



**CSD In Trail Dispute  
Between RMA  
And Developers**

PAGE 6

**A Bike Theft  
Morphs into an  
Outpouring of Love**

PAGE 3



# RIVER VALLEY TIMES

40TH YEAR • ISSUE 02      *Serving Rancho Murieta, Sloughhouse, Wilton*      JANUARY 26, 2024

**SEE  
INSIDE**

**ETC ANNOUNCES  
SUMMER  
CONCERT LINEUP**



PAGE 3

**WILTON FIRE  
AWARDED GRANT  
FOR 'JAWS OF LIFE'**



PAGE 5

**RMA BOARD:  
SPEEDING TICKETS,  
APPOINTS COMMITTEES**



PAGE 4

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## New Boat Ramp and Dock

*RMA Completes New Boat Ramp and Dock at Lake Calero*



RMA employees responsible for the bulk of the work are, from left, Vincent Carrillo, Kyle Buchanan, and Mark Kitchner. Mechanic Eric Kvasager, not pictured, fabricated the metal brackets to allow the dock to be moved up and down with the water level. Photos by Gail Bullen

**By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter**

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - First suggested by the Rancho Murieta Fishing Club in February, the Rancho Murieta

Association (RMA) finished building a new boat ramp and dock at Lake Calero on Jan. 9.

The culmination came when four employees, including Maintenance Manager Troy Schaffner, ignored the cold, rainy

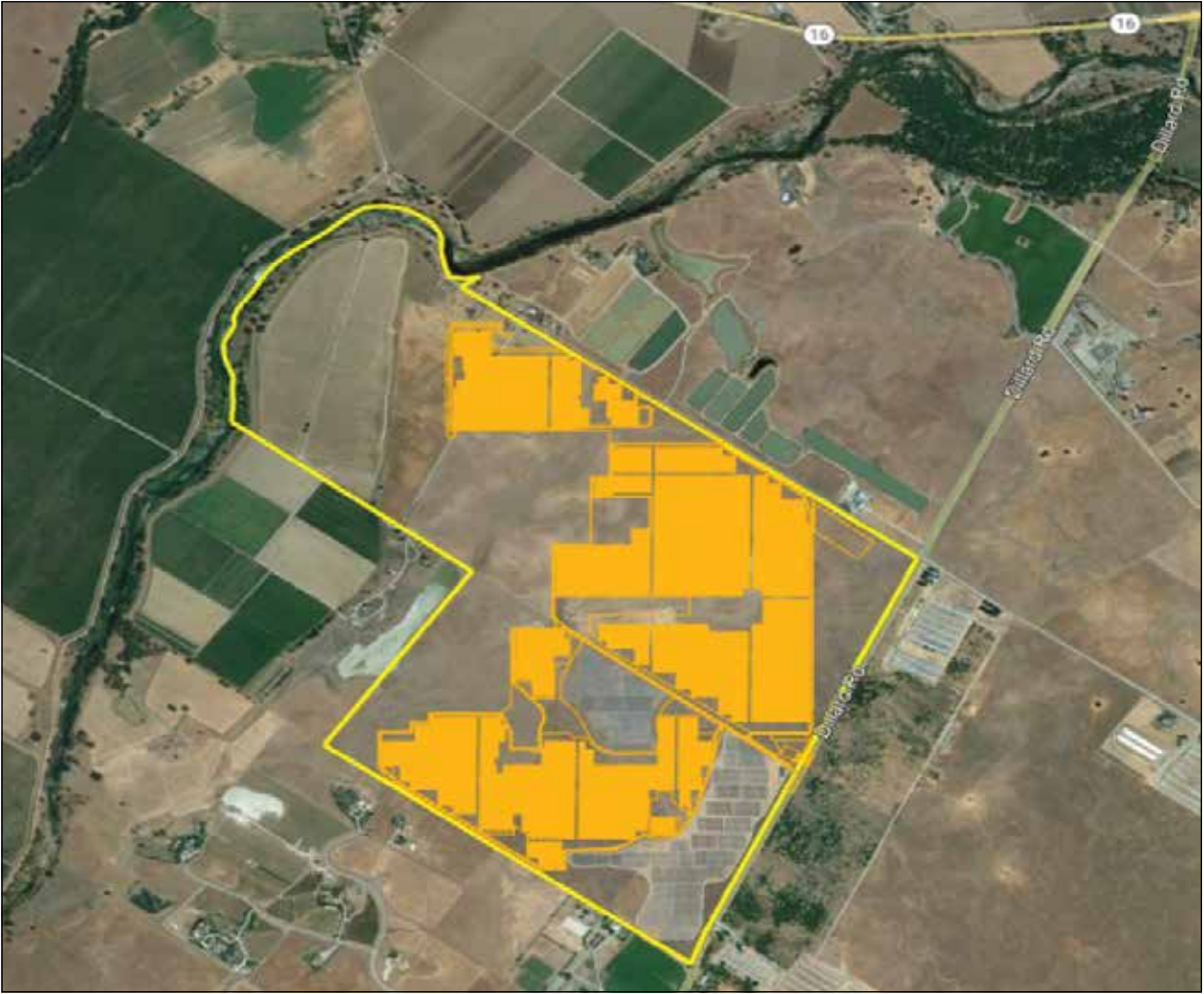
weather to launch the dock from the concrete ramp where the final assembly had taken place the previous day. The boat ramp is on the peninsula at the future Calero Lakeside Park.

Schaffner said the

main challenge was dealing with the Calero water levels, which rise and fall more significantly than in Chesbro and Clementia. He said they looked at docks at other lakes, talked

*Continued on page 2*

## Supervisors Approve Sloughhouse Solar Farm Despite Local Objections



Graphic shows the footprint of the huge Sloughhouse Solar Facility on Dillard Road. The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the application on Jan. 11. Photo courtesy Sacramento County

**By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter**

**SLOUGHHOUSE, CA (MPG)** - Despite a local recommendation to reject the application, the

Sacramento County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously on Jan. 9 to approve the huge Sloughhouse Solar Facility on Dillard Road.

