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RIVER VALLEY TIMES

40TH YEAR • ISSUE 03 *Serving Rancho Murieta, Sloughouse, Wilton* FEBRUARY 9, 2024

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All Eyes on the Bottom Line

Mark Matulich Brings Extensive Experience to CSD Finance Post



Mark Matulich brings 24 years of experience as an accountant and as an FBI investigator to his new position as Director of Finance and Administration of the Rancho Murieta Community Services District (CSD). Photo by Gail Bullen

**By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter**

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Mark Matulich brings 24 years of experience as an accountant and as an FBI investigator to his new position of Director of Finance and Administration at the Rancho Murieta Community Services District (CSD). He

came on board Oct. 30. After graduating from college, Matulich worked as an auditor and a controller for 11 years in Sacramento, as a white-collar fraud investigator for the FBI for 12 years, mostly in San Francisco, and as an accountant for the past two years, initially as the chief financial officer for a health care company in the Bay Area and more recently

in his new CSD position. "I've always loved my career in accounting," Matulich said. "Even in the bureau, I worked hard to get assigned to a white-collar crime squad so I could leverage my background in accounting and finance." To Matulich, there is always an answer with accounting. "It might take a while to dig in, to move

numbers around, and to figure things out," he said. "But there is always an answer." Matulich grew up in Sacramento, attended McLatchy High School for two years, graduated from high school in Auburn, but returned to Sacramento to attend college. He worked Raley's for seven years while in high school and college. *Continued on page 8*



Security Chief Kelly Benitez explains patrol coverage issues at a special meeting of the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board on Jan. 19. Photo by Gail Bullen

CSD Security Supervisor Explains Coverage Issues

**By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter**

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Security was a topic at four different Rancho Murieta Community Services District (CSD) meetings in January, but Security Chief Kelly Benitez issued a warning about gate coverage at the Jan. 9 special board meeting.

Benitez told the board that even though the front gates were still operating 24/7, the pain of not having enough patrol officers was showing.

(Because of the lack of sufficient Measure J tax funding, CSD only employs three patrol officers. That compares to the past when five to six positions were funded because property taxes were used to make up the shortfall in the security budget. A 2023 Grand Jury finding criticized the district for using property taxes to shore up the security budget, saying it had jeopardized the financial stability of the district.)

Benitez explained that when a gate officer had an emergency in the past, a patrol officer would fill in. However, with security down to three patrol officers, with all out sick as of the Jan. 9 meeting, "The only person you have to come in for backup to is me," he said. "These gates could be left open an hour or two hours until I get here (from town), and we keep coming close to that happening."

When writing this story, the River Valley Times asked Benitez via email how many patrol shifts weren't covered in January. He said only 28 were uncovered, which was a vast improvement

Continued on page 2

Nicole Sullins is Remembered For Enriching the Lives of RM Women



The late Nicole Sullins, a consummate historian, poses with a picture board she assembled for the Rancho Murieta Women's Club in 2018. The club presented a celebration of her life. Photos by Gail Bullen

**By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter**

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Longtime Rancho Murieta resident Nicole Sullins always found family in her friends.

That manifested at a celebration of her life that was presented by the Rancho Murieta Women's Club on Jan. 13 at the Rancho Murieta Country Club. Not only did Sullins become part of the glue that has kept the women's

club going for 32 years, but she also co-founded the River Valley Garden Club in 2003, which is still going strong. Sullins died on Oct. 26 after being hospitalized following a head injury suffered at her home. She

was 75. Lisa Teague, the primary event organizer, emceed a short program in which members from both clubs described her impact. Other friends, including one from high school, were also present. *Continued on page 4*

Garden Club Awards \$500 Grants to Four RM Organizations



Vice-President Nancy Compton presents a community grant award for \$500 to Save Our Lakes & Open Spaces (SOLOS) at the Jan. 23 meeting of the River Valley Garden Club. SOLOS Board members Linda Butler, left, and Cheryl McElhany are delighted with the new money. Photos by Gail Bullen

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Benefitting local Scouts, mountain bike riders and fishermen, the River Valley Garden Club presented four community grant awards to local organizations at the Jan. 23 meeting.

The recipients of the \$500 checks were Save Our Lakes & Open Spaces (SOLOS), Scout Troop 633, the Rancho Murieta Fishing Club, and the Murieta Trail Stewardship.

Another meeting highlight was a presentation by Master Gardiner Roxie Jones, who explained how members could create a wildlife habitat in their own backyards. See the separate story in this issue.

In other business, the members were introduced to a new fertilizer made from rocks, were updated about upcoming field trips and workshops, and approved a change to the club bylaws.

Awards Vice-President Nancy Compton presented the community grant awards. She said the club gives them out annually “to local groups that help enrich and enhance our community.”

