

Response Times, Gate Issues are Topics at Sheriff's **Meeting**

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Garden Club and **Boy Scout Troop** Refurbish School Garden



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DECEMBER 8, 2023

RM SOCCER **SEASON ENDS ON A HIGH NOTE**



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BULLDOGS FUNDRAISER DRAWS A CROWD



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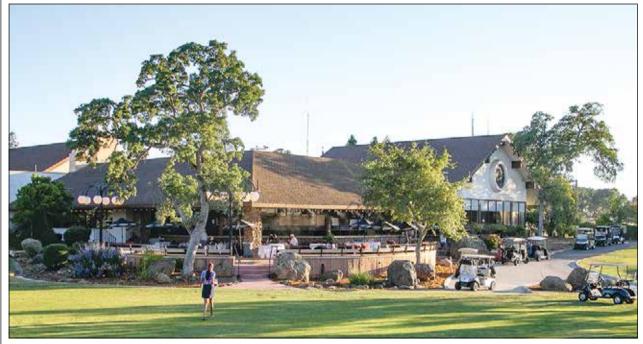
SIDEWALK SHOPPE OPENS FOR BUSINESS



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Rancho Murieta Country Club **Board Considers Bankruptcy**



The Rancho Murieta Country Club is in dire financial straits. File photo by Gail Bullen

By Gail Bullen River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)

- The Rancho Murieta Country Club (RMCC) is in a financial crisis, and the Board of Directors is considering options that include bankruptcy to resolve it, according to an email the board sent to the membership on Dec. 1.

Next year's preliminary budget shows a deficit of \$700,000 if the service levels remain the same. "If we do nothing, we are out of business by June 2024 or sooner," the email said.

The board has identified three options. First is reducing club services and amenities to balance the budget. The second is increasing the dues by at least 20% to balance the budget. The third is declaring bankruptcy and selling the lease to an entity that will make operational and capital improvements, which is the board's preferred option.

However, the board won't pursue the bankruptcy option without the approval of a majority of its members in an electronic vote planned before the end of the year. The board also has slated a town hall meeting to answer member questions on Dec. 12 at 6:30 p.m. at the Murieta Room at the clubhouse.

The country club doesn't own its two golf courses and operates under a 55-year lease that expires in 2028. The club's landlord is Rancho Murieta Properties, an investment group that includes Carol Anderson Ward. The developers have built the hotel, the Bel Air

Continued on page 2

Rancho Murieta **Soccer Club Coach Selected** as a Coach of the Year



Sloughhouse resident Matt Kartchner feels honored after being as selected as a coach of the year in the Elk Grove Soccer League. He coached the Rancho Murieta Hawks girls team this fall and took a co-ed team to a tournament on Dec. 2 Photo by Gail Bullen

By Gail Bullen River Valley Times Reporter

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Elk Grove Soccer League has recognized Rancho Murieta Soccer Club Coach Matt Kartchner as one of seven coaches of the year thanks to efforts by the parents of the girls he coached last fall. The league has about 450 coaches and more than 70 were nominated for the

See a separate story in this issue about the Ranch Murieta soccer season that ended Nov. 11

honor.

Kim Doughty was one of the parents who put together the nomination statement for Kartchner. She said her daughter tried competitive soccer for one season but returned to the recreational Rancho Murieta Hawks girls' team because she loved Kartchner so much.

"We all love him" Doughty added.

The parent statement put it this way: "Coach Matt is not just a coach, he is a person we trust to guide and shape our daughters as strong young women, humble humans, and dedicated athletes," it said. "He builds a rapport with all those he coaches and aways shows

When asked about the recognition, Kartchner said he couldn't have done it by himself. "It has really been an honor to coach in this league, especially being able to coach my kids and all of their friends," he said. "I have been privileged to coach some really, really great teams of kids. It has just been an awesome experience," he added. Kartchner began coach-

ing soccer 15 years ago and joined the Rancho Murieta Club in 2014. As a past goalie, he began coaching to teach his two sons and then his daughter to play soccer. Kartchner confirmed this

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Christmas Tree Lighting Gathers Community to Stonehouse Park



The kids in the crowd are especially ecstatic as Santa Claus and friends approach. Photos by Gail Bullen

By Gail Bullen River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)

- The chance to visit with Santa drew an excited crowd to the annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at Stonehouse Park on Nov. 24. It was the 20th year that the Rancho Murieta Optimist Club sponsored the event that drew an estimated 400 kids, parents, grandparents, and several well-behaved dogs.

In addition to celebappearances by Santa, Mrs. Claus, the Christmas Elf, and Blitzen the reindeer, the event featured the lighting of the Christmas tree supplied by the Rancho Murieta Association (RMA), a performance by the Murieta

Dance Company, upbeat



Lighting at Stonehouse Park on Nov. 24. The Optimist Club sponsored the annual event.

Christmas music, seasonal refreshments, and two fire pits for toasting marshmallows and keeping warm.

The crowd stayed well-fueled as they waited for Santa and watched the dance per-

formance, according to

Optimist President Renee Bechthold. The club supplied many dozens of cookies from a specialty shop in Galt, went through eight urns of steaming water for hot chocolate and cider and gave out 130 S'mores kits. RMA Director Chris Childs and other volunteers helped serve the goodies. Santa and friends made

p.m. after three fire engines with lights flashing and sirens sounding dropped

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their grand entrance at 6

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Rancho Murieta Country Club Board Considers Bankruptcy

Continued from page 1 shopping center, and is proposing the 697-lot Rancho North subdivision.

Represented by the late John Sullivan, the investment group purchased the country club land, but not the club, when they acquired all of the property owned by the Pension Trust Fund of Operating Engineers Local 3 (OE3) in 2013.

The dire financial news came in a "club status update" emailed to the membership on Friday, Dec. 1 at 5:17 p.m. It said those who attended the recent annual board meeting had already heard about the financial crisis from Board President Eric **Dutton and Treasurer Chase** Armer.

Although RMCC has faced financial difficulties for years, the reserves are now so low that the board can't put off difficult decisions, the email said.

