



Guiding Kids Through Hard Things

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West Sacramento News Ledger

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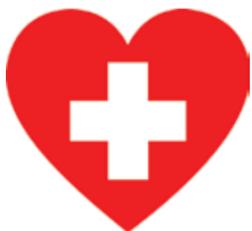
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Camellia Show Celebrates 100 Years



The Pink Perfection camellia is featured in this year's Camellia Show sponsored by the Camellia Society of Sacramento. The photo contest is focused on this particular variety.

Story by Carol Feineman, photos by Julie Vierra, Camellia Society of Sacramento

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Camellia Society of Sacramento President Julie Vierra has loved camellias since the 1980s.

She has more than 100 flowering plants in her West Sacramento front and backyard.

Vierra, a West Sacramento resident

of 50 years, said the flowers are beautiful and easy to grow.

Vierra has also loved being a Camellia Society of Sacramento member. She became a member after a next-door neighbor unexpectedly entered three of Vierra's Larrarook varieties in the society's Camellia Show in the 1980s.

"My neighbor said 'Julie, you won a blue ribbon in the Camellia Show' and I joined right after, immediately

becoming a recording secretary. I've been a member ever since," Vierra reminisced this week.

With that said, the gardening club's president is hoping to encourage residents to attend an upcoming event.

It's not every day that nonprofit organizations celebrate a centennial so Camellia Society of Sacramento members are especially excited about its Camellia Show on March 2 and its Camellia Show on March 2 and *Continued on page 2*

West Sacramento to Host Community Academy

By Michele Townsend

WEST SACRAMENTO (MPG) - The City of West Sacramento is looking forward to the upcoming Community Academy. Fifty-four applications were received from West Sacramento residents who would like to attend the Community Academy program. The program will be held once a week, for seven weeks, with Graduation from the program taking place at the May 15 City Council meeting. Of the 54 applicants, a diverse group of 24 will be chosen from across the city to attend the Academy.

The Community Academy is a free program designed to teach those that attend more about the City of West Sacramento. Attendees will learn more about the running of the City. They will learn about how the city government works, about the operations of various city Departments and gain a better understanding of how decisions are made, how funds are allocated and about different City Boards, Commissions and Committees.

The program will take place primarily at City Hall, with additional tour locations planned. Those in the program will meet and interact with various City staff in different departments, learn what that department is in charge of and who you would contact if needed. The program is designed to be interactive, informative, and fun and the departments that will be in the program are working to prepare their presentations and interactive activities.

So why is the City hosting this program? West Sacramento is hosting this program for the residents to become better informed. They want to promote good neighborliness, volunteerism, advocacy for issues that residents feel strongly about and to get the community involved in the decision making of how our city is developed and maintained. They want to prepare residents to advocate more effectively for policies and programs that they support, apply for advisory commissions, and *Continued on page 2*

River Cats, Sutter Health Team Together

Sacramento River Cats News Release

WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento River Cats and their partners at Sutter Health, along with the City of West Sacramento, have announced a partnership for renovation at the Alyce Norman Parks and Sports Fields complex in West Sacramento.

Both the River Cats and Sutter Health will come together to donate funds to help the renovation of the softball backstop on field No. 4 at the Alyce Norman Park softball fields, which are located in the Bryte community. Alyce Norman Park is one of the oldest and most used parks in the City of West Sacramento and serves both youth baseball and youth softball programs.

"We are thrilled to team with our partners at Sutter Health to support



our local community right here in West Sacramento," said Chip Maxson, President and COO of the Sacramento River Cats. "Recreation spaces are crucial in promoting a healthy community, and we could not be more excited to ensure that all people in the West Sacramento area will have an outdoor space that supports activity of all kinds, especially softball."

This donation will allow the City of West Sacramento to complete structural repairs to

the girls' softball backstop, ensuring the safety and longevity of the youth softball fields. Included in the renovation will be the complete removal of the old backstops prior to the installation of new posts and chain-link fabric as the structure is reassembled.

"The Parks and Recreation department is extremely grateful for the generous donation from Sutter Health and the Sacramento River Cats," said Kate Smith, Director of Parks and Recreation

for the City of West Sacramento. "Access to parks, recreation and leisure is foundational when looking at the health of a community, which is why our mission is 'Parks Make Life Better.' We look forward to a continued partnership that will support our efforts in building a healthy, thriving community for [the] City of West Sacramento."

"Sutter Health is excited to partner with the River Cats and the City of West Sacramento to restore the backstop at Alyce Norman Parks and Sports Fields complex," said Ryan Loofbourrow, government affairs director for Sutter Health. "Access to safe and modern parks is critical to the health and wellbeing of our communities. We are proud to support projects that not only improve our public spaces, but provide a place that supports outdoor play, movement and fun."★



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Camellia Show Celebrates 100 Years



Camellia Society of Sacramento members will dip fresh flowers into paraffin to make the flowers last longer at the Camellia Show on March 2 and March 3 in Sacramento.

Continued from page 1
March 3.

The nonprofit gardening organization's first Camellia Show, highlighting the plant that is a member of the tea family, was in 1924.

"Our 100th is going to be a big deal for us! We are hoping lots of people attend," Vierra said.

This year's 100th show includes hundreds of camellias to view, floral arrangements, camellia waxing, plants for sale, raffle, collectible camellia buttons and a Matsuyama, Japan display. The Japanese city is the organization's sister city. The Sacramento History Center will have an informational table with memorabilia about camellias, the show and the former Camellia Festival.

"Did you know the flower of Sacramento is the camellia?," Vierra stated. "We will be going to the State Capitol on the 29th. Our 100th resolution will be presented to us by Kevin McCarty (California Assemblymember, 6th District)."

New this year is a partnership between the camellia society and the Camellia Coffee Roasters at 12th and R streets in Sacramento. That includes Camellia Coffee Roasters Instagram "infomercials"



The trophy table in the 2022 show included yard art and gardening items. In honor of the 100th-year celebration, this year's trophies will be crystal and cut glass.

with club members describing how to care for the plants. The cafe and coffee wholesaler company has also named one of its coffee blends in the society's honor. The Camellia Coffee Roasters will be at the Camellia Show on March 3.

Camellia Show hours are from 3 to 6 p.m. March 2 and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 3 at the Scottish Rite Temple, 6151 H St., Sacramento.

Admission is free both days.

"If you enjoy gardening, you will love the show. We are all gardeners," Vierra said.

The Camellia Society of Sacramento meets once a month from October to April. Northern California Camellia Society President

Justin Bergamini will speak about grafting techniques at the Feb. 25 2 p.m. meeting at Sierra 2, 2791 24th St., Room 12, Sacramento.

