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Offers a Taste
of the Undead**

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Land Park News

VOL 33 • ISSUE 05

Bringing You Community News For Over 30 Years

MARCH 8, 2024

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Introducing the New, New China



Chef Stanley Hoang prepares egg rolls with cabbage, celery, carrots, and salt.

**Story and photos by
Mitch Barber**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - This isn't Danny Leung's first restaurant rodeo. You might recognize him from Frank Fat's where he was a server while

he went to college. You might recognize Leung from the "many," he said, area restaurants he has managed.

Leung is comfortable in the Pocket area after having immigrated from Hong Kong in 1982 and

attending Cordova High School, later majoring in computer science. How comfortable? He said, "I signed a lease for 10 years. We do plan to be here for a long time."

There are three owners: himself, working as

a manager; Chef Stanley Hoang; and a second manager, Joe Jang. In an intriguing coincidence, the previous owner also went by Danny.

Before the interview, the new Danny said he
Continued on Page 2

River Cats Changing In the New Baseball Year



Dinger stands perched on top of the dugout at Sutter Health Park, 400 Ballpark Drive, West Sacramento.

**By Mitch Barber,
photos courtesy of
Sacramento River Cats**

**SACRAMENTO REGION,
CA (MPG)** - If you've ever watched Triple-A

baseball, you know that it is extremely competitive and just one level below the major leagues. It also happens to be a lot of fun.

Before the 2024 season gets underway in

late March, Messenger Publishing Group interviewed a well-informed man in Sutter Health Park's press box: Jake Ward, who is the Sacramento River Cats communications

coordinator.

The interview began with discussion about Dinger, the River Cats' full-of-fun mascot who plays a key role with the
Continued on Page 3



Major Takedown of Vast Organized Retail Crime Operation

CHP News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The CHP, California Department of Justice, and allied federal agencies announced the takedown of a vast organized retail theft operation spanning 21 counties and involving \$8 million worth of stolen beauty products.

The ringleader of an extensive organized retail crime operation spanning 21 counties, involving an estimated \$8 million in stolen beauty products, was arrested and charges were filed. The announcement signals the culmination of several months of collaborative investigatory efforts in the CHP's ongoing fight against retail crime.

The investigation was conducted by the California Department of Justice (DOJ), CHP, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Postal Inspection Service along with Ulta's Loss Prevention Organized Retail Crime team and Sephora representatives. It is alleged that the ringleader of the scheme paid more than seven people to steal from Ulta Beauty stores, as well as other retail outlets. The ringleader would then sell the stolen cosmetic items on her Amazon storefront.

CHP Commissioner Sean Duryee said, "The success of this investigation is due to the collaboration between several of our Organized

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Memory Care Communities

By Tenfold Senior Living

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - In this series, we discuss topics that are top-of-mind for a person navigating the changes that occur when a family member has Alzheimer’s disease or any other type of dementia. In this article, we provide guidance for selecting a Memory Care community.

When dealing with the complexity of caring for a loved one with dementia, many of us consider a Memory Care community. While browsing websites and brochures is one step, those resources don’t necessarily tell you what to look for to ensure the best situation for your loved one and your family. Here are our suggestions for what to look for when you research and visit Memory Care communities.

1. Understand types of communities.

- A community with ‘a continuum of care’ has Independent Living, Assisted Living, and a secure Memory Care area, enabling residents to stay as they need additional support. Others are stand-alone Memory Care, with the entire community being a secured facility. Size is important. A smaller community may be more intimate, while large communities sometimes offer additional services.

2. Be smart in your research.

- These 3 tips will make the most of your time:

a. When you look at ratings, pay attention to how



When dealing with the complexity of caring for a loved one with dementia, many of us consider a Memory Care community. MPG Courtesy Photo

the community responds to both negative and positive comments. If they’ve taken the time to answer thoughtfully, that means they take feedback seriously.

b. Check the community’s Facebook or Instagram page. Frequent updates and photos of activities indicate a strong activities director and program.

c. It’s essential to see communities in person. Visit at different times of day to see the range of activities. Be wary of a community that limits you to preplanned visits.

3. Look at the physical environment.

- This will be home for your loved one. Is the environment warm and inviting, or does it feel institutional? What’s in the common area? Are activities the main focus, or is the living area dominated by a TV?

4. Ask about programming.

- What does a typical day look like? Ask to see the activities calendar. Is there a mix of activities to engage the mind,

encourage social interaction and maintain physical mobility? Is there a dedicated activities director? If you’re seriously considering this community, ask to meet them.

5. Talk to the staff.

- How you’re treated is a good indication of how your loved one will be treated. Are you greeted as you walk through the community? Are staff interacting with residents? Talk to a staff member. Ask them about their favorite activities to do with residents.

Resources such as senior placement services and agencies offer information about senior living communities and help you to compare factors like cost and services offered. But just like buying a home, the best choice will be very much about how you feel. When we speak with families that are happy with the choice they’ve made, they often say simply “It just felt right.” In our next article: how to talk to your family and loved one about memory care. ★

Introducing the New, New China



The entrance to New China Restaurant.

Continued from Page 1
was “running around, all over. I was out buying stuff.”

Leung said the menu would stay pretty much the same, giving a 90% figure for how much so. His favorite item on the menu is a dish that is also popular at Frank Fat’s: the honey-glazed walnut prawns, a delicacy sold for \$16.

A change to the menu that Leung is excited about is the addition of congee, also referred to

as jook, a Chinese porridge. He described the dish, or bowl, rather, as “rice and broth and a little bit of meat like chicken, fish.” It is something Leung grew up eating.

The restaurant is currently open for exclusively take-out service, but there will be indoor dining, at the latest by March 18, when they will have a grand opening celebration from 2-5 p.m. with free food and drinks, including roast

pork from a whole pig.


Come in and say hello to the new owner/manager, Danny, and find out what his experience at Frank Fat’s and with computer science brings to the Chinese food table.