Supervisor Pat Hume, who represents Wilton

and Sloughhouse, made the motion to approve the project even though he attended the Aug. 23 meeting of the Cosumnes Community Planning Advisory Council (CCPAC). That's when

the council members voted 5:1 deny the application because "placing an industrial site in rural farmland just doesn't fit" and "doesn't reflect the values of the community,"

*Continued on page 2*

## CSD Changes Allocation of Indirect Costs to Security

**By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Time  
Reporter**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)**

- Local and state governmental agencies and many companies routinely use cost allocation as part of the budgeting process, but using it with the security fund has been a bone of contention in Rancho Murieta for several years.

The Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board has voted 3:0 to change that allocation methodology and to apply it to four open fiscal budget years "to right-size" the financial records. The special meeting was held on Jan. 19.

Cost allocation is the assignment of indirect or overhead costs to one or more programs according to a formula that represents a reasonable equitable distribution. When formulating the budget each year, the CSD staff allocates the administrative costs to the water, sewer, drainage, solid waste and security funds. The five utilities are either funded with taxes or fees, although security gets additional funding.

Until this fiscal year when only \$50,000 of property taxes was allotted to security, the current and past boards have used the bulk of the property taxes to prop up security operations instead of putting the money into reserves. That's because Measure J hasn't brought in enough tax dollars to cover the cost of operations for more than a decade.

In 2020, then-General Manager Tom Hennig followed a recommendation from the Punn Group accounting firm to hire a consultant to reconsider the formula to allocate administrative costs to the enterprise funds. The result was used for the 20/21, 21/22, 22/23 and 23/24 fiscal year budgets. The formula is 37% for water, 27% for waste water, 3% for drainage, 4% for solid waste (since it is mostly a pass-through of costs from Cal Waste), and 32% for security.

During 2021 and 2022, the current board repeatedly discussed how to deal with the red ink in security operations and the need to build up the underfunded reserves. That led to the board seeking a significant rate increase for June 2022 which was shot down by patrons. The board also put Measure R on the ballot to fund security without using property taxes. It was shot down in November of 2022.

During the past discussions at those board meetings and on social media, some critics of the district, particularly Crystal Matter, said that the large administrative

*Continued on page 9*



# RMA Completes New Boat Ramp and Dock at Lake Calero



Rancho Murieta Association Maintenance Department employees launch a new boat dock at Lake Calero on Jan. 9. The RMA employees built the new concrete ramp first. Photos by Gail Bullen

*Continued from page 1*

to the bridge manufacturer (SuperDeck Systems), and found some wheels for the dock from another company.

“This was brand new to us...It was mostly standing here with a piece of paper trying to figure it out,” he said.

Thanks to their brainstorming, the dock has two brackets that connect to six metal poles that have been embedded into the concrete from the bottom to the top of the ramp. Now RMA workers can move the dock up and down depending on the water level.

Schaffner said the concrete had to be poured in sections to get the cement truck in and because RMA didn’t have enough employees to work on a big pour. Because of the topography, the ramp will be too steep for residents to launch their boats using the golf carts. He said signs will be posted to warn them.

Schaffner said the board approved a \$35,000 budget for the work, with Summerfest donating \$10,000 of that amount. The RMA funding came from exclusive use fees, which is money collected from residents for a license to use a common area. The final cost was \$34,500.

RMA employees began working on the project last summer when Rod Hart was still the maintenance manager. Schaffner took over the supervision after Hart was promoted to general manager.

Schaffner said that employees Vincent Carrillo, Kyle Buchanan, and Mark Kitchner deserved the credit for constructing the new amenity. He also praised mechanic Eric Kvasager for fabricating administrative assistant Susan Hamrick had helped them with her computer skills, particularly in finding the wheels that make the dock easier to move.

The suggestion for

the new ramp and dock came from past fishing club President Jay Soloman and current President Jim Monical. The two broached it at the February meeting of the RMA Maintenance Committee.

Both were delighted with the end result.

“It looks great and was much needed over there, Solomon said. “RMA Maintenance did a fantastic job. We are very lucky to have Rod, and now Troy. They really put a lot of thought into it.”

Monical said that Solomon had been the main champion for the new facility. The concern was Calero lack of any ramps or a dock, which made the water hard to access, especially for older residents.

“RMA has done a great job,” Monical said. “I compare it to what they have at Camanche and New Hogan. These are the bigger reservoirs that support an awful lot of boating activity and fishing.” ★

# Supervisors Approve Sloughhouse Solar Farm Despite Local Objections

*Continued from page 1*

according to the motion.

**Board discussion**

Thirteen attendees made public comments at the board meeting, with 11 supporting the facility and two neighbors objecting. Hume spoke first, saying conversations had been going on for months. He said his head was “literally swirling” because he had been talking to neighbors, the applicants and other interested parties up until he walked into the building. After he and Supervisor Rich Desmond received assurances that the applicant was still working with the two unhappy neighbors, Hume explained some of his reasoning for approving the project.

“If we are going to walk the walk relative to our own climate plans relative to the carbon neutrality goals of our energy providing partners, these types of project are highly critical,” Hume said.

On the other hand, because large swaths of agricultural and undeveloped lands lie within District 5, “I am very mindful of the fact that this is a conversion of use within an agricultural use although it is permitted,” he said.

Hume also said the applicant also had gone above and beyond what was required, which included seeking approval of an alternative (that dramatically reduces grading and restores a grassy surface.) Saying that the applicant had a vested interest in being good actor, Hume made the motion to approve the application.

Supervisor Phil Serna said he was seconding the motion because of the prior comments about the need for the project and because of the applicant’s efforts to mitigate the impacts. “I always make a distinction between half-baked application and those that are very mature,” he said.

Chairman Patrick Kennedy and Supervisor echoed the same sentiments before the unanimous vote. Frost, who represents Rancho Murieta didn’t comment.

The applicant is Sloughhouse Solar, LLC, which is a subsidiary of D.E Shaw Renewable Investments in New York. Local consulting Jim Gillum has represented the applicant in its dealings with the county and with the neighbors since it was first presented to the CCPAC in September of 2022.