The society's 60 members are from Sacramento, Orangevale, West Sacramento, Fair Oaks, Carmichael, Folsom, Davis, Elk Grove, Rancho Cordova, Roseville, Gold River, Lincoln and Woodland. New members are always welcome.

"We have fun, we have food and we have lots of knowledgeable camellia people if you have any questions," Vierra said.

For more information about the 100th Camellia Show or the organization, call Vierra at 916-812-3202 or visit <https://camelliasocietyofsacramento.org> ★

Presidential Primary Election Update: Choices for "No Party Preference" Voters

Yolo County Elections Office News Release

Voting for a U.S. President in a primary election is part of the process of determining who will represent their political party in the general election. Voters who registered with a political party choose who will be the nominee among the candidates from their political party.

Voters who did not register with a qualified political party or declined to state a party affiliation are considered "No Party Preference" (NPP) voters. NPP voters who take no action will receive a primary ballot without the contest or candidates for U.S. President.

This week, the Yolo County Elections Office is mailing postcards to voters registered as "No Party Preference," or NPP. Voters who believe they are impacted are encouraged to re-register to vote to make sure that their records are up to date before the March 5, 2024, Presidential Primary Election. "We want to inform our voters that if you received this No Party Preference (NPP) postcard and would like to vote for a Presidential candidate next March, you need to take action to either request a cross-over ballot or re-register with your preferred party," said Assessor/Clerk-Recorder/Registrar of Voters, Jesse Salinas. The specific action needed by NPP voters will

depend on the party of your preferred Presidential candidate.

The NPP postcards that will be mailed outline what steps are needed to cast a crossover vote in the March 2024 Presidential contest.

If a No Party Preference (NPP) voter wants to vote in the presidential primary for a candidate with the Green, Peace and Freedom, or Republican parties, the voter must re-register with that specific political party because these parties are not allowing cross-over voting this election. To re-register to vote online, go to ca.gov or complete a paper Voter Registration Card.

If an NPP voter wants to vote in the presidential primary for a candidate with the American Independent, Democratic, or Libertarian parties, the voter may re-register with that specific political party or may request a No Party Preference Cross-over Ballot without re-registering with a political party.

Active voters who are registered as NPP will be mailed a postcard this week that they can return if they wish to receive a ballot from the parties offering cross-over voting. No Party Preference voters can also request a NPP Cross-over Ballot in the following ways:

-Submitting by mail a "No Party Preference Cross-over Ballot Notice

and Application"

-Calling (800) 649-9943
-Submitting a "No Party Preference Cross-over Ballot Notice and Application" by fax at (530) 666-8123 or by email to elections@yolo-county.org.

Applications for No Party Preference Cross-over Ballot in other supported languages and more information are found on our website: <https://www.yoloelections.org/candidate-services/march-5-2024-ppp-presidential-primary-npp-voters>.

The deadline to re-register to vote is February 20, 2024. If you miss the registration deadline, you may register in person at a Yolo County Vote Center or at the Yolo County Elections Office. Vote-by-mail ballots will be mailed 29 days before the election, beginning February 5, 2024, so NPP voters should re-register to vote or make the request for a No Party Preference Cross-over Ballot as soon as possible.

The Elections Office encourages residents to connect with Yolo County ACE - Assessor/Clerk-Recorder/Elections on Facebook: @YoloACE, Instagram: @YoloCoACE, Threads: @YoloCoACE, YouTube: @Yolo County ACE, TikTok: @yolococace and X:@YoloCoACE to receive the most up to date information. ★

West Sacramento to Host Community Academy

Continued from page 1
simply better understand how the city operates.

As the city chooses who will attend, they will be looking to assemble a group that is geographically and demographically representative of West Sacramento's diverse population. Those that are selected will be notified by the end of February. If you were not chosen, or if learning more about your city in this interactive

format sounds like something you are interested in, check back with the city at cityofwestsacramento.org later in 2024 for future opportunities to attend this program.

West Sacramento has many wonderful programs that a vast number of residents are unaware of. Whether your interest is in recycling, fresh vegetables, water quality, yard care, planting on trees or other landscaping,

recreation of all kinds, neighborhood safety, or any number of interests... our local government may have a program that is beneficial to your topic. They have information from professionals, offer education, many programs offer evaluations, coupons, or rebates and lots of freebies. Don't be afraid to look into what our city has to offer us! You may learn something, and it may just save you lots of money. ★

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Guiding Kids Through Hard Things



Regardless of how trauma is showing up, kids who are suffering from the effects of trauma need support. Photo by Myriams-Fotos from Pixabay

By Jon Sundt, Founder of Natural High

No one escapes troubles in life — no one. Some, however, experience more than their fair share.

Kids who experience a traumatic moment can have a variety of responses. In simple terms, they will often respond in ways that are either overt or covert.

When a kid goes through a potentially traumatic experience like the divorce of their parents, abuse, natural disaster, or physical harm, they may have an overt fight response. Their nervous system is doing its job to protect itself from further harm or pain.

That might show up through physical symptoms like shortness of breath, tightness in the chest, digestive issues, difficulty sleeping, or outbursts of anger. Covertly, though, it might present itself differently.

This is considered more of a flight or freeze response, which is also a protective mechanism instigated by the nervous system. You might notice a kid who's suddenly more withdrawn, has faraway looks on their face, or does not want to engage in their

typical activities. They might spend more time disengaging from social interactions, more time gaming or on their smartphones, or binge-watching shows. Maybe they sleep a lot more or quickly shut down conversations.

Regardless of how trauma is showing up, kids who are suffering from the effects of trauma need support.

They need an adult to guide them in addressing, processing, and resolving the pain that's baked into their systems. Otherwise, out of their pain and lack of perspective or maturity, they might go down paths to numb, escape, hide, or run from their pain. That choice inevitably leads down an unhelpful, unhealthy path that will catch up with them eventually.

How do we understand the effects of their traumatic experiences, and what can we do to help kids who go through them?

According to a licensed therapist and nervous system coach/consultant, Charlie Ruce, parents (and adults) who pay attention to the inner lives of kids will provide a more supportive, rich environment

to offer resilience and recovery. That starts with modeling, he says, in a recent interview for The YouSchool podcast.

He recommends parents share their common, ordinary everyday experiences from two perspectives:

-Share about the what: the circumstances, the events, the words that were spoken, and the observable details. Let them see how normal it is for you to reflect on your day, where you went, who you saw, and what you did.

-Share the why and the how: talk about what's below the surface. Share why you responded the way you did, and how you felt throughout the experience. This is the part that is teaching the good stuff: you're showing kids how important it is to process and explore what's underneath the surface.