New China Restaurant is located at 6363 Riverside Blvd., #2, Sacramento
Hours
11 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Sunday-Thursday
11 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Friday and Saturday

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River Cats Changing In the New Baseball Year

Continued from Page 1
team at and away from the ballpark.

“Every year, one of the big events that we do, one of our draws, is Dinger’s birthday party. So, we have a lot of mascots in the area come to the game for his birthday,” Ward said. “Last year, there was Quackals... Dunkson from Stockton... I believe Herky T. Hornet was here.”

The UC Davis mustang mascot, Gunrock, also attended.

Dinger’s birthday event will be on July 21 this year during the Albuquerque Isotopes game.

Ward outlined another enjoyable event, a ballpark get-together, that took place last year.

“We did a sleepover night where we had some fans who could purchase a package to stay on the field and then they showed the movie, ‘Sandlot,’ while they had some sleeping bags and some tents out there on the grass,” Ward said. “...That was a pretty cool one (event).”

This year, on March 30, gameday festivities will revolve around the movie.

But the River Cats aren’t a team of kids with one that says, “You’re killing me, Smalls.” They are a professional team affiliated with the San Francisco Giants in the Pacific Coast League (a league that includes the Sugar Land Space Cowboys, a team name indicative of more fun).

The River Cats’ field is a step up from the make-shift one in the movie. Ward explained how Sutter Health Park is different from the former Raley Field: “We’ve been completely remodeling the inside of our clubhouse.”

There is no irony in what the organization is doing with Sutter Health Park.

“Mental health is just as big as physical health,” Ward said. “It’s something that our organization stresses all the way from the Giants up at the top, all the way down through San Jose (its Single-A affiliate).”

“In addition to expanding our weight-room area and adding a second batting tunnel, they’re also adding family rooms and they’re adding a mental health room,” Ward continued.

The family rooms would make it possible for players to meet a spouse or their children in a laid-back atmosphere.

Another modification has to do with the lights.

“We’re replacing a lot of our lights; we’re moving to LED lights just to be a little bit more energy efficient,” Ward said.

He said they wouldn’t have to go through the war-mup period required of standard floodlights before they shine bright.

Ward was happy to announce that what will stay the same is the head coach.

“Dave Brundage will be back for his seventh season,” he said.

Brundage has the second most wins in franchise history.

A staff change this season revolves around a promotion.

“Our pitching coach from last season — Garvin Alston — he earned one of those promotions (to the major leagues) and he is now going to be the bullpen coach for the Giants,” Ward said.

He was happy about the news, but more focused on the River Cats. “The home opener is Friday, March 29, against the Salt Lake Bees at 6:45 p.m.,” said Ward.

Ward also knew about another special game: “Just about a week prior — this isn’t our opening day but a big event that we’re excited for — we’ll be facing off against the Giants in our exhibition game on Sunday, March 24th.”

The San Francisco Giants and the rest of Major League Baseball don’t use the automated ball-strike (ABS) system, but this year, like last season, the River Cats and the rest of the PCL will use the automated ball-strike. The first three games of each six-game series “will be all-automated,” Ward said, meaning that all ball and strike calls will be relayed to the umpire through an earpiece and called using the Hawk-Eye tracking system. (Tennis fans might recognize the Hawk-Eye name.)

The last three games of each series, Ward said, “We go back to a more traditional system where your umpire calls balls and strikes but we use a challenge system...so if a batter feels that a pitch was called a strike, but he thinks, no, that pitch was outside or it was high, he can turn around and he can initiate a challenge by tapping his helmet.”

Each team will get three challenges to start the game. The pitcher, batter or catcher can initiate a challenge — the inquiry cannot be initiated by the dugout.

“It goes up on the jumbotron,” Ward said.

It’s all part of the competitive, fun experience that is Sacramento River Cats baseball. Play ball!

Sutter Health Park is at 400 Ballpark Drive, West Sacramento.



Fans arrive at Sutter Health Park to watch a day game.



Fans relax on the outfield grass during a game at Sutter Health Park.



Nick Avila, Turlock native and member of the Sacramento River Cats, pitches at Sutter Health Park.



Nick Avila, Turlock native and member of the Sacramento River Cats, pitches at Sutter Health Park.



Dinger stands on the dugout with a beachball, ready for some fun with fans.



The Tower Bridge looms behind the outfield grass at Sutter Health Park.



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ABOUT TOWN

Line Dancing at the Elk’s Lodge
Friday March 22nd
6 pm on dance floor of the Lodge Room. \$10.00 is the cost for entrance.

Bring your friends. This is very much a beginner class. We have an instructor, Shirley Stassi. (\$5 of the \$10 goes to the instructor)
If you are interested in learning this great form of fun and exercise come join us. The level of interest will determine how often we offer the class and days and times. Guest are VERY welcome!

Curtis Park Book Club with Crawford’s Books
March 12, April 9
Curtis Park Book Club is back for 2024!
Join Track 7 Brewing Company and Crawford’s Books every second Tuesday of the month in the Curtis Park taproom for Book Club! Crawford’s Books will be leading the discussion.
Track 7 Brewing Company is located at Track 7 Brewing Co. - Curtis Park, 3747 W. Pacific Ave, Ste F, Sacramento, CA 95820
The event dates and times are: Feb 13, 2024 at 07:00 pm (Tue), Mar 12, 2024 at 07:00 pm (Tue), Apr 9, 2024 at 07:00 pm (Tue).
Questions? Contact Crawford’s Books at sue@crawfordbooks.net

LPVC Volunteer Day April 6th
9:00 am - 11:30 am
Join your Neighbors to support William Land Park and help clean it up on Park Work Day on April 6th.

Your Elks 6 Lodge Needs Your Help!
Help is needed in the office from 9 - 3 Monday through Friday to answer phones, sell event tickets etc.
We also need help in the Rental office to answer the phone.
If you can lend a hand even if it is half a day or one day per week, please contact me and I will get

your information to the appropriate person.
For questions or to volunteer call or send text message to Sue Hill 215-327-7712.

