



**K-ZAP Launches
'Feed the Kitty'
Donation Drive**

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Pocket News

VOL 33 • ISSUE 28 *Bringing You Community News For Over 30 Years* JUNE 28, 2024

**SEE
INSIDE**

**KEEPING FOCUS
ON MUNICIPAL
SERVICES**



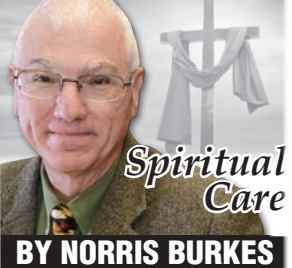
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FOR ELKS 6
MEMBERS**



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**SHARE FAITH
BY LISTENING
TO OTHERS**



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Walking with American Heroes

*Story and photos by
Kristina Rogers*

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Celebrating our U.S. Veterans is certainly something Americans do often. And although newer generations hear about “sacrifice,” there isn’t always a deep understanding of what that really means. All they hear are dates along with static photos in a school history book.

A recent flag planting ceremony at the Sacramento Historic City Cemetery made military history more “interactive.” The event was supported by Walk with Me, a non-profit founded by William Franco III. War veterans and the Boy Scout troops worked together to place flags at the gravesite of the dead who served from the Civil War to Desert Storm. Franco said, “The Walk with Me program brings an active-duty soldier or veteran together with a Boy or Girl Scout. They walk alongside each other and carry on a conversation.”

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William Franco III stands next to the Veterans Affiliated Council memorial.

Fireworks and July 4: Keep it Safe; Keep it Legal

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - With Independence Day coming up, it’s always a good idea to know the risks of fireworks, only use legal fireworks and stay safe when using them.

If you see or suspect illegal firework usage, report it! When it comes to fireworks, we want to keep it safe and keep it legal!

The Use or Sale of Illegal Fireworks will Result in Fines

In 2022, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors adopted a social host ordinance that levies fines, starting at \$1,000, against property owners that either use or allow the use of illegal fireworks on their property, in addition to fines for use in places such as the American River Parkway.

“Host,” as it relates to this ordinance, means a person who knowingly permits or allows fireworks to be lit, exploded or sold on private property owned or controlled by the person.

If the illegal fireworks are being set off from your property, you are responsible for the fines.

Penalties for violations are as follows:

\$1,000 for the first violation, \$2,500 for the second violation within one year of the first violation, \$5,000 for each additional violation within one year of the first violation, and \$10,000 for each violation that occurs at schools, parks and within the American River Parkway.

When to Call 9-1-1

Calls for service throughout the county increase dramatically on July 4, and emergency response resources are stretched extremely thin.

During the holiday weekend, use 9-1-1 for emergencies only, such as an active fire or injury or immediate threat to persons or property. Each jurisdiction has provided an alternative method to report illegal fireworks sales and usage.

Know the Risks

The unsafe use of fireworks can cause severe burns, amputations, blinding and even death. Damaging fires might occur when children use

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Elks 6’s Chung Shin Tang Soo Do Wins Four Awards



Elks 6’s Chung Shin Tang Soo Do went to Fortuna in early May for the Tang Soo Do Association Region 1 tournament, which was for Northern California and the western states. From left to right are John Paul Pressburg-Nevans, his wife Sharon, and their five-year-old daughter Ellie; Master Brian Olden and James Nevans. Photo courtesy of Elks 6

**By Stephen B. Clazie,
Sacramento Elks
Past Exalted Ruler**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Most people recognize Chuck Norris as an American martial artist and actor. He is probably most famous for starring in the action series “Walker, Texas Ranger.” The show was very successful in the ratings throughout its

run, and it is why most people recognize his name. Norris is a black belt in Tang Soo Do.

Chuck Norris received his first black belt while he was stationed in Korea with the Air Force. He received his black belt from Grandmaster Jae C. Shin, who later came to America and founded the World Tang Soo Do Association.

It is hard to believe that a Korean

martial art is associated with the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks; nevertheless, Sacramento Elks is home to a martial arts club called the Chung Shin Tang Soo Do. The BPOE, also often known as the Elks Lodge or simply The Elks, is an American fraternal order founded in 1868, originally as a social club in New York City. In Sacramento, Elks

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Libraries Provide Free Meals to Youth This Summer

By Annie Kerr and Mitch Barber

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - As another blisteringly hot summer unfolds, library officials make it a priority to provide support to youth while they are out of school and parents are working.

Fourteen public libraries throughout the area are offering free meals to local youth as needed throughout the summer.

Lunch at the Library provides free meals for young people when school is out for summer. From June 18 through Aug. 9, meals will be distributed at 14 library locations Tuesdays through Fridays from noon to 1 p.m.