The New York-based firm is also proposing the huge Coyote Creek Agrivoltaic Rancho on Scott Road at the Barton Ranch north of Rancho Murieta. It would be four times the size of the Sloughhouse facility. That application is still pending. D.E. Shaw also operates the Rancho Seco Solar Power Facility.

Sloughhouse Solar will be constructing and operating a 50-megawatt solar facility on 381 acres on property owned by the trust for the Wanless Ranch. Located at Dillard and Meiss Roads, it would produce enough power for 12,000 homes. It would be developed with solar panel arrays and ancillary facilities, energy storage facilities, an electrical substation, internal dirt

roads, and distribution lines connecting to the SMUD power grid. The connection will be at a Wilton substation that also serves the community.

The new solar facility will avoid prime agricultural lands and will be grazed with sheep to reduce the fire danger, according to the county planning report. The perimeter also will be landscaped with native plants.

The Sloughhouse Solar Facility will be constructed adjacent to the existing R.E. Dillard Road Solar Facility, which has a different owner.

**Audience comments**

Fish farmer Michael Passmore, who lives across Meiss Road from the project, was adamantly opposed to the application at prior meetings. He told the supervisors he still wasn’t excited about it being dropped into his agricultural community but still recommended it’s approval “due to maintaining a true and real legitimate agricultural component to this project.

“I think it represents a blue ribbon plan and is something that SMUD, the county and our community can hang its hat on as a model for future solar projects,” Passmore said.

Sod farm Dave Utterback said he wasn’t against the project but he believes the applicant’s mitigations aren’t enough. He said drainage caused by subtropical rainstorm would still flood his fields and has asked for a retention pond. Gillum told the supervisors they will return the topsoil above Utterback’s land so it can be reseeded “so it is largely the same kind of cover that it is there today...We are adding at 1.1 acre feet to the storage of the flood plain.”

Gillum said at a CCPAC meeting that the applicant wouldn’t build a retention pond.

Rob Grossglauser said the project would ruin the view from his home on Simpson Ranch Road. “There is zero mitigation in the plan for my property....If a continuance isn’t amenable, please change the findings to note that someone will be damaged.”

Robert Thornton, an attorney for the applicant, told the supervisors that California Court of Appeals has ruled that aesthetic view requirements of the California Environment Quality Act (CEQA) don’t apply to private views. Gillum said they were continuing to work with Grossglauser and hope to reach an agreement to place a landscaping screen on his property.

Rancher Stan Vleck spoke about the impact on agriculture. “There is actually a set aside requirement for mitigation on this project that actually stays as agriculture in perpetuity,” he said. “We are doing that in our operation for this project.”

Van Vleck owns the Van Vleck Ranch across Jackson Highway from Rancho Murieta South. He said the Sloughhouse Solar mitigation was an important piece of keeping the ranch going in perpetuity. “I’m please to say that we are 80% of the way and have already preserved over 3,500 acres,” he said. ★

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Supervisor Pat Hume, who represents Sloughhouse and Wilton, explains why he supports the project although a Wilton and Rancho Murieta planning group had recommended its rejection. Photos by Gail Bullen



Fish farmer Michael Passmore explains his change of heart about the project. He opposed it last summer.



Stan Van Vleck explains that the solar project is required to have a set aside that stays in agriculture in perpetuity. The mitigating property is on his ranch across from Rancho Murieta.



Rancho Murieta

HOMES & LAND



Rancho Murieta, a 3,500-acre country-club community, is an oasis of emerald fairways and manicured greens, built along the scenic banks of the Cosumnes River.

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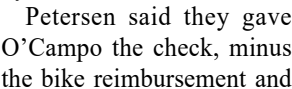
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# A Bike Theft Morphs into an Outpouring of Love

Although it would be eight days before GoFundMe

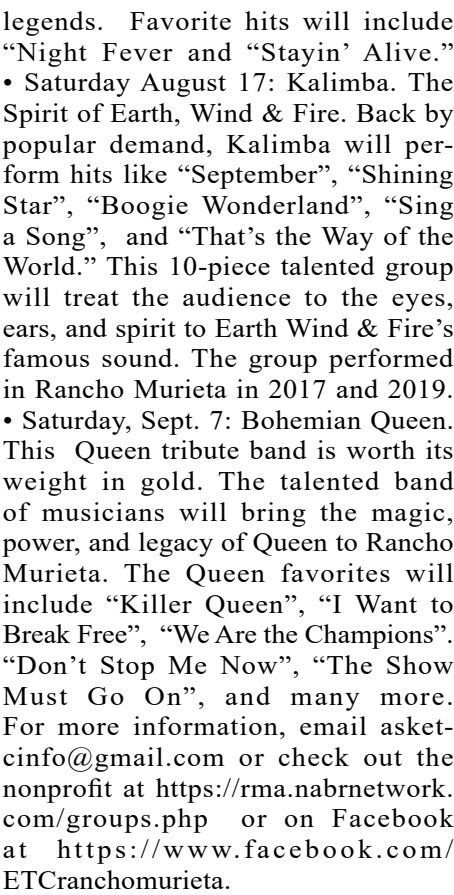


Petersen said the response from the community had been incredible. "The outpouring of love and support just shows what Rancho Murieta is," he said. "We take care of our own." ★

# ETC Announces Lineup for Summer Concert Season



• **Saturday, July 27:** Bee Gees Gold Tribute, This is the ultimate salute to the band that struck gold during the disco era. The group will recreate the look and sound of the Bee Gees, with their unique falsettos that made them



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# RMA Board Updated on Speeding Tickets, Appoints Committees

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - Appointing residents to committees ranging from architecture review to maintenance was the primary happening when the Rancho Murieta Association Board (RMA) of Directors held a brief meeting on Jan. 16. The board also dissolved or suspended two committees. General Manager Rod Hart also reported RMA Compliance would begin issuing citations to residents who are captured speeding by four Lidar cameras on Jan. 22. He also reported dashboard cameras coming soon will help document stop sign violations.

In other business, Director Chris Childs reported on the most recent meeting of the Ad Hoc Security Committee, and two audience members spoke. One of them asked the RMA to spearhead a summer activities program for kids.

