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# RIVER VALLEY TIMES

39TH YEAR • ISSUE 43      Serving Rancho Murieta, Sloughouse, Wilton      DECEMBER 22, 2023

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GENERAL MANAGER  
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## Options to Keep Country Club Discussed

Options Explained to Keep County Club Viable at Town Hall Meeting



Carol Anderson Ward addresses the crowd when the Rancho Murieta Country Club Board of Directors holds a town hall meeting to discuss potential bankruptcy on Dec. 12. She leads an investment group that owns the two golf courses and clubhouse and leases them to the club. Photos by Gail Bullen

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - With the Rancho Murieta Country Club (RMCC) facing an anticipated \$700,000 deficit next year, the Board of

Directors convened a town hall meeting on Dec. 12 to explain three options to keep the club operating and to explain why filing for bankruptcy would have the best chance for success. The meeting drew a standing-room-only crowd to the Murieta Room.

The three presenters were President Eric Dutton, who provided an overview of three options; Vice President John O'Brien who explained bankruptcy legalities, and Treasurer Chase Armer who talked about the financials. A link to a video recording of the

meeting has been sent to members. The club is unusual because it doesn't own the two golf courses or the clubhouse and leases them from Rancho Murieta Properties. That is an investment group led by  
*Continued on page 2*

## CSD Committee Reviews New Housing Proposal with Apartments

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - Although a proposal for a new subdivision in Rancho Murieta with a 160-unit apartment building and 88 single-family lots for workforce housing might seem alarming, the chances it will happen probably are a long way off, if ever. That's because the owners of the 39-acre parcel next to the Rancho Murieta Community Services District (CSD), must secure an easement to the CSD driveway to develop the subdivision.

That isn't going to be easy based on a comment that Director Randy Jenco made at the CSD Improvements Committee on Dec. 5.

"I think the elephant in the room here is that if we granted this easement through our property, there is some value to it. What does CSD get in return," Jenco said. "I think you should put some thought into why would CSD want to do this other than just being a good neighbor."

The Improvements Committee is comprised of Directors Jenco and Martin Pohll, Director of Operations Michael Fritschi, all engineers, General Manager Mimi Morris, and other staff. The group looks at infrastructure issues in depth and reports its findings and recommendations to the entire board.

The Pension Trust Fund for Operating Engineers Local 3 (OE3) previously owned the 39-acre parcel, using it to train students on heavy equipment. OE3 continued using it even after it was included in the hundreds of acres the Pension Trust Fund sold to an investment group led by the late John Sullivan in 2013. It became part of the Rancho North project.

However, after OE3 moved the training to a site off Meiss Road, Sullivan began making noises about getting the easement from CSD. A request discussed at an Improvements Committee meeting in January 2020 didn't go anywhere. Sullivan brought up again when the CSD Board was discussing a plan to plant trees along  
*Continued on page 2*

## Wilton Winter Festival Celebrates with Parade, Craft Fair, and Santa



Rangeview 4-H Club members with their goats and chickens take part in the Wilton Winter Festival Parade on Dec. 2. Reserve deputies and volunteers closed access to Dillard Road between the Wilton Fire Station and Dillard Elementary for the event. Photos by Gail Bullen

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter

**WILTON, CA (MPG)** - The 15th iteration of the Wilton Winter Festival unfolded on Dec. 2 with a parade and activities inside the Wilton Community Center that drew several hundred attendees.

The Sacramento County Area 4 B Council (Parks & Rec) sponsored the event. The organizer was Randy Upham who spearheads the nonprofit that raises funds for the community center.

"Overall the festival went well, and it didn't rain," Upham said. "Last year it was raining buckets."

The parade is always the major attraction at the festival. The route begins at the Wilton Fire Department station at Wilton Road, travels north on Dillard Road past the viewing stand in front of the Wilton Bible Church, and ends at the community center off Colony Road.