Teaching kids to reflect on their experiences, whether positive or negative — their participation, uncovering their motivations, examining their responses, and processing the effects — will serve as an asset for life and a protective factor against making poor and unhealthy choices. ★

All City Writers Presents: Liminal States

All City Writers News Release

WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Immerse yourself in creative expression! Join All City Writers on March 2nd at 6:30 PM at the West Sacramento Black Box Theatre for "Liminal States" as we enter our 2nd year together!

Witness this experimental, award-winning group of performers as they explore mental health, through the creation of our one-person shows - it's a unique glimpse into our stories-in-progress, and we would love for you to be part of the artistic adventure!

"I love how our different styles have all come together so beautifully," founder AndYes (David Loret de Mola) said. "We

put so much care into having each showcase be deep yet nurturing."

Under the vision of director Nicole C. Limón, founder of Matriarchy Theatre and Theatres of Color), this diverse collective shatters artistic boundaries. On our cast of accomplished performers is two-time finalist of the College Union Poetry Slam Invitational (CUPSI) Nigerian-American poet Natachi Mez; Cuban-American spoken word champion of Sacramento AndYes; and award-winning filmmaker Jorge Quintana.

Joining them is the internationally renowned multi-faceted National Poetry Slam representative Isaac Torres; acclaimed poet JRowe who has graced stages like the Democratic

National Convention and the Women of the World Poetry Slam; and the powerful artistry of Ms. Moxiebrain's music and storytelling. Together, they address crucial issues like women's empowerment, mental health, and self-actualization with their distinct creative blends and styles.

Expect an unforgettable exploration of love, identity, and humanity through this powerful lens. Witness the depth and brilliance of artistic expression at its finest, masterminded by Limón and brought to life by this diverse and talented group.

For tickets, go to: tinyurl.com/LSACW - tickets are \$25, but only \$20 until Feb. 16th!

Follow us on Instagram @All.City.Writers - and email us at writersallcity@gmail.com! ★

Check Out These Projects

By MPG Staff

Capital Projects Community Listening Sessions -

The Capital Projects Department is hosting a series of Community Listening Sessions. Residents are encouraged to join and share their thoughts on community engagement and outreach related to Capital Improvement Projects.

- RSVP to the sessions:
 - Thursday, February 29, 6-7 pm
 - Bridgeway Lakes Boathouse, 3650 Southport Pkwy
 - RSVP at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NQ8PYNP>
 - Saturday, March 9 from 9-10 am

- West Sacramento Recreation Center, 2801 Jefferson Blvd
- RSVP at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Y8MLXS6>
- Saturday, March 9 from 11-12 pm
- West Sacramento City Hall 1st Floor, 1110 West Capitol Avenue
- RSVP at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NQ9FX72>
- Wednesday, March 13 from 6-7 pm
- Bryte Career and College Training, 637 Todhunter Ave
- RSVP at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NQY2CWD>
- For more information, please visit <https://wsac.city/cplistingessions>. ★

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www.camelliasocietyofsacramento.org

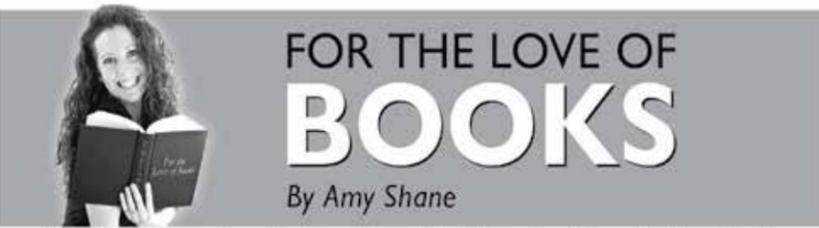
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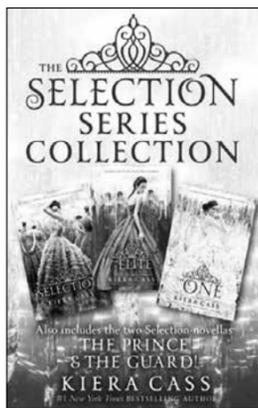
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The Series that will Spark the Fairytale in all of Us

The Selection Series Box Set
by Kiera Cass



Thirty-five girls compete but only one will win the Prince's heart. America is just an average lower-caste girl who works hard to make ends meet for her family. Living in the newly united country of Illea, people live and die in the caste their families have been assigned to. But America doesn't care about castes. Her family survives with just enough food on their table every night, and she gets to do what she loves, sing and perform, as she secretly hopes to marry the forbidden love of her life, Aspen. However, America's life drastically changes for the worse when the country announces the lottery- a competition for all eligible girls to compete for the Prince's heart and be crowned Princess of Illea. Even though every girl in the country eagerly anticipates the lottery, America only sees entering as a way to ruin her life.

From the moment the announcer read off America's name for The Selection, her life became a whirlwind, as she was suddenly thrust into the competition. The selected girls compete, fight, sabotage, and form friendships as they all try to be the girl

remains in the competition by being who she truly is: an outspoken and intriguing girl who throws caution into the wind. America is not afraid of telling anyone what she thinks, including the Prince. Even with her brutal honesty, the Prince can't help but be enamored with her, keeping her in the competition purely for her firm conviction.

As the competition narrows down to the Elite, only six girls remain, and America becomes torn between her first love and Prince Maxon, yet she is the only one in the competition who finds her heart divided. The remaining girls know exactly what they want and will go to any lengths to safeguard their

and friendship are tested to the greatest lengths as the remaining girls' lives are shattered, and the real meaning behind holding the crown is presented before them. While the competition has forced America to grow stronger than she ever thought possible, it has also highlighted the downfalls of being royalty. Teaching America not only the type of leader she could fight to become but also if she wants to fight for that type of life, and turn her back on love.

Charged with emotional angst and heartbreaking struggle, Kiera Cass thrills readers with her enchanting and enthralling *The Selection Series*. Beautiful, as it is endearing, this series will break readers' hearts as well as mend them, repeatedly. Leaving the conclusion to etch itself permanently in the remnants of their hearts, forever.

America and Prince Maxon's journey is realistic and honest, causing readers' minds to reel into endless conclusions. Readers will be shocked by the moments that forever changed the competition and opened America's heart, forcing readers to question the path

Social Security Matters

Should I Claim Social Security at 68, or Wait Until I'm 70?



By Russell Gloor,
AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I have a question regarding my SS benefits. I turned 68 this month and work part time. I earned \$28,000 last year but will probably gross \$36,000 to \$38,000 this year. My husband collects his SS, and he earned \$25,000 last year. I was told by a financial planner that I should apply for my benefits now, instead of waiting until I'm 70. I would collect \$1700/month at 68 and \$1944/month if I wait. Which is the smarter move?