Since the RMCC lease runs through October 2028, the members must decide how the next five years will go. "Do we hold on and financially squeak by as we have done in the past, or do we speed up the process of transitioning the club to new ownership that may be able to give our members the quality experiences they deserve," it asked.

The club has been treading water for at least the past decade with the golf course conditions and food and beverage services waxing and waning during that time. The board has looked for solutions over the past three years. They included obtaining outside funding, hiring management groups, exercising the option to buy the club under the lease agreement and selling the club to an outside party, and even offering an equity position to the current membership to raise the necessary funds.

"Unfortunately, all these various options are doomed to fail for the same reason: the club has never been, nor will ever be, profitable with labor contracts," the email said. "Every outside individual or entity that considers buying or managing the club declines to do so after reviewing the books and the dictates imposed by the club's labor contracts."

RMCC has been in a downward spiral for years as it lost full golf memberships and the associated revenue. At the same, the cost of all goods and services has gone up. The RMCC bylaws only permit a 5% increase in dues each year and "that has not been enough to offset the inflationary costs associated with golf and clubhouse equipment, labor, and the extraordinary expense caused by the storms this year," the email said.

The financial outlook for next year is so bleak that RMCC would be out of business in June 2024, if the board doesn't do anything.

However, the first option of cutting costs to meet the budget would likely reduce membership because of large cuts in amenities and services and the negative impact on the courses.

The second option of increasing dues a \$ 150month increase for full members, \$25 for social members, also is expected to hurt membership.

Both options would only allow the club to tread water until the end of the lease term which ends Oct. 31, 2028.

The third option involving bankruptcy would be about starting over. "The entity known as the Rancho Murieta Country Club would cease to exist," the email said. "A new entity would take its place and be run by a professional with experience operating a successful country club with all the amenities, energy, and positivity that one should expect from the centerpiece of the community."

Many potential buyers have been interested in doing exactly that. "None are interested in doing so unless the facilities are free of any successor liability, whether it be the unions, other creditors, or our membership bylaws," the email said. "In the past, any contemplated sale has failed primarily because of withdrawal liability to the unions. (The estimated Pension Trust Fund Liability was more than \$3 million in 2017.)

Until recently, not even bankruptcy could alleviate this situation, according to the email. "However, there is a new provision in the bankruptcy code under Chapter 11 subparagraph 5 that will permit us to sell our interest in the remaining lease term, the club's only true asset, bundle that sum with any other cash on hand, and present a compelling case to the bankruptcy court to dismiss all of our creditor's claims," the email said.

If that happens, several individuals competing to buy and improve the club could do so free of the conditions that prevented past sales.

"At the end of the day, it's about improving our experience as members and maximizing our property values," the email said. "Our best opportunity to do that is to allow the sale of the club to someone with the resources to invest in improving the facilities and the know-how to manage a private country club."

Three Incumbents Re-elected to the RMA Board



From left, Danny Carrillo, Renee Bechtold, and Scott Adams are sworn in for a second term by Jim Elections Inspector Jim Moore at the Rancho Murieta Association Annual meeting on Nov. **30. The meeting drew 13 attendees.** Photos by Gail Bullen

By Gail Bullen River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Scott Adams, Renee Bechtold, and Danny Carrillo have been re-elected to the Rancho Murieta Association Board (RMA) of Directors.

After confirming that enough ballots had been returned to reach a quorum, Director of Elections Jim Moore announced the results at the RMA Annual Meeting on Nov. 30.

The outcome wasn't a surprise although a fourth candidate, David Roy Harmon, threw his hat into the ring before the filing deadline. The results were 784 votes for Adams, 765 for Bechtold, and 777 for

Harmon, who previously served on the board between 2009 and 2011, received 185 votes. He didn't attend the meeting.

The three incumbents were asked to comment after the meeting.

Adams said he was happy and proud. "I'm happy that the board is staying intact because we have such a great board...I think this board serves the RMA and the membership very well."

Bechtold was appointed to the board last year to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Joanne Brandt. "I am so honored and feel so privileged to be able to have this opportunity to continue with the people of Rancho Murieta," she said. "I thank everyone who put their faith and trust in me."

Carrillo said he felt very honored and very blessed that he had received so many votes. "I just love this community. I love the people," he said.

In a tradition at the annual meeting, directors who had just completed terms on the board were awarded a wooden plaque hand-crafted by RMA General Manager Rod Hart. Adams, Bechtold and Carrillo all received plaques.

Adams described Hart as being a magician with wood. "One of the great things about being on the board is that you know you will be getting one of these at the end of three years," he said.

Adams began the meeting by thanking the RMA staff for their work, and Hart then introduced each department head by name. The board also introduced

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Carrillo admires a hand-craft plaque commemorating three years of service on the board. General Manager Rod Hart also made plagues for Adams and Bechtold, who accepted them at the meeting

themselves. They also drew names for a raffle rewarding residents who voted early. Six RMA members received \$50 gift carts, and one received an iPad.

As seems to happen every year, the RMA staff had to send out blast emails and phone residents urging them to return their ballots so the annual meeting could take place as scheduled. They needed 931 eligible ballots to meet the required

Moore said that 950 eligible ballots came in before the noon deadline. The volunteer counters tossed out four ballots because they were duplicates. Moore also said that five ballots had write-in candidates. One was for a dog – Leo Carrillo.

Asked how his dog ended up with a vote, Carrillo said a friend thought it would be humorous to write in Leo's name. "Even though I told him that Leo wasn't a property owner since he was a dog, my friend said that Leo identifies as a property owner," he said.

Moore also announced that RMA members had voted 693 yes and 25 no to approve applying any excess income from the 2023 financial year to the next year's

Adams also announced the results of the annual photo contest. See the separate story in this issue. The written results weren't available at deadline. None of the winners came to the annual meeting to accept their prizes. The meeting drew only 13 attendees.

