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Steady Rain Doesn't Impede Annual RM Shredding Event

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RIVER VALLEY TIMES

40TH YEAR • ISSUE 11

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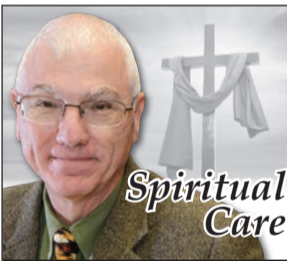
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SPRAY PARK OPENS FOR THE SEASON



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Water Study Questioned at Fraught Town Hall Meeting



With more than 250 audience members listening, John Merchant poses many questions about the Integrated Water Master Plan at the May 30 town hall meeting. Photo by Gail Bullen

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - A town hall meeting to update residents about an assessment of the community's water supply became fraught at times when it unfolded at the Rancho Murieta Country Club on May 30.

The Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board commissioned the Integrated Water Master Plan, which is using a data-based approach to forecast water needs over the next 20 years, given climate

change, drought and the development buildout.

About a dozen audience members spoke at the microphone about the study, prompting the 250-plus audience members to loudly applaud whenever they agreed with the sentiments. Strong emotions were especially evident regarding the impact of development on the future water supply. The most surprising comment coming from a developer. Other tense comments had to do with assumptions in the ongoing water study.

The two speakers were Lisa

Maddaus and Dan Scalas, the consulting engineers leading the preparation of the Integrated Water Master Plan.

The consultants considered climate change when they analyzed the community's water supply under normal river flows and in a worst-case drought serving current customers vs. full development. They recommend increasing the water supply by using some of Clementia for drinking water, digging emergency wells, irrigating the golf courses with river water, and assuming a future increase

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RMA Covers Security, Events, Rule Changes

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - An update about assuming security operations inside the gates, the approval of comedy night at the Lake Clementia Amphitheater and proposed rule changes were notable topics when the Rancho Murieta Association (RMA) Board met on May 21.

The board also approved four expenditures from reserve funds, including the purchase of 107 new street and stop signs and a contract to paint the exterior of the RMA Building. Additionally, the board approved an agreement to transfer the ownership of the wooden bridge from the Rancho Murieta Community Services District to the association.

Security inside gates

The board formed the Ad Hoc Security Committee in May 2023 to look at security options inside the gate after the Community Services District announced it would cut back on patrol funding following the rejection of Measure R by voters in November 2022. The Rancho Murieta Association board appointed director Chris Childs as the chair, director John Van Doren as the second board member and five residents. Community Services District director Linda Butler also participated in some meetings.

The committee met monthly until December when Childs told them that Community Services District Board President Tim Maybee had advised him that the district wouldn't implement security changes until July 2025, which would extend their timeline to look at options. However, the committee stopped meeting several months ago and no public explanation was provided.

Although a report from the Ad Hoc Security Committee wasn't agendaized at the May meeting, Childs provided an update. He reported that the committee was researching options and many legal issues arose.

"So we requested legal opinions about whether or not we could use Measure J funding as a pass-through from CSD," he said. "In the end, it became clear

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Pickleballers, Firefighters Fundraise for Burn Institute



Tournament organizer Serda Folk announces the Rancho Murieta Pickleball Club has raised \$3,047 to benefit the Firefighters Burn Institute. The event was held at the Stonehouse Park pickleball courts on May 18. Photo by Gail Bullen

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Pickleball Club and firefighters teamed up for a tournament to benefit the Firefighters Burn Institute at the Stonehouse Park pickleball courts on May 18.

The tournament raised

\$3,047 for the institute and the Rancho Murieta Kiwanis Club contributed an additional \$500 donation.

The Sacramento Area Firefighters Local 522 established the burn institute at U.C. Davis Medical Center a year after a jet crashed into the crowded Farrell's Ice Cream Parlour in 1972, killing 23 people and burning many others.

Over the years, the burn institute has expanded its mission to include burn recovery for survivors and their families, burn research, public education, and fire and burn prevention.

Serda Folk, who organized the tournament, explained how Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District (Sac Metro) at Station 59 began playing at

the Stonehouse Park pickleball courts. Her grandson, Alexander Lawton, is a firefighter for Auburn City Fire. He told her they had set up a pickleball court in their firehouse but didn't have access to an outside court.

Folk said she struck up a conversation with a couple of Sac Metro firefighters when they were

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Photo by Gail Bullen



Photo courtesy of Jerome Keyes

Troop 633 Retires Flags on Memorial Day

Scout Troop 633 honored fallen soldiers and paid tribute to the United States flag during a flag retirement ceremony on Memorial Day at Lake Calero's Memorial Grove. This year marked the 18th time the Rancho Murieta troop had conducted the ceremony, where 200 worn and torn flags were respectfully burned one by one. The event took place at 6 p.m. and was attended by parents, five firefighters and members of the public. The ceremony included readings about the American flag's significance and history, complemented by patriotic bagpipe music performed by retired Navy Captain Chuck Jamison. In the photo above, the Scouts hold up a 17-foot flag before its careful disposal. In the photo at left, Griffin MacFarland and Zachary Holmes are seen placing a flag onto the fire.