Signed: Seeking Answers

Dear Seeking: I'm sure your financial advisor would agree that your decision on when to claim your Social Security comes down to just a few basic things – 1) how badly you need the money, 2) your life expectancy, and 3) whether you will receive a spousal boost from your husband when you claim.

Because you have already passed your full retirement age (FRA) of 66 years and 4 months, your work earnings won't negatively affect your monthly SS benefit amount. If you claim now, however, your work earnings will affect how much of your SS benefits will be subject to income tax. Assuming you file your income tax as "married/

filing jointly," up to 85% of the Social Security benefits you receive during the tax year will become part of your income taxable by the IRS. If you do not urgently need the extra money that your SS will provide, then waiting longer to claim will also postpone paying income tax on your received benefits, and that may be a consideration.

Your life expectancy is key in making your decision on when to claim. You already know that your benefit will be \$244 per month more if you wait until you are 70 to claim. If you claim at 68 (e.g., this month), you will collect about \$40,800 by the time you reach 70. If you, instead, wait until age 70 to get that extra \$244/month benefit, it will take you about 14 years collecting at the higher rate to offset the \$40,800 you would have received had you claimed now (in other words, you would break even moneywise at about age 84). If your life expectancy is longer, then waiting to claim may be the better choice. Of course, no one knows how long they will live but, for general guidance, average life expectancy for a woman your current age is about 87. Family history and your current health are obviously influencing factors as well. If you wish to get a more personal estimate of your life expectancy, I suggest using this tool:

www.socialsecurityreport.org/tools/life-expectancy-calculator/.

In the end, if you believe you will attain at least average life expectancy and you don't urgently need the money now, waiting longer will not only give you

a higher monthly benefit in your later years, but also the most in cumulative lifetime benefits. If, however, you have reason to suspect you won't achieve at least average life expectancy, or you need the SS money sooner, claiming before age 70 is likely the better move.

One other thing to consider: If your benefit as your husband's spouse will be more than your own earned maximum SS retirement benefit, then you should claim your SS benefit now. Your maximum benefit as a spouse would be 50% of your husband's full retirement age entitlement and, if that is more than your own benefit will be at age 70, then claiming now to get your maximum spousal benefit would be your best choice. To get a spousal benefit from your husband, your personal FRA entitlement (not your age 68 amount) would need to be less than half of his FRA entitlement. If that isn't the case, then you should make your decision based only on your own Social Security entitlement, as described above.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. ★

California Should Not Tolerate Having So Many Children Struggling To Read



By Dan Walters,
CALMatters.org

Of all the skills that children may acquire in school, none surpasses reading in importance.

The ability to read and comprehend what's read is the key to all other learning, either formal or personal, and the students in California's schools are not doing well.

Results from the state's latest academic achievement tests, released last October, revealed that fewer than half met standards in English language skills and scarcely a third met those in mathematics.

California's overall score in the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the federal government's program of measuring academic achievement, is equally bleak, ranked seventh from the bottom.

One reason the state fares so poorly is that for decades, California embraced trendy theories of teaching them to read, such as "whole language," while spurning strong evidence that using phonics, a more traditional method, would produce better results.

The conflict, dubbed the "reading wars," was not confined to California, but the state was one of the major battlegrounds given its size.

Ultimately, phonics-based instruction, recast as "the science of reading," won out, at least on paper. But the state has not been insistent on its adoption, and many local school systems have continued to use less effective teaching methods.

Last month, the National Council on Teacher Quality released a report on how well states are implementing the science of reading and California achieved only a mediocre score, once again falling behind other states, such as Texas, Florida, Arkansas, Louisiana and Alabama, that many would regard as regressive.

California won plaudits in some areas, such as setting reading standards in teacher training and including skills in its licensing process, but fell behind in requiring ongoing literacy training and overseeing teacher preparation programs to ensure that the science of reading is being stressed.

"In California, only 58% of fourth grade students can read at a basic level based on the most recent National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP)," according to the report. "That number falls precipitously for California's historically underserved students.

"Students who are not reading at grade level by the time they reach fourth grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school, which in turn leads to additional challenges for them as adults: lower lifetime earnings, higher rates of unemployment, and a

higher likelihood of entering the criminal justice system.

"These alarming statistics can be largely attributed to inequities in access to effective reading instruction, a problem that strong state policy and bold state leaders can solve."

The brighter side of the picture is that within a few months, California will require teacher preparation programs to stress the science of reading with an eye on meeting the state's new literacy standards.

Newly introduced legislation would make the science of reading mandatory. In the absence of such a mandate, it could take years for full implementation, if ever, because many liberal school districts will continue to resist, falsely believing that phonics are incompatible with educational equity.

California has an odd policy on overseeing what happens in local school systems. It closely monitors their finances and will essentially seize districts that are in danger of becoming insolvent, but takes a more hands-off stance regarding educational outcomes.

Reading is too important to allow local school systems to decide if and when they will adopt the science of reading. As the report on teacher quality points out, a child who can't read is likely to fall behind for the remainder of his or her life.

Dan Walters has been a journalist for more than 60 years, spending all but a few of those years working for California newspapers. ★

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during school year

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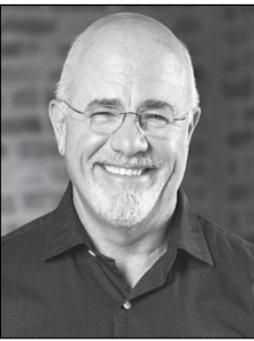
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A Big Mess

Dave Ramsey Says

to be so blunt, but you've got a really big mess on your hands.

Long story short, the money you make at another full-time job is likely to decide whether you can stay in your home. If you've got a mortgage, home equity loan and business debts hanging over your head, the chances of this are slim. You probably need to consider the idea moving into a small, affordable apartment for a while, too. If you do this, get your debts paid off and your finances back in order—which includes living on a budget and saving—you might be able to buy a house again in a few years.

I know the idea of giving up your home and business is hurtful, but sometimes when you have a serious illness, extensive surgery is needed to fix the problem. And right now, you've got a very serious financial illness.

I want you to understand how I'm looking at this,

Tammy. The house alone is not the problem. You borrowed money to open a business, and that was your first mistake. You also have no savings, which is another mistake, and now your business isn't making a profit. See how all of it combined adds up into one big mess?

I love your spirit, and the fact that you want to be an entrepreneur. But you've got to get control of your money first. If you don't, this thing will eat you alive.