Annual Turkey Trot Sees Runners and Walkers Gobble to Gazebo



Approximately 90 runners, walkers, young cyclists and a couple dozen dogs participate in the annual Turkey Trot that was held at the Gazebo on Thanksgiving Day. In photo left, the second wave of participants take off. In photo right, organizer Carole Thames awards a youth prize to Luke Camara after he came in first on his bicycle. Thames took over sponsorship of the event at the last minute. Participants donated \$242 in cash to the Tunnel 2 Towers Foundation and filled a box with canned goods for the Elk Grove Food Bank. Photo by Gail Bullen



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Murieta Bulldogs Fundraiser Draws Crowd to Equestrian Center



The Murieta Bulldogs Concert BBQ Fundraiser unfolds at the Murieta Equestrian Center on Nov. 18 with emcee Billy Haze thanking the traveling baseball club's many supporters. Photos by Gail Bullen

By Gail Bullen River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)

- The party atmosphere wouldn't quit when the fifth annual Murieta Bulldogs Concert BBQ fundraiser opened for business at the Murieta Equestrian Center on Nov. 18.

The Bulldogs are a Rancho Murieta traveling baseball team that was founded by local parents in 2016 and has been going strong ever since.

Attendees weren't lacking for food and drink as they sampled delicious barbecue at five booths that came with the price of admission or grabbed adult beverages at the bar. Two food trucks also offered oven-fired pizza or desserts.

Attendees also perused tables full of beautifully packaged raffle prizes and silent auction opportunities as a disc jockey filled the air with driving music. Cornhole games also lured some from the mezzanine down to the



Barbecue chef Corri Gran serves Riley Russo, left, and Justine Russo.

Billy Haze, one of the coaches, emceed the program that proceeded the night's entertainment. He waxed at length over the support that the club has received from the parents and many supporters over the years. Haze brought his wife Denise onto the stage, explaining that she had spent eight months putting the fundraiser together.

Haze gave special thanks to Carol Anderson Ward, who owns the equestrian center. He said Ward's generosity was the reason that the Bulldogs can now hold their fundraisers rain or shine. Haze also told the young baseball players standing in front of the stage that it had been "an absolute honor and blessing" to mentor them.

Before introducing the band, Haze brought high schooler Gracie Tucker to the stage. Her ability to hit every single note as she sang the National Anthem drew considerable applause.

Haze ended his program by asking the crowd to give it up for the country-rock band North Forty, which played until the event wrapped up.

Christmas Tree Lighting Gathers Community to Stonehouse Park

Continued from page 1

them off at the park. Santa led the countdown that ended with the illumination of the Christmas tree and other holiday figures. As Santa moved to his throne, Christmas tunes began reverberating from the speaker and the first child in a long line of youngsters and families drew near to tell him what she wanted for Christmas.

Bechtold said RMA Director Tom Reimers was a very convincing Santa. Director Danny Carrillo was the elf, his dog Leo was the reindeer and Optimist Melinda Martel was Mrs. Claus.

Reimers said they "posed for a ton of family pics with their kids and pets."

As for Christmas wishes, the older children asked for electric bikes and scooters while the younger ones were more interested in Pokémon cards, Legos, and Barbie dolls. A couple of children asked for a puppy or kitten while a few said they would be happy with anything and wanted to be surprised.

"One girl asked for an army tank, sweaters, and a machine gun for her guinea pigs," Reimers said.

Murieta Dance Company Director Doreen Zimmerman said eight members of the Junior Competition Team learned a new dance especially for the event. Emma Hunter, Alyssa Gritzmacher, Quinn McWayne, Arianna Chavez, Kennedy Brenner, Aislinn Brenner, Addison Burgundy, and Jema Nauman danced to "Santa, Can You Hear Me," by Ariana Grande and Kelly Clarkson.

Bechtold thanked members of the RMA Maintenance Department for their help with the event. They blew away the leaves, set up the tables, put up the decorations and lighting, and built the fire pits. Then, they stayed afterwards to clean up. "We could not hold this event without them," she said.

The Optimists have sponsored the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony for 20 years, according to Bechtold.

"It is such a beloved and well-attended event that we will continue to work in cooperation with the RMA Recreation Committee to keep this tradition going," she said. "See you next year."



The Christmas tree lights up as soon as Santa finishes the countdown.



Explaining their Christmas wishes to Santa are, from left, Abigail, Jack, and Emily Leslie.



Murieta Dance Company members strike a pose before dancing to 'Santa, Can You Hear Me.' Photo courtesy of Murieta Dance Company



Response Times, Gate Issues are Topics at Sheriff's Meeting

By Gail Bullen River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)

- Response times, gate problems, and juvenile misbehavior were topics of interest when the Central Division of the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office held a community meeting at the RMA Building on Nov. 15 that attracted about 20 audience members.

Other subjects included plans to re-open the sheriff's service center in Rancho Murieta, descriptions of two specialized teams that operate out of the Central Division, and crime prevention tips.

The meeting was similar to a "Coffee with a Cop" event but minus the coffee and on a larger scale with 12 uniformed officers and four civilians representing the sheriff's office. The emcee was Lt. James Petrinovich, who is the operations commander for the Central Division which includes Rancho Murieta.

"We invited a lot of folks out her because we want to make sure we give you guys the best up-to-date answers that we possibly can," Petrinovich said.

He introduced five speakers who all said a few words: Vanessa Vaden, who is the captain of the Central Division; Dawn Messmer, the crime prevention officer; Deputy District Attorney Mai Triou who is with the Community Prosecuting Unit; Sgt. Jeff Massangli, who supervises the Problem Oriented Policing (POP) team; and Deputy Bret Uecker, a Rancho Murieta resident who is part of the Homeless Outreach Team.

"Fortunately for us up here, it's not much of an issue," Uecker said.

After Petrinovich opened the floor for questions, two watch commanders also helped answer them. They were Lt. Stephen Ayers, and Lt. Greg Coauette, has lived in Rancho Murieta since 1995.

Coauette said he has worked patrol in Rancho Murieta, as a sergeant, and as the watch commander. "Now I am back as the dayshift watch commander," he

Response times

The initial question about response times and staffing came from audience member Chris Child, who also is a Rancho Murieta Association (RMA) director.