ETC Kicks Off Summer With Song, Dance and Music Concert



Who's That Girl – The Ultimate Diva Experience is slated as the first ETC concert of the season on June 15 at the Lake Clementia Amphitheater. Courtesy photo



Steve Anderson picks up his discounted tickets at the ETC Kick Off on May 18. The ETC volunteers are, from left, Jim Moore, Cheryl McElhany, Barbara Foley and Susan Kurz. Photo by Gail Bullen



Attendee Teresa Wagoner admires a glass of wine that ETC volunteer Barbara Simas is pouring for her. Photo by Gail Bullen

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Flush from success after selling tickets and memberships at the May 19 Kick Off Event, Entertainment, Theater & Culture for Rancho Murieta (ETC), will present its first concert of the season at Lake Clementia Amphitheater on Saturday, June 15.

"Who's That Girl – The Ultimate Diva Experience" will send the audience on a journey through the greatest hits of the world's most beloved pop divas such as Madonna, Beyonce and Lady Gaga.

Led by three dynamic

lead singers and backed by a team of talented dancers and musicians, the concert will feature hits such as "Vogue" to "Just Dance" to "Crazy in Love."

The gates open at 7 p.m. and the concert begins at 8:30 p.m. Tickets are priced at \$25 for members and \$35 for nonmembers with a \$5 surcharge if bought at the door. Tickets and memberships can be bought in advance at Ace Hardware. Children 6 and under attend for free.

Kick Off

Billed as a Kick Off Event on May 19, the sale of tickets and memberships at the Rancho Murieta Country Club was actually

a big party. Besides snagging tickets for the upcoming summer season, attendees tasted wine and beer, grazed on veggies, cookies and cheese, and relished hearty hors d'oeuvres against a musical backdrop.

ETC Board President Jane Rosetta estimated that there was a crowd of 350 at the free event, marking it the largest crowd ever for the Kick Off.

She thanked five wineries for their participation: Karmere, Andis Wines, Vino Noceto, Drytown Cellars and Fate. In addition, Brian and Alicia Correia poured Valley Oak Brewing beer, which they make and donate every

year.

The sales of memberships and tickets were also the highest ever, Rosetta said. Anyone who joined ETC or signed up to volunteer received a raffle ticket.

"Our new Kick Off chair, Brenda Allen-Booth, did a fantastic job collecting raffle baskets and we had more than ever this year," Rosetta said. "A big thanks to all those who donated."

Additionally, Drew Gray volunteered his deejay services, tailoring his music to the concert season.

"He also had video screens with a phone number listed so people could text photos and selfies to the number to have them displayed on the screen, a

fun idea," Rosetta said.

Overall, attendees said it was the best Kick Off Event yet.

"It's always a loud and lively event, and moving the transaction center to the Terrace Lounge and Board Room gave us a quieter area so we could speak to customers about the season, answer questions about the membership levels and handle the purchases efficiently," Rosetta said. "It just gets better every year."

Four additional concerts are slated for the season. Cripple Creek, a country and southern rock band, will perform July 6.

Bee Gees Gold – the tribute band will take the

stage on July 27. Another repeat performance by Kalimba – The Spirit of Earth, Wind & Fire will be on tap on Aug. 17.

The season will conclude on Sept. 7 with the Bohemian Queen – a Queen tribute band.

ETC concerts are exclusively for Rancho Murieta residents and their guests. Residents can buy more tickets next weekend when ETC volunteers will sell tickets outside of Ace Hardware from 8 to 10 a.m. Friday, June 14 and from 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, June 15 at the amphitheater.

For more information, contact ETC at asketcinfo@gmail.com. ★

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RMA Covers Security, Events, Rule Changes

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that if RMA accepts Measure J funding, we would be subject to the same legal codes as CSD.”

Or, as Childs explained after the meeting: the association (which is a type of nonprofit) would have to become a quasi-government agency to accept the Measure J tax funding.

“I don’t think there is the appetite for that,” Childs said.

Childs told the board that he, Van Doren and General Manager Rod Hart met with Community Services District Manager Mimi Morris, their operations manager and their attorney on May 1 to discuss the security situation.

When they asked the Community Services District representatives what the future would look like, they were advised that the district would announce the addition of a fourth patrol position to the 2024/25 budget the following week.

“The obvious question is if CSD is providing security next year, why do we need to have an RMA committee to discuss security,” Childs said. “I have requested, as the chair of this committee, that RMA receive a full year’s notice from CSD if they are in any way pulling back from security, which would provide RMA plenty of time to research funding options.”

In further discussion, Childs noted that several committee members had devoted many hours researching codes and history as well as reaching out to other associations and private security contractors.

“I don’t think these efforts will be wasted in



Director Chris Childs provides an update about security operations behind the gates at the Rancho Murieta Association Board meeting on May 21. He said the association will not assume the responsibility any time soon. Photos by Gail Bullen

the future because it is my personal opinion that RMA will be called upon done the road to provide security,” Childs said.

Comedy night

Director Renee Bechtold, who chairs the Recreation Committee, said her group considered a proposal for an Aug. 10 comedy night at the Lake Clementia Amphitheater as a Cosumnes River Activities League fundraiser and it “was a delightful idea.” She invited Matt Bigaman, the league’s co-founder, to the podium to answer questions.