Elk’s Lodge Calendar of Events
Elk’s Lodge Sunday Breakfast
Every Sunday 8:30am - 11am
Bring your friends and family
\$15 tax included
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Made to order Omelets or eggs any way you want. Bacon, sausage, potatoes, biscuits and gravy, pancakes, waffles, coffee large parties should call for reservations
Guest are VERY welcome!
Water Aerobics, Monday 10 am, Wednesday 2 pm
Yoga, Monday 12 pm, Wednesday 3:30 pm
Lodge members free.
Martial Arts, Monday 5 pm
Pickleball, Mon & Wed 9 am-12 pm, Thu 4:30-7:30 pm, Sun 4-7 pm
To sign-up or confirm schedule, join playtimescheduler.com
Improv Night, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 6-8 pm
Wednesday Night Dinner, 5:30 to 7 pm
See above and elks6.net for weekly menu.
Karaoke
Thursday 7 pm
Saturday 7:30pm
Friday Happy Hour
Friday 4-7 pm

Elks Lodge 6 & Boy Scout Troup 259 Shred Event
Kick off your spring cleaning and help our boy scouts! Elks Front Parking Lot at 6446 Riverside Blvd. 95831 on Saturday March 30th 2024, from 9:00am-1:00pm. It’s \$15.00 per Bankers Box.
We hope to see you there!
Land Park Softball
Softball is back in Land Park and will now be a part of the Land Park Pacific Little League organization. LPPLL has been a pillar in our community since 1954 and

is welcoming softball under their umbrella this SPRING!
Early Bird Registration is NOW OPEN!
Visit lppll.com/registration to register and learn more.

Sacramento Area Museums Showcase Region’s Farm-to-Fork Roots All Year Long
The Greater Sacramento region is rich with popular museums and destinations that offer diverse and enriching experiences for individuals, families, residents, and visitors alike. Given the critically important role agriculture continues to play in the region, many local museums offer special exhibits, experiences and activations that highlight ever-enduring Farm-to-Fork connections. A sampling of some of the Farm-to-Fork offerings at local museums includes the following:
California Agriculture Museum – Woodland is home to an entire museum focused on agriculture, filled with a unique collection of harvesters, wheel and crawler-type tractors, combines, trucks, art, artifacts, rotating interactive exhibits and much more. In all, the museum tells the history of Farm-to-Fork, dating back to the Gold Rush era and how the industry evolved from horse drawn to steam driven to fuel powered machines to harvest and transport California’s bounty.
California State Railroad Museum & Foundation – A Fruit Growers Express refrigerated rail car is on permanent display inside the Museum’s Roundhouse. Museum visitors can explore this historic rail car and exhibit, “Farm to Fork: A Public History,” and learn about how refrigerated rail cars enabled California farmers, growers, and producers send farm-to-fork freshness all over the country. Visitors can step inside the historic Fruit Growers Express rail car to see how the ice-cooled rail cars transported produce and built an agricultural

system that exports more wealth than the California Gold Rush. Plus, the popular weekend excursion train, Sacramento Southern Railroad – currently on pause due to an important rail repair project – runs on the historic Walnut Grove Branch Line. This rail line transported pears, asparagus, celery, seeds, and other products from the Delta communities to markets nationwide.
Sacramento Children’s Museum – Young visitors hungry to learn about fresh food have a variety of options at the Children’s Museum, including at the miniature Leo’s Market and Leo’s Food Court (a miniature market of food carts), about bees and honey with the in-house beehive, and an interactive train table highlighting Sacramento’s agricultural landscape in miniature, complete with mini livestock. Plus, the Children’s Museum will be at the Farm-to-Fork Festival (September 22-23) sharing vegetable stamp printing with visitors.
SMUD Museum of Science & Curiosity – MOSAC’s interactive exhibits bring the story of water to life, demonstrating how our region is working together to conserve this natural resource for now and future generations. The “Water Challenge” exhibit lets museum visitors actively shape a watershed’s flow, create a tune for saving water at home, and choose between local or non-local foods to buy based on how everyday decisions impact conservation efforts — all while learning about the environmental footprint along the way.
Utility Exploration Center – The City of Roseville’s Utility Exploration Center (UEC) is a testament to the region’s commitment to sustainable living and resource conservation. Nestled in the heart of a region renowned for its Farm-to-Fork movement, the UEC acts as an educational hub, encouraging residents and visitors alike to delve into the intricacies of energy and water conservation, waste reduction, and

sustainable practices. By fostering an understanding of how we use and preserve resources, the UEC underscores the importance of our agricultural roots.
For more information about upcoming activities offered by Sacramento area museums, “like” them on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/SacMuseums, follow them on Instagram and Twitter @SacMuseums or visit the user-friendly website at www.SacMuseums.org.

Friends of Sutter’s Fort Announces Discounted Admission Rates
SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Friends of Sutter’s Fort, in partnership with Sutter’s Fort State Historic Park, is proud to present a series of family-friendly events and activations this fall highlighted by holiday themed movies, an all-ages concert, and adventurous self-guided evening tours by flashlight or lantern light.
For those interested in visiting inside Sutter’s Fort State Historic Park (that is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily), all Fort admission fees will be waived for the duration of a major roof replacement and seismic stabilization project that is currently underway. Visitors can observe the rehabilitation project firsthand and tour the Central Building, which remains open.

Friends of Sutter’s Fort Friends of Sutter’s Fort is a 501c3 charitable foundation. As a state park cooperating association, we collaborate with California State Parks at Sutter’s Fort State Historic Park to preserve and protect historic structures, and artifacts, and to engage visitors of all ages. For more information, please visit www.sutters-fort.org

Bunny on the Green Saturday, March 24th, 2024
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Location: William Land Golf Course 1701 Sutterville Road.
Families are

encouraged to come and meet The Easter Bunny for the 2nd Annual Bunny on the Green. It is free to visit the Bunny and take photos. There will also be a childrens’ Easter Bonnet contest and putting activities. Guests can purchase food and mimosa’s for the adults. More details to come soon.