During his president’s report, Scott Adams said that he would attend the Rancho Murieta Community Services District (CSD) Board the following night. He planned to discuss a developer’s proposal to construct a natural trail instead of a paved trail in the Residences East subdivision. See the separate story in this issue.

Committee appointments

As happens in the first meeting of the year, the directors appointed residents to be members of board committees ranging from architectural review to recreation. However, the chairs for two separate committees asked to deactivate their groups, and a third asked for a postponement to make his appointments.

The board approved a motion by Director Danny Carrillo to put the Community Advisory Committee in suspension “to make more efficient use of staff time. President Scott Adams said he thought it was a

good move since a charter for that committee has yet to be approved. Carrillo said the group could be reactivated on an as needed basis. The Board appointed that committee after a group of residents complained about racial harassment in July of 2022.

Adams also received board approval to deactivate the Recreation and Aquatic Center Committee. He said the committee had worked about a year and a half to find a location for a community center and for eventual member approval. After determining the best location was on country club property, they entered a discussion with one of the property owners (the late John Sullivan) and had it appraised. Then the country club began discussions about the possibility of bankruptcy and an eventual sale. “If there comes a time when it is appropriate to reactivate the committee, then we’ll certainly do that,” Adams said. “But don’t anticipate that happening for a while.”

In other committee reports, Director John Van Doren, who chairs the Finance Committee, received approval to delay his appointments until February. The River Valley Times asked for a list of the new appointees to the eight other committees but hadn’t received one as of the deadline for this story.

Speeding citations

During his general manager’s report, Hart said Compliance would begin issuing citations for speeding violations captured by four Lidar cameras on Jan. 22. He said the need for the cameras became evident during the 90-day grace period in which residents caught speeding were only issued warnings.

During that time, the cameras captured 550 residents and their guests speeding between 35 to 60 mph. Another 1,500 violations involved vendors. Hart said Amazon was the worst with 135

violations. He is reaching out to Amazon and other vendors to seek compliance.

“Fortunately, with these cameras, we have beautiful pictures and license plates so they will be difficult to deny,” he said.

Hart said some residents also have asked him to set up the cameras in front of their homes. “It’s quite evident they are needed for the safety of the community,” he said.

Running stop signs also is a problem and new dashboard cameras will provide documentation, according to Hart. RMA has ordered two cameras for the compliance vehicles. CSD also had planned to buy a third camera for a security vehicle but decided against it last month for security budgetary reasons.

Hart told the board he ordered a third camera at a cost of \$4,500 for a CSD security vehicle using his own line of discretionary spending. The data from all three cameras will go into an RMA server and would be utilized for appeals and evaluations.

Hart said that recordings from the dashboard cameras will also provide documentation of citizen contacts “so you guys will have an idea of what some of our compliance guys go through.” He said the same system also will handle body camera recordings.

Security Committee

Director Chris Childs chairs the Ad Hoc Security Committee, which was asked to research options for privatizing security behind the gates given the budgetary issues facing CSD. Although the gates currently operate 24/7, that isn’t true for patrol because the Measure J tax money isn’t sufficient to pay for full operations.

Childs reported that committee member Greg Mason reached out to several security companies and also asked other homeowners associations



The Rancho Murieta Association (RMA) directors are shown after presiding over the first board meeting of the year on Jan. 16. From left, are Tom Reimers, Danny Carrillo, Renee Bechthold, Chris Childs, Scott Adams, and Patrick O’Hearn. Photos by Gail Bullen

(HOAs) how they handled security and made his report at the Jan. 11 meeting. “He came back with a pretty interesting report about what security measures exist in other places and what our committee sees as pretty unique security challenges in Rancho Murieta,” he said.

Hart also will research what other HOAs are doing for security through two industry associations, Childs told the board.

Childs said the most robust discussion at the Jan. 11 meeting had to do with where the committee should go at that point. “We have gone a long way in terms of research, but we have yet to have any type of direction in terms of what CSD is going to do with security,” he said.

Childs said after CSD Director Linda Butler arrived late at the meeting, they peppered her with questions. “Her response was pretty clear that there isn’t going to be much direction until CSD completes its audits so they know exactly what funding sources they can use for security,” he said.

Childs also told the board he had also attended a special CSD Board meeting about security on Jan. 12 and learned that the CSD Board is considering a recommendation to reduce the amount of overhead allotted to the CSD security budget. See a separate story for more



Audience member Melinda Martel asks that RMA initiate an activity schedule for kids in the summer.

details.

Another topic at the meeting was whether security officers should be armed. Their opinions went both ways, according to Childs.

Audience comments

Audience member Melinda Martel told the board she was making three recommendations. She said the big one was the development of some kind of summer activity program for kids. Although she understands that RMA doesn’t have the staff for a recreational program she asked the association could provide some coordination. She suggested that civic groups and volunteers could sponsor activities such as a bike rodeo, a knitting class, a game day, a gardening project, and chalk sidewalk art.

“There are a lot of kids out here, and there are a lot of things we could do with them,” Martell said. “I think the more

active we keep the kids, the less trouble they will get into.”

Martell also asked the board to put up a shade structure for spectators at the spray park in the south “because is blazing hot sitting on the bench.” She also suggested holding a Halloween decorating contest. “I don’t have any ideas about how to do it, so I am throwing it out for you guys to talk about,” she said.

Another audience member, Marilyn Haugen, complained about two street lights being out and causing safety issues. One on Alameda Drive belongs to the country club. It wasn’t clear whether a second one at Murieta Parkway and De La Cruz Drive belonged to RMA or SMUD. Hart said he would check it out.

The board will hold its next meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 20. ★







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# Wilton Fire Awarded Grant for ‘Jaws of Life’

The Wilton Fire Protection District is the recipient of a \$20,000 grant to purchase new extrication equipment, according to a news release from the California Office of Traffic Safety. Known at the "Jaws of Life," first responders use these specialized tools to safely rescue victims trapped inside a vehicle. "The new equipment will help reduce the time it takes for us to safely reach someone who needs immediate medication," said Wilton fire Captain Gino Buranzon. "The OTS grant funding will give us the opportunity to purchase modern rescue

tools and provide training to the first responders that is critical for the care of those injured in crashes." Delays in providing care to crash victims impacts the "golden hour" of survival, a care principle in the emergency medical services industry. Reducing the time it takes to get to the patient, treat what can be treated, and transport the patient to the hospital helps improve the chance for recovery. Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. ★

# 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](http://www.rmcsd.com). A quick link to the security logs is on the home page.