Lunch is available for free for youth 18 and under who are physically present. Meals must be consumed on-site. No registration

is required. Drop-ins are welcome. Eligibility documentation is not required. Look for signage at the library or meeting room entrance.

“The Sacramento Public Library has been doing this since 2013,” said Christie Hamm, youth services director.

“Libraries have stepped in to help kids whose families might be stressed. Our meals come with whole grains and fruits and vegetables. So, they get a good healthy meal, and we also help them get connected with our different summer reading programs,” she continued. “It’s a great time, and a friendly and welcoming place for them to come to.”

According to Hamm, all are welcome to enjoy the free lunches and there is no income requirement. The youth are encouraged

to come to the library and engage in reading programs, computer and STEAM programs, book groups, and they might even win prizes. The programming varies by library branch.

“Lunch is just the beginning of connecting people to other services the library provides,” Hamm said.

The lunches are funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and programs are funded by the California State Library.

Lunch will not be served on July 4. All libraries will be closed for the holiday.

Meal Locations

Meal sites are available at 14 library locations: Arcade, Carmichael, Colonial Heights, Del Paso Heights, Elk Grove, Fair Oaks, Martin Luther King, Jr., North Highlands – Antelope, North



Teen volunteers help with the Lunch at the Library program. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Public Library

Sacramento - Hagginwood, Rancho Cordova, Rio Linda, Southgate, Sylvan Oaks, and Valley Hi - North Laguna.

USDA Meal Finder

Find a summer site in your community with the Summer Meal Site Finder mapping tool.

You can also text “Summer Meals” to 914-342-7744 or call 1-866-348-6479 to find a site near you. ★

District Still Failing Vulnerable Students, Grand Jury Says

Sacramento County Grand Jury News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) fails to meet the needs of students with learning, physical, and behavioral disabilities, despite receiving multiple improvement recommendations from national, state and local education experts, the Sacramento County Grand Jury found in its eight-month investigation on June 17.

“The Board of Education has failed to direct the administration to create a working plan and

district-wide accepted goals to guide the Special Education Department,” said Steve Caruso, 2023-24 foreperson. “Yet the Grand Jury found over the past seven years SCUSD received reports with specific recommendations for best practices in special education services.”

“Incredibly, there’s no plan for the more than 7,000 special education students in the district,” Caruso continued. “Both the board and the administration seem content to ignore these students and their parents.”

SCUSD also fails all students by not consistently assessing each student,

through “early intervention,” to determine their specific learning needs, the Grand Jury found. SCUSD has invested in an early assessment and intervention system, but its use is limited to only a few of the District’s 47 elementary schools.

Educational experts told the Grand Jury, if SCUSD assessed students’ learning needs early and provided them with the specific support they need, many students could avoid special education altogether and thrive in the regular education classroom, Caruso said.

The Grand Jury also found that teachers and

administrators throughout the district fail to update and refine Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) that are created for each special education student. All IEPs are required to be reviewed annually to ensure the special education student receives the services to which they are entitled.

Tension and low morale among administration, faculty, staff, and bargaining units in SCUSD Special Education Department was a reoccurring theme from the 14 interviews the Grand Jury conducted for this investigation.

Turnover adds to district-wide internal strife

and low morale especially when the focus changes frequently with no clear expectations or consequences for not following procedures.

While the recent change of top administrative leadership seems to bode well for improving districtwide relationships in the future, the Grand Jury was also told infighting among district office administrators can still thwart progress.

The Grand Jury report includes 13 wide-ranging recommendations that SCUSD can follow to improve special education.

Among them, the Grand Jury recommends the Board of Education direct

staff to create and then formally adopt a master plan for special ed.

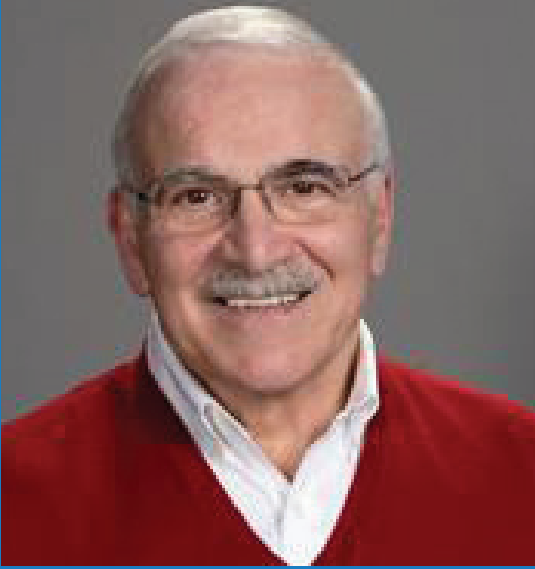
The Board should also receive quarterly updates on progress implementing the plan from SCUSD administration.