Ayers told him that he currently had only two officers working in the South County which encompasses everything from Rancho Murieta to the Antioch Bridge. "It is a lot of area to cover, and it is manpower-related," he said.

However, the three shifts are staggered so that deputies can be available for patrol requests. Ayers said deputies drive around the community at different times of the day or just park and watch. "It is what we call flashing paint," he said. "That's where we are at with our staffing across the county."

Petrinovich said the two south officers wouldn't be the only ones responding to a major incident. Several officers assigned to the East Area around Bradshaw Road are in close vicinity, and all deputies assigned to the City of Rancho Cordova could respond. Massagli said a POP officer might also be in the vicinity.

Audience member Crystal Matter cited a 40-minute response time last summer. It involved a resident who was in law enforcement having a gun being held to him. "With 6,000 residents and 2,600 houses, I think we need a little more presence out here, especially considering we don't have much in the way of security anymore," Matter said.

Petrinovich told her that a 40-minute response time was a little troubling, and he wanted to look into it. But he also pointed out that the sheriff's office currently has 98 vacancies. "We would love to staff every place even more," he said. "But we have to work with the numbers we have."

Coauette said he also responds to some Rancho Murieta calls from his home since taking over as a day shift watch commander last summer. He said he oversees everything that is happening on his laptop, which is his office that can go anywhere.

"When there is nobody here because they are down in Isleton, I am still here Monday through Thursday," he said.

A case in point happened the previous day. Coauette said he jumped on a report on a suspicious call that two people might be dead inside their house in Rancho Murieta. Nevertheless, he advised the two assigned deputies not to respond Code 3. "If two people are dead in a house, they've been there some time because of the smell," he said. (The source of the odor was a dozen abandoned cats. See the story in the Nov. 24 issue of the River Valley Times.)

Coauette also noted that the sheriff's office response time "has been one of the major concerns in the community forever."

Gate operations

Coauette brought up issues with gate security during a discussion about large groups of juveniles misbehaving at South Beach last summer. He said one of the major issues is that kids who live in Rancho Murieta are inviting their non-resident friends into the community. He said some of that could be prevented at the gates, but it isn't happening.

Coauette said when he has visited other gated communities, he has been required to show his driver's license that also was scanned. He also had to be on a list before he got through.

"Yeah, it is a pain. But we

don't do that," he said. "We don't keep track of the license plates of people who are supposed to be here on a guest list."

Nor are IDs being checked. "You can get through these gates by using somebody's name because you don't have to prove who you are," he said.

When Coauette contacted the gate after a burglary, he could get photos of vehicles that came through during a time frame. "But they are not getting the name of the person driving that vehicle so I can't put the two together," he said.

(The RMA Board sets the policies for gate entry, not CSD.)

Massagli, the POP supervisor, had a different take on the gate issue. He said every community has to decide on the level of gate security. He said it can range from the type of tracking found on a military base to merely having a code to open the gate.

Massagli said the best form of security is neighbors looking out for each other. "The communities that have a lot of problems are those who don't know each other," he said.

At the end of the meeting, Petrinovich said he hadn't known of any issues with the Rancho Murieta gates. "But just having a gate is a major deterrent," he said.

Juvenile misbehavior

Coauette said juvenile misbehavior has always been that way in the community. "I know it's the youth who are causing a lot of damage to the golf course, stealing golf carts, and doing mischief type stuff by the lakes and the river," he said

Drug activity "has been out here" since he came back. "The 13-year-old girl who overdosed as a call that I came on when I first got out here," he said.

Coauette said he has initiated patrol requests to be more visible. He also has talked to CSD Security Supervisor Kelly



Lt. James Petrinovich and Captain Vanessa Vaden from the Central Division are two of the speakers when the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office holds a community meeting at the RMA building on Nov. 15. Photos by Gail Bullen

Benitez and Sgt. Mel Outram on ways some of the governing rules can "prohibit some of the stuff that the kids are doing."

Coauette also cited the community's security camera system so "We get to see stuff and know who is doing what," he said.

Coauette said everyone loves the new Bel Air shopping center, but "It attracts different people we aren't used to seeing in our community," he said.

Coauette also said deputies have done a good job addressing some of the issues at the river (the South Beach). When they come upon one of these calls late at night, they order the young people to leave. "With the weight of the uniform, and who we are, they seem to get up and go," he said. "Sometimes they won't do it for security."

Childs asked whether deputies could cite the young people for trespassing on the North and South Beaches, saying it wouldn't take much to get a ripple effect.

Petrinovich suggested putting up no trespassing signs to give deputies a basis for citations. He also suggested going through the HOA to penalize the parents.

Massagli, the POP sergeant, said doing something inside the community would be more effective than "citing a bunch of juveniles for trespassing", given the current state of the juvenile justice system, compared to five or 10 years ago. "Honestly, hitting somebody's pocketbook at

Bidwell

this level is going to have more effect," he said.

(RMA posted signs last summer, but they were ripped down. The RMA Board also adopted a new rule intended to deter young people from trashing the South Beach, setting bonfires and trespassing.)

Coauette told the audience that his hands are tied at times. He said he wouldn't go down to the river to arrest 20 people around a bonfire unless he had backup. Nor would he ask one or two of his guys to do it either. Coauette said there is a time to lay down the law, and a time not to.

Coauette said he has seen videos of the security officers going down there by themselves. "So put yourself in your shoes as to what they are going to do and how they do it," he said.

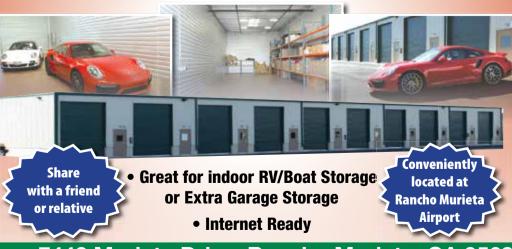
Other

Petrinovich said the sheriff's office plans to reopen the service center for one or two days a week and currently has a volunteer in training. He said the department is looking for more volunteers.