Elks 6 Volunteer Opportunities Available
This is just a partial list of ways you can be of service to the Lodge and by extension the community.
- PM Crew - We welcome anyone willing to work but especially if you have experience in mechanical, electrical, general contracting, painting, or plumbing the lodge really needs you.
- Bar Back - Help out the paid bartenders for large events.
- Bartender - Riverside bar for Elks events
There will be a meeting for volunteer bar tenders some time this week. email or text Sue Hill if you want to be on the meeting list
- Sunday Breakfast - Cook, Serve, bus tables
- Wednesday Night Dinners - Help or adopt a night one time or once a month
- Join the membership committee.
Attend events and be available to give tours: Help at membership booth at Farmers Market, Man a membership booth at the Craft Fair or Parking Lot Sale, Make phone calls to members

If any of the above sound like something you would enjoy doing, please contact me for more information and I will make sure you are directed to the proper person. Call or text Sue Hill 215-327-7712
Volunteer for Land Park on May 4
9:00 am - 11:30 am
Join your Neighbors to support William Land Park and help clean it up on Park Work Day on May 4th.



Little Pocket Properties

Beautiful home with 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms, living room, dining area and spacious kitchen. The spacious and open kitchen has been updated with Corian countertops and tons of storage. Home also features a primary suite with bath. Wood floors have been newly refinished and the carpet in the living room was replaced in February 2024. Outside there is a covered deck, a patio, beautiful landscaping and lots of space for entertaining. Little Pocket is located close to William Land Park, Sacramento Zoo, Sacramento City College, shopping and restaurants. Come see this stunning home and discover why Little Pocket is such a highly coveted place to live.



PENDING

905 Roeder Way, Sacramento, CA 95822
3 Beds | 2 Baths | 1,393 sq. ft. | \$599,000

This home features 4 bedrooms and 2 remodeled baths, living room with fireplace, formal dining area, primary suite and inside laundry room. The kitchen has been remodeled and boasts granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, beautiful custom cabinets, a dining bar and a breakfast nook. Outside there's a lushly landscaped yard with beautiful mature trees and a sparkling pool for summer entertaining. Located adjacent to a local park and near Sacramento City College, the Sacramento Zoo, restaurants and shopping. This beautiful property is the perfect place to call home.



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Hollywood Production Films Upcoming Movie in Galt



Leonardo DiCaprio is seen on Feb. 26 during rehearsals for a scene being filmed at Harvey Park. The secretive production is being directed by Paul Thomas Anderson. Photos by Matthew Malone

By Matthew Malone
Staff Writer

GALT, CA (MPG) - The stars came out in the daytime on Feb. 25, as a movie whose cast includes Leonardo DiCaprio, Sean Penn and Regina Hall filmed at Harvey Park and Galt High School.

Although the production has been shrouded in secrecy — no title or synopsis has been officially announced — it has attracted intense interest as it films on-location around Northern California.

Production vehicles lined E Street, Second Street and Third Street, and the sidewalks around Harvey Park were closed to the public. Third Street closed at noon, and most of the afternoon filming took place in the space between the park and the railroad tracks.

Groups of curious onlookers gathered on the far side of the streets around the park, hoping to catch a glimpse of one of the celebrities or get some insight into the filmmaking process. Every person approached by the this publication had learned of the shoot through social media posts.

“It’s been all over social media,” Christina Tapia said, explaining that one of her daughters wants to be an actress. “She was the one that was like, ‘Mom, they closed off all the streets. Can we please go try to find them?’”

Her daughter, Selah, described hearing rumors of the movie shoot.

“We heard it from a bunch of friends. It was going around,” Selah said. “Some people were like, ‘Oh yeah, Leonardo DiCaprio’s coming to Galt.’ And I love Leonardo DiCaprio. He’s one of my favorite celebrities.”

Selah and sister, Rikki, hoped to see DiCaprio delivering lines or recreating a shot from his 2013 movie “The Great Gatsby,” in which he raises a glass of champagne.

Maria Fernandez and Michael Tam were waiting nearby. Fernandez, a Galt resident, remarked on the event’s rarity for the city.

“It’s kind of exciting because nothing really happens here in Galt that



Extras walk across the Harvey Park baseball diamond during filming on Feb. 26.

exciting, so I feel everyone’s excited for it,” Fernandez said.

And Tam said, “I want to see what the process is, maybe catch a glimpse of whoever’s coming in ... and hopefully see some action scenes.”

The production involved its fair share of action; at one point, Penn filmed several takes of a scene in which he was led into a chain-link cage with a rifle at his back. Meanwhile, dozens of extras ran out of the Harvey Park baseball field into a semitruck. DiCaprio was also present, at one point rehearsing a scene that involved throwing an object on top of the cage.

Other stars seen on set included Hall and singer-songwriter Teyana Taylor.

The city of Galt posted on social media that “a special event” would involve simulated gunfire between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m.

Paul Slaviero, who lives in San Jose, happened to be visiting in-laws in town when he learned of the movie. He told the this publication why he and his wife decided to watch the filming.

“He’s one of the greatest actors. ... You take a look at Ben Affleck and Leo DiCaprio and some of the others, they’re the legacy now of great actors, who carry on the torch of what Hollywood, and what great acting, is all about. And here he is today. And I’m thinking that’s exciting for me to take my time to stay here to watch this,” Slaviero said.

The film is written and directed by Paul Thomas Anderson, who has also written and directed movies such as “Boogie

Nights” and “There Will Be Blood.” Warner Bros. is the distributor.

Reached for comment before the Galt filming date, a representative told the this publication, “For the safety of our cast and crew, we would like to refrain from doing any media until after our scheduled filming. Thank you for understanding.”