The Sacramento County Grand Jury is the independent watchdog over public entities within the county. Concerned residents can contact the Grand Jury on a confidential basis through written complaints that alert the Grand Jury to issues within public entities.

We would like to hear from you at www.sac-grandjury.org. ★

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Chris Kiesz bicycles with his daughter Charlee at the Greenhaven Pocket Farmers Market.

Charlee’s in Charge, Daddy...

Story and photo by Stephen B. Clazie, Sacramento Elks 6

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Charlee is the pilot and her father, Chris Kiesz, is power source on their Saturday morning tour of the Greenhaven Pocket Farmers Market, located at the Elks 6’s parking lot on

Riverside Boulevard. There is always plenty of parking at the market because most customers ride their bikes or walk. Families have been spotted bringing their young children in their wagons, some of which are pulled by the family’s large dog. ★

Keeping Focus on Municipal Services

The City of Sacramento is fundamentally a municipal services organization, both in principle and practice. We deliver essential services to our residents, including police and fire protection, trash collection, and park maintenance. During this year’s budget discussions on how to address the multi-million-dollar structural deficit, I focused on preserving these critical municipal services. I am pleased to report that we were largely successful in maintaining this focus. Looking ahead to future budgets, we have more work to do to balance our structural deficit. My priority will remain on core municipal services: the services that only the City of Sacramento can provide to our residents. These include public safety, park maintenance, and trash collection. No other entity will provide these services if we do not. Therefore, our budgetary spending must prioritize these core services. There are, however, areas of non-core services where we can and should collaborate with other organizations and government entities to meet the needs of our shared constituents. These services can be effectively provided



By focusing on core municipal services and collaborating with other governmental and nonprofit organizations, we can enhance our service delivery.

through joint partnerships, with each organization contributing appropriately to achieve common goals. A notable example of such a partnership, emerging from this year’s budget discussions, is the RYDEFree RT program. The City initially funded RT passes for school-aged children at a cost of \$1 million per year. The program yielded positive outcomes,

such as improved student attendance and the ability for students to use the passes for jobs, extra-curricular activities, and internships outside school hours. Overall, it had a very positive impact. Given the City’s structural deficit, we must evaluate every program thoroughly. While the RYDEFree RT program is important, it is not a core municipal service. If the City did not provide it, others would. Through discussions with Regional Transit (RT) and our school district partners, we reached an agreement where RT and the school districts joined us in funding this program. This collaboration allowed the City to reduce its annual cost by \$750,000. This partnership exemplifies how working together benefits our mutual constituents. By focusing on core municipal services and collaborating with other governmental and nonprofit organizations, we can enhance our service delivery. We can concentrate our efforts on public safety and park maintenance while partnering with others to address issues like homelessness and youth services. Rick Jennings is the Sacramento councilmember for District 7. ★

Elks 6’s Chung Shin Tang Soo Do Wins Four Awards

Continued from page 1

Lodge No. 6 is located in the Greenhaven/Pocket neighborhood at 6446 Riverside Blvd. Most people who drive by the Lodge have no idea that the Lodge has a martial arts club and an indoor swimming pool, handball courts, and a gym. Chung Shin Tang Soo Do is a member school of the World Tang Soo Do Association, and the Chief Instructor, Master Brian Olden, was also a student of Grandmaster Shin. Four members of Elks 6’s Chung Shin Tang Soo Do went to Fortuna, California, in early May for the Tang Soo Do Association Region 1 tournament, which was for Northern California and the western states. Not only did each of Elks 6’s four participants medal in each of their events, but Brian Olden was awarded the Master of the Year for Region 1. The head of the World Tang Soo Do Association, Grandmaster William Strong, came all the way from the East Coast to present Olden with his



John Paul Pressburg-Nevans, his wife Sharon, and their five-year-old daughter Ellie were all winners at the Tang Soo Do Association Region 1 tournament. Photos courtesy of Elks 6

sixth degree black belt, making him a Senior Master. James Nevans, one of the four Elks 6 attendees, said, “I believe this makes Master Olden the only Senior Master to be running a do jang (formal training hall) in the region.” James Nevans was Exalted Ruler of Elks Lodge 6 in 2020-21. He has a brother, John Paul Pressburg-Nevans, who

has been a member of the Lodge for four years. At the Region 1 tournament, John placed first in weapons, second in forms, and tied with his brother James for third in free fighting. The free fighting was open for green to red belts above age 18. The brothers are right in the middle as brown belts, which is where weapons training begins. John’s wife Sharon