The money comes from fundraisers held throughout the year mostly comprised of plant sales in the warmer months. The club also funds scholarships for horticultural students at local colleges.

Compton said the first recipient was

SOLOS. “This group is very involved in water and air and preserving our natural environment,” she said.

In thanking her for the check, SOLOS Board Member Linda Butler said money would go towards several needs. “But the most important one is that we need to get more residents involved in paying attention to the Integrated Water Master Plan that CSD is working on right now,” she said.

SOLOS Board President Cheryl McElhany added that now was a good time to grow the group’s membership, which already stands at 1300 residents. She said they must prepare for a proposed development (Rancho North with 697 lots) that could create issues with traffic and water.

Compton was visibly excited about handing a \$500 check to the three representatives of Scout Troop 633. “I don’t care what goes on in this community, they are always there to help,” she said.

A case in point was their assistance with the club’s garden tour last summer. They helped set up the tables and the tents and delivered the flowers. Another was the Scout participation in a recent work party to revive a neglected student garden at Cosumnes River Elementary School.

As soon as President Jim Monical stepped forward to accept a check for the fishing club, Compton invited him “to come back and do a little presentation of what your fishing club

actually does.” Monical said he wanted to talk about introducing Sacramento Black Fish to Lake Calero. When he asked the audience members if they had ever heard of that fish, no one raised their hand. “That’s why we are doing a presentation,” he said.

The final award recipient was the Murieta Trail Stewardship, which is comprised of local mountain bike riders who maintain 17 miles of dirt trails in undeveloped areas of the community. “If you have ever walked on them, they are clean, free of brush, and there isn’t a lot of stuff to trip over,” Compton said. “And that is all because of the volunteers in the Murieta Trail Stewardship.”

Compton said some garden club members are now seeing the work firsthand. “We now have a biking group within our garden club, and we call it the Green Thumb Trekkers. How cool is that,” she said.

In thanking the club for the donation, Representative John Weatherford told them that the stewardship has installed three new trail signs thanks to the garden club grant given to the stewardship last year.

In other business: • Business owner Joe Amoros introduced a new type of fertilizer that is a blend of rock power and green waste called Bio Roc. Grande said she would invite him back for a separate presentation. • The members unanimously approved a



Accepting the club’s award to Scout Troop 633, are, from left, Jax Salo, Alex Hoburg, and Marjorie Salo.



Rancho Murieta Fishing Club President Jim Monical is happy with the new money.



John Weatherford of the Murieta Trail Stewardship welcomes the donation that will help his group maintain the dirt trails in undeveloped areas of the community.

change in the bylaws as presented by Co-President Jayne La Grande.

• Member Maria Lopez announced she will lead a Feb. 24 workshop on moss art. • Sharon Barton announced the first field

trip of the year will be to the annual Camelia Show on March 2.

• Berniece Jones provided an update on a club community project at the CRES gardens. Work days had been slated on Feb. 18 and 25. • La Grande announced

the club will present a plant sale the day before Mother’s Day. Last year’s was extremely successful.

More information about the club can be found at its website: <https://river-valleygardenclub.net/> The club also is on Facebook. ★

CSD Security Supervisor Explains Coverage Issues

Continued from page 1 over December when 38 shifts weren’t covered. In December, one officer was out for a month on vacation, another was injured and out for two months, and the third was sick for three weeks.

The primary issue at the January security meetings was how administrative overhead costs have affected the security budget. The resolution came at the Jan. 19 special board meeting when the board approved a new

formula for allocating the overhead costs. Besides applying it to the current year, the board voted to apply it to the past three budgets that were still open to “right size” the financial records for those years.

Mark Matulich, the

director of finance and administration, came up with the new formula for allocating administrative overhead at the request of Director Stephen Booth and General Manager Mimi Morris. Both had been concerned that the

security burden had been too heavy under the prior formula.

Because the new formula showed that the security fund was in the black during the current fiscal year Director Randy Jenco asked Morris at the

Jan. 19 meeting if that could mean another security position. Morris told him no. That’s because security is already operating a deficit, and the change to the indirect cost would just reduce the deficit, she said. ★

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Turning a Yard Into a Wildlife Habitat

Topic at Recent Garden Club Meeting

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Who knew that caterpillars and or oak trees could be essential elements when transforming a yard into a wildlife habitat?

Master Gardener Roxie Jones explained both ideas when speaking to the River Valley Garden Club on Jan. 23. Her topic was gardening for wildlife: creating a wildlife habitat in your yard.

Jones said supplying food and corridors for wildlife is especially critical in California because the area has met the requirements to become one of only two biodiversity hot spots in the nation. The first requirement is having a minimum of 1500 endemic species of vascular plants. Endemic means they don't grow anywhere else.