— Dave

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

Dear Dave,
I'm a single mom, and I opened my own small business last year. The business isn't growing at all, and my mom and dad are helping me with the bills. On top of all this, I don't receive any child support payments from my ex-husband. But my biggest concern is our home. I bought it four years ago, and when I opened my business, I did it with a home equity loan. Do you have any advice?

— Tammy

Dear Tammy,

You need to close up your business, at least temporarily, and go find some money-making work. I'm sorry

**Crime Reports
WEST SACRAMENTO**



- 2-01-24 MARC HAYDEN BREWER Arrested for Petty theft, Possession of unlawful paraphernalia, Receiving known stolen property, Possession of narcotics, Possession of burglary tools.
- 2-07-24 CHRISTOPHER GREEN Arrested for Petty theft, Disorderly conduct: Loitering, Tamper with vehicle and Possession of burglary tools.
- 2-09-24 STEPHEN HECKMAN Arrested for Grand theft, Possession of unlawful paraphernalia and a bench warrant.
- 2-09-24 LEOPOLD HAMLIN Arrested for Disorderly conduct after allegedly being seen trying to open doors to buses that belonged to the business, then trying to enter vehicles of the neighboring business.
- 2-09-24 ASHVEER SINGH Arrested for DUI: Alcohol after a single car accident.
- 2-10-24 ANGEL HERNANDEZ Arrested for Attempt to commit receiving stolen property and a bench warrant after allegedly being caught in a stolen car.

INCIDENT/CRIME REPORTS

- 2-02-24 Victim was dropping off coffee at the shop when an unknown suspect(s) broke his rear vehicle window and took 2-3 thousand dollars' worth of cigarettes. \$3,000 loss. Burglary.
- 2-03-24 Theft of employee bicycle from Walmart parking lot. \$500 loss. Petty theft.
- 2-06-24 The reporting party stated that he left his Knaack toolbox, full of miscellaneous tools, out of his driveway and when he woke up the next morning and it was gone. \$1,900 loss. Grand theft.
- 2-06-24 Suspect allegedly stole \$646.84 in merchandise and refused to comply with asset protection employees. The suspect then fled in a vehicle with the merchandise. The business wishes to press charges. \$647 loss. Petty theft.
- 2-06-24 Unknown suspect threw a rock at the front door and cracked the door then walked away. \$900 loss. Vandalism.
- 2-05-24 The reporting party stated that a homeless individual stole her trash can. \$396 loss. Petty theft.
- 2-07-24 Burglary by unknown suspect(s) at Goodwill. \$1,060 loss. Burglary: First Degree and Vandalism.
- 2-07-24 Propane tanks stolen from metal container. \$500 loss. Petty theft.
- 2-08-24 Two unknown suspects allegedly broke into business and stole cash from ATM. \$1,000 loss. Burglary.
- 2-9-24 Left rear passenger window broken and punched ignition by unknown suspect. Tamper with vehicle.
- 2-09-24 Left rear passenger window broken and punched ignition. \$1,500 loss. Tamper with vehicle.
- 2-09-24 Unknown suspect fraudulently accepted an application deposit. \$50 loss. Obtain money under false pretenses.
- 2-11-24 The reporting party called and stated that someone threw a brick through the driver side window and stole some CDs out of his car. \$11 loss. Burglary.
- 2-11-24 Wallet stolen out of locker and credit cards are being used. Burglary and Theft by use of access card information.

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Legal Advertising
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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENTS

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENTS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20231076
The following person(s) is doing business as: Smart AZ, 188 Harvey Way, Davis, CA 95618.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240047
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: River Bend Nursing Center, 2215 Oakmont Way, West Sacramento, CA 95691 County of YOLO

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240056
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: 1. Dentists of Davis, 2. Dentists of Davis Dental Group, 4625 Second Street, Suite 100, Davis, CA 95618 County of YOLO

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240039
The following person(s) is doing business as: HANDYMAN HAULING & BEYOND, 2455 W CAPITOL AVE., APT. 286 WEST SACRAMENTO, CA 95691, County of YOLO.

titious business name or names listed above on 12/01/2023 /s/ VIKTOR USTINOV
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Yolo County on 01/12/2024.

Jesse Salinas, County Clerk/Recorder
By: K LOPEZ, Deputy
Publish: 2/2, 2/9, 2/16, 2/23/24
CNS-3775838#
NEWS-LEDGER 2-23-24

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20231019
The following person(s) is doing business as: Khalsa Truck Trailer Repair, 5766 Lolet Way, Sacramento, CA 95835.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240074
The following person(s) is doing business as: Rod Equipment Rental, 1550 Harbor Boulevard Suite 140, West Sacramento, CA 95691.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240088
The following person(s) is doing business as: The Goodnight Room/The Goodnight Club, 524 Main Street Suite 101, Woodland, CA 95695.

Jesse Salinas, County Clerk/Recorder
By: kquam, Deputy
2/16, 2/23, 3/1, 3/8/24
CNS-3782060#
NEWS-LEDGER 3-8-24

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240099
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: Extra Space Storage (#3597), 19389 County Road 102, Woodland, CA 95776 County of YOLO

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240134
The following person(s) is doing business as: Northern California Breakthrough Parenting, 194 West Main Street Suite 201, Woodland, CA 95695.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240130
The following person(s) is doing business as: LSGG LLC, 1712 Picasso Avenue Suite B, Davis, CA 95618.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240060
The following person(s) is doing business as: MP Plumbing, 3453 Kauai Road, West Sacramento, CA 95691.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240013
The following person(s) is doing business as: La Casita Del Tamal..., 1165 Chapman Street, Winters, CA 95694

By: Jesse Salinas, Deputy
Publish: Feb 23, March 1, 8, 15, 2024
LA 3-15-24

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240069
The following person(s) is doing business as: Kalesa Transport, 1567 Carmel Valley Drive, Woodland, CA 95776.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240109
The following person(s) is doing business as: Pink Dozen, 1300 E Covell Boulevard Suite D, Davis, CA 95616.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240130
The following person(s) is doing business as: LSGG LLC, 1712 Picasso Avenue Suite B, Davis, CA 95618.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240116
The following person(s) is doing business as: NMotions Transportation, 3142 Pender Island Street, West Sacramento, CA 95691.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240116
The following person(s) is doing business as: NMotions Transportation, 3142 Pender Island Street, West Sacramento, CA 95691.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240113
The following person(s) is doing business as: Doman Treated Wood, 1492 Churchill Downs Avenue, Woodland, CA 95776, County of Yolo.