RP = Reporting Person  
GOA = Gone on Arrival  
UTL = Unable to Locate  
BOLO = Be on Look Out  
NFI = No Further Information  
QOA = Quiet on Arrival  
HBD = Had Been Drinking

## Rancho Murieta

**Jan. 8 - Jan. 12**

- Log not generated./ No report about the log

**Jan. 13**

- Extra patrol, 8:07 p.m. commercial area, no signs of suspicious activities.

**Jan. 14 - Jan. 15**

- No report about the log.

**Jan. 16**

- Stop sign enforcement, 8:36 a.m. Murieta South, two citations.
- Vandalism, 10:54 a.m. Clementia Park restroom, empty toilets plugged with toilet paper causing an overflow of non-contaminated water heading

## Wilton Fire

**Jan. 8 - Jan. 12**

- Five medical aids between Jan. 9 and 14.

**Jan. 9**

- Public assistance, 10:52 p.m., 12801 Yearling Court.

**Jan. 11**

- Accident, 9:42 p.m. 11260 Dillard Road.

**Jan. 12**

- Outbuilding fire, 3:38 p.m. 12751 Rimfire Drive.

## Sacramento County Sheriff's Office

- No incidents reported. ★

# CSD Committee Okays Electrofishing Survey at Clementia

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times Reporter

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - Rancho Murieta will soon have new information about the condition of the Lake Clementia fish population thanks to an upcoming electrofishing survey.

After hearing a presentation about the sampling method that uses a mild electrical shock to temporarily stun the fish so they can be assessed, the Rancho Murieta Community Services District (CSD) Improvements Committee gave their permission at their Jan. 9 meeting.

"I personally think it is a win-win," said Director Marty Pohl. "I have no objection to it."

"I'm totally in favor," Director Randy Jenco added.

The survey will take place on Feb. 26.

The Improvements Committee is comprised of two directors, Pohl and Jenco, Operations Director Michael Fritschi, all three engineers, General Manager Mimi Morris and other CSD staff. The committee looks at infrastructure issues in depth and makes recommendations to the entire board.

Jim Monical, who is the fishing club president, brought two California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) biologists to the meeting. Ben Ewing explained how the survey would work. Max Fish said he was exploring whether a Rancho Murieta lake would be suitable for the Sacramento Perch, the only native sunfish in California.

Ewing said his department uses electrofishing surveys throughout the state to assess fisheries. "When it done correctly, there is like a 99% survival rate for the fish," he said.

CDFW biologists will use a specialized boat to apply a mild electrical current to the water. This will temporarily stun the fish in the vicinity. After the fish float to the surface, they will be placed in live well on the boat so the biologists can collect and tag

California Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists Ben Ewing, left, and Max Fish pose next to a boat that will be used for an electrofishing survey of Lake Clementia fish in February. They spoke at the Jan. 9 meeting of the CSD improvements Committee. Photo by Gail Bullen

Biologists are exploring whether a Rancho Murieta lake could be a new home for Sacramento Perch, the only native sunfish in California. Photo by Dave (Gio) Giordano

them before throwing them back into the water.

Ewing said the end result will be a 10 to 12 page report that will provide a percentage for each species in the lake, the average length and age range. "The big one is the length to weight ratio because that gives you an idea of how the fish are doing," he said. "Are the fish real skinny and emaciated or real fat and chunky?"

Asked about the number of fish that would be shocked, Erwin said he couldn't say because he didn't know the particulars about Lake Clementia. He said the survey would take several hours and would utilize an electrical motor supplied by the fish club member. Neither the district or fishing club be charged for the survey.

Fritschi asked Monical how the survey would benefit the fishing club. "It's not just the fishing club," Monical told him. "It is all Rancho Murieta residents who fish in the lake."

The committee also took in a brief presentation from Fish, who is a specialist in native fish conservation and management. He came to the meeting with Ewing in hopes that Rancho Murieta might

have "some interesting opportunities" to plant Sacramento Perch. Related to bass and sunfish, the only native California sunfish "have been extinct from their native waters for quite a while, but still exist in locations where they have been moved."

Describing them as "a pretty fun fish to catch," Fish said they are adapted to harsh environmental conditions such as drought, high salinity, high alkalinity and low oxygen levels. But the introduction on non-native sunfish (such as blue gills) pushed them out of their native waters.

"We are just looking for opportunities to expand their range, and potentially provide recreational fisheries where possible," Fish said.

Pohl and Jenco both asked if the Perch would compete with other fish and take over the reservoirs.

Fish told them it was pretty much the opposite. "They have trouble competing, especially with green sunfish, bluegills and croppie," he said.

When contacted after the meeting, Monical said he was hopeful that front lake might prove to be a good option for the Sacramento Perch. ★

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# COMMUNITY BRIEFS

**CSD office now open Friday morning**

As of January, the Rancho Murieta Community Services District (CSD) has changed its office hours. Previously, the office was closed every Friday. Now it is open on Friday from 8 a.m. until noon. The hours on Monday through Thursday are from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

**Student enrollment under way at CRES**

Cosumnes River Elementary School (CRES) is enrolling students for the next school year. Come to the school office to pick up a packet during office hours between 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Completed registration packets are due by 3:30 p.m. on Feb. 21. The eligibility for transitional kindergarten age is 5 years old between Sept. 2, 2024 and June 2, 2025. The eligibility for kindergarten is 5 years old before or on Sept. 1, 2024.

**Talent show for kids slated in Wilton Feb. 23**

The Cosumnes Parks and Recreation Council is seeking entries for a talent show that will be held at the Wilton Community Center on Feb. 23 at 6 p.m. at the Wilton Community Center. Kids from kindergarten through six grade will be showing off their talent. Email [wilton@saccounty.gov](mailto:wilton@saccounty.gov) for an application. The

entry deadline is Jan. 30. All entries must be in good taste and meet a 4-minute time limit. Lip syncing not allowed. Groups and individual acts are welcome and can include anything from juggling, playing an instrument, dancing, or performing a skit.