When wrapping up the meeting, Petrinovich said he felt jealous as an outsider looking in. He said while Rancho Murieta has its problems, the complaints don't begin to compare to others he's heard at other community meetings. He also said having a gate was a determent.

"You guys are doing pretty darn good," he said. "I would say you guys are definitely on the right track and doing a good job.





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Murieta Sidewalk Shoppe **Opens for Business**



Christmas ns, Santa bargains, photos, holiday music, and tasty barbecue lure many visitors to the Murieta Sidewalk Shoppe for a one-day event that unfolded at Murieta Plaza on Nov. 25. In photo right, plaza business owners like Jessica Sanders display their wares on the sidewalk. In photo above, crafters like Lorraine Spradlin are excited about showing off their work. Sanders, who owns Ilume Luxe Studio, organized the event. She said more than 34 vendors signed up. Photos by Gail Bullen



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Wilton Fire plans light parade of fire

engines. Fire trucks with lights blazing will parade along Wilton Roads on Dec. 16 and 17 beginning at 6 p.m. The first parade on Dec. 16 will leave Station 83 on Dillard and Orange Roads, turn left at Clay Station Road, turn on the first Stable Gate Road, and stop at Rim Road, where the firefighters will park and meet with neighbors. The second parade on Dec. 17 will leave Station 1 at Dillard and Wilton Roads, turn left on Dillard Road, right on Colony Road, right on Walmart Road, right on Davis Road, and right on Dillard Road. The firefighters will park at the Dillard Elementary School to meet with neighbors.

Kiwanis slates See's Candies fundraiser

Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta is once again be selling See's Candies for the holidays. You will have two ways of purchasing your favorite items in-person or online. You will find us at the same in-person location as last vear, next door to Town & Country Real Estate in the Bel Air Shopping Center. Look for our blue Kiwanis flag. We will be open every day from Nov. 25 and 26 and Friday to Sunday, Dec. 1 to 3, Dec. 8 to 10, Dec. 15 to 17, and Dec. 22 to 23, if not sold out. Our hours will be noon to 4 p.m. We will accept cash or credit cards. Online purchases can be made through our website. We offer free delivery to residents in the North, South, Gardens, and the Village. Orders placed by 5 p.m. will be available for delivery the next day. For more information or to purchase online, please visit our website at www.rmkiwanis. org. You can also contact the co-chairs Jeannette Edwards at (408) 515-2636 or Patti Maffei at (415) 519-1043. Thank you for supporting our fundraiser.

Kiwanis seeks donations for Toys for Tots

The Kiwanis Club is in its 14th year in partnership with the Marines Toys for Tots program. Kiwanis has placed Toys for Tots boxes at several locations in Rancho Murieta. Toy boxes can be found at: Consumnes River Elementary School, Ace Hardware, The Backyard, Go Fore Pizza, Rancho Murieta Homes and Ranches, Kiwanis See's Candy Store, Rancho Murieta Garden Club, Rancho Murieta Country Club and the Local Bean Coffee Shop. Toys will be collected until Dec. 14. The toys collected are for needy children in over 2000 families in Sacramento County. For more information contact Pete Edwards 408-209-1461.

Murieta Dance Company sales annual recital Dec. 9 **and 10**

The Murieta Dance Company will head "Back to the Future" when the young members will dance, sing and act their hearts out at the annual recital on Dec. 9 and 10. The performances inside the former Murieta Market space in The Plaza will be held at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 9 and at 2 p.m. on Sunday Dec. 10. Tickets are \$15 per person for general admission and \$25 for VIP seating. Tickets can be purchased at the studio which is located in the plaza and at Bar Code Barbers in the Bel Air shopping center. Food and drink will be available for purchase during the performances. For more information call 916-296-6503.

Rancho Murieta **Cub Scout pack is** recruiting members

Cub Scout Pack 233 in Rancho Murieta is seeking new members. The pack is open to boys and girls in grades kindergarten through fifth. Contact Scoutmaster Phil Kleam at pckleam@gmail.com.

Kiwanis seeks Sweats for Vets donations

Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta is once again asking for monetary donations to its Sweat for Vets program. This is 14th year of helping veterans who are hospitalized at the Sacramento VA Medical Center in Mather. Please make your check out to Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta Sweat for Vets. Cash donations and

Walmart gift cards are also welcome. Mail donations to Kiwanis at P. O. Box 855, Rancho Murieta, or put them in a drop box at the RMA building. If you have any questions call Diann Swan at 916-354-0656. Thank you for your support of this program. Roadway improvements to close Grant Line Road

Sacramento County will close Grant Line Road between Keifer and Douglas Roads between Nov. 27 and Dec. 23 to make roadway improvements.

Kiwanis slates

annual crab fee on Feb. 3. The Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta is thrilled to announce our 10th Annual Crab Feed will be Feb. 3, 2024, at the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church on Cantova Way. In partnership with the Knights of Columbus the Crab Feed is an amazing evening of delicious crab dinner, a silent auction, dessert auction, and, of course, our huge and extravagant raffle. The Crab Feed is the largest fundraiser for our Kiwanis Club. Cash sponsorship opportunities ranging from \$300 to \$5,000 are available until Dec. 3, 2023. Crab Feed dine-in tickets will go on sale January 6 and 13 at The Local Bean from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dine-in tickets will be sold on a first come first served basis. Cash or credit cards are accepted. The price is the same as last year at \$70. Drive-through tickets can be purchased at The Local Bean in-person sales days or online at our website www.rmkiwanis.org from Jan. 6 to Jan. 28. Dinner includes crab, shrimp, salad, pasta, rolls and dessert. Chef KC will be catering the meal this year. Our Key Club high school students will again be our servers. For more information regarding sponsorships, raffle or silent or dessert auction items, please contact Bonnie at 916-502-3260. For more information regarding ticket sales, please contact Jeannette at 408-515-2636. Like our Facebook page for most up-to-date infor-

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port of our Kiwanis Club of

Rancho Murieta.

Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians Supports Holiday Toy Drive with \$20,000 Donation



Jackson Rancheria News Release

JACKSON, CA (MPG) -The Jackson Rancheria

Band of Miwuk Indians is proud to support this year's Matt Scott Racing/ Amador County Sheriff's Foundation Holiday Toy Drive with a \$20,000 donation to help families in need in Amador County. For sixteen years, the

elves at Matt Scott Racing have been collecting and purchasing toys for the youth of Amador County.

In cooperation with the Amador Sheriff's Annual Toy Drive, they have successfully fulfilled the many wishes of local children. This year, once again, the need will be great.

"On behalf of the Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians, we are proud to sponsor this year's holiday toy drive," said Crystal Jack, CEO of Jackson Rancheria. "The Tribe is committed to our community during times of need, and we hope that the contribution will help many families have a more joyful holiday season."

The Holiday Toy Drive will take place on Saturday, December 2 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in front of Foothill Appliance in the Amador Shopping Plaza. Bring a new unwrapped toy and Santa's helpers will collect your donation.

If you would like to make a monetary donation or learn more about the Holiday Toy Drive, please contact Kevin Barnett at (209) 223-0508 or kevin@ themountainmerchant.com



SECURITY LOGS

Following is a summary of activity for the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Security Department for the following dates. Note: these log entries are condensed. For full security log details, go to the CSD website at www. rmcsd.com. A quick link to the security logs is on the home page.

RP = Reporting PersonGOA = Gone on Arrival UTL = Unable to Locate BOLO = Be on LookOut NFI = No Further

Information QOA = Quiet on Arrival HBD = Had Been Drinking

Rancho Murieta

Nov. 17

• Three extra patrols. • Parking enforcement,

5:51 a.m. Murieta South, seven citations.

• Two extra patrols.

Nov. 18

• Motorcycle escort, 1:33 p.m. Guadalupe Drive.

Nov. 19

• Three extra patrols.

• Stop sign enforcement, 7:17 p.m. De La Cruz Drive and Murieta Parkway.

Nov. 20

• Follow up, 7:14 a.m. animal hospital construction site. Report of juveniles hanging around when patrol was unavailable. No signs of vandalism or theft, but the wind blew over a large section of temporary fencing. • Parking enforcement,

7:25 a.m. Murieta South, six citations.

Nov. 21 • Alarm, 5:10 a.m.

Catholic Church, nothing suspicious to report. • Water leak, 5:44 a.m.

Murieta Parkway in 7000 block, water coming from the ground, CSD utility department responding.

Nov. 22

• One extra patrol. • Open door, 3:29 p.m.

Domino Drive, garage door closed when patrol arrived. • Speeding complaint,

9:48 p.m. Lago Drive, flatbed truck with juvenile passengers, UTL.

Nov. 23

• One extra patrol

• Miscellaneous, 5:59 p.m. Stonehouse Park, incident from previous night reported. RP said one of his friends got stuck in a swing in the playground and he had to cut the safety handlebars to get him out. Forwarded report and photos to RMA.

Nov. 24

• Suspicious person, 9:23 p.m. North Gate, CSD employee saw a bike being stolen from the back of the guard shack. Unable to

locate the suspect.

Nov. 25

• One extra patrol. • Noise complaint, 9;59

p.m. Riverview Park, report of a large group in the park after hours. Patrol used his PA system to ask the group to leave, which happened. • Noise complaint, 10:10

p.m. Reynosa Drive, report of large, loud gathering inside a garage. Patrol contacted the group and advised them of the complaint. The resident stated the party would be taken inside the house. • Noise complaint, 10:30

pm. Magno Court, report of a party. Patrol didn't hear anything upon arrival.

• Noise complaint, 11:45 pm. Shaq Street inside Riverview development, report of juveniles in the street, a disturbance, and doorbell ditching. Upon arrival, observed only one juvenile who ran into Riverview Park upon seeing the patrol vehicle.

Nov. 26 • One extra patrol.

12:18 am. Camino Del Sol Cricle, the resident could hear a band playing. Upon arrival, patrol could also hear the music but couldn't locate the Parking enforcement

Noise complaint,

4:20 a.m. Murieta South, two citations.

Nov. 27 • One extra patrol.

• Parking enforcement, 2:45 a.m. north and south, three citations.

Nov. 28

• One extra patrol.

• Parking enforcement, 4:51 a.m. Trinidad Drive, one citation.

• Trespassing, 2 p.m. Murieta Village RV Storage Yard, west side fence was cut, but no obvious signs of theft.

• Alarm, 11:50 p.m. Burger King, no signs of forced entry.

Wilton Fire • Thirteen medical aids

between Nov. 15 and 26.

Nov. 15

• Smoke Alarm, 3:28 p.m. 11180 Green Road.

Nov. 16

• Grass fire, 12:33 p.m. 10974 Mann Road.

Nov. 17

• Unknown type fir, 7:26 p.m. 11280 Alta Mesa

Nov. 22

• Public assistance, 12 a.m. 12206 Arno Road. • Public assistance, 1:36

a.m. 12206 Arno Road. Smoke investiga-

tion, 7:15 p.m. 10139 Alta Mesa Road.

Nov. 26 • Public assistance, 2:40

a.m. 12530 Lee School Road. Sacramento County

Sheriff's Office • No incidents reported.



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6 • River Valley Times

Rancho Murieta Soccer Season Ends on a High Note

By Gail Bullen River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (M **PG)** - Good memories ran rampant after the Rancho Murieta Soccer Club ended its 21st season on Nov. 11.

A case in point was Chris Betzler, who signed up last fall as a new head coach for the Rancho Murieta Tigers to make soccer fun for his daughter. Most of his players were 4-year-olds with a couple of 5-year-olds. Quite a few hadn't played soccer before. He probably had the youngest team in the Elk Grove Soccer League.

"We went from the first practice with them not really knowing how to dribble to ending the season when they were scoring goals against 6 and 7-year-olds," he said. "Seeing the progression was incredible.'