"The second requirement is very sad. You have lost 70% of the primary vegetation," she said

That is primarily due to agriculture given that because California supplies half of the agricultural products consumed in the United States, which is great. "Where do the wildlife go, where do they survive."

Another factor is lawns. They use too much water; don't support wildlife and cover an area three times larger than any irrigated crop in the country. As for private and public landscaping, the primary emphasis for years has only been aesthetics. "We are bringing in plants from all the world that our wildlife knows nothing about," she said.

Although wildlife issues are monumental, is there some way that a

gardener with a small yard can help? Showing before and after photos of her yard, Jones said yes.

The answer comes from the National Wildlife Federation. It has a checklist to confirm that a garden has all the elements necessary to be certified as a "Garden for Wildlife," which Jones provided to the audience in a handout.

The same checklist also is a one-page summary of strategies that include options for the most challenged of gardeners such as adding a bird feeder or a bird bath or growing host plants for caterpillars. See the checklist at www.nwf.org/certifiedwildlifehabitat/

Punctuating her talk with colorful slides, Jones covered the following points.

- **Wildlife definition.** "Most people think we are talking about the birds, the bees, and the lizards, but we are also talking about the plants, insects, and all the life in the soil," she said.
- **Native plants.** Jones emphasized using local native plants for 50 to 70% of the landscaping and recommended the California Native Plant Society's plant list for the Central Valley. "They have a fabulous database of California native plants... What they need, where they grow, and what insects and wildlife they support," she said.
- **Keystone native plants.** They are "must haves" for to support caterpillars, which, in turn, feed baby birds. They include the Hollyleaf Cherry, the Pink-Flowering Currant, and the California Wildrose. However, the oak tree is the keystone species of all keystone species.
- **Food.** The checklist



Master Garden Roxie Jones recommends using guidelines from the National Wildlife Federation to garden for wildlife. She was the speaker at the Jan. 23 meeting of the River Valley Garden Club Photos by Gail Bullen.



A cute birdhouse like this one doesn't work for wildlife. Jones recommends a birdhouse like the wooden one below.

requires three of 15 elements for a wildlife garden certification. They could include seeds from a plant, berries, pollen, and even a squirrel feeder.

- **Water.** Elements to provide clean water for wildlife to drink and bath could include a birdbath, a water garden, or a stream.
- **Cover.** Wildlife needs at least two places to shelter from the weather and predators such as a bramble patch, ground cover, or a brush and log pile.
- **Places to raise young.**

The garden needs at two places for wildlife to engage in courtship and then bear and raise their young. Options include mature trees, a nesting box, dead trees or snags, and host plants for caterpillars.

• **Sustainable practices.** The Wildlife Federation recommends practices from three categories: soil and water conservation such as using drip hoses for irrigation, controlling exotic species such as by reducing lawn areas, and organic practices such as by eliminating chemical pesticides and fertilizers.



Before and after photos of her yard show how she transformed it into a wildlife habitat.

Jones ended her talk by explaining how to "bird sit," a practice she learned from the Audubon Society. It is an outdoor meditation with a focus on birds. She showed a video of her yard with birds frolicking in her wildlife-friendly habitat to help her audience get the idea.

The garden club's next meeting will be on Feb. 27. The topic will be "Lawn Begone." More information about the club can be found at its website" <https://river-valleygardenclub.net..> ★



Baby birds eat an immense number of caterpillars.

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Primary Election Ballot Includes Two River Valley Contests

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - River Valley residents will see only two local contests on their March 5 primary ballots as most of the action will be taking place at the state and federal levels. Heath Flora, a Republican, is seeking reelection to the 9th Assembly District. The Sacramento Bee has endorsed him because of his willingness to work across the aisle. He is being challenged by Tami Nobriga, a member of the American Independent Party. Three are vying to replace Sue Frost as the Sacramento County Supervisor for

the 4th District. Frost has endorsed Rosario Rodriguez, a restaurant owner and Folsom City councilwoman. Bret C. Daniels is a retired sheriff's deputy and a Citrus Heights city council member. Braden Murphy describes himself as a father who was born with cerebral palsy. His endorsements include the Folsom Area Democratic Club. Although all Rancho Murieta, Sloughhouse, and Wilton residents are receiving mail-in ballots for the March 5 primary election, they will have the option to vote in person or to drop off their ballots. The county's vote center locations will be open from Saturday, March 2 to Tuesday, March 5, Election Day. The hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. except for Election Day when hours will extend from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. The Rancho Murieta Vote Center is at the CSD Building, 15160 Jackson Road. The Wilton Vote Center is at the Wilton Community Center, 9717 Colony Road. Ballot drop boxes were placed in both communities on Feb. 5 and will remain available through Election Day from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except the CSD location will be closed Feb. 19. The Rancho Murieta box is outside the CSD Building. The Wilton location is at the Wilton Garage, 11050 Wilton Road. ★