The production popped up in Humboldt County from late January to early February, and filming moved to the Sacramento area starting on Feb. 3, with shoots at the Sacramento County Administration Building and the Sacramento County Superior Court building, and, on Feb. 6, near the Bob Hope Theatre in Stockton.

The city of Galt acknowledged the filming directly in a Feb. 26 social-media post.

“First off, we would like to extend our sincerest appreciation to Warner Bros. Pictures for choosing Galt as a filming location for their upcoming movie! It is such an honor to have our small town showcased as part of this project,” the post read. It thanked residents for their patience, as well as staff with the police, parks and recreation, and public works departments for their work during and before filming.

On the day of filming, some spectators crowding the sidewalks in the afternoon experienced the movie shoot close up, when a production crew member approached and began recruiting individuals to be extras for the evening scenes. Tapia, who came to accompany her daughters, left to change clothes after the crew member picked her as an extra. ★



Actors Teyana Taylor and Sean Penn (both at center) wait between takes of a scene where Taylor leads Penn into a chain-link cage at gunpoint.



Ten years ago, I was at a writing seminar hanging around the snack table, when one of the seminar instructors joined me for a Danish.

He was a quiet, introspective man, truly a statesman among aspiring student writers. That’s why I guided him to the quiet side of the room to tell him I thought he was lying.

Not in those exact words. I constructed a more diplomatic approach that went something like this:

“You were introduced as a ‘Pulitzer Prize nominee,’ but a quick Internet search tells me that we share some confusion over the term ‘nominee.’”

For a moment he glanced at this watch, but unfortunately realized he had time to hear me out.

“If you’d met me last year,” I explained, “I would have told you that my syndicated column had received a Pulitzer Prize nomination.”

“And it was not?” he asked.

“Sadly, no.”

I told the aging professor how my “Florida Today” editor had submitted the dozen columns I’d written during my 2009 deployment to a combat field hospital in Iraq.

“Yes,” said the professor, “My publisher also submitted my work.”

As he gathered his lecture notes, he dismissively added, “Congratulations, it sounds like we are both Pulitzer nominees.”

“No, we are not.” I said, “but we both made the same assumption. We assumed that our editor’s submission of our work equaled a Pulitzer

To Tell the Truth, I Wasn’t

nomination.”

Sadly, the difference between a Pulitzer submission and a Pulitzer nomination is about as far as “ticket purchaser” is from “lotto winner.”

I showed him the Pulitzer website on my tablet where he read “More than 2,500 entries are submitted annually for Pulitzer Prize consideration, yet only three in each category are bestowed with the prestigious title of Pulitzer Nominee.”

“In fact,” I said, “anyone of my fellow conferees can submit their work for Pulitzer consideration as long as they send \$75. But only the Pulitzer committee can bestow the title of Nominee.”

The professor seemed embarrassed that a pupil had schooled him in the difference.

Our stories beg the complicated question: “Can one be a lair if one doesn’t know he’s lying?” Another facet of the question is: “Does one’s story default to becoming the truth if one doesn’t bother to fact check the story?”

In other words, in a quick check of the Pulitzer website you’ll note the glaring absence of our names. And that omission, for a time, made us both liars.

For the duration of the conference, the professor continued to allow his introductions to claim a Pulitzer connection. Just as it took some time for me to remove the notation from my website.

I guess we felt much like the claim made in the movie in “A Few Good Men,” by Jack Nicholson’s character, Col. Jessup.

When Jessup is questioned on the witness stand, a shouting match ensues. Tom

Cruise’s character Lt. j.g. Kaffee demands the court finally be told the truth behind a hazing incident in the Marine barracks.

We all know Col. Jessup’s answer, so say it with me.

“You can’t handle the truth!”

Neither the professor nor I handled our truths very well. Sadly, our websites boasted our Pulitzer claim for a few more months.

But centuries before that movie, Jesus set the scene for real truth in John 8:32 when he said, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

The professor, while not religious, had no doubt heard the scripture quoted in his academic circles by those promoting academic freedom and the power of learning.

It was a minute before he and I found a way to handle our truth, but the truth eventually set us free from our egos—just as Jesus promised it would.

Note: While nowhere near Pulitzer fame, Norris does boast the 2019 Will Rogers Humanitarian Award for his columns about Chispa Project. The charity, started by his daughter Sara, establishes Spanish libraries in Honduran elementary schools. The Honduran school year began this month so your continued support is greatly needed at <https://www.chispaproject.org/nextchapter>.

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Major Takedown of Vast Organized Retail Crime Operation

Continued from Page 1

Retail Crime Task Force teams throughout the state, the CHP’s Computer Crimes Investigation Unit, the DOJ, our federal partners, and retailers. Through increased collaborative efforts, retailers and law enforcement have become more efficient and effective in our fight against organized retail crime.”

Recognizing the complexity and scale of the operation, in August 2023, federal investigators requested the CHP’s Organized Retail Crime Task Force (ORCTF) join their

ongoing investigation. In December, simultaneous search warrants were executed by ORCTF investigators in Southern California and the suspects were taken into custody.

The charges, brought by the California DOJ, include Organized Retail Theft, Conspiracy, Receipt of Stolen Property, and multiple counts of Grand Theft.

The thefts occurred in Alameda, Placer, Kern, Contra Costa, Orange, Los Angeles, Santa Clara, San Diego, Sacramento, San Mateo, Solano, Riverside, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Napa, Marin, Tulare, San Bernardino, Sonoma,

Ventura, and Yolo counties.

Since the inception of the ORCTF in 2019, the CHP has been involved in more than 2,300 investigations leading to the arrest of more than 2,200 suspects and the recovery of over 761,000 stolen goods valued at \$41.7 million.

If you witness one of these crimes occurring, do not attempt to intervene — call 9-1-1. Members of the public and retailers can also report retail crime tips directly through the CHP’s website.