Betzler said he would coach the same team into the foreseeable future. "They were engaged. They were energetic, They had a big smile on their faces at every practice and every game," he said. "We had a blast."

A total of 250 youngsters signed up for the Rancho Murieta Soccer experience last fall with 54 in the Rancho Murieta Mini Kickers 3 and 4-year-olds. Tony Silva and Chad Myers ran the program, which consisted of six Friday night sessions. Three past players Sophia Krist, Kate Myers, and Macey Casagranda earned community service hours helping with the youngsters.

The other kids, 101 boys and 95 girls, were divided into 14 teams with 14 coaches. Three teams, the most ever, played in tournaments.

Doug Mattos has been the club's program director for 11 years. He said the 2023 season was one of the best because of the coaches. "At the end of the day, they create the experience for the kids and the parents who come to the games," he said. "They are our lifeline. We couldn't have a season without them."

Prospective coaches, mostly parents with a child on the team, must make the choice to volunteer, he said. After working all day, they must commit to two practices on weekday evenings and be available for games on Saturday.

Parents also have busy schedules. They too must make a choice about whether to sign their kids up for the program. The biggest compliment parents can give a couch is signing up their kids to play on their roster another season, Mattos said.

The Rancho Murieta Association (RMA) also wraps its arms around the program particularly General Manager Rod Hart and Maintenance Manager Troy Schaffner. "They keep the fields in such great shape," Mattos said. The



Melissa Kassel, the Rancho Murieta Mustangs coach, encourages her players to focus as they practice for a tournament. Photos by Gail Bullen

fields are the envy of visiting soccer teams, according to parent Dave Keslar. They go "into shock" the first time they see them, he said.

The club is part of Elk Grove Soccer League, which provides "great" support with funding, equipment "and everything we need to put soccer on the field," Mattos said. Debra Carlton is the president and Andrew Donnary, is the CEO for the league. It has 5,000 registered players and 450 coaches, according to its website.

Mattos said the Rancho Murieta club needs local leadership to ensure the program runs smoothly. The committee members take care of the fields, scheduling, registration, and referees. Their goal is to make everything as easy as possible for the coaches,

An even larger committee is already in place for next year - Mattos, Melissa Kassel, Josh Twist, Tony Driver, Luke Iverson, and Kim Doughty. His wife Jennifer Mattos also helps with registration.

Mattos said they begin reaching out to find coaches in July and August after forming the teams according to age groups. This year six new coaches volunteered - Kaitlin Bauer, Chris Betzler, Grace Long, Kurt Bunnell, Tony Driver, and Josh Twist. Another eight returned - Jason Strongman, Dennis Brown, Meghan McDonald, Josh Long, Melissa Kassel, Tara Iverson, Rick Spickard, and Matt Kartchner.

Nor could the program operate without referees. Four young people who aged out of the program came back as paid referees last season - Rocco Krist, Kate Myers, Christian Stigler, and Gavin Yabut. "It's a great avenue for these kids to stay in the community," Mattos said. "Refereeing also grows

them up quickly." Coaches with older players sometimes choose to take their teams to tournaments, which is a further commitment by them, the kids, and their parents. "It extends the season with three weeks of practice under the lights when the weather is getting colder," Mattos said.. "It is a testament to what the coaches are doing to make an

experience for the kids."

This year three coaches were bringing teams to a tournament in Davis on Dec. 2 and 3. They were Melissa Kassel with the Rancho Murieta Mustangs, Tara Iverson with the Rancho Murieta Feisty Cats and Matt Kartchner with a co-ed team with players from the Rancho Murieta Hawks and the Murieta Mayhem teams.

Mattos said the Rancho Murieta Club was founded 21 years ago by Paul Frank, Martha Glunt, and Sam Sommers Jr. "They got it started by putting the best experience on the field that the community would embrace, and we are just continuing it," he said. "That's why it has lasted 21

Two parents also contributed their thoughts about Rancho Murieta Soccer.

Tony Driver, who also is a Little League coach, was a first-time soccer coach this season. He managed two teams with his younger and older sons. Fortunately, their practices were backto-back. Driver said his soccer knowledge stems from 10 years of exposure to his wife's side of the family. His sister-in-law had a full-ride scholarship at Cal Berkeley and entered the Olympic development program, all the while coached by her father and his father-in-law.

Driver is convinced that soccer is the best sport for young kids. "It develops so much of that foundational athleticism," he said. "We focus very much on movement – balance, running, jumping, lateral movement, and fun. That is how all our

practices are." Keslar, who was interviewed when watching his son practice for a tournament, appreciates the continuity and consistency that is built into the Rancho Murieta club. His son Avery has played for Coach Melissa Kassel for the past five years and developed lifelong friendships. "That camaraderie just gets better

through the years," he said. Keslar also knows what makes the best teams. "Good leadership is very hard to find," he said. "There is definitely great leadership in this coaching

Parents also play a role. "We are like the support cast," he said.



Coach Matt Kartchner directs his co-ed team during a Nov. 20 practice under the lights at Stonehouse Park as they prepare for an upcoming soccer tournament where they will compete





This is the time of year that many of us consider our charitable-donation budget. But as we decide how much to give, perhaps we also ought to calculate why we

In his list called "Eight Degrees of Charity," the 13th century Rabbi Moses Maimonides offers wise council for weighing our motives.

I've mentioned his list a few times in this column, but like Dicken's "Christmas Carol," the list inspires me each time I revisit it. The unabridged catalogue can be found on my website, but since it has many nuances, allow me this paraphrased summary.

Maimonides describes his list as a ladder, so let's begin at the bottom rung, the lowest form of charity.

8. Sometimes we give only because we are uncomfortable with our wealth. This sentiment is aptly described by Tibetan Buddhist Trungpa Rinpoche as "Idiot compassion." You can see it in the actions of retirees like me who did this during the pandemic. As our savings bulged with stimulus checks and investment returns, we started giving to the local foodbank. No judgment here. I think Maimonides would say that most charity is good charity. Still, it's hard to sort our good motives from our lesser ones. That's why the rabbi encouraged us to work our way up the ladder.