Winter Rains Highlight Need For Improved Transportation Corridors

Capital Southeast Connector JPA News Release

MATHER, CALIF, FEB. 2, 2024 (MPG) - With the current and anticipated winter storms, regional Sacramento transportation leaders are highlighting the need to improve area transportation corridors to serve as key evacuation routes during flood and other emergencies. One of those corridors is the SouthEast Connector Expressway, the 34-mile transportation corridor that connects I-5 and Highway 99 in Elk Grove to Highway 50 in El Dorado Hills. Authorized in 2004 by Sacramento County voters, about 6.5 miles of the Connector have been improved primarily along Kammerer Road in Elk Grove and White Rock Road in Folsom. The largest stretch of the Connector is along Grant Line Road through south Sacramento County, a mostly two-lane country road, limiting emergency access and its value as a route to higher ground when flooding threatens nearby communities, and for El Dorado County residents to flee wildfires to the east. Parts of Grant Line Road and other area roads in recent years have on occasion been closed due to high water. "Recent flood events in south Sacramento County have demonstrated the need for improved transportation corridors in that area, including Grant Line Road, that are able to remain open even when threatened by high water," said Derek Minnema, executive director of the Capital SouthEast Connector Joint Powers Authority, which is responsible for the project's

implementation. "The Connector's design helps ensure that emergency responders and evacuees are able to use it when needed." The 19-mile Grant Line Road segment is the Connector's longest and is being implemented in partnership with Sacramento County, Elk Grove, and Rancho Cordova. Planning and environmental review is either complete or underway for portions of the alignment, but anticipated construction funding has not materialized as expected due to a shift in transportation funding priorities that favor transit and bikeways. "The need to improve the longest portion of the Connector route along Grant Line has been clearly demonstrated but securing the additional local, state and federal funding that we need to move into construction has been a challenge," said Minnema, who is leading efforts to raise the project's visibility and make it a higher funding priority. "We're trying to educate more area residents about our plans and help local, state and federal officials better understand why this project needs to move forward sooner rather than later." The Connector JPA currently has several active funding requests under consideration by Rancho Cordova and Sacramento County, and expects budget decisions in the next several months. More information on the SouthEast Connector Expressway is available at <https://www.southeastconnectorexpressway.com>, where those interested can sign up for occasional project updates, or on the project's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@southeastconnectorexpressway>. ★



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Women's Club Scores Another Success With January Blood Drive



Aida Nauman is happy to give back to the community. Photos by Gail Bullen

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Given the severe shortage of blood nationwide, Rancho Murieta residents did their part to help at the Jan. 22 Community Blood Drive. The Rancho Murieta Women's Club sponsored the quarterly event that was held at the Rancho Murieta Community Church on behalf of Vitalant, which is the local blood bank. Of the 88 participants that Vitalant registered, four were first-time donors. The staff collected 59 whole blood donations and nine Power Red donations, which count as two donations, for a total of 77 pints of blood. There also was one plasma donation. Bonnie Kirschner, currently the women's club president, has been the lead organizer of the blood drive since 2018. She was very pleased with the January results and hopes it bodes well for the rest of the year. Kirschner also pointed to last year's results. "We had 280 successful donations in 2023, and each one can save three lives – That is 840 lives," she said. Kirschner had special thanks for

residents who have chosen to donate their blood and all of the volunteers who helped make it happen. She also praised the women's club for putting on the blood drive for more than 30 years and the Rancho Murieta Community Church for stepping up at the end of the COVID pandemic to be the new donation site. Kirschner said Ron Conway has been the "set-up coordinator" for transforming the church's worship area into a blood donation center and back again for each blood drive. Volunteers from Scout Troop 633 and the VFW Post have pitched in to help. Kirschner also thanked her co-chairs. "Patti Keating who has been part of it since we both started this journey in January 2018, has done a tremendous job with publicity, organizing flyers, being at the blood drives, and assisting the donors with Vitalant's new 'Fast Track' system which has stymied many of us many times," Kirschner said. "Cheryl Cannon and Sharen McGowan joined us in 2023 to help with finding and coordinating volunteers in many areas such as greeters, bakers, hospitality, phone callers, and more." The next blood drive will be held Monday, April 29, at the church. ★



The worship area at the Rancho Murieta Community Church is transformed into a donation center for the Rancho Murieta Community Blood Drive on Jan. 22.