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Immortal Café and Supply Offers a Taste of the Undead



Customers enjoy the café's space on a winter Saturday during brunch hours.

Story by Mitch Barber, photos by Matt Jones

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - If you have been to the Temple Coffee on S Street in recent years, there was a heavily-bearded man behind the bar with an ironic wit who went against the grain.

After six-and-a-half years working there as a barista, Ted Evans has opened his own café with three partners just last October.

This isn't his first coffee rodeo: Before moving to Sacramento, Evans was getting a master's degree at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. At the same time, he picked and processed coffee from Wai'anāe Kai Forest Reserve, on the west side of Oahu, where he had a field site that was formerly a coffee plantation, while specializing in natural resources and environmental management.

Once he graduated, Evans immediately started working in a little, craft, mom-and-pop-type café called Morning Glass on the islands.

His new downtown Sacramento venture, Immortal Café and Supply, consists of a long corridor occupying the former space of Naked Coffee's coffeehouse at 11th and H streets. Art with a still-life bias greets customers, hung on bluish-green walls that make the café, on a cloudy day, seem almost underwater. There is a bar with six stools if you want to chat with a staff member making drinks. Heavy metal likely plays on the sound system and there is a disco ball gracing the ceiling — a trenchant juxtaposition.

Evans is one of four owners of Immortal Café and Supply, which is not a coffee shop, he underscored, but a café that emphasizes food and beverages in addition to

coffee.

When asked about what was behind the name of the café, Evans became existential. He said, "And how I interpret it is totally different from the other owners and how they would interpret it...We want something that just continues to live on... Living on in infamy of sorts."

Co-owners Eric Cockrell and Jess Weddle Cockrell are behind the food. She has worked at Canon and he has worked for Cru, a couple of Sacramento favorites. The fourth owner, Shan Dan Horan, is a silent partner who has a music record label.

This writer sampled the vegan biscuits and gravy for \$13, part of the Saturday brunch menu. Evans said, "Jess, one of the owners-slash-I-guess-you-could-call-her-head-chef-slash-baker makes the biscuits. She and Eric tag team to make the gravy. They are husband and wife." (Evans, in Evans' ironic fashion, initially joked that the delicious biscuits were Pillsbury.)

Evans said, "Everything is vegetarian, most things are vegan — we are not a vegan café." He continued, "Labeling yourself as a vegan café pigeon-holes you — people avoid vegan cafés because for some reason, people are like, 'I don't eat vegan food.'"

He asked, "Like if you close your eyes, did it taste like biscuits and gravy to you?" This writer said, "Yes." He said, "That's the point." The biscuits were flaky-scrumptious and the gravy had a pleasant earthiness.

They serve other dishes such as savory bread pudding, or "strata," with rotating ingredients including spinach and leeks, with cheddar cheese that goes for \$13, as well.

If you're looking for a more economical hand-crafted option, you could go with the house-made kimchi, a Korean touch at \$4.

But wait, there are beverages sold at the café, as well. They have your standard espressos (\$3.75) and cortados (\$4.50), and a variety of coffees from four different roasters, including Olympia Coffee in Washington. One staff member with the company was a regular at Morning Glass. Another is a good buddy of Evans' from Hawaii who visits his mom in Sacramento's Pocket area.

Evans said of Olympia, "They've got six or seven Hawaii connections."

For the 21-and-over crowd, there is a full beer and wine menu — a large, glass refrigerator greets customers just inside the entrance.

His dreams for the future include perhaps opening a second location that specializes (more so than the current iteration) in something like wine or a beer bar. Evans mused, "Maybe if I can get a little roaster and do some tiny batch roasting on the side."

Immortal Café and Supply's building is supposed to become a boutique hotel; Evans and his partners signed a long-term lease and have committed to staying open during the remodeling.

Where would he like to be in 10 years? He said, "I'm going to be old in 10 years. My back can only take so much." He is 38 and full of irony.

Immortal Café and Supply
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A variety of coffees is for sale at Immortal Café and Supply.



Banners hang above the entrance to Immortal Café and Supply.



Ted Evans holds a portafilter behind the bar at Immortal Café and Supply.



Owner/operator Eric Cockrell works on an order with a receipt in hand as customers enjoy the café's space.



Customers enjoy the café's space on a winter Saturday.



A couple customers enjoy conversation amongst the art on the walls decorating Immortal Café and Supply.



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Interview with USL Head Coach Mark Briggs

By Mitch Barber

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Mark Briggs has a clear mission for the 2024 United Soccer League (USL) season, Republic FC's 11th. He told the Messenger Publishing Group that "it is to go one step further than last year and win the championship. Pretty simple, I think, after where we got to last year and reaching the conference final. We gotta go one step further this year and try and be better than what we were."

The club won its only USL championship in 2014. The Tower Bridge Battalion has been cheering since then.

Briggs said of them, "I think they're like a 12th person on our team. They give us extra energy when we're in difficult moments. They make us run those extra five yards when we're tired. I can't speak highly enough of the Tower Bridge Battalion. I think they're incredible and we're proud to have them as our supporters' group."

The Tower Bridge Battalion will support numerous players this season who made their way through the Republic FC Academy, such as forward Rafael Jauregui, the youngest goal scorer in club history; forward Da'vian Kimbrough, who just turned 14 and signed with the club at 13 becoming the youngest pro in U.S. team sports history; midfielder Blake Willey who grew up in the Pocket area; and 16-year-old central defender Chibuike "Chibi" Ukaegbu.

Briggs also started his



Sacramento Republic FC Head Coach Mark Briggs.
Photo courtesy of Sacramento Republic FC

own career at an early age in England. When asked about pickup soccer there, he said, "It's a huge thing. You drive past every park and there's people going on [the pitch] and, it was for me every single day growing up, soon as I finished school, there would be 20, 30 of us at the park just playing. I think it's where the game over here... You don't get that in America. I think you can go anywhere else in the rest of the world, England, Italy, Brazil, Argentina, like there's always just people playing, you know? Of course, you don't need anything — just a ball. [If] you can't find a goalpost, use trees, use whatever it is, you can just play and I think that's what I'd like to see happening a little bit more over here in America."