**Rancho Murieta Voices choral group seeking volunteers**

Rancho Murieta Voices choral group is in need of volunteers to fill two key positions in their 35 year old non-profit group. We are looking to fill the positions of Chior Master/ Director and Pianist . We practice Thursday afternoons at St. Vincent de Paul Church from 2pm to 3:30pm. We perform 14 times a year at Assisted Living Homes in the local area. Please call Joanne Lehman, President, on 707-326-6885 if you are interested in getting more information.

**Kiwanis slates Easter Egg Hunt Fishing Day**

The Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta is excited to announce dates for two upcoming spring legacy projects. Our annual Easter Egg Hunt and Family Picnic Day is scheduled for Saturday, March 30 at Stonehouse Park. This perennial family favorite event is free for Rancho Murieta families. Cookie

decorating, crafts and petting zoo are offered for a family friendly fee. The following Saturday morning, April 6, is Kids' Fishing Day at Lake Clementia. Kids' Fishing Day is a fun morning for kids to learn the art of fishing. The lake area near the beach is netted and stocked with hundreds of pounds of planted fish. More details to follow regarding both events. For up to date information, please like our Facebook page "Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta" and check our website, at [www.rmkiwanis.org](http://www.rmkiwanis.org). Our Kiwanis Club loves hosting these events for our community.

**Mardi Gras Celebration Feb. 9**

Please join us for a Mardi Gras celebration on Friday February 9, 2024 at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in our social hall at 14673 Cantova Way from 5:30 to 9:30 pm. Enjoy a meal of jambalaya/rice, ribs, sausage, salad and dessert. There will be music for dancing and a raffle. Tickets are \$30 per person and can be purchased at St. Vincent de Paul church before and after Saturday 5:00 pm Mass and before and after Sunday 9:00 am Mass. Or call Karen Mauro at 916 608-1647. Gather your family and friends, and wear your Mardi Gras attire for a fun filled evening. ★



# CSD Embroiled In Trail Surface Dispute Between RMA And Developers



The photo shows an example of a natural trail being proposed in the Residences East subdivision that would connect Puerto Drive to Stonehouse Park. It is opposed by the Rancho Murieta Association (RMA), which won support for an asphalt trail at the Jan. 17 meeting of the Rancho Community Services District Association (CSD) Board. Courtesy photo

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

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Although the Rancho Murieta Community Services District (CSD) has no jurisdiction over the community’s parks, it still became involved in a dispute between developers and the Rancho Murieta Association (RMA). It played out at a CSD board meeting on Jan. 17.

The clash centered on a one-mile trail that would connect Puerto Drive to Stonehouse Park inside the Residences East and West subdivision where grading is expected to begin this year. Developer Bob Keil and his partners are proposing a natural surface trail. The Rancho Murieta Association is insisting on the construction of a Class I asphalt trail that would be 12 feet wide with 2-feet shoulders. It would be far more costly than an unpaved trail.

After both sides laid out their arguments, the CSD Board voted 4:1 to side with RMA.

The CSD involvement stemmed from the formation of a five-member Parks Committee to make decisions about developing parks more than 30 years ago. The RMA has two representatives, the development community has two, and CSD has one – Director Linda Butler.

Scott Adams, the RMA board president, said he and other directors met with Keil five times over the past six months to discuss the trail without making any progress. Keil then requested a meeting of the Parks Committee for approval of his trail so he wouldn’t have to go back to the county.

In asking that the matter be placed on the CSD Board agenda, Adams said that the two RMA representatives had been directed to vote for the paved trail while the two developer representatives would be voting for a non-paved trail. That made CSD the tiebreaker.

“The RMA Board respectfully asks that (1) you direct your Parks representative to reject Mr. Keil’s unilateral request for a Parks meeting and (2) if a Parks Committee meeting is held, you direct your parks representative to oppose any motion that deviates from the Parks prior approved Class I trail design,” his letter said.

Shortly after the discussion began, Director Stephen Booth made a motion to hold the meeting but to direct Butler to vote against the natural trail. But he didn’t get a second. Towards the end of the discussion, Director Martin Pohl made the motion to reject the meeting, which passed 4:1. Butler was the no vote.

**Developer argument**  
Keil said the Residences project went through an environmental impact report (EIR) process before the county approval in 2007. “What was approved by



Developer Bob Keil spreads his arms to give an idea of the trail width. He said the RMA-preferred trail would mean felling many trees.



RMA President Scott Adams says a paved trail for the subdivision was approved 20 years ago and is needed to deal with increasing traffic.

the county was a six-foot-wide DG (decomposed gravel) path,” he said. After Keil showed it to the Murieta Trail Stewardship, they warned him the path would be slippery and wash out frequently. The group referred him to a trail architect and a trail builder. He then approached RMA for approval of a change from DG to a natural trail surface.

Keil said that RMA rejected his plan saying a Class I trail design was required. Keil said an asphalt trail wasn’t approved until 2013 or 2018. Sacramento County also has told him that asphalt path isn’t currently permitted and would require another EIR.

Keil said building a Type I paved trail would require extensive grading and the removal of many trees. “No one seems to be talking about the devastation to the area,” he said.

**RMA argument**

Adams said the Parks Committee unanimously adopted the county trail specifications and approved a trail system with Class I trails in 2003. One of the developers voting for it was Bob Cassano who then owned the Residences East. Adams said they met with Keil five times and were willing to discuss a non-paved trail as long it satisfied the characteristics expected by RMA and the residents. That included the accommodation of everything from golf carts to wheelchairs, space for two-way traffic and the accommodation of heavy traffic year round.

Adams said that Keil hasn’t submitted site specific information and his most recent proposal looked like a bike path.

Adams said after the trail is built, RMA be responsible for maintaining it. He expects it to be heavily used because it would give residents the option of avoiding the substantial traffic on Puerto and Guadalupe Drives to get to Stonehouse, which is the busiest park in the community.

**Butler’s comments**

Butler began her remarks by saying her direction would have to come from the entire board. However, having visited the site with Keil she had her own thoughts.