7. Let us give cheerfully but not too much. We do this by dropping a few bucks in the Salvation Army kettle or the church offering. We smile generously, but we know it's woefully inadequate.

6. Just ask me and I'll donate. Generous, yes. But why must we be asked first? In Honduras, as in many Latin countries, people of all income levels will carry charity money to give to those who ask. The San Francisco

What Is Your Reason for Giving?

company GoFundMe began with the premise of giving to those who ask. The tragic drama in many requests inspires us to give. In 2021 they generated \$22.6M in

5. Let's give without being asked. This sounds like a clean motive but it's low on the ladder because the giver may be doing it to gain attention. On one hand, it's the kind of giving we might do when we say we pick up the dinner check. On the positive side, it's the kind of giving we do when a neighbor needs our assistance.

4. We should give to those we don't know, but they should know who we are. A lot of us achieve this when we give to the homeless woman at the intersection. It's a kind act, but there's no way to avoid making the recipient feel less-than.

3. I like to give anonymously but I need to know who's getting it. This may seem like a high form of giving, but not quite. Maimonides cautions that since "subconsciously, the giver might gain a pleasure and a sense of power over the recipient, this detracts from his act."

2. I like to give anonymously and don't want anyone to know This one is tricky, but the best modern-day example is the Salvation Army Kettle. Your donation helps the poor, but you will never know who they are, and they will never know who you are. You have no say in where the money goes and cannot take it back. And the highest degree of charity motive on Maimonides

1.Let's form a business part**nership with the poor.** "What?" you ask. "Business is not charity!" The rabbi considered this the highest charitable form because it "strengthens the hand of the poor through either a gift or an interest-free loan." Surprisingly, Maimonides considered the loan better than an outright gift "since the poor are not shamed."

This charity is best illustrated in the saying, "Give a person a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him to fish and he eats for

It's this charitable approach that has inspired me to proudly promote Chispa Project in this column for the past eight years.

Chispa establishes libraries in Honduran elementary schools with the help of Honduran teachers, parents and students who will organize, plan and monitor the

Each Honduran community is asked to raise a symbolic portion of the costs (less than 4% of the total project). In this way Maimonides highest principle is applied and the schools establish ownership, pride, and better sustainability of the library.

"Pure" charity is about improving the lives of others, not our own. Yet still I think even Maimonides would have to admit that sometimes we need to do something to feel better. Regardless of our motive, someone is helped. In any case none of us have a

pure heart, so thankfully most charities are able to help those in need regardless of our motive to Maimonides' full writ-

ing is available at https://www. myjewishlearning.com/article/ maimonides-ladder-of-tzedakah/ If you will start a monthly

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Rancho Murieta Soccer Club Coach Selected as a Coach of the Year

was his last year coaching in Rancho Murieta. He is "basically retiring" because his daughter is leaving the team.

"It's a little sad to think about not coaching," he said. "But I am hoping to sit back and enjoy watching my daughter Lila play volleyball," he said.

Kartchner began playing recreational soccer when he was 8 years old. He came to love the goalkeeper position, which he played through high school and in college intramurals. He also played some indoor soccer. However, his time as a goalie ended when he blew out a knee when he was in his 30s.

Kartchner said his final season with the Rancho Murieta Hawks, comprised of 11 and 12-year-olds was challenging and rewarding at the same time. He said a solid core of eight players he had coached for the past three years returned, and three new players fit right in. Danny Kershaw was the assistant coach.

Most of their games were very close, with the team winning or losing by one goal. "We had some really great competition in the league this year," he said. "But the girls all played their hearts out. It was fun to be able to coach them."

He was asked why he and Kershaw decided to enter the post-season tournament in Davis on Dec. 2 and 3. Kartchner said they talked about doing it for a couple of seasons but couldn't make it happen until this year. However, because of the age requirements, they didn't have enough girls to make a team. That's when

he reached out to the team with boys of the same age – the Murieta Mayhem team coached by Rick Spickard.

"They wanted to join forces," he said.

With seven girls and nine boys, the co-ed team practiced together for three weeks before the tournament and competed in the Boys Division during the tournament. "I feel my girls are tough enough they will be able to play right in there with the boys," he said before the tournament.

Kartchner enjoyed affiliating with the club in Rancho Murieta nine years ago after six years of coaching in the "very, very large" Pleasant Grove Soccer

"Rancho Murieta is a pretty unique community, and it is very intimate,' he said. "We really have only one or two teams at the same age level which made them competitive and proud to represent the community...There is just that feeling that you are part of something special."

Kartchner, who lives in Sloughhouse, said he and his kids always felt welcome in the Rancho Murieta Club. It didn't hurt that his kids also attended Cosumnes River Elementary (CRES). However, other players who attended Dillard Elementary or Bradshaw Christian also become close friends with their CRES teammates. That comradery translates into their play.

Kartchner has fond memories of the kids on his teams. "They were raised by great families. They are humble. They love to compete, and they are gracious winners or losers," he said. "It just makes me proud as a coach to take them out and play with them."

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River Valley Garden Club and Boy Scout Troop #633 Join Hands to Refurbish CRES School Garden



Garden club members and boy scout members working at the CRES garden.

Story and photo by **Nancy Compton**

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - On a sunny Saturday morning in November, members of the River Valley Garden Club and Boy Scouts from Troop #633 joined staff member Melissa Fite at the CRES school garden located behind the school with shovels, rakes, hoes, trowels, and a can-do spirit.

Due to vandalism and neglect, the garden, which had been up and running in the past, needed to be completely refurbished, including replacing the building blocks which provided structure for the raised garden beds.

With the exception of one enormous rosemary bush and a large lavender, weeds had taken over most of the growing space, and had to be weeded out by hand. With so many community members pulling together, what appeared to be an enormous task was accomplished in under three



Jerome Keys working with stone planters.

Next, the raised beds will be filled with soil so it will be ready for spring planting. Right now, the school

garden is in need of soil and fertilizer, and will welcome donations from local businesses or nonprofits.





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