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SECURITY LOGS

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

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 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. 17
- No report about the log.
- Jan. 18
- No report about the log.
- Jan. 19
- Resident complaint, 11:54 a.m. location not listed, resident reports a female resident continues to harass her when walking on a trail behind her home. Referred to SSD and RMA compliance. Suspect has never been present when patrol at scene.
 - Shoplifting, 2:57 p.m. Tractor Supply, cashier reported a male tried to shoplift merchandise worth \$1,000. The shoplifter got away but the merchandise was retrieved. The store manager declined to call SSD to file a report.
 - Suspicious activity, 4:36 p.m. Via Del Cerrito. Patrol didn't find any signs of suspicious activity or vandalism. The garage door was closed and locked.
- Jan. 20
- Juvenile delinquency, 4:16 p.m. location not listed, report of juveniles playing loud usic and riding their dirt bikes on the trail. GOA.
 - Downed tree, 5:26 p.m. Rio Circle, patrol observed large tree blocking the road. No structure nor vehicle was damaged. The fire department arrived on scene and took care of the problem.

- Jan. 21
- Juvenile delinquency, 2:39 p.m. Via Robia. Report of juveniles harassing a resident. Patrol advised them to leave the area, which they did.
- Jan. 22
- Log not generated.
- Jan. 23
- Resident complaint, 7:01 a.m. location not listed, report of a male sitting in a disabled red Ford Mustang. He told patrol he had broken down while visiting a resident on Fuede de Paz and he was waiting for a tow truck. Patrol confirmed his story.
- Jan. 24
- Miscellaneous, 6:15 a.m., Cantova Way. A vehicle appeared suspicious because of the way it was parked behind a fenced enclosure out of view. OE3 student advised the gate had been locked when he had arrived that morning.
 - Parking enforcement, 6:56 a.m. three locations on the south, three citations.
 - Miscellaneous, 11:26 a.m. Colbert Drive and Fescue Court. Unknown substance in the road. CSD plant supervisor determined the oily substance on the road wasn't affecting the water supply.
- Jan. 25
- Stop sign enforcement, 7:02 a.m. Murieta South Parkway and Reynosa. Citation issued.
 - Boat permit violation, 11:30 a.m. Lake Calero, patrol found a red boat trailer at the boat ramp and observed a resident fishing. Citation issued.
 - Boat permit violation, 11:30 a.m. Lake Chesbro, patrol observed a single guest vehicle with a boat trailer parked at the boat ramp. Two male adults were observed fishing. The resident was cited.
 - Miscellaneous, 3:01 p.m. Stonehouse Park. A compliance officer requested assistance regarding a 7-year-old riding an e-bike. Patrol made contact with a compliance officer and the child's parent. Unable

to resolve the issue. The compliance officer stated he would write a citation.

- Jan. 26
- No report about the log.
- Jan. 27
- One extra patrol.
- Jan. 28
- One extra patrol.
 - Parking enforcement, 5 a.m. two locations on the north, two citations issued.
 - Resident complaint, 3:04 pm. Burger King, report of juveniles blocking the entrance with their bikes. GOA. UTL.
- Jan. 29
- One extra patrol.
 - Parking enforcement, 10:44 a.m. overnight street parking, three locations on south, three citations.
 - Stop sign enforcement, 2:39 p.m. Murieta South Parkway and Reynosa Drive, two citations issued.
 - Burglary, 6:18 p.m. Shell Station construction site, During the night, a suspect cut the lock on the construction storage unit and stole unknown items. The suspect also entered the building through a rear window and stole more unknown items. RP referred to SSD for a report.

Wilton Fire

- Twenty-one medical aids between Jan. 16 and Feb. 2
- Jan. 17
- Public assistance, 3:35 p.m., 9710 Sherman Lane.
- Jan. 26
- Public assistance, 2:25 p.m. 12530 Lee School Road
- Sacramento County Sheriff's Office
- Jan. 5
- Theft – all other larceny, 8:30 a.m. convenience store, 7300 block of Murieta Drive.
- Jan. 1
- Theft – all other larceny, 12:20 p.m. single-family home, 6500 block of Chesbro Circle. ★

Women's Club slates 'Easter Bonnet Bingo' in March

Easter Bonnet Bingo will be on tap when the Rancho Murieta Women's Club holds its next luncheon on March 27. Decorate and wear your best Easter Bonnet and join us for Bingo. A prize will be awarded for the best Easter Bonnett. French onion soup, tea sandwiches and strawberry shortcake will be on the menu. The cost is \$35 for members and \$40 for nonmembers. The reservation deadline is March 15. The contacts are Cindy Shamrock at 916-354-1918 or Barbara Armstrong at 916-541-1884.