“I don’t see how you can expect that one-mile trail to take care of our traffic problems,” she said.

She also referred to problems with speeding golf carts on the paved path (that isn’t a Class I) connecting the north and south. “I think it would be nice if something was done in this community that was not directed at golf carts,” she said. “This just seems to me like they are asking for trouble.”

**Other director comments**

Booth said the new houses being built will increase traffic, and he likes the idea of diverting substantial golf cart traffic off the main roads.

Booth also said he had talked to John Merchant earlier in the day, Merchant is a former CSD and Vice-President of SOLOS. “Even though he is the champion of natural trails, he favors the paved pathway for the same reasons that I described,” Booth said.

Pohl said the trail needs to be safe. The Class I design would provide safety and would be easier to maintain. He also noted that the trail standard had already been set, “I’m not in favor of changing the standard,” Pohl said.

Director Randy Jenco said that since RMA would end up owning the path and maintaining it. “I don’t know why we would do anything other than what they want as far as the path,” he said.

President Tim Maybee told Pohl he liked his motion not to hold a Parks Committee meeting “because that pushes everybody back to the negotiation table.”

Pohl, Jenco, and Maybee are all previous members of the RMA Board of Directors.

# CSD Board Updated on Audit, Rates, Sewer Clog, Fish Ladder Fix

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

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)**

- Because of a light agenda, the Rancho Murieta Community Services District directors spent most of their time at their Jan. 17 board meeting taking in staff reports that varied from an updated audit report to a clogged sewer lift on Christmas Eve.

Other highlights from the staff reports included a projection for a rate increase next year, the disposition of a juvenile who injured others with a firework on July 4, a fish ladder fix, a new communication strategy, and the allocation of overhead costs.

The only agenda item discussed in length had to do with a proposed trail in the Residences East subdivision. See the separate story in this issue.

Here are some highlights from the staff reports and other agenda items.

**General Manager**

- General Manager Mimi Morris reported the many problems with the 20/21 fiscal year financial records had been resolved and submitted to the auditor. She hopes the audit report will be ready for the February meeting. “It has taken almost 18 months to get the bookkeeping in order,” she said.
- The staff has begun preparing the district’s 2024/25 budget. “It is likely that staff will propose a 10 to 15% increase in rates to ensure all costs are covered for the coming year, Morris said.

- Staff has been evaluating the past method used to assign overhead costs to water, sewer, drainage, solid waste and, in particular, to security. See a separate story in this issue about security overhead costs.
- Morris showed the board the Community Communication Tracker form that staff has been using since December to track questions brought up at meetings or as direct inquiries. She said district responses will be published on the CSD website for full transparency. Morris also has implemented a tracker for Public Records Act requests.

- The district is updating the reception area at the CSD Building to improve the workspace for employees and to make the counter ADA accessible.
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported that the fish ladder at Granlee’s Dam was blocked so fish couldn’t get through. Operations Supervisor Travis Bohannon and three other employees worked for half a day to remove the debris that including a log and a chair. Morris said the federal agency was pleased.

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**Finance**

- Mark Matulich, director of finance and administration, reported that a financial report to date showed excess revenue of \$1.17 million over expenditures, but he said it had to be taken with a grain of because it isn’t all discretionary money.



The photo shows a pile of rags pulled out of the North Sewer Lift Station next to the fire station on Christmas Eve. The five employees who responded to the emergency were praised at the Jan. 17 meeting Rancho Murieta Community Services District (CSD) Board. Photos courtesy of CSD



The photo shows a hole in Granlees Dam at the top of the fish ladder that had been blocked by a chair and a hefty branch. The National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration asked CSD to clear the blockage so fish could get through.

- Matulich was more certain about the management of costs that have led to an 8% decrease in expenditures than had been budgeted. “Savings like this are important to the success of the district and will help offset the current year’s budget deficit of \$283,000,” Matulich said.
- He also reported on balancing reserves for the 20/21 fiscal year. The Improvements Committee approved his request to transfer money from reserves to eliminate a deficit in the water fund in 20/21.

**Security**

- Security Supervisor Kelly Benitez reported that 38 out of 93 patrol shifts weren’t covered in December. That’s because CSD has three patrol vacancies that aren’t being filled.
- A Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District captain advised him that the juvenile who injured others with a firework on July 4 has been referred to their fire youth program instead of to the district attorney.

- The Sacramento County Sheriff’s Office has advised that RMA will soon have a VIP (Volunteer in Partnership with the Sheriff) working in Rancho Murieta at the service center after a 2 1/2-year lapse. The new VIP is already a sheriff’s chaplain.
- Benitez already has been working with RMA, a sheriff’s POP officer, and probation in hopes of minimizing problems next summer such as underage teens gathering at the South and North Beaches.
- Benitez said he resolved a complaint about racial descriptions being used in the log. He said he will edit out references to sex and ethnicity unless it is needed for a suspect description.

- Benitez reported two incidents of note. One concerned a woman suffering from an overdose outside the AT&T building, and the other was the theft of a leaf blower in Murieta Village.
- RMA has “gifted” CSD

Security with a dashboard camera that will help officers document speed sign violations and encounters with residents.

**Utilities**

- Plant Supervisor Travis Bohannon and four other employees and a vendor responded to an emergency at the North Sewer Lift Station next to the fire station on Christmas Eve. The comminutor that chews up rags had failed and the second one was on its last legs. The rags included flushable wipes, tampons, and condoms that residents have flushed down their toilets. The vendor also sucked out two to three inches of grease from the dry well. Bohannon said a new comminutor had been delivered that day, and the purchase of a second one has been approved.
- A hit-and-run pickup driver hit an air flow valve cover in the Tractor Supply lot on Dec. 19, causing a 4,000-gallon water leak. Although the license plate and other information were furnished to CHP, Bohannon didn’t know the outcome.


- As of the meeting, Clementia Reservoir was 100% full, Chesbro, 75%, and Calero 77% because of diversions from the Cosumnes River.
- During annual lead and copper testing of the water, a sample at one home came in too high but a repeat test showed acceptable levels.

- The board also approved a staff recommendation to change the custodian agency for a benefit fund for past employees to save more than \$10,000 a year.