Lynn Holliday, who is the lead parade organizer said this year's was the "smoothest one ever because we were able to recruit more volunteers for the day," she said. "That made it a lot easier," she said.

Many of them helped with the road closures including some reserve sheriff's deputies. "We had



Garrett Aarseeth peaks around the corner at Santa, who catches him doing it. Santa listened to Christmas wishes from the stage behind the Wilton Community Center when craft vendors sold their wares inside and outside of the building.

people manning every barricade, and sheriff's cars staged in specific spots," she said. "In past years we have had people sneak around the blockades even

though we mail a post card to everyone will be affected."

Unlike last year when heavy rains drenched the  
*Continued on page 3*

## CSD Committee Reviews New Housing Proposal With Apartments

The bankruptcy

Income from dues has increased for the first time in years because of an intense marketing campaign that brought in new members including some from outside the community. Non-residents could be a huge, untapped resource to reach full membership. But two

The board was slated to hold the electronic vote on the options between Dec. 18 and 22. Full members will have one vote, and social members a quarter vote. If a majority approves the bankruptcy option, the board will immediately pay the attorney's retainer to begin the process. ★



In August, the engineer for the development group, Michael Robertson of the Baker-Williams Engineering Group, emailed the district about a potential access agreement. Operations Director Michael Fritsch responded with a list of questions.

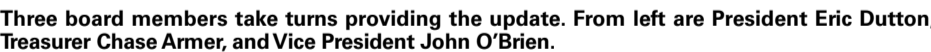
Robertson said the site plan was in response to a CSD question about what could be done with the property, and it wasn't a formal

Pohll and Jenco asked Baker many questions, and two audience members commented. In the end, Jenco summed up the discussion this way: "This is just an idea that they are sharing with us," he said. "We have made no commitments to them. This is just strictly information sharing." ★

**By Gail Bullen**  
**River Valley Times Reporter**

The CHP report said Monroe was driving a 2007 Ford van north on Stonehouse

Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District firefighters also responded to the crash that was initially reported as requiring extrication. None was needed, according to scanner traffic ★





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*Continued from page 1*  
parade, the weather cooperated this year. "Although it rained during the night, it held off through the entire parade, which is a rain-or-shine event," she said.

This year's parade drew a dozen entries that began with a sheriff's patrol vehicle and ended with several Wilton firetrucks with red lights flashing. As is the tradition, one of the firefighters chauffeured a waving Santa Claus.

Holliday was happy that the Wilton-based California Cowgirls Rodeo Drill Team participated again this year. "The team has won so many freaking awards and will be riding in the Rose Bowl parade this year," she explained.

Another notable attendee was Sacramento Supervisor Pat Hume. He dressed as an elf and brought along his assistant dressed as a Christmas tree.

Other parade entries included a flatbed trailer from the Wilton Animal Rescue bearing some of the beautiful dogs that have been rehabilitated, the Grinch with his family in the bed of his pickup truck, Rangeview 4-H club members who clutched chickens and goats, Cub Scout Pack 16 wielding a banner, a float for veterans, and the Living Water Church float with the "Little Drummer Boy" wailing on his professional-grade drums.

This year's grand marshal was Heather Miller. She recently retired from Dillard Elementary after teaching close to 1,000 students at every grade level except 4th grade over a 37-year career, according to parade announcer Jim Ring.

“Every year she was excited to meet her new class of students,” Ring said. “She treasures the relationships she made with families over the years.”

Upham said many children came up to her car in the parade to say "hi" and to get a hug.

Lorraine Robinson organized the craft fair that attracted 28 vendors who set up their tables inside the community center and on the patio behind it. Their wares were mostly handcrafted. The offerings included jewelry, goat soaps, birdhouses, sewn and knitted textiles, Christmas wreaths, glass cutting boards, and succulent plants.

Robinson said the turnout was better than last year. "Everyone made good money and the Wilton History Group was able to get rid of a lot of old tee-shirts," she said.