The head of the World Tang Soo Do Association, Grandmaster William Strong, came all the way from the East Coast to present Brian Olden with his sixth-degree black belt, making him a Senior Master.

finished second in free fighting. She also took third in forms for white and orange belts. Last year she and Dr. Kelly Byam finished first and second. Dr. Byam was an Elks 6 trustee until she sold her Abel Pet Clinic in Elk Grove. She has retired and splits her retirement time between San Diego and Oregon. John and Sharon’s five-year-old daughter Ellie was



back for the second time at the Region 1 tournament. She received a first-place medal for forms and modified free fighting. Elks 6’s Chung Shin Tang Soo Do holds classes every Monday for one hour starting at 5 p.m. The cost to Elks members is free of charge for them and family members participating with them. There is a nominal cost for a uniform and testing. Elks 6 has two other students currently in the class. They are Becky Buckman and Betsy Vu. Elks 6’s Master Olden can be reached at bjolden07@yahoo.com. James Nevans said, “Brian has been a member of Elks 6 for six years. He is a veteran and an all-around nice guy of good character.” ★

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Sharing Your Faith by Listening to Others

In the years I served as a hospital chaplain, I was often asked, “Why don’t you use your position to tell people about Jesus?”

The question is much like the one I’m still asked as a syndicated columnist: “Why don’t you use your writing to tell people about Jesus?”

The first question assumes that chaplains represent Christianity and should use their position to surreptitiously evangelize patients.

The second question assumes that a Christian who writes a spiritual column for secular newspapers should use his writings to espouse Christian teachings.

But neither assumption is true.

That’s because hospital chaplains, like spiritual columnists, don’t “represent” a single belief.



Chaplains don’t wear the hat of a pastor, rabbi or even a guru. That’s because once you’re inside a hospital, it doesn’t matter what you are.

What matters to the chaplain is who you are.

In the hospital, like in this column, I try to help people get in touch with the spiritual component in their lives. I affirm the personal beliefs of the patient because when people are sick or dying, they tend to look toward their own healing rituals for comfort. And while I believe

that Jesus is my friend — and even theirs — I don’t believe patients should hear that proclamation from a stranger.

While serving as a hospital chaplain, who happens to be a Christian, I did some unorthodox things at the request of patients that might make some Christians uncomfortable.

For instance, I’ve taped crystals to their wrists, turned their bed eastward, read the Bible, read the Koran, spread a healing blanket on their bed and placed garlic under their bed. I’ve collected bones to be burned and placentas to be buried.

I did these things because those patients deserved my respect, not because I personally share their beliefs.

When I’ve shown proper respect for people’s beliefs, I was sometimes honored

with questions about my beliefs.

On one such occasion, I met a cancer patient who told me that he wasn’t even sure he believed in God.

“That’s fine,” I joked. “I’m in customer service, not sales.”

He liked that retort, and we established a common ground for our visits over the next several weeks.

One day, in the grips of his illness, he fired multiple spiritual questions, which I answered in rapid succession.

Yes, there is a God; yes, God is loving; yes, God wants an up-close relationship with you.

He then asked how he could talk to God.

“Talking to God is just like talking to me,” I said. “Just say what you feel.”

He wondered aloud if God would consider him a hypocrite for waiting until

his dying days to pray.

It was then he asked me to do something I’ve never done before or since. “Say the words for me.”

Like I said, I’ve done some fairly unorthodox things, but nobody had ever asked me to lip-sync their prayers — very unorthodox.

“OK,” I agreed, “but if I pray something you don’t agree with, squeeze my hand to indicate you want a do-over.”

As he reached for my hand, I told God that my friend wanted to know him. I told God that the man sought forgiveness and wholeness and was asking for God to be present in his life.

It was a prayer I will never forget. It was a prayer that never would have happened if it hadn’t started with respect.

Is there someone you

want to share your faith with? If so, ask yourself how that sharing might look if it starts with respect. Dare to hear their story before blurting into yours.

The result will, I hope, surprise you.

Readers: I’m in Honduras this week finishing the 86th library for Chispa Project. Currently, the library is just over half funded. Please consider helping by giving online at Chispaproject.org/chaplain or make check to “Chispa Project.”

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

Celebrate July 4 at Area Events

By Ornella Rossi

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Get ready to celebrate Independence Day with a lineup of exciting events across the region. Whether you're craving carnival rides, live music, delicious food from local vendors or simply a stunning fireworks display, these events promise something special for everyone.