Bigaman, a real estate agent who teaches Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, and his wife, Meagan, created the league to empower youth through enriching activities, according to their website.

Bigaman explained that “Comedy Under the Stars” would be an adults-only event with alcohol served and with ticket sales

limited to 1,500 residents and guests. Following the ETC model for putting on concerts, the league will provide insurance, hire three off-duty deputies and an emergency medical technician. The league also will bring in food trucks.

Bigaman said the line-up would feature successful, well-known comedians from Sacramento who would offer “the type of humor that would fit with the community.”

“There would be no vulgar or foul language because we don’t have any appetite for that ourselves,” Bigaman said.

The six board members unanimously voted in favor of Bechtold’s motion to approve comedy night.

Rule changes

Director Pat O’Hern, who chairs the Architectural Review Committee, received unanimous approval to send proposed changes in the fine schedule and rules for fencing to the Governing



Matt Bigaman, the Cosumnes River Activity Leagues co-founder, explains plans for a comedy night.

Documents Committee for review. Per the schedule, the fine for starting or performing work on a project without written approval from the committee would increase from \$1,000 to \$1,500. O’Hern said his committee’s priority is ensuring compliance and “only people who completely ignore us” are fined.

Director Tom Reimers presented the report from the Governing Documents Committee because its chair, President Scott Adams, couldn’t attend the meeting. Reimers received unanimous consent to send a proposal for a rule designating no-parking areas for a 30-day community review. Examples of illegal parking under the rule

would be parking where the curbs are painted red or within 15 feet of a fire hydrant.

Reserve expenditures

At the request of the general manager, the board approved spending \$9,971 for a new plotter for architectural manager Mark Parson and \$3,350 for a three-year reserve study. The board also approved requests from director Danny Carillo, who chairs the maintenance committee, to spend \$6,232 to replace 107 stop and street signs and to spend \$6,223 to paint the exterior of the RMA building. The money will come from reserves.

In other business:

The board approved an

agreement to transfer the wooden bridge ownership from Community Services District to Rancho Murieta Association, in what Hart described as a formality. When the bridge was being constructed in the 2000s, the district took over its ownership to make it easier to go through the environmental process. By doing so, the district saved the association about \$300,000, audience member Mike Martel pointed out. Transferring the ownership back to the association has been tied up in legalities for years.

Van Doren, who is one of the two Rancho Murieta Association representatives on the Parks Committee, reported on the group’s last meeting on May 2. See the May 10 issue of the River Valley Times for a report about the meeting that included a heated dispute about constructing a pedestrian trail in the Residences East subdivision.

Bechtold reported that the Recreation Committee was asked to review the Sports Field Use Agreement. However, after her committee found some errors in the document, Bechtold received board approval to send it to the Governing Documents Committee for review.

In public comments, resident Dave Thomas commended the Rancho Murieta Association Board and Maintenance Department because the midge flies at Laguna Joaquin are nearly gone. “The next challenge is getting rid of the goose poop,” he said.

The RMA’s next board meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. June 18. ★

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Water Study Questioned at Fraught Town Hall Meeting

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in recycled water.

Stephen Booth, a Community Services District director, moderated the town hall. Booth became quite assertive at times, insisting that audience members come to the podium to make a comment rather than grousing from their seats.

Also on the panel were Travis Bohannon, the district's acting operations manager, Ryan Stolfus, the district's water rights attorney, Andrew Ramos, the district's counsel, and General Manager Mimi Morris.

Booth said he had received numerous emails from residents asking that their three-minute comments be ceded to audience members John Merchant and Janis Eckard. Both spoke at length.

Merchant resigned from the Community Services District board last year to focus on water and related issues as the vice-president of Saving Our Lakes & Open Spaces (SOLOS). It's a community action group that supports responsible development.

Eckard has been an outspoken critic of past water studies, particularly in 2010 and 2016, which Maddaus helped prepare. Eckard has raised many questions about the assumptions used in the current study, which she presented to the Community Services District Board a couple of times earlier this year.

FAQs

However, none of her questions were answered until just before the town hall meeting. That's when 56 new FAQs (frequently asked questions) were

posted to the district's website on the section dedicated to the Integrated Water Master Plan. The FAQs were also distributed as an 11-page handout just before the meeting began.

Merchant expressed frustration about the late appearance of the FAQs, saying he didn't have time to read them before commenting at the meeting. He said it was the third time that material promised 10 days in advance before didn't show up until the last minute.

Following the meeting, the River Valley Times asked Morris the sources of questions and answers in the FAQs. The general manager said that of the 56 questions, 29 came from Eckard, five from Cookie Whalen, and 10 from Booth. The remaining questions were posed by eight board members and four members of the public.

Morris said that she, Maddaus, Scalas, Bohannon and Michael Fritschi, who has resigned as the director of operations, answered the questions.

"It was a lot of work to answer the questions succinctly and accurately," Morris said.

Development

After some audience members opposed further development because of the effect on water, Booth said he wanted to clarify that any subdivision approval decisions would be made by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, not the district.