Many attendees also enjoyed breakfast and lunch at the event, thanks to volunteers with Girl Scout Troop 2060 and the PACE program at Dillard Elementary. Maryanne Evans, a Dillard Elementary teacher, supervises both programs. ★



**Members of the California Cowgirls Rodeo Drill Team wave at the crowd. The Wilton-based group will ride in the Tournament of Rose Parade on Jan. 1.**



**Alexis Green volunteers to carry the birdhouse her family just purchased from Jim Vidal.**



**Santa foregoes his sleigh to ride in a Wilton Fire truck to end the parade in style.**



**Robin Vanden Raadt helps her children tackle their pancake breakfast served by Girl Scout Troop 2060. From left, are James, Jonathan, Amelia and Abigail.**



**Parade Marshal Heather Miller, waves to the crowd, as Mary Upham chauffeurs the car. Miller taught at Dillard Elementary for 37 years before she retired.**



**Sacramento County Supervisor Pat Hume pulls a crate filled with Christmas presents.**



**Carol Eisenbrandt, who operates Wilton Animal Rescue, waves to the crowd.**

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# Rancho Murieta Tour Visits Six Homes Looking Their Christmas Best



From left, Pam Werner, Kathy Richardson, and Ginny Hoskins photograph a Christmas tree at the home of Sherri and Bruce Colston. Their home was one of six that participated in the 2023 Holiday Home Tour presented by the Rancho Murieta Women's Club on Dec. 8. Photos by Gail Bullen

**By Gail Bullen**  
**River Valley Times**  
**Reporter**

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - Six homes beautifully decorated for Christmas opened their doors to visitors when the Rancho Murieta Women's Club presented the 2023 Holiday Home Tour on Dec. 8. The event drew 210 attendees.

It has been five years since the women's club has put on the popular event, according to Club President Boots Conway. The club canceled plans for a tour in 2020 because of the pandemic. Conway said this was the first time the club opened the

tour to the public instead of limiting it to members and their guests. "We plan to keep it that way," she said. The tour began at 10 a.m. at the Rancho Murieta Country Club where attendees enjoyed a light brunch and their choice of a Bloody Mary or Mimosa. Finding homes on the tour couldn't have been easier thanks to the beautiful program put together by Janet Nicholson. It had maps, directions, information about the homeowners with their pictures, and details about how they decorated their houses. Each home had hostesses from the women's club who

opened the door and pointed out its unique features. Everyone questioned was amazed by the creativity and the extent of the work that went into the beautifully displayed Christmas decorations. One of them was Candy Armstrong. "Each home was special in its own way," she said. "There was no winner." The homeowners participating were: Sherri and Bruce Colston, who live on De La Pena Circle; Kirsten and Tim DuBray, Guadalupe Drive; Moragan and Jerome Keyes, Abierto Drive; Kat and Tara O'Donnell, Abierto Drive; Laura and John



Falling 'snow' is the final touch after Laura and John Petersen decorate their patio to look like a Christmas wonderland.

Petersen, Abierto Drive; and Natachia Taylor, De La Cruz Drive. The most extensively decorated home belongs to the Colstons and has been featured on GoodDay Sacramento on Channel 13. Sherri Colston decorates 25 Christmas trees for the holidays, Conway said. Conway and Vickie Joyner co-chaired the tour's organizing committee. The other committee members were Laura Petersen, Bonnie Kirschman, Cindy Shamrock, Janet Nicholson, Sue Delmore, Barbara Armstrong, and Michelle Hubbell. ★



Sandra Cooper and Leta Stelter admire a display of Playboy magazine covers at the home of Kat and Tara O'Donnell.



Geri Dekker admires the 'Frozen Room' at the Colston home.



Cuddling her little Yorkie, Natachia Taylor adds glamour to her glitzy dining room decorations.



An out-of-the-ordinary village display built from Legos gets bigger every year at the home of Moragan and Jerome Keyes.