Join the two-day festival in Rancho Cordova on July 3 and 4. The festivities kick off with the All-American Mile Road race at 9:30 a.m. on July 4 along Coloma Road, followed by a vibrant parade at 10 a.m. featuring floats and the energetic All American Youth Marching Band. Throughout both days, from 4 to 11 p.m., enjoy carnival rides and indulge in treats from more than 30 food and beverage vendors at Hagan Park, 2197 Chase Drive.

Make sure to stick around for live music starting at 8 p.m. showcasing different bands on each day leading up to the big fireworks display at 9:45 p.m.

In Citrus Heights, the Stars and Stripes celebration in Citrus Heights begins at 6 p.m. on July 1 at Van Maren Park, 6601 Thalia Way. Enjoy live music by local bands from 7 to 9:30 p.m., explore numerous food trucks and bring the children to the fun Kids’ Zone. Cap off the night with the fireworks show starting at 9:45 p.m.

Carmichael, on June 29, will host the Red, White & Blue celebration at La Sierra Community Center, 5325 Engle Road from 6 to 9 p.m. Enjoy live music by Hipper than Hip while indulging in various options of food trucks hosted by Food in the Hoods. Don’t miss out on the firework display at 9:30 p.m. Celebrate with Elk Grove Salute to the Red, White, and



An attendee at the 2023 Salute to the Red, White and Blue in Elk Grove. MPG file photo

Blue on July 4 from 5 to 10 p.m. at 9950 Elk Grove Florin Road. Enjoy the festivities with a bike parade at 6 p.m., opening ceremonies at 7 p.m., and rock out to Agents of Rock in concert at 7:30 p.m. The night ends with a firework show at 9:40 p.m. Free shuttle rides by the Sacramento Regional Transit will be available starting at 4:30 p.m., running every 15 minutes, with return services from 10 to 11 p.m. Admission is free, with parking available for \$10.

Fireworks and July 4: Keep it Safe; Keep it Legal

Continued from page 1

fireworks unsupervised by adults. Parents are responsible for any property damage or injuries caused by all fireworks.

Keep it Legal

All legal fireworks in California are called Safe and Sane Fireworks and must bear the State Fire Marshal’s seal. Safe and Sane Fireworks can only be sold from noon June 28 through 9 p.m. July 4. Safe and Sane Fireworks can only be used between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. from June 28 to July 4. Any firework that goes up in the air or explodes is illegal and dangerous.

Keep it Safe

Always have a non-combustible bucket of water to dispose of fireworks and leave in the water overnight before disposing. Always have an available hose connected to water in case of fire. Do not use fireworks near dry grass or other flammable materials. Do not use fireworks while under a canopy, covered balcony, covered patio or under a tree or bushes.

How to Report Illegal Fireworks Sale and Usage

Unincorporated County of Sacramento: 916-874-5115 or reportfireworks@saccounty.gov

City of Sacramento: 916-808-FIRE or the Sacramento Fire Department App

Aren’t sure who or how to report? Call 3-1-1 to be connected to the right place.

Highest New Home Sales in May Since 2005, Association Reports

North State Building Industry Association News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sales of Sacramento-area new homes maintained their rapid pace during May as North State Building Industry Association (BIA) members reported selling 666 new homes in the seven-county region.

That is the highest number of new homes sold during May since 2005 during the peak of the housing boom. The total is also 200 sales higher than the average number sold during the month.

North State Building Industry Association President and CEO Tim Murphy said the continued strong sales volume reflects the advantages

that new homes provide to buyers.

“Besides the fact that new homes come with extended warranties, the latest in technology and the opportunity for buyers to customize their homes, in today’s market, homebuilders are able to offer incentives that buyers can’t get when purchasing existing homes,” Murphy said. “Simply put, builders can

offer creative solutions to today’s higher interest rates and help make buying a new home possible.

“And with June being National Homeownership Month, I’d encourage anyone thinking of buying a home to explore the nearly 200 new-home communities in our region to find the home and lifestyle they’re looking for,” Murphy said.

As has been typical, the

highest number of new homes were sold in Placer County’s Roseville (137) and the next four highest sales volumes were reported in Sacramento County: Rancho Cordova (98), Elk Grove (87), Sacramento (74) and Folsom (63). The Top 10 was rounded out by Lincoln (29), Plumas Lake (26), Woodland (26), Natomas (23) and El

Dorado Hills (21). Building Industry Association statistics include sales by members in Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties. The North State Building Industry Association represents more than 500 members. For more information, visit www.northstatebia.org.

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ABOUT TOWN

4th of July Pocket Parade
Attention: Veterans who ride motorcycles. We need you to be honored and represent the Elks at the Greenhaven-Pocket July 4th parade. Please contact John DeArman, the Elks 6 Veteran Chairperson, at 916-801-5202.
Potluck in the bar after. Please see sign-up sheet in the bar.