However, Eckard pointed out that the district is required to submit a water supply assessment



Developer Carol Anderson Ward, left, says her investment group might not need to develop homes on the other side of the reservoirs. Audience member Janis Eckard, right, questions some assumptions in the current study. Photos by Gail Bullen



to the county planners before any decision can be made. This assessment won't happen until after the Integrated Water Master Plan is completed, according to a report Merchant has posted to the Saving Our Lakes & Open Spaces website. He was a Community Services District director at the time of the meeting with planners.

The strongest statement opposing the proposed Rancho North development came from rancher and attorney Stan Van Vleck, who requested that his letter be read at the meeting.

Although he respects Carol Ward Anderson for her contributions to the community, Van Vleck opposes her Rancho North development.

"Unfortunately, this project is not good for the community," Van Vleck said.

Nor would it be good for him. "Adding the additional development without sufficient water in the Cosumnes River harms our ability to irrigate our lands, which we use to feed and water our cattle during the spring and fall months," his letter said.

Other objections came from audience members

Marklin Brown and Roger Formanek. Brown said it was time to consider a moratorium on development.

Formanek, a retired state attorney who is licensed as an engineering geologist, said the district can't give new hookups to a developer unless they can bring the water and related infrastructure "so that burden doesn't go with the people who are in this jurisdiction today."

Maddaus pointed out that developers must pay infrastructure augmentation fees for every connection in Rancho Murieta. In addition, the developers made advance payments to upgrade the water treatment plant. Maddaus said that was "extraordinarily rare," compared to other communities.

Ward

The last audience member to address development was Ward.

"I'm not your enemy here. When we bought the development, it was for 1,200 homes but we went down to 697, she said. "We've looked very carefully at this property on the other side of the lakes and it probably doesn't need to be built up."

After the audience reacted with loud applause,

Ward told them she had her kids and horses in the community and wanted to work together to find solutions.

"We are looking at sensitive areas, and we are bringing in people who want to make this a wonderful place to live and to bring our property values," she said. "We want to save the country club and the golf courses."

The River Valley Times emailed Ward after the meeting to ask if she was reconsidering the development of Villages D, E, F and G on the other side of the reservoirs.

"Yes, there are areas in D, E, F and G that may be more beneficial to the community than building houses," she said. "We are actively looking at alternatives in these areas."

Ward said they are acutely aware that the country club and shopping center need about 800 new rooftops to support them. However, with the Residences East and West subdivision constructing 198 lots, "It softens the need for homes in D, E, F and G," Ward said.

Merchant

Merchant delved into the details to explain why using Clementia for drinking water won't be feasible. "Number one, it will be very expensive. Number two, it will be very time-consuming. Number three, when you have protests to that change in the water rights, it multiplies both the time and the money exponentially."

Merchant also questioned the explanation of the water rights in the Phase 1 story map. He disagrees with how much water can be stored in the three reservoirs after

the Department of Water Resources resolved a protest from downstream farmers in 1979.

Merchant also contended that houses built on the other side of the reservoirs would block essential drainage into Clementia. He also questioned whether the Cosumnes River would remain a sustainable water supply for a population of 9,500 at full buildout.

Eckard

Eckard questioned the numbers used in the current plan for the current water supply since it is about the same number as in the 2010 study, how the figures for the future amount of recycled water were computed and the conservation rate percentages used in the past and current studies.

"I'm asking each and every one of you to write letters, call and talk to the board of directors. Tell them it is time to have Lisa clean up her study and get the data corrected," Eckard said.

Solomons


Myrna and Jay Solomon, who were also ceded extra time, went into detail about the unfeasibility of groundwater wells.

Maddaus

Maddaus was the last to speak at the meeting. She said she appreciated the comments even though some had been against her personally.

"I am not here to put fraudulent numbers together for you. Neither is Dan or his team," she said. "We are all engineers and professionals."

The crowd applauded her comments. ★



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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Hymn Sing Slated June 9

Love to sing the traditional hymns? Join the hymn sing at the Rancho Murieta Community Church on Sunday, June 9 at 5:30 p.m. A dessert reception will follow.

Church Sponsors Fireworks Sale

Buy your fireworks at Bel Air Plaza from Friday, June 28, to Wednesday, July 3 and support the Rancho Murieta Community Church's Day by Day Youth Program and Elk Grove Young Life as they fundraise for school year programs and camp scholarships.

Want to help the cause? Two-hour volunteer signups are at rmchurch.org/events.

Kiwanis Slates July 4 Pancake Breakfast

The Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta's annual 4th of July Pancake Breakfast will be on Thursday, July 4 at Stonehouse Park.

Breakfast, including pancakes, eggs, sausage, juice, water, coffee and tea, will be served from 7 to 9:30 a.m. July 4.

Adult tickets are \$6 and children age 5 and under are free. Tickets bought at the event will be \$9. Tickets can be purchased in advance at the RMA Office from June 17 through July 3. RMA hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. Cash and checks are only accepted at RMA.

Tickets will also be sold at The Local Bean from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. June 29 and June 30. Cash, checks and credit cards payments will be accepted. Or buy tickets at the Kiwanis Club website at www.rmkiwanis.org from June 17 through July 3. Like the Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta Facebook page for real-time updates.