Woodland Wood Preservers, Ltd., 1492 Churchill Downs Avenue, Woodland, CA 95776
This business is conducted by Corporation.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on October 17, 2018 /s/ John Russell, President

Jesse Salinas, County Clerk/Recorder
By: kquam, Deputy
2/23, 3/1, 3/8, 3/15/24
CNS-3784064#
NEWS-LEDGER 3-15-24

SUMMONS

SUMMONS (CITACION JUDICIAL) CASE NUMBER: CV2022-1914
NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: Victor Parra, Victor Parralopez, Victor Parra Lopez, Victor Lopez; and DOES 1 through 20

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: Colleen Erdes
NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days.

There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program.

REQUEST FOR BID

REQUEST FOR BID for Davis Non-Profit Facility, Davis CA.
YCN Project Oversight is seeking bids for qualified contractors to provide construction services for the Davis Non-Profit Facility in Davis, California.

The bid documents can be reviewed and obtained at the Sacramento Builders Exchange or by reaching out via email to Lisa.l@ycnoversight.com. Interested bidders are responsible for checking both the Exchange or links periodically for any updates, revisions, or Addenda.

The facility consists of a one-story wood framed building in a courtyard configuration with four distinct wings. The Main building totals approximately 8,712 square feet, without including the area of the courtyard. The main building includes various occupancy group types for different areas of the facility.

A non-mandatory site visit is scheduled for 2:00pm on Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 2525 Research Park Drive, Davis, CA 95618.

Sealed bids shall be received prior to 2:00pm on Tuesday March 12, 2024 at 2940 Spafford Street, #200, Davis, CA 95618. A public bid opening will occur immediately thereafter.

This is considered a non-prevailing wage project.

Each bid must conform to the requirements of the drawings, project specifications manual, and other documents comprising the Bid Documents. Inquiries regarding the project or bid document can be made by contacting Neal Cordeiro, Owner's Representative, at neal.c@ycnoversight.com.

No bid will be considered unless it is made on the bid form that is part of the Project Documents, filled out in its entirety, and accompanied by a cashiers check or bidder's bond for 10% of the amount of the bid including any additive alternates. Additional information and bid requirements can be found in the Bid Documents.

West Sac News Ledger 2-23, 3-1 and 3-8-2024

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE: Self-storage Cube contents of the following customers containing household and other goods will be sold for cash by CubeSmart Asset Management, LLC as Agent for Owner 541 Harbor Blvd. West Sacramento Ca, 95691 to satisfy a lien on March 14, 2024 at approx. 12:00PM at www.storagetreasures.com:

Susan Buck, Michael Garcia, Jaime Toral, Laura Romo, Joann Jones
West News Ledger 2-23 and 3-1-2024

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed proposals will be received and submitted electronically through the City's Procurement system at https://www.cityofwestsacramento.org/business/invitation-to-bid until 2:30 PM local time on March 21, 2024, at which results will be posted and available for public review for the:

POLICE DEPARTMENT TI PROJECT

This Invitation to Bid (ITB) is for the construction phase of the Police Department TI Project. The City is seeking a qualified contractor to provide all labor, material, equipment, and services necessary.

CITY SCHEDULE:

Mandatory Bid Walk: February 27, 2024 - 11:00am
West Sacramento Police Department
550 Jefferson Blvd.
West Sacramento, CA 95691

INQUIRIES: Questions about this Invitation to Bid should be submitted through the OpenGov at https://www.cityofwestsacramento.org/business/invitation-to-bid. If appropriate, the City will post responses to Bidder questions through the Procurement system.

West Sac News Ledger 2-16 and 2-23-2024

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Failing Our Newborns

She opened a business to deliver babies, then California policies drove her out of the country

By Kristen Hwang,
CALMatters.org

CALMATTERS - Madeleine Wisner dreamed of making community midwife services available to all expecting parents regardless of their income when she opened Welcome Home Community Birth Center in south Sacramento.

But 451 births and five years later, Wisner is packing up her family and moving from California to New Zealand, where government policies are far more favorable to midwifery. She closed her birth center in October.

Wisner was the only licensed community midwife who took Medi-Cal patients in the greater Sacramento region, but she's leaving, she said, because it was impossible to sustain the birth center. Insurance refused to pay two out of every three claims she submitted for services including prenatal visits, labor and delivery, at-home postpartum check ups, and lactation consultations, Wisner said.

"The entire system is not made for us," Wisner said. "I look at Medi-Cal as the standard of care, and midwives should be part of the standard of care."

Her experience and decision to leave reflects larger problems for California midwives highlighted in a new study released today from UC San Francisco's Osher Center for Integrative Health. It focuses on community midwives who work outside of hospitals but have licenses and training to perform much of the same reproductive care doctors provide to women with low-risk pregnancies.

The report warns that access to maternity care will worsen in California if the state does not increase the number of community midwives who are Medi-Cal providers at a time when hospitals are shutting down labor and delivery wards and maternal mortality is trending upwards.

Seventy-five community midwives are registered with Medi-Cal, according to data provided by the state. More than 1,000 nurse midwives are registered with Medi-Cal, but the majority of those

providers work in hospitals and not in community settings, researchers said.

Outdated licensing requirements, tortuous state regulations and cumbersome insurance policies make it nearly impossible for community midwives to accept Medi-Cal patients, the UCSF report found.

Medi-Cal is the state's health insurance program for extremely low-income residents. It pays for 40% of all births statewide, and midwife care is a guaranteed benefit for expecting mothers.

On paper, the benefit includes community midwifery, which focuses on providing care close to where people live either at a birth center or in the home. But the reality is different, researchers and providers say.

"So many people who have taken Medi-Cal in the past have had to stop or close their practices, and so many people who want to have not been able to make it happen," said Ariana Thompson-Lastad, lead author of the study.

California's 'Momnibus' Act

The UCSF findings come at a time when the state is trying to make inroads against persistent maternal and infant health disparities, particularly among Black families. Statewide surveys show Black mothers are the most interested in alternative birth support through doulas and midwives, which have been shown to improve a variety of birth outcomes.

Doulas are birth workers who provide non-medical social and emotional support during and after pregnancy while licensed midwives are clinically trained professionals who can provide a range of independent reproductive care for low-risk moms and babies.

In an effort to chip away at inequities, state lawmakers passed the "California Momnibus Act" three years ago. It required Medi-Cal to cover postpartum care for a full year after birth — the period when most maternal deaths happen — and added doula benefits. In January, rate increases for California doulas made



Midwife Madeleine Wisner evaluates Chloé Mick's belly during a maternal care consultation at Mick's home in Sacramento on Feb. 6, 2024. Photo by Miguel Gutierrez Jr., CalMatters

them the highest-paid in the nation.

But state regulations simply aren't designed to accommodate the services community midwives provide, UCSF researchers found.