And then there's veteran midfielder Rodrigo Lopez, who was on Republic FC's 2014 championship team, winning MVP honors in the final. He's from Guadalajara, Mexico, another country with quite the pickup soccer scene.

USL soccer is a different level of soccer. Coach

Briggs said of Republic FC, "You have professional players, a professional team of the highest caliber there has ever been in Sacramento. I think the reason to come out and support your local club [is] first and foremost, but also you have top top players that are in this league, and I think a lot of people still have the perception that it's semi-professional, and it's not semi-professional; it's fully-professional. If you have a kid that likes soccer, there's no better learning tool than watching a professional live."

What does Briggs do when he isn't coaching elite soccer?

"I'm usually with the family: my wife, my kids, my dog. Usually walking around parks or playing with the kids," the coach said. "Every now and then, I pick up a pickleball racket or tennis racket. Sometimes a golf club and the majority of the time's with the kids and with my wife."

Briggs is comfortable in Sacramento. He said of the city, "It's not flashy — you know the glitz and glamour of your L.A.'s and San Diego's. It's humble people that work hard and enjoy life and I certainly feel at home here."

Let's see if he and the team can bring Sacramento another championship in 2024.

The Indomitable Club will open their season on March 9 against Orange County SC at Heart Health Park, 1600 Exposition Blvd., Sacramento. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m. ★

It Costs \$18,441 for a Hospital Stay in California, the Most Expensive State

Charlotte Green, Digitaloft News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - A new study reveals the most expensive states for a hospital stay and the most common reasons for those stays.

The research, conducted by Universal Drugstore, looked at the average cost of a hospital stay in each state to determine the most expensive states for a stay. The study also uncovered the most common reasons for a hospital stay.

California is the most expensive state for a hospital stay. On average, by staying for 4.6 days, patients can expect to pay an astronomical \$18,441, equating to just over \$4,000 daily. Despite the high prices, the sunny state has various hospitals for residents to consider, including Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and UCLA Medical Centre. Each hospital is ranked nationally in multiple specialties with high-performing procedures and conditions.

Oregon is the second most expensive state for a hospital stay. It's a top visitor location known for its diverse landscape, scenic forests, and beautiful lakes. However, when it comes to its healthcare, Oregon is one of the most expensive states in the US, averaging around \$18,336 to afford a typical 4.6-day hospital stay. There are plenty of hospitals in and around the state, including OHSU Hospital, which has been described as Oregon's leading academic medical center, offering advanced treatments and expert care.

Washington state is also one of the most expensive places for a hospital stay. An average stay of just under five days in Washington can cost as much as \$17,753, equating to more than \$3,800 per day in hospital fees. If you are looking for specialized hospital care, Inova Fairfax Hospital and MedStar Washington Hospital Center have numerous medical specialties. From complex care to common procedures and conditions such as knee replacement and heart failure.

The most common reasons for



On average, by staying for 4.6 days, patients can expect to pay an astronomical \$18,441, equating to just over \$4,000 daily. MPG Courtesy Photo

hospital stays:

- 1-Septicemia
- 2-Heart failure
- 3-Osteoarthritis
- 4-Pneumonia (except that caused by tuberculosis)
- 5-Diabetes mellitus with complication
- 6-Acute myocardial infarction
- 7-Cardiac dysrhythmias
- 8-COPD and bronchiectasis
- 9-Acute and unspecified renal failure
- 10-Cerebral infarction.

Septicemia, also known as sepsis, is the clinical name for blood poisoning by bacteria; surprisingly, it is the most common reason for hospital stays in the United States, with a shocking rate of over 2.2 million. Sepsis is a life-threatening infection that requires urgent medical treatment.

Another primary reason for hospital stays across the US is heart failure. This typically happens when the heart cannot adequately pump blood around the body, especially when it has become weak. In the United States, a staggering 1,135,900 hospital stays resulted from heart failure in 2018.

With more than 1.1 million hospital stays, osteoarthritis is one of the most common reasons for visiting the hospital in the US. The condition causes joints to become painful and stiff. It is also one of the most common types of arthritis. ★



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Spider-Man 2099 to Pokemon Attended Ohana Comic-Con

Story and photos
by Emanuel Espinoza

ELK GROVE, CA (MPG) - Scores of residents joined the world of comics, anime, science fiction and other fandoms as the Ohana Comic-Con returned to Soccer World on March 2.

Several attendees dressed as their favorite characters, including Spider-Man 2099, The Predator and Pokemon members.

Ziggy Star, co-promoter for the convention, said this event is held “every weekend” as they travel to various cities. One example was the con in Hollister the following day and the following weekend in Folsom, and a couple of others in Salinas and Santa Cruz. Star said that they differ from other cons because of how often this one is held.

“We hold these events every weekend,” Star said. “But we are also helping my buddy with the Omega Con on Memorial Day weekend in Fresno.”

Like many other cons, this event had several vendors ranging from artists who do fan art and comic books to vendors selling sports memorabilia and autographed pictures to also vendors selling video games and plushies.

Artist Jade Gonzalez of Woodland, owner of Jadedxcreations, said she had done the Ohana Comic Con in her hometown before and is looking to branch out into doing cons in other locations. However, Gonzalez said

she had done other events in the Bay Area and Sacramento before.

Gonzalez’s booth was devoted to her artwork. She said she was selling prints at the moment, but some of her other works were of original canvas paintings and also had done digital artwork.

“I took pictures of my art and made them into prints and did all of this at home,” Gonzalez said.