Free Classic Car Show
First and third Fridays, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., free Classic Car Show, in parking lot next to Device Brewing Company’s Pocket/Greenhaven Taproom + Kitchen at 7485 Rush River Dr. Suite 650.

Music on the Green is June 28
The band Four Barrel is set to play Music on the Green from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, June 28 at William Land Golf Course.
For details go to: www.williamlandgc.com

Trucks & Such in Garcia Bend Park
This family fun event is hosted by District 7 Councilmember Rick Jennings from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. June 21 and Aug.

16 in Garcia Bend Park.
Friends of Sutter’s Fort Discounted Admission Rates
– 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. For more information, please visit www.suttersfort.org.

District 7 Sponsors Music in the Park
Music, food trucks and fun! Sponsored by District 7 Councilmember Rick Jennings.
June 28, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.: Jazz in the Park, Jeff Minnieweather Quartet @ William Land Park “Panhandle”
June 30, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.: Music in the

Park @William Curtis Park
July 12, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.: Jazz in July, Joe Mazzaferro Band @Marriott Park
July 19, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.: Jazz in July, Vivian Lee @Garcia Bend Park
July 26, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.: Jazz in July, Virginia Ayers-Dawson & Ayerplay @ Belle Cooledge Park
July 28, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.: Music in the Park @Curtis Park
August 25, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.: Music in the Park @Curtis Park

Elk’s Lodge Calendar of Events
Farmer’s Market, 9 am-1 pm every Saturday.
Elk’s Lodge Sunday Breakfast, 8:30 am-11 am every Sunday.
Bring your friends and family; \$15 tax included. Best deal in town. 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.
Guests are VERY welcome!
Water Aerobics, Monday 10 am, Wednesday 2 pm, Friday 10 am
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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.
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Sacramento Area Museums Showcase Region’s 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.
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The Most Popular Veterans Benefits Don’t Expire

By Dr. Paul Lawrence

While some people may think that the veterans benefits they have earned from military service could evaporate or disappear, this is inaccurate. The most popular veteran benefits have no expiration date. You can apply at any point and are not time-bound.
The three most popular veterans’ benefits are disability compensation, home loan guaranty and education/G.I. Bill.
For these benefits, there are important dates to remember. If you miss those dates, you may be inconvenienced but these benefits are still available, providing you qualify.
Disability compensation is a tax-free monthly payment based on an injury or disability that occurred during service. A veteran completes an

application, referred to as a claim. Accompanying this claim is information about their service and medical conditions.
The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) evaluates the claim and grants or denies benefits.
A disability compensation claim can be filed as early as 180 days prior to completion of active duty and throughout the remainder of a veteran’s life. In short, there is no expiration date for disability compensation.
Many veterans file multiple claims throughout their lives as new conditions are identified or previously identified conditions worsen. This is called a claim for an increase. There is no limit on how often this can be done.
There are two important dates to keep in mind relative to disability



Paul Lawrence served at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs from 2018 to 2021. Photo courtesy of Paul Lawrence

compensation. The first concerns the Intent to File. In advance of actually applying for disability compensation, you can complete an Intent to File form. This tells the VA that you will file in the next year and preserves the effective day (i.e., the date on which benefits will begin).

For example, a veteran completes an Intent to File form establishing Feb. 1, 2024, as his/her effective date.
After collecting all the needed information and forms, benefits are granted on Dec. 1, 2024. The first payment would include a retroactive payment reflecting the intent to file date of Feb. 1.
You can get assistance with your VA claim for no cost from an accredited representative such as your county veterans service officer or an accredited veteran’s service organization, such as the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans or the VFW.
Home Loan Guaranty allows veterans to purchase a home with no money down.
This is a tremendous advantage over our civilian counterparts, who must

save for a down payment prior to purchasing a home. Subject to restrictions, this can even be used to purchase a mobile home or farm residence.
There is no time restriction on this benefit. It can be used repeatedly by veterans as they move and purchase new homes.
Education/G.I. Bill benefits are significant for veterans. Serve for three years and you can earn four years of free college.
It can also be used for high-tech apprenticeships, advanced Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math training, and credentials and certificates.
In 2017, a new law, often known as the Forever G.I. Bill, was introduced. If your service ended on or after Jan. 1, 2013, this benefit will never expire.
If your service ended prior to Jan. 1, 2013, you

still could qualify for the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill or the Montgomery G.I. Bill for active duty or reservists. Each of these has an expiration date, so check those dates carefully at VA.gov.
Veterans’ benefits are an important part of the rewards for military service and you can apply at VA.gov. The best time to learn about your benefits is well before applying for them.
But remember, it’s never too late to start and some of the most popular veterans benefits never expire.