RM Community Church slates February events

The Rancho Murieta Community Church is hosting three events in February that are open to the community. Do you love to sing the traditional hymns? Join us for a Hymn Sing on Sunday Feb. 25 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Stay for treats and conversation. All are welcome. A new women's Bible study will begin on Wednesday, Feb. 14 from 10 a.m. to noon. The new study, Discerning the Voice of God, features Priscilla Schirer. Sign up at rmchurch.org/events/ Men of all ages are invited to our annual Men's Breakfast Saturday, Feb. 24, 9 to 11 a.m. A speaker and good food are included in the registration. Sign up today at rmchurch.org/events/

RM Community Church slates women's lunch, Easter services in March

The Rancho Murieta Community Church has slated two events in March that would be of interest to the community. The Women's Lunch & Conference, Child of Gold, will be held on March 2 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Speakers, worship, lunch and activities are included in the registration. Sign up today at rmchurch.org/events/ The church also is planning five Easter services. The first will be on Good Friday, March 29 at 6 p.m. The Sunrise Service

is slated on Gazebo Hill on Sunday, March 31 at 6:30 a.m. Easter Services at the church will take place on Saturday, Mar 30 at 6 p.m. and on Sunday, March 31 at 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

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 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.

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. 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.

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.

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.

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. ★

Manage County Utility Payments and Accounts Online

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County Consolidated Utilities Billing & Service (CUBS) is making it easier for customers to view and manage their utilities accounts online with MyUtilities.

Tired of receiving your county utilities bills in the mail? MyUtilities also allows residents to go paperless, freeing up space in crowded mailboxes.

MyUtilities rolled out in 2020, and so far, 44.9% of customers are utilizing it!

Using MyUtilities, residents can:

- Manage your bank account details
- Manage one-time or

recurring payments

- Manage payment reminders
- Change your mailing address
- Set up paperless billing
- View bills and payments (up to two years)
- View Frequently Asked Questions that will enhance your user experience

If you are a landlord or property management company, MyUtilities can be your one-stop shop for managing the utilities accounts for all of your properties.

In 2023, CUBS added even more ways for customers to receive digital eBills and set up online Bill Pay. Customers can now access their utility bills and schedule online payments directly through their bank's online banking

portal. As of today, 4.4% of customers are utilizing this new service.

Here are some reasons residents choose eBills:

- Convenience – paying bills online is easy and saves time. For even more convenience, use your phone or tablet.
- Control – you can choose when and how much to pay.
- Security – your financial information and records are protected with bank-grade security.

To learn more and get started, visit the CUBS website. If you need assistance setting up your MyUtilities portal, please contact CUBS online or by phone at (916) 875-5555. To find out if your bank offers eBill and Bill Pay services, contact your bank directly. ★

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Presidential Primary Election Update

Ballot Drop Box and Vote Center Locations Posted

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Voter Registration and Elections (VRE) has posted the list of Ballot Drop Box and Vote Center locations for the March 5, 2024, Presidential Primary Election on the website.

Vote by Mail ballots will be mailed to voters beginning Monday, February 5, 2024. Ballot Drop Boxes will begin opening Monday, February 5, 2024, and Vote Centers will begin opening Saturday, February 24, 2024. A complete list of Ballot Drop Box and Vote Center locations, their days and hours of operation, and an interactive map can be found at: <https://elections.sac-county.net/votecenters/pages/locations.aspx>

A QR code to the interactive map will be included in the County Voter Information Guide to replace the flat printed map. This simple change supports the County’s GoGreen policy, is accessible to voters with disabilities and is fiscally responsible, saving the county over two (2) million pages of printed material and the associated mailing cost.

For more information, contact VRE at (916) 875-6451, email voterinfo@sac-county.gov, or by using the toll-free

voter assistance hotline at (800) 762-8019. The hotline has the ability to connect voters with disabilities with TTY (Text Telephone).

- Key Election Dates**
- Monday, February 5 - Mailing of ballots to all registered voters begins
 - Monday, February 5 - Voted ballots may be returned in any of the Ballot Drop Boxes located throughout the County
 - Monday, February 19 - Close of voter registration for this election. Voter registration forms must be post-marked by this date or delivered to the VRE Office at 7000 65th Street, Suite A, Sacramento 95823 by 5:00 p.m. Online voter registration must be completed before midnight on this date at www.registertovote.ca.gov
 - Tuesday, February 20 – Conditional Voter Registration (VBM) begins
 - Saturday, February 24 – 11 Day Vote Centers open
 - Tuesday, February 27 – Last day a Vote by Mail (VBM) ballot can be mailed to you. After this date, VBM ballots are only available at the VRE office or at any of the 90 Vote Centers
 - Saturday, March 2 – All Vote Centers open throughout the County
 - Tuesday, March 5 – Election Day ★

UC Master Gardeners of Sacramento County Present February Open Garden

UC Agriculture and Natural Resources News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - If a thriving spring garden is what you want, then start now! The Fair Oaks Horticulture Center is a unique local site in the community and has grown significantly over the last several years with diverse plant selections. See what is possible in your space.

