and the community that supports that growth. A lot of people come to roller derby during a hard time in life. They know the community of roller derby will be there."

Sacramento Roller Derby has no paid employees and finances are always a challenge. A lot of the players within the league are also the ones running the entire show.

"There are challenges on and off the track when you play roller derby," explains Dunham. "We have both the typical athlete struggles plus business struggles. Most recreational sports don't have both. For us, it's really serious – it is comparable to minor

league sports. But there's the added pressure of running it. Most sports have administrative oversight – that's not us. We are off the track running the game and then we put on our skates and play the game. You're always doing two things at the same time."

But is it worth it? Dunham absolutely believes it is.

"It makes you grow in ways you never thought you could. In myself I've grown a lot in confidence."

She also mentions that derby skaters not only grow in what their bodies are capable of, but also personally and professionally. Confidence found in roller derby can lead to the courage for everything from pursuing job promotions to leaving harmful relationships.

Also notable is Sacramento Roller Derby's junior program. Children as young as eight years

old can join the team.

"The kids find their own way there," says Dunham when asked how they recruit children to the program. Current league kids share with friends via word-of-mouth, and the league's numbers have also benefited from a popular graphic novel featuring a roller derby girl.

However, the junior program is hardly new. "We've had a juniors program for as long as Sac Roller Derby has been around."

Safety comes first, and just like the adults, junior skaters wear helmets, mouth guards and pads. And they aren't afraid to completely wipe out and try again.

"The kids are super resilient and dedicated," says Dunham. "They are just like Gumby and fall in weird ways that make my heart stop and then get up and skate away."

"They are all amazing," adds Watts. "They are always striving to do better."

Perhaps that's the true magic of roller derby. Beyond the sport itself, skaters are inspired to do better both on and off the rink.

Those who would like to watch a game can head out to the Andy Morin Sports Complex on December 2 for the Red Red Tournament – a chance to see not only Sacramento Roller Derby but other leagues play on mixed teams. Or, take things a step further and consider trying out for the league next spring. Anyone can try out, and skating experience isn't necessary. The tryouts include everything from skating lessons to teaching the rules of the game. The junior program is for boys and girls aged eight through seniors in high school. Females aged 18+ make up the main league.

Sacramento Roller Derby is located at the Andy Morin Sports Complex on 66 Clarksville Rd, Folsom, Calif.

For more information call (916) 461 6650 or visit [sacramentorollerderby.com](http://sacramentorollerderby.com). ★

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