Paul R. Lawrence, Ph.D., served as Under Secretary for Benefits at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs from May 2018 to January 2021. He is the author of “Veterans Benefits for You: Get what You Deserve,” published in 2023. ★

Annual Emerge Summit at The Sofia

T-Rock Communications News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Tickets are available now for the young professionals’ event of the year that brings together hundreds across the region. Spearheaded by Metro EDGE, a program of the Sacramento Metro Chamber Foundation, the annual Emerge Summit is scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 5 at The Sofia in Midtown Sacramento. Celebrating growth and development, the Emerge Summit is the largest young professionals conference on the West Coast. The high-energy daylong event is the result of a collaborative effort of regional organizations committed to supporting young professionals and their growth in the community. Each year, hundreds of Sacramento’s emerging young professionals participate in

the personal and professional development conference, which includes inspirational speakers, educational breakout sessions and coveted opportunities to network with peers.
The annual Emerge Summit is designed to inspire young professionals to dream big, do the work and achieve their greatest potential. Participants will engage with a diverse network, develop critical business skills, focus on giving back to the community and learn the importance of an empowering leadership mindset. The Emerge Summit will provide young professionals with a sense of belonging and encourage them to work together to explore individual and community needs.
“It’s inspiring to see the multiple generations that have attended Emerge Summit over the years, been members of Metro EDGE and have

now contributed to shaping this community,” said Joaquin Razo, chair of Metro EDGE. “The Metro Chamber Foundation is very proud to offer this inspiring annual program to young professionals who gather, connect and collaborate as they pave the way for a successful career path and are crucial to our region’s inclusive economic success.”
The Emerge Summit is unique in that it activates the local business community for the conference. While the morning session is hosted at The Sofia, Home of B Street Theatre, attendees then change locations for different breakout opportunities and for lunch, activating various locally owned Midtown businesses within walking distance.
Breakout sessions are led by business and community leaders to develop both personal and professional skillsets. Topics

range from how to conquer your fears to learning about search engine optimization. Throughout the one-day conference that runs 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., attendees will be exposed to a variety of interactive experiences that represent the creative economy.
Then, the event will conclude with a happy hour at a popular and walkable venue, Harlow’s Restaurant and Nightclub, celebrating young professionals and the endless opportunity of impact they have within their futures.
“Sacramento Metro Chamber Foundation’s Metro EDGE Young Professionals Program provides an opportunity for our next generation of leaders to foster their professional growth, expand their networks and help shape the future of our region,” said Jennifer Ablog, Sacramento Metro Chamber Foundation chair and



The annual Emerge Summit is scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 5 at The Sofia in Midtown Sacramento. Photo courtesy of T-Rock Communications

community & government relations manager for Kaiser Permanente.
The 2024 Emerge Summit is proudly presented by engaged sponsors and partners, including UC Davis Graduate School of Management, UC Davis Health, Sutter Health, SMUD, Safe Credit Union, Kaiser Permanente and Raley’s.
In addition, there are still sponsorship, venue and entertainment plus speaking opportunities available by contacting Savannah Fox at sfox@metrochamber.org.

Each Emerge Summit attendee will receive an experience swag bag with goodies from local businesses to use for networking opportunities. Individual or group tickets are available, ranging in cost from \$60 (Metro EDGE members) to \$130 for single tickets, or \$115 each when purchasing five or more tickets.
Emerge Summit tickets are available now via Eventbrite. More details about the 2024 Emerge Summit are available at emergeypsummit.com. ★

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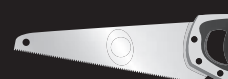
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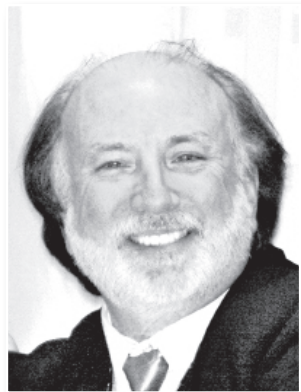
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Malik Monk Signing Huge Move for Team

By V.G.Harris

And the winner of this year's most popular basketball player in Sacramento — Malik Monk!

Well, he's my most popular player, and from the people I'm talking to it appears to be a consensus.


Yes, a \$78-million contract represents a lot of money, but by many accounts, Malik left up to 10 million in additional free agent money on the table, to sign and stay with our very own Sacramento Kings.

I have not the adjectives to describe how critical this signing is to the Kings team, but let's take a moment to congratulate Monte McNair. This

was no easy proposition for a young NBA GM, but just like the Donantas Sabonis acquisition, this is a huge signing for the Kings, and will finally allow this talented guard to start every night in the NBA.