The water efficient landscape area is emerging from its winter dormancy.

- Aromatic culinary herbs were pruned in the fall and filling out nicely.
- Edible micro-greens, kale, and Swiss chard are cheery looking in the raised vegetable beds.
- See how blueberries and raspberries were pruned for a flourishing summer crop.
- Look for citrus trees suited for your space and taste after seeing our specimens.

- Grape vines have two methods of pruning. Ask a master gardener why.
- Learn approaches of turning compost, see how the GEO bin and Sunset bin differ.

What seeds should you be planting? Find 15 vegetables ready for direct outdoor seeding in the 2024 Gardening Guide and Calendar... into the Wild... Habitat Gardening. \$12 cash or check incl. tax.

Event Day and Date: February 10, 2024

Event Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Event Location: Horticulture Center 11549 Fair Oaks Blvd. Fair Oaks, CA 95628

Located Outside: Rain or shine.

Event Cost: Free

For More Info: UC Cooperative Extension, (916) 875-6913, sacmg.ucanr.edu, facebook.com/sacmg. ★

Find Back Issues on
TheRiverValleyTimes.com

Mark Matulich Brings Extensive Experience to CSD Finance Post



The image shows a leadership medal for investigative work awarded to Matulich by FBI Director James Comey in 2016. Photo by Gail Bullen

Continued from page 1

Matulich thought he would major in business when he enrolled in Sacramento City College. To meet the general requirements, he took an accounting class in which the professor showed videos of CPAs working in different scenarios. “This wasn’t my stereotypical image of an accountant squirreled away in a dark, little room,” he said. “It clicked. I thought: I can do this.”

Matulich graduated from California State University Sacramento (Sac State) in 1999 with a bachelor of science in business administration with a specialization in accountancy.

His first job after college was with Burnett & Company LLP, which is a public accounting firm in Rancho Cordova. Private companies and entities like CSD hire public accounting firms to issue audit reports on their financial statements and to prepare their taxes. Matulich leaned towards auditing because he was interested in how businesses work. But he also had the opportunity to work on tax returns for his clients. It was during his time with Burnett that he became a CPA.

After a few years, he had to decide whether he would go after a partner track with a public accounting firm or try private industry. A friend told him about an opening for an internal auditor at McClatchy Newspapers. “I thought this would be a good way to test out and learn private industry accounting,” he said.

He was part of the audit team that worked at McClatchy newspapers across the country for several months in 2003. But when an assistant controller position came up at the Sacramento Bee, he took it. “I was really fortunate to have a boss that taught me a lot, such as how to work with other departments that could care less about what the accounting department is doing,” he said.

In 2006, he decided to step up to a position as the controller for University Enterprises. It is a division of Sac State that operates business functions such as the book store, food services,

and even a temporary student employment agency. He also began work on a master’s degree simultaneously but didn’t finish because of a career change.

It came about after he and his wife were having dinner with another couple, and the husband told Matulich he had listed him as a reference on his FBI application. Matulich decided to apply himself.

After many interviews and tests, the FBI hired Matulich and sent him to Quantico for 21 weeks of training to become a special agent. “I thought I would go on this adventure see where it would take me,” Matulich said.

After finishing the academy in 2010, Matulich couldn’t request an assignment to the Sacramento FBI office but “lucked out” in being sent to the large San Francisco office. He used his background in accounting and finance to investigate complex financial frauds and other criminal activity through document research, interviews and other sophisticated techniques.

He also served as the crisis management coordinator with multiple federal, state, and local agencies to prepare for critical incidents and large-scale operations. In 2016, his office successfully nominated him for the FBI Director’s Leadership Medal for leading the investigation of a major case.

Between 2016 and 2018, Matulich took an 18-month temporary assignment at the Economic Crimes Unit in Washington D. C. He provided program support to 13 field offices such as securing them needed funding or the permission for an investigation. He also organized a weeklong conference for 400 special agents and forensic accountants who needed continuing education to maintain their CPAs. Another part of the job was preparing and delivering talks and training programs about complex financial crimes. He also served as the acting unit chief with oversight for the 56 field offices during a transition between unit chiefs.

Back in the San Francisco office, Matulich began to realize

that he couldn’t afford to retire at the FBI’s mandatory age of 57 unless he could be promoted to higher, more lucrative positions. That would require several transfers around the country including back to Washington D.C. That wasn’t a good fit.

Matulich put out some feelers and found a position as the chief financial officer for Acadia Healthcare, which provides high-end, drug and alcohol treatment in the Bay Area. “I thought it would be a good move for me and my family to go back to the private sector and recharge my accounting career,” he said.