For example, the Medi-Cal application until recently asked midwives to list a supervising physician even though licensed midwives are authorized to practice independently. Providers also said most community midwives conduct home visits during pregnancy and especially after birth, but Medi-Cal billing policies make it difficult to get reimbursed for services that happen outside of a clinical facility.

"The overarching policy issue for licensed midwives in California is that we continue to be regulated under a very dysfunctional arrangement," said Rosanna Davis, president of the California Association of Licensed Midwives.

Wisner, who served mostly Medi-Cal patients, said on average insurance reimbursed just 17% of her costs — roughly \$1,451 out of \$8,500 for a full course of prenatal, birth and postpartum care — and frequently took months to pay her.

"We've had people have two or three babies with us

before we get paid for the first one," Wisner said.

The state is trying to make improvements, said Holly Smith, co-lead of the California Midwifery Learning Collaborative, but the system is still "failing a lot of people." The midwifery learning collaborative is a five-state initiative aimed at improving access to midwife care. The state agency that oversees Medi-Cal recently joined, Smith said.

In an emailed statement, the Department of Health Care Services said it is working closely with the midwifery learning collaborative to help midwives "successfully navigate and work within Medi-Cal." The department is using a document drafted by the collaborative to "continue making program and policy improvements" on issues related to billing and applications, the statement said.

Midwives Could Help Fill Maternity Gaps

Large studies of birth center and at-home birth outcomes show that when trained midwives care for low-risk patients, cesarean section and preterm birth rates decrease while breastfeeding rates and reports of satisfactory birth experiences increase. Severe outcomes and deaths of mother and baby are

exceedingly rare and similar to the rates found in planned hospital births. UCSF researchers also found that community midwives see patients more frequently before and after birth and are able to catch complications early.

The majority of Medi-Cal births — more than 80% — are babies of color. They and their mothers suffer some of the worst infant and maternal health outcomes. Even though the state has made improvements overall, it has struggled to curb severe pregnancy complications and death among Black women and babies. Black women of all income levels are more than four times as likely as white women to die from pregnancy-related complications and their babies are nearly three times as likely to die within a year, according to state data.

Physicians deliver the vast majority of babies in California, and while the percentage of babies delivered by certified nurse midwives has increased slightly in the past decade most certified nurse midwives work in hospital maternity wards under doctors. Often when maternity services end, providers leave the area.

At least 46 hospitals have closed maternity wards since 2012, leaving a dozen counties without a single hospital delivering babies, a CalMatters investigation found.

Smith, with the midwifery learning collaborative, said historically state laws and policies have supported physician-only maternity care.

"It's not safe anymore to do that," Smith said. "We have a maternity desert situation. Literally hospitals are closing, and birth centers will be a necessary strategy for that."

One of Her Last California Patients

In a cozy house in Sacramento's Oak Park neighborhood, Wisner has Chloé Mick lie back on her couch while her kids and husband play outside. Wisner measures the length of Mick's uterus, feels for the baby's position and they both listen to the baby's heartbeat. Mick is 25 weeks pregnant and tired.

"I feel the most depleted probably just from having two other children that I hope I have the inner strength to not get a bad attitude during the process and make it through," Mick tells Wisner.

Wisner responded, "Has it occurred to you that having a bad attitude is OK?"

Mick is planning a home birth, and Wisner assures her that going to the hospital would not be "giving up." It would be listening to her body's needs and responding appropriately. They make plans for what to do if the baby is breech or if Wisner's New Zealand visa comes before Mick gives birth. When Mick's second child was born, she was on Medi-Cal and Wisner was the only midwife who would take her.

"(The hospital) really feels like a business. You're in and out, and you don't have a rapport or relationship with them...It feels like your bodily autonomy is taken away," Mick said. "And then you look back, and you wish you had done things different."

Wisner wishes her birth center's story had ended differently. Her practice finally had enough patient volume to maybe be sustainable, she said, but the other community midwives who worked with her didn't want to argue with Medi-Cal insurers day in and day out. Over the past five years, Wisner estimates she poured \$250,000 into the birth center to keep it open. It's a big reason why she's leaving California for another country where she'll make \$60,000 a year working four days a week with a team of other midwives.

"There was always this promise that the system would be reformed, you know, Medi-Cal is gonna get reformed," Wisner said. "I was really let down."

Supported by the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF), which works to ensure that people have access to the care they need, when they need it, at a price they can afford. Visit www.chcf.org to learn more. ★



Midwife Madeleine Wisner uses a fetal doppler on Chloé Mick's belly during a maternal care consultation at Mick's home in Sacramento on Feb. 6, 2024. Wisner is listening to the fetal heartbeat. Photo by Miguel Gutierrez Jr., CalMatters

COMICS & PUZZLES

The Spats



by Jeff Pickering



Amber Waves



by Dave T. Phipps

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



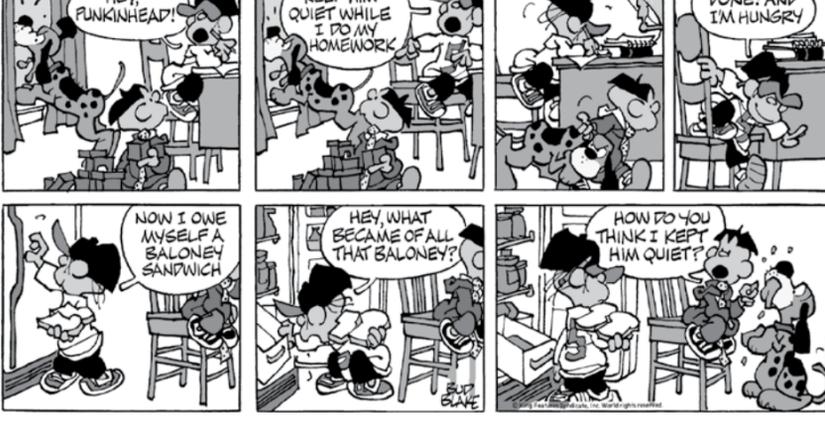
Differences: 1. Flower picture is reversed. 2. Clock is larger. 3. Nose is different. 4. Pillow is different. 5. Curtain is larger. 6. Drawer is missing.