Fun Run Slated July 4 in RM

The 44th annual 4th of July Fun Run is open to all runners, joggers, dog walkers, stroller pushers. The course is a little under three miles and there is a shorter course for walkers. Erin Baily of Murieta Health Club is again the sponsor.

The adult race starts at 7:30 a.m. at the Gazebo on the north. There is also a kids' run (10 and under) that starts at 8:15 a.m. at the park across from the Gazebo. Any questions, call John McNamee at 916-206-3246.

Rancho Murieta Community Church Slates Bible School

The Rancho Murieta Community Church will present Vacation Bible School between July 22 and 26 for kids ages 2 through sixth-grade. Registration opened June 1.

This event always sells out so register early. The cost is \$25 per child. Scholarships are available.

Information and registration are at rmchurch.org/events.

Rancho Murieta Community Church Sponsors Youth Group

Is your child an incoming seventh- to 12th-grader? Bring them to Youth Group at the Rancho Murieta Community Church on Wednesday nights. Incoming seventh- to eighth-graders meet from 6 to 7:30 p.m., incoming ninth- to 12th-graders meet from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at the church. There are games, hang out groups and great conversation. Check out the website at rmchurch.org for dates when the church members will be away at camp or offsite.

ETC to Offer Scholarship Essay Contest

Entertainment, Theatre & Culture for Rancho Murieta (ETC) is sponsoring its annual essay contest for graduating high school seniors who live in Rancho Murieta North or South.

The winner will be awarded a \$2,000 scholarship, which will go directly to the college or trade school she or he will attend in the fall of 2024 or spring of 2025 for application toward tuition and fees.

Essays must address one of three questions:

1. How have Technology, Artificial

Intelligence and Social Media influenced the arts for the better or for the worse?

2. What is it about the arts that sets your soul on fire?

3. How do the arts (dance, music, visual art, theater) and cultural events improve our society?

Essays must be 550 to 600 words in length and entries must be postmarked by May 30. The contest winner will be announced on July 27 at Lake Clementia amphitheater prior to the concert.

The application form with contest rules is available at the Rancho Murieta Association Building or by request at stephslaus2@ranchomurieta.org.

Entertainment, Theatre & Culture is a nonprofit organization of volunteers that provides entertainment events for the Rancho Murieta community.

In addition to giving back to the Rancho Murieta community through the Entertainment, Theatre & Culture Essay Contest Scholarship Program, Entertainment, Theatre & Culture has contributed to numerous community causes including Cosumnes River Little League and Summerfest.

For more information about the scholarship program or other Entertainment, Theatre & Culture philanthropic efforts, contact Stephanie Stanislus, philanthropy chair at 916-354-0901. ★

SMUD's Shine Program Accepting Applications

SMUD News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The SMUD Shine Awards' application period opened for nonprofit organizations June 1 and runs through July 31. The Shine Awards program is designed to improve and revitalize communities in the Sacramento region.

Proposals should focus on projects that support zero carbon workforce development, environmental justice and equity, inclusive economic development and STEM education. Shine

projects align with SMUD's Clean Energy Vision, which is to eliminate all carbon emissions from the power supply by 2030.

Shine awards range from \$5,000 to \$100,000 and are very competitive. Any incorporated nonprofit organization within SMUD's service area is eligible to apply. Shine awards are available at three funding levels: Spark (up to \$10,000), Amplifier (up to \$50,000) and Transformer (up to \$100,000). Applications will be accepted through July 31.

While SMUD will consider a broad variety of potential

projects, it is primarily interested in proposals that promote the 2030 Clean Energy Vision. That includes utilizing clean energy solutions, advancing zero carbon workforce development and training, promoting energy efficiency, energy conservation and greenhouse gas reduction particularly in diverse and under-resourced communities (environmental justice and equity), supporting inclusive economic development and involving clean energy education related to energy efficiency, renewable energy or

related Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields.