Kathy Richardson tries to capture the green ambiance of the Grinch Room at the Colston home.

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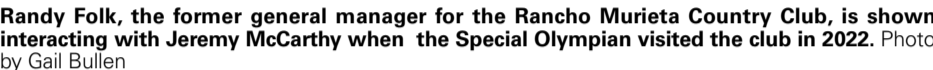
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# SECURITY LOGS



The board hired Folk as general manager in February 2021. Later that year in June, then Board President Bill Armstrong sent an email to the membership with this description of Folk: “The Board chose him because of his demonstrated track record of transformational leadership at a number of clubs. His reputation for success is stellar,” it said. “He was hired to assess the club’s strengths and weaknesses, to shake this club up, and turn it around.” ★

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# Sac County Teens Support Gifts From the Heart



A group of dedicated teens from Inderkum High School chose to get involved with Gifts from the Heart as part of their Senior Project. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

## Sacramento County News Release

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento County is celebrating 35 years of Gifts from the Heart this year. A child protective services worker founded the program in 1988. Since then, the tradition has grown to support thousands of people in Sacramento County. Each year, dozens of volunteers donate thousands of hours. Volunteers pick up, wrap, and deliver gifts from November into mid-December. Sponsors also support the cause by donating gifts, money, and food.

This year, a group of dedicated teens from Inderkum High School have joined the cause. John Norboe, Van Froling, Ty Miramontes, Kaylee King, Jackson Norton, Mason Worrall, and Lindsay Jones say they are excited to give back to their community. The group chose to get involved with Gifts from the Heart as part of their Senior Project – which requires them to volunteer for a cause they are passionate about. The teens have not only volunteered their time, but they have also

fundraised over \$1,500 for Gifts from the Heart. They organized different events to fundraise the money. The cash will help provide gifts for foster youth in Sacramento County. The teens say they are privileged to be able to give back.

“It’s a great cause. It’s really nice to help out your community. And, when you hear about these foster kids that aren’t really getting much for Christmas and whatnot, that makes you appreciate it. The least you can do is give back, and when we were given an opportunity like this for our senior project, I thought it was a great idea,” says Van.

The teens are just 17 and 18 years old, proving anyone can get involved with helping their community at any age. These high schoolers, along with other volunteers and sponsors highlight our community’s kindness and compassion. It is the people who donate their time and money who have helped Gifts from the Heart grow into a program that helps thousands of children, teens, disabled adults, and older adults in Sacramento County. ★



# Signs Point to God’s Love for Us All

and location of his services.

“No,” he said, “I’m not a preacher. I don’t really know much about the Bible.”

Nevertheless, Jose found the Bible’s most important message, so I asked him what kind of reaction the sign was generating.

“Most people show their agreement in some way,” he said. “They smile or nod and say, ‘That’s right.’” But no matter what their response, Jose held his sign in the same unflinching way he had begun in 2000.

I admire Jose’s courage, but I also appreciated what his sign did not say.

In a time when fundamentalist fanatics picket the funerals of war veterans and thrust placards of dead babies in the faces of confused mothers, I could fill several columns with what Jose’s sign DID NOT say.

It didn’t name conditions such as, “Jesus loves you if . . .”

It didn’t say “Jesus only loves you when . . .” It didn’t say, “My god hates your god.”

The cynic might have scolded Jose saying that it’s easier to hold a placard about Jesus’ love than to actually put love into practice. It’s the warning James, (Jesus’ half-brother) gave against simply telling the hungry, “Be warm and filled,” without offering them a cup of soup.

While I doubt Jose would argue that point, I do think he was on track to offer love.

After all, I don’t think it’s possible to remind each other too often about God’s love for us. For instance, can you tell a child you love him too much? Can you tell your spouse too many times that you cherish her above all?

Maybe Jose’s message, however many times you see it at football games or on the streets of a major city, is that God’s love will always be too big to define or imagine. This was the love that John the Baptist saw in Jesus when he said in Mark 1:7 that he wasn’t “worthy to stoop down and untie his (Jesus’) sandals.”