Out on a Limb



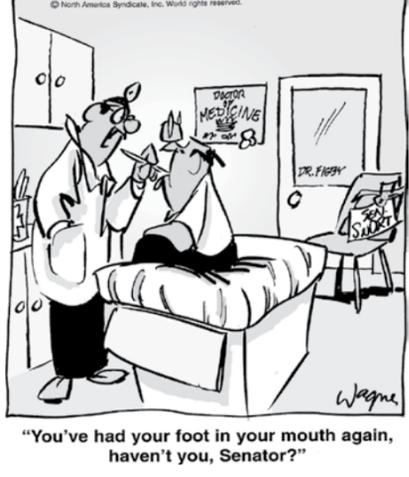
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- CLUES**
- ACROSS**
- Anti-seniors sentiment
 - ____ Pérignon, Champagne
 - Big Bang's original matter
 - Prefix for earliest
 - Call to Maria
 - Bob and ____
 - "Peter, Peter Pumpkin ____"
 - "Le ____ des cygnes"
 - Like yesteryear
 - *Greta Gerwig's Oscar nominated movie
 - *He's nominated for playing Leonard Bernstein
 - Nothing
 - White ____ shopping event
 - Federal food safety agency, acr.
 - It ran away with the spoon
 - ROTC happenings
 - Figure skating jump
 - Grad
 - Arrogant one
 - Archaic preposition
 - Passé
 - Scrubbed
 - Sugarcoating
 - Money in Mexico City
 - What DJs do
 - Trickery
 - Swerves
 - Sigma Alpha Epsilon
 - *Typical number of nominations in one Oscar category
 - Emergency responder, acr.
 - *"Nyad" nominee
 - *"What kind of moon?"
 - *"Finnegan's Wake" author
 - Mother load offering
 - Java cotton tree
 - Artemis' companion
 - Fat of olives
 - *What actors do
 - Spinner's product
 - Wisecrack
 - Like Phoenix
- DOWN**
- Cornelius of the movies
 - Snap up
 - 'I' in Greek alphabet
 - Howard of radio fame
 - Death-related
 - One of the Earnhardts
 - Spermatozoa counterparts
 - Muhammad's birthplace
 - Review service, with .com
 - Use a ladle
 - At any time
 - *"No Country for Old ____" multi Oscar winner
 - Suitors
 - Trojan War story
 - *Just an ____-fashioned love song"
 - Slumber
 - Fl., as in fl. oz.
 - *"A Confederacy of ____" sing.
 - Place above a ceiling
 - Dueler's strike
 - Overnight lodgings
 - Shoelace bunny ears
 - Divine saying

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Food & Farm NEWS

Farmers Assess Damages After Recent California Storm Surge

With a respite from stormy weather, farmers say they are surveying for damage and waiting for the ground to dry so they can access fields and orchards to make repairs or do other practices. Historic and deadly storms that brought two weeks of rain and powerful winds to California led to mudslides, flooding and widespread power outages and related evacuations. A state of emergency was declared for eight Southern California counties. Even with farming challenges caused by the storms, farmers say they are grateful for the winter weather, which adds water to the state.

Valentine's Day Inspires, Tests Flower Retailers and Wholesalers

With Valentine's Day falling on a Wednesday and clear skies forecast for most regions in the U.S., flower retailers were preparing for a busy Feb. 14. Two separate consumer data analyses projected record Valentine's Day flower sales this year. The holiday typically trails only Mother's Day in flower sales. For California cut flower farmers, the winter holiday brought a welcome boost in demand alongside renewed frustration. For two years running, dark skies and stormy weather have impacted flower crops grown in the state for Valentine's Day.

Researchers Strive to Ramp Up Studies to Meet Needs of Organic Farmers

California leads the nation in organic agricultural production, accounting for more than \$14 billion in organic sales and 36% of the U.S. organic market in 2021. Yet research has lagged behind the exponential growth of organic farming in the state. Now that trend may be changing, thanks to an increasing focus on supporting organic studies and information sharing. With organic studies drawing increasing funding interest, researchers and growers are looking to identify potential study areas that are best connected to day-to-day challenges of organic farming.

USDA Offers Grants Up to \$250,000 to Inspire 'Value-Added' Farm Products

Federal funding is available under the Value-Added Producer Grants program to help farmers and ranchers generate new products and create marketing opportunities. The U.S. Department of Agriculture may award up to \$75,000 for planning activities or up to \$250,000 for capital expenses related to producing and marketing value-added agricultural products. USDA said it is interested in proposals for initiatives aimed at reducing pollution and increasing resilience to impacts of climate change. Some \$31 million in funding is available through the program. ★

Red Cross and Black History Month

Red Cross News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION (MPG)

- As we embark on the month of February, a time dedicated to honoring the remarkable achievements of Black Americans, we are filled with pride and gratitude for the vibrant legacies of trailblazers who have shaped our humanitarian mission. This Black History Month, with the theme "Black Excellence Is in Our Blood," we recognize the pivotal role that blood donations from Black individuals play in meeting the transfusion needs of patients, especially those battling sickle cell disease.

We hope you will all take a moment to reflect on the historical ties between Black excellence and the Red Cross:

-Frederick Douglass, a prominent Black abolitionist and author who escaped slavery, supported Clara Barton's efforts to establish the American Red Cross. Having been impressed by Barton's aid to soldiers who were Black during the Civil War and her desire to improve the protection of the wounded during wartime, Douglass signed the original Articles of Incorporation for

the Red Cross in 1881. February is designated as Black History Month to honor Douglass' birthday on February 14.

-Howard University, one of the nation's top historically Black colleges and universities, formed its Red Cross Unit in March 1917 under the leadership of Red Crosser Hallie E. Queen. Determined to aid the war effort, students met daily to make 1,000 hospital supplies before the semester ended and coordinated entertainment for Black soldiers stationed at Fort Meade. Howard University carries on this tradition today through its Red Cross Club, which hosts blood drives and completes community service projects.

-Dr. Charles R. Drew, a surgeon and pioneer of modern blood banking, was named the first medical director of the Red Cross National Blood Collection Program in 1941. His work with the Red Cross helped save the lives of hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians during World War II. Dr. Drew's efforts to increase the blood supply led to the use of bloodmobiles and other collection, preservation and distribution processes still

used today.

"Black Excellence Is in Our Blood" is more than just a mantra; it is a call to action. The American Red Cross is facing a nationwide emergency blood shortage, and it is another reason why the Red Cross is teaming up with partners in the Black community to inspire blood donors to contribute in honor of Black History Month. You too can commemorate this occasion by scheduling a blood, platelet, or plasma donation appointment at redcrossblood.org. As a token of appreciation, those who donate from Feb. 1-29, 2024, will receive a \$20 Amazon.com gift card by email!

As we're also experiencing severe weather, we're seeing severe winter weather across the country and seasonal illnesses affecting the blood supply, too. I encourage each of you to prioritize your safety and that of your loved ones by following the Red Cross flood safety tips.

Your assistance in the Red Cross mission is a testament to the strength of our diverse community. Together, we can make a lasting impact on the lives of those in need. Thank you! ★

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