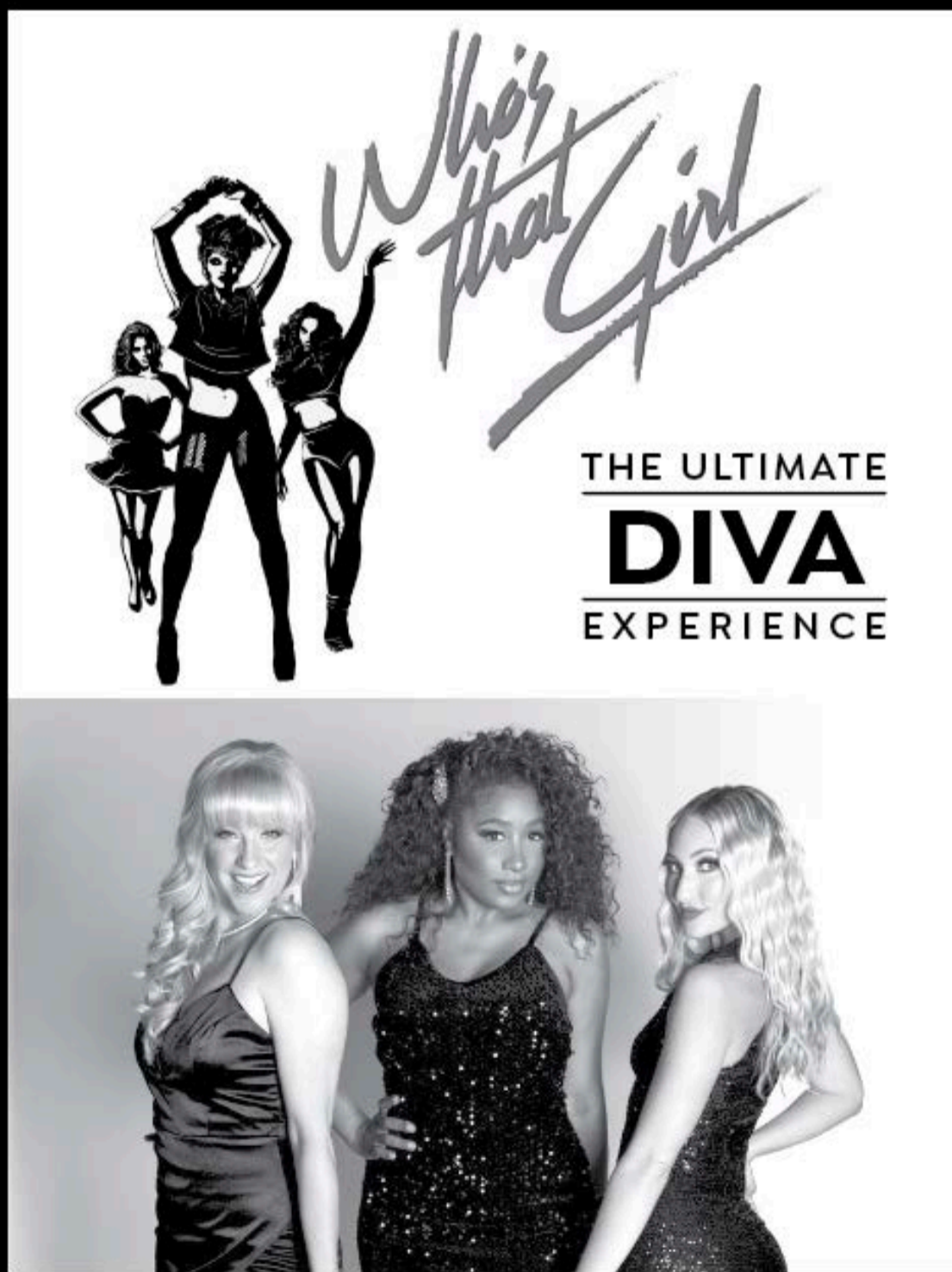
SMUD will host multiple technical assistance webinar sessions about Shine and the application process. A registration link and application can be found on smud.org/Shine.

This past year, SMUD awarded more than \$583,000 in Shine funding to 29 local nonprofits. SMUD received a wide range of applications, and the selected projects were able to successfully demonstrate collaboration and the potential for

broad community impact.

Each year, SMUD contributes approximately \$3 million in financial support and in-kind services to community-based organizations. SMUD will continue to support healthy, vibrant, and economically sustainable neighborhoods for all customers, with a special focus toward improving equity in the region through SMUD's Sustainable Communities program.

For more information about the SMUD Shine program, including a list of previous winners, visit smud.org/Shine. ★



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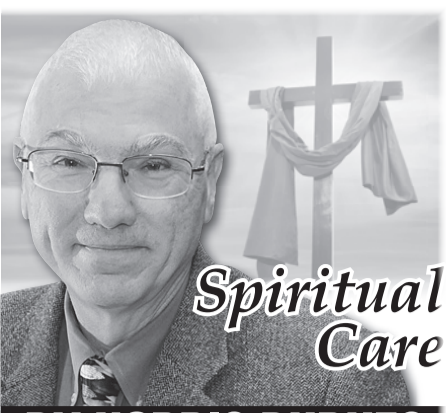
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Spiritual Care

BY NORRIS BURKES

Searching for Faith Isn't for the Faint of Heart

I'm still on a Baltic Sea cruise this week with Holland America. It's been good sailing, but I carry motion sickness medication just in case.

I wonder if that medication would have helped me some years ago when I went to my doctor hoping for a simple steroid shot for the bursitis in my shoulder.

(Stop me if I've told you this story before because I think I may have.)

As the nurse smeared the injection site with disinfectant and placed a surgical drape over my shoulder, it was clear that this wasn't going to be a plain old shot.

To mask my anxiety, I started cracking jokes.

"Will this steroid buff me up and help me play amazing baseball?" I asked.

The doctor seemed unamused as she began reciting the list of things that could possibly go wrong. It was simple things such as nerve damage, infections and twitching.

"Don't worry," she said as I eyed the

door, "we've never had a problem."

Easy for her to say. She was on the giving end of the three-inch needle.

"Do you mind if I sing a hymn?" I asked.

"No, go right ahead," she said.

I began to hum, "Shall We Gather at the River?" but her glare suggested that I change that tune.

A few moments later, as she began the deep injection, I had a news flash. To be more precise, a hot flash.

"Simple" quickly became complicated. "I think I'm going to faint," I said. It felt like severe motion sickness.