Maybe it comes down to a variation of what our mothers taught us: If you can’t say something nice about God, don’t say anything at all.

After I got my fill of sourdough and cable cars that day, I entered the subway to take the last train home when I spied a woman holding a hymnal and singing “Silent Night, Holy Night.”

I paused, recalling my experience with Jose. His example inspired me to put down my train schedule and join in song. And for a moment our voices managed to flood the station with an echoing chorus that told a busy world of God’s never-ending love.

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# Rep. Ami Bera Announces \$225K Federal Award

## Office of Rep. Ami Bera News Release

**WASHINGTON, DC (MPG)** - U.S. Representative Ami Bera, M.D. (CA-06) announced on December 5, 2023, that Improve Your Tomorrow, a Sacramento-based nonprofit, has been selected to receive a federal award of \$225,900 per year. The funding, made available through AmeriCorps VISTA, will bolster college readiness for Sacramento area youth and will support 10 year-round service positions locally.

“I am thrilled to share that Improve Your Tomorrow has been chosen to receive over \$225,000 in federal funding, furthering their vital mission of empowering Sacramento young men of color to pursue and graduate from college,” said Representative Ami Bera. “AmeriCorps volunteers are among the most dedicated

and selfless contributors to our society, and I look forward to seeing the positive impact these 10 volunteers make on the Sacramento community.”

Improve Your Tomorrow is a Sacramento-based nonprofit that is working to empower and uplift young men of color throughout California by enabling them to pursue and complete their college education.

“Improve Your Tomorrow is profoundly honored to stand among the four distinguished AmeriCorps VISTA Awardees in California. This kind of unwavering support from Congressman Ami Bera and AmeriCorps California showcases a commitment to expanding service opportunities that address critical achievement gaps within our education system. Thanks to the advocacy of youth champions like Congressman Bera,

Improve Your Tomorrow will harness the transformative power of the VISTA program — a pinnacle of professional service opportunities in our state. This investment in at-promise youth will undoubtedly propel improved outcomes for the thousands of young men of color we are dedicated to serving,” said Michael Lynch, CEO & Co-Founder, Improve Your Tomorrow.

In addition to the award announced today, AmeriCorps will also provide more than \$68,950 each year in education scholarships for the AmeriCorps VISTA members supported by this award to help pay for college, vocational training, or pay back student loans.

AmeriCorps, the federal agency for service and volunteering, brings people together to tackle the country’s



Rep. Ami Bera with graduates at the Improve Your Tomorrow graduation ceremony, June 2023. Photo courtesy of Office of Rep. Ami Bera

most pressing challenges through national service and volunteering. Every year, tens of thousands AmeriCorps members serve through 21,000+ schools, nonprofits, community and faith-based organizations and state, tribal and local governments across the country. Since the program’s inception in 1994, more than 1 million Americans have served in AmeriCorps, providing more than 1.6 billion hours of service and earned more than \$4 billion in education scholarships. For those interested in joining AmeriCorps, you can learn more at AmeriCorps.gov/Join. ★

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## Nonprofit Donates Bikes to Wilton Toy Drive



The annual toy drive sponsored by the Wilton Firefighters Association has three new bikes to distribute this year. Randy Upham, who is president of Wilton Community Center Nonprofit, said his board voted to donate half of the group's proceeds from the Wilton Winter Festival to buy the bikes. In photo below, Firefighter Roderick Huerta-Moore pauses before taking the bikes inside the fire station. In photo above, a Christmas tree inside the station is surrounded with toys including the new bikes. The firefighters also collected toys at two other locations in the community. Photos courtesy of Wilton Firefighters Association



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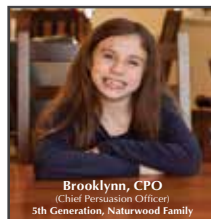
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