Then a friend told him about the CSD opening. The job looked very interesting when he pulled up the posting. Another plus was the location in Sacramento so he could be close to family. “This also looked like a place where I could work for 15 years and retire without having to worry about bouncing around or switching jobs,” he said.

Matulich is happy that General Manager Mimi Morris hired him. “Mimi is great to work with,” he said. “She’s got a really good vision for CSD, and she is working super hard to get everything cleaned up.”

There are times when Matulich, Morris, and accountant Chris Funakoshi stay late. “A couple of weeks ago she cooked some pizzas for us, and we were here until 8 or 9 p.m. just working through some stuff,” he said. “So it is a good, collaborative working environment. Everyone wants to see CSD run smoothly.”

Matulich is married and has a 15-year-old daughter and a 9-year-old Beagle. He enjoys attending his daughter’s softball games and cross-country matches, walking the dog, and lifting some weights. His favorite pastime is barbecuing for friends and family. He even fixed Christmas dinner this year.

“I joke all the time that I am going to find a surplus, 1,000-gallon propane tank, build my own giant smoker, and take it around on a trailer on the weekends,” he said. ★

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Voter Registration and Elections Update

My Voter Portal

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Voter Registration and Elections is excited to introduce My Voter Portal (MVP) to access your voter registration record, view your ballot status and voting history, access accessible election materials, view your County Voter Information Guide, obtain information regarding the current election, find Vote Center and Official

Ballot Drop Box locations near you, and so much more!

Visit the My Voter Portal link and check it out on the Sacramento County website.

If you have questions or need help, contact VRE at (916) 875-6451, email voterinfo@saccounty.gov, or use the toll-free voter assistance hotline at (800) 762-8019. The hotline has the ability to connect voters with disabilities with TTY (Text Telephone). ★

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Sky River Casino Announces Top Three Nonprofit Winners



A special awards ceremony and check presentation was held January 11th when the winners were announced. Photo courtesy of Sky River Casino

Sky River Casino News Release

ELK GROVE, CA (MPG) - Sky River Casino is excited to announce the top three winners of the 2nd Annual Wreaths of Hope, an annual holiday program that resulted in \$15,000 being donated to support local charities. Creatively decorated 48" wreaths were on display throughout Sky River during the month of December 2023 when casino Rewards members were encouraged to vote for their favorites. In total, an impressive 45,048 votes were cast as part of the 2nd annual holiday program. 2023 Wreaths of Hope winners are as follows:

- First Place – Native Breast Cancer Awareness Walk/Run
- Second Place – Elk Grove Food Bank
- Third Place – Paws For A Purpose

Each of the 10 participating organizations received \$1,000 just for participating. Then, the first place wreath winner received an additional \$2,500, second place an additional \$1,500, and third place an additional \$1,000.

“We were amazed with the number of votes that were cast for our festive Wreaths of Hope program that supports 10 local charities,” said Michael J. Facenda, President of Sky River Casino. “This 2nd annual holiday program clearly struck a chord with our guests while also providing much-needed donations that support local nonprofits so they can continue their meaningful work in the community.”

A special awards ceremony and check presentation was held January 11th when the winners were announced. For more information, please visit www.SkyRiver.com.

About Sky River Casino
Sky River Casino was built by the Wilton Rancheria in partnership with Boyd Gaming Corporation, which is building and managing the property for the tribe. The casino opened in August 2022 and includes 100,000 sq ft of gaming, 2,100 slot machines, 80 table games, and 17 bars and restaurants. To learn more, visit www.SkyRiver.com. ★

GOLF SCORES

Submitted by
Nancy Clevenger

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Country Club Niners Women’s Golf Group recently held their monthly Charm and Putt tournament. During Charm and Putt, the ladies play nine holes of golf in a friendly competition, vying for lowest net score and fewest putts.

On Jan. 25, the ladies played the front nine holes of the North Course at Rancho Murieta Country Club for this month’s tournament. Mary Carroll was medalist with a scalding 35 net score. The putting portion of play was led by Chris Pasek, who sank the ball in 14 putts on the nine greens.

Earlier in the month, the Niners’ general meeting was held. During this meeting, Captain Pamela O’Hern made the announcement of 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 of golf in 2023, improving her handicap from 35.3 in January 2023 to 25.0 in December 2023, an improvement factor of 1.278. That player was Alison Gomez. She earned a cash award and a lovely plaque noting this amazing accomplishment.

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 each month. Additional Fun Tournaments are held at various times during the month with prizes awarded to the winners. For more information, contact Pamela O’Hern, plohern@sbcglobal.net or 209-598-1160. ★



Mary Carroll. Photos courtesy of Rancho Murieta Country Club Niners



Chris Pasek



Alison Gomez



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