"Lie down," the doctor advised, "and don't forget to breathe."

Breathing wasn't my problem at that moment; it was my hearing that felt impaired. I've always heard that hearing was the last thing to go before you die.

Then came a muffled question from the nursing assistant. "Do you feel your heart beating faster?"

"I don't think so," I whined as I felt her offering her hand. I'd always heard that in a near-death experience, someone will take your hand and walk you through a tunnel toward the light.

"Your pulse is slowing a bit, but don't worry," the doctor reported, "I think you're having a vagal response."

"What's a vagal response?" I asked.

I didn't hear an immediate answer, so I persisted.

"Is that some kind of anaphylactic shock?"

I wanted her to know I knew some medical lingo. Anaphylactic shock is a life-threatening condition where blood pressure becomes too low to sustain life.

I wondered if it might be the kind of thing that often precipitates near-death experiences.

"Lord," I silently prayed, "if this is going to be a near-death deal, please send me back before my column deadline."

I was imagining the headline: "Chaplain Reports Existence of God After Near-death Experience."

It was definitely Pulitzer-Prize stuff; but as I thought about it, I wasn't sure I was ready for an exclusive with the Holy. So, I nodded to the doctor and pronounced, "We're done here."

Nevertheless, I did learn a few things.

First, I learned that sometimes the best evidence we have of God's existence is

the warm hand of another. Thankfully, this means that God will always have a pulse, even when I don't.

Second, I think maybe sometimes we need to allow God to find us through the kindness of others. I was looking for God down that tunnel and, while I didn't see God, I did see someone who showed compassion.

In other words, God showed up and she was wearing scrubs.

The third thing I learned is the definition of a "vagal response."

"A vagal response," my doctor explained as she called me back from the proverbial tunnel of white light, "is pretty much like fainting."

"We'll have to try this next week. I'll get you a prescription for Xanax for your anxiety."

Wow. I guess searching for faith isn't for the faint of heart.

Headline: "Chaplain faints again, misses deadline."

Send comments to 10556 Combie Rd. Suite 6643 Auburn, CA 95602. Email comment@thechaplain.net or message at (843) 608-9715. ★

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Summerfest Spray Park Opens for the Season on May 18



The weather is perfect and spirits are high as Opening Day unfolds at the Summerfest Spray Park in Riverview Park on May 18. Sponsored by the Rancho Murieta Association Recreation Committee, the event featured volunteers serving 220 hot dogs, popcorn, cotton candy, and snow cones. In the photo above, siblings Blake and Phillip Cooper are seen testing the water, while the photo on the right shows a crowd lined up for cotton candy. Photos by Gail Bullen

Pickleballers, Firefighters Fundraise for Burn Institute



Taking first place in the tournament are, from left, Becky Beer, Greg Brown, Mike Schanzenbach and Cookie Whalen. Schanzenbach is a Sac Metro Station 59 captain who authorized pickleball as an on-duty activity to meet physical fitness requirements. Photos by Gail Bullen

Continued from page 1

standing in line at Bel Air and mentioned her grandson's pickleball playing. They said they also played pickleball inside their firehouse although it wasn't ideal. Folk asked why they weren't using the courts at Stonehouse Park.

Folk said that Sac Metro Capt. Mike Schanzenbach liked the idea so much that he added pickleball as an on-duty exercise option. The idea for the tournament evolved as the firefighters began playing with pickleball club members.

The tournament attracted 40 players, including pickleball club members and 10 to 11 firefighters. In fact, Schanzenbach was a member of the team that took first place. Following the tournament, Folk presented the winnings to Joe Pick, executive director of the burn institute. Pick also gratefully accepted a \$500 check from Angelo Lutz, president of the Rancho Murieta Kiwanis Club.

At the same time the tournament was going on, the Kiwanians hosted lessons for children across the street in the basketball court. Jan Tarantino organized the program that attracted eight youngsters.

Pick, who has been executive director of the burn institute since 2021, isn't a stranger in Rancho Murieta. When he was a fire captain at Station 59 for three years, Pick began participating in the annual Murieta Village Christmas Golf Parade, wearing a Santa outfit and an old-fashioned fire helmet. Pick came back nine more years, after he transferred to another station and then retired. He always recruited the on-duty firefighters to participate and in 2021 brought the fire institute truck and float to the village to take part in the 2021 golf cart parade.

Boots, a certified therapy dog, accompanied Pick to the pickleball tournament. The miniature Goldendoodle came to



Joe Pick directs traffic as the annual Christmas Golf Cart Parade winds through Murieta Village on Dec. 11, 2021.

the Hearts 4 Heroes program that places therapy dogs in firehouses. Boots has an even bigger mission accompanying Pick as he visits burn patients and participates in many institute events.

Boots gains even more fame by posting to his own Instagram account. Pick said that his wife, Linda Parrinella, is the dog's ghostwriter.

Because he is "especially moved" by pediatric burn patients, Pick is proud of two institute events at Camp Arroyo in Livermore that make their lives happier.

The first is the Firefighters Kids Camp, which benefits burn survivors from ages 6 to 17, and will be held this year from July 2 to July 7. The

three-day Little Heroes Family burn camp from Nov. 1 to Nov. 3 will help burn survivors ages 1 to 6 and their caregivers.