- The board will hold its next regular meeting at 5 p.m. on Feb. 21.

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# CSD Changes Allocation of Indirect Costs to Security

*Continued from page 1*

allocation to security was a major reason the fund was in the hole. She said the district shouldn't allocate any administrative costs to security.

A couple of years later at the Dec. 20 CSD Board meeting, Director Stephen Booth, who had only been on the board for 14 months, questioned the security budget. He said the administrative allocation this year to security was \$637,227, which represents a hit of 38.9% to the operational budget.

General Manager Mimi Morris told Booth she was in "complete agreement" and said the distribution of administrative costs must be recalibrated according to the level of administrative effort that is being utilized. "We are kind of baffled how it landed on security at that heavy level," she said.

After Booth said he wanted the issue placed the agenda for an upcoming board meeting, Morris directed Mark Matulich, who is the CSD director of administration and

finance and a CPA, to come up with an alternative methodology for administrative costs. His recalibration of the methodology was discussed at three board meetings and one Finance Committee meeting, all in January.

Matulich didn't find much documentation on what the consultant used in 2020 to allocate overhead, but it appears she based it on the number of FTE (full-time equivalent) employees in each department, which is common. He considered other cost drivers such as the overall complexity of a fund's operation and the corresponding demands, it's physical plant and equipment, and the operating budget in addition to the number of positions.

He came up with 52% for water, 27% for sewer, 3% for drainage, 4% for solid waste, and 14% for security. He also explained what it would mean in dollars this fiscal year, although it was a ballpark estimate since the three prior budgets haven't been closed and audited. Applied

to security in the 23/24 budget, the new methodology would drop the allocation from \$637,227 to \$280,540, which would leave it in the black at \$53,296.

However, the water fund allocation would increase from \$745,435 to \$1,042,000. As a result, the fund would now be in the red \$824,911 instead of \$528,348, according to his rough estimate.

Whether to use the revamped allocation methodology was discussed at the Jan. 17 board meeting. Morris recommended that it be applied to the current and three past budgets that are all still open even though the 20/21 budget had just been sent the auditor. Since the attorney said it would take board action to make a budget change, a special board meeting was convened on Jan. 19 with Morris, Matulich, and Directors Booth, Randy Jenco and President Tim Maybee attending. Directors Linda Butler and Martin Pohl weren't present.

Booth said he favored making an adjustment to the current budget but didn't know if there was any value for the past budgets since it was essentially a paper change. "I'd rather just start fresh this fiscal year, get it right, and do so moving forward, unless you can convince me there is some other tangible results," he said.

Morris responded to his point. "I think one thing for me that is the integrity of the financials," she said. "From my perspective, it's actually cleaning up the financials so the costs are appropriately aligned with the different units," she said. "Then you have the information you can really share with everyone and have your credibility bolstered."

Jenco said he was concerned about what going backward to make changes would do, especially for the water fund.

Morris told him that a rough calculation she made for the CSD Finance Committee showed that if

a \$360,000 administrative allocation was moved from security to water "We would have to charge \$12 per month per house and expenses... Then we would have to add for reserves."

Booth said they could make addressing the administrative allocation in prior years a zero-sum game. "But if we apply this reallocation, it puts on a kind of right-sizing," he said. "Then if we apply it to this year, then we are not going to have enough money in our sewer, drainage and water rates in the budget."

Jenco said that no matter what, people are going to pay more.

Booth told him that was inevitable. "But I think we are potentially placing ourselves in a position you weren't in when Measure R and the rate increase were turned down," he said. "Once we have a couple audits completed, and we have taken a look at whether we are properly distributing our overhead, we will have a better idea of what our true costs all for all of our services.

"We will be in a better position when we seek additional money for rates and can justify it based on verifiable numbers that we just didn't have two years ago," Booth concluded.

Morris also said that she is bringing the administration fund costs down, which will also affect the future allocation of its costs.

After further discussion in which Jenco favored applying the revised administrative allocation change to all years to create a truer picture, he made the motion to that effect. The vote to approve was 3:0.

As a side note during the discussion, Jenco asked Morris if the security fund being in the black under the new allocation methodology could mean another security position. Morris told him no because the security resources that come from Measure J, even without any administrative cost allocation, barely fully cover the cost of the current staffing levels. ★

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## GOLF SCORES

Submitted by Nancy  
Clevenger

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)**  
- The Rancho Murieta Country Club Niners Women's Golf Group recently held their monthly meeting in the Terrace Lounge at the Country Club. This breakfast meeting was the first of the new season, led by Captain Pamela O'Hern. The captain gavel was passed from the 2023 captain, Chris Pasek, to 2024 Captain Pamela O'Hern.

During this meeting, Captain O'Hern made several announcements. Announcements for achievements in 2023 were made, including the 2023 Most Improved Golfer. To qualify for Most Improved, the player must play 10 18-hole games and be an active participant with the Niners. This year's winner played 51 rounds, improving her handicap from 35.3 in January 2023 to 25.0 in December 2023. That's an improvement factor of 1.278. That

player was Alison Gomez. Gomez earned a cash award and a lovely plaque.

The Charm and Putt winner for 2023 was Therese Yannuzzi. Therese competed in the finals of Charm and Putt in November. This competition included all players who won Charm and Putt each month. Charm and Putt players play for the lowest score each month and the fewest putts during that same monthly play. Results were just announced that Yannuzzi scored a net 34 and putted it in 15 times.

The Niners Women's Golf Group is a casually competitive group of ladies who are members of Rancho Murieta Country Club. This group meets for nine holes of golf every Thursday, with a tournament the second Thursday of the month. Additional Fun Tournaments are held at various times during the month, with prizes going to the winners. For more information, contact Pamela O'Hern, plohern@sbcglobal.net or 209-598-1160.



Therese Yannuzzi Photos courtesy of Niners Women's Golf Club



Alison Gomez



2024 Captain Pamela O'Hern and 2023 Captain Chris Pasek

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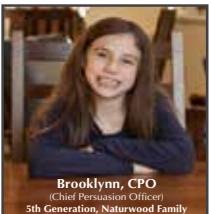
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