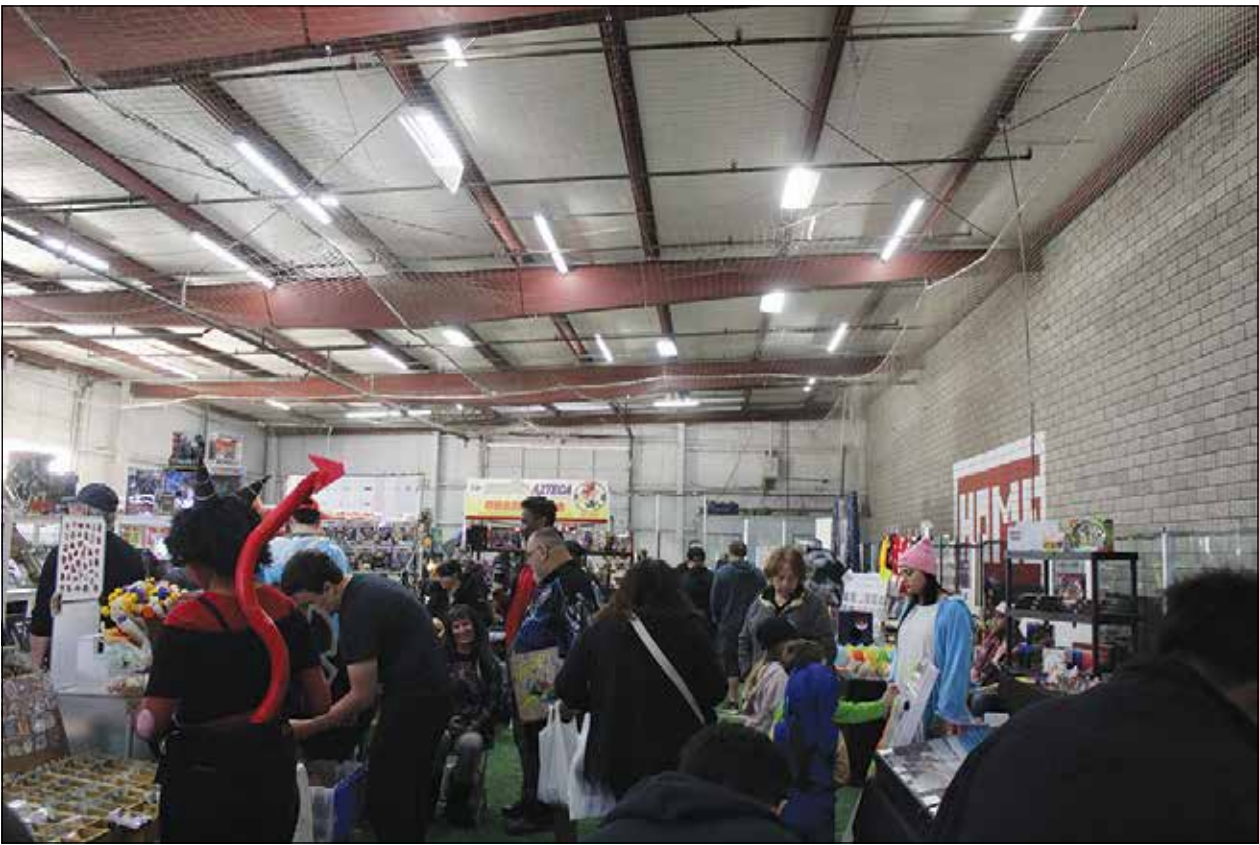
Branden Sanderson, owner of Midnight Comics and artist/writer of his “Malevolent Rising” comic book series, said he had been doing a lot of comic cons as of late, one of which being the Lodi Comic Con Fall this past September.

“I usually do a con every weekend,” Sanderson said. “I do three a month. I am all over the place.”

Sanderson said he had been self-publishing his work since 2019. After every con and show he participated in, Sanderson said, he had gained more followers. He said his comic business gets bigger every year and makes more books and travels farther to do other events.

“As time has gone on, I’ve grown quite a bit,” Sanderson said. “When I first started promoting my work, I hardly had any followers, but now I have little under a thousand followers.”

Amelia Pendleton, a watercolor and digital artist from Palo Alto, said she had come back to doing cons this past year after being away because of the pandemic.



Residents of all ages had fun at the Ohana Comic Con at Soccer World on March 2.

“The first con I went to after a long time was the Fan Expo in San Francisco,” Pendleton said. “My friend and I had a great time and I’ve been enjoying doing shows and getting back into them since.”

Pendleton said she started drawing fan art after watching a particular series and wanted to do more with some of the characters and bring her own twist and flair to them.

“It comes from the love of watching the series and wanting to do more like bring my own twist and flair to the characters,” Pendleton said. “I did that a lot with the books I read as a kid like ‘Harry Potter’ and ‘Lord of the Rings.’” ★



Many attendees participated at the March 2 Ohana Comic-Con while dressing up as their favorite characters. Pictured here is one man dressed as Spider-Man 2099.



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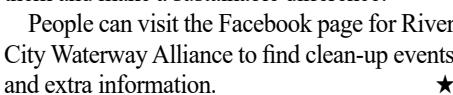
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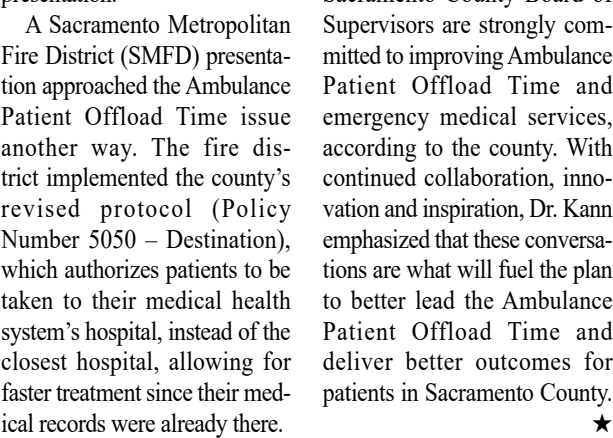
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