The burn institute also hosted the Adult Burn Survivor Recovery Retreat in South Lake Tahoe last April and mobilizes teams to help burn-injured firefighters.

Other institute activities include burn prevention programs at schools, community events and the Camp Smokey exhibit at the California State Fair. Burn survivors, firefighters and burn team professionals can also win scholarships.

Pick said the burn institute's best-known fundraiser is the "Fill the Boot for Burns," which is held at the corner of



A popular Santa figure in Murieta Village and a retired Station 59 Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District (Sac Metro) captain, Joe Pick is now the executive director of the burn institute. His assistant is Boots the therapy dog.



Joe Pick thanks Kiwanis Club President Angelo Lutz for an additional \$500 donation.

Sunrise Boulevard and Greenback Lane in Citrus Heights in February in conjunction with National Burn Awareness Week. Many fire departments throughout Northern and Central California also hold satellite boot drives to

support the cause. In 2010, the UC Davis Medical Center's burn unit underwent expansion and renamed the Firefighters Burn Institute Regional Burn Center after the burn institute raised \$2 million, mostly with Fill

the Boots campaigns. In linked but separate programs, the UC Davis unit treats burn patients 18 and older and Shriners Hospital for Children Northern California provides free care to children under 18 years. ★



Taking part in Kiwanis-sponsored pickleball lessons for kids are, from left, Luke Donnalley, Ryder Clark and Isabel Whaley. The lessons took place across the street on the basketball court.

Steady Rain Doesn't Impede Annual RM Shredding Event

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Despite steady rain, the annual Rancho Murieta shredding event proceeded smoothly in the RMA parking lot on May 4.

This year, Scout Troop 633 took over the event from the Rancho Murieta Optimist Club.

After organizing the event for eight years, the Optimists handed it over to the Scouts when the club disbanded earlier this year. Scout leader Paul Miller said the Scouts had learned the routine from helping out at two prior shredding events.

"We did everything like the Optimists and the



Despite steady rain, the annual shredding event went off as scheduled in the RMA parking lot on May 11. Scout Troop 633 organized the event.

event was nearly flawless," he said. "A big thanks to Optimists Renee Bechtold and Melinda Martell for helping with the pre-event details."

Miller reported that approximately 600 boxes of paperwork were shredded this year. The cost was \$10 for a standard office box, although some

residents, such as Chuck Hays, donated more. Hays appreciated the convenience of shredding tax records as soon as they turn seven years old.

Miller said they anticipated the rain and brought three pop-up shelters.

Nevertheless, "We were surprised by how much rain there was," he said.



Scouts such as Alex Hoberg bear the brunt of the rain as they unload vehicles and direct traffic. Photos by Gail Bullen

Although they managed to keep the paperwork and cardboard boxes dry for the most part, some Scouts became drenched while directing traffic and unloading boxes from vehicles. Eight Scouts and eight adults participated in the event.

Miller said the shredding

event was an excellent fundraiser, with the proceeds going into "Scout Bucks" accounts to help cover summer camp expenses.

Realtor Karen Hoberg was a generous sponsor and Bel Air Market accepted all the cardboard generated by the event.

Similar to their pumpkin sales and car washes, the shredding event provided valuable work experience for the Scouts.

"For many of them, it's the first time they've worked in a formal setting, taking responsibility for everything from setup to tear down," Miller said. ★

Four-Legged Seasonal Help Brought in To Fight Flooding

Sacramento County Department of Water Resources News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Department of Water Resources (DWR) is continuing its annual eco-friendly program to combat overgrowth in detention basins to prevent the potential for flooding in the unincorporated parts of the County.

Starting on May 21, Billy Goat Gruff and hundreds of his hungriest friends will

converge on five separate locations over the next five weeks to help reduce the flood threat from overgrown grass and weeds.

Most of the County's flood prevention efforts occur during the spring and summer months before the rains fall again. Left unattended overgrowth could block water flow from heavy rains, resulting in street flooding.

This is the twelfth year these contractors have been utilized as an effective force to

ensure the creeks and detention basins are clear for the upcoming storm season. This year, 300 goats and sheep will be casually dining as they rotate through five different locations.

The areas chosen for the contractor's dining experience will include Arcade Creek at Evergreen Estates: Winding Way at Auburn Blvd - 4.4 Acres, Arcade Creek at Kenneth Avenue: N/O Burl Way - 3.4 Acres, Arcade Creek at White Fir Way: E/O Garfield Ave - 2 Acres, Ottoman

Hills Detention Basin: Main Avenue at Wiltshire Way - .7 Acres, and Strawberry Creek at Calvine Road: East & West of Auberry Drive - 7.7 Acres.

Residents near the projects received postcards letting them know about the cost-effective approach to flood prevention work. An onsite herder and trained dogs accompany the dining party 24 hours a day to ensure they are cared for, kept on task, don't wander off, and offer Thousand Island or Blue Cheese, if requested. ★



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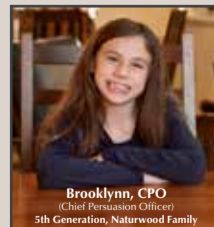
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