As I have expressed, having Malik in the starting lineup, as opposed to coming off the bench, will add a minimum of five points a game to the scoring tally, and adding five points a game represents a monumental leap forward.

Fifty wins is what this signing means, and I can't wait to witness the standing ovation Malik Monk will receive when on opening night I will hear the words, "and now starting at guard from the



Kentucky Wildcats, welcome Sacramento's own Malik Monk!!"

If you don't already have a ticket for opening night, start looking now, because regardless of who the Kings add in the draft on Wednesday night, the first game of the 2025 season is going to be something special.

I think back to the many years, now over 35 years for me, that I sat on the sidelines shaking my head as the Kings made mistakes that cemented their fate as a team looking in, and rarely on the court at playoff time.

True, the Bibby, Webber years brought a lot of hoopla and excitement to

Kings Korner

the Sacramento region, but I can assure every Kings fan, that the team assembled now, by adding just one more piece, can supersede the achievements of those teams.

The Kings are so close it's tantalizing, and now that Monte McNair has proven his value in the signing of Malik, I'm on the edge of my seat to see what the #13 pick in the draft will bring to this already talented and competitive NBA team.

It's definitely a time to celebrate Kings fans! Anytime one of your own kicks the rest of the league to the curb, and signs with the hometown team, it pulls just a little at your heart strings, and it certainly brings a tremendous level of admiration for this journeyman that has finally

found a home!

Today's NBA draft has changed considerably from decades ago when nearly every player chosen, certainly in the first round, came from one of America's college ranks.

Thanks in large part to the Euro league, NBA scouts are perusing the globe, in areas not even considered just a few short years ago.

It makes the draft all that more compelling, and I almost feel like I should be buying a ticket to watch this level of entertainment.

So, I'm not attempting to artificially build a false confidence, but rather remind fans of the many prior 13th picks, and beyond, that have gone on to highly successful NBA careers.

Robin Lopez would be a welcome addition to the Kings front line, and it's interesting to note that he was drafted #15 in the 2008 draft.

The reigning NBA Celtics boast a player by the name of Jrue Holliday who had a tremendous Finals and was drafted 17th in the 2009 draft.

Can anyone forget that perennial all-star and future hall-of-famer Kawhi Leonard was drafted #15 in the first round!?

Rudy Gobert is another player that would look good in a Kings uniform, and he was drafted in the 27th spot back in 2013.

Perhaps there really is reason for anticipated celebration to make a pick at #13.

Let's all collectively cross our fingers and watch with anticipation as the Sacramento Kings add a new member to their already stellar family of players!

All the best! ★

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Two Elks 6 Members Receive Special Citations

By Noreen Stevenson

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Elks 6 presented three first-place California-Hawaii Elks Association (CHEA) Special Citation awards to two of its members at a recent Lodge meeting.

CHEA held its annual contest for three public relations events. Sacramento Elks took first place for Division III Lodges in all three events. After the Elks 6’s presentation, Elks 6 Grand Lodge Special Representative Robert Brotherton said, “It was an outstanding accomplishment for Elks 6 because this rarely happens where one Lodge takes first place in all three events.”

Elks 6 Exalted Ruler Sue Hill presented two CHEA Special Citations to Past Exalted Ruler (PER) Stephen B. Clazie at a recent Lodge meeting. The first one was for the best Community Service & Image Brochure.

This brochure contained copies of nine issues of the Pocket News with stories and photos about the GreenHaven Pocket Farmers Market (GHP) by Clazie that were published this year. They ranged from “Dinger Gets a Country Style Breakdancing Lesson” to “Eight-Month-Old Wins Halloween Costume Contest.”

The brochure also included four copies of the Elks 6’s Weekly Blast emailed to all Elks 6 members with an update of events. There were also four copies of stories on the Lodge’s website. Each one of the stories in the Blast and on the website told of an event at the market.

The Sacramento City Unified School District approved two emails to be disseminated to approximately a thousand contacts at Didion K-8 School. Those two emails were part of the brochure. The first email started with Clazie writing “ONCE UPON A TIME . . .” and telling how the Sacramento River Cats mascot was coming to GHP.

The second email was about the market’s Halloween contest for children in a veggie or fruit-inspired costume. It had a

photo of the market's manager, Vic Cima, in a veggie costume.

During the Lodge presentation, Clazie said how he was a journalism major in college, and finally in retirement he had the pleasure of writing whatever he wanted to say. He thanked Vic Cima for giving him that opportunity to have fun.

He told how he would have an idea at about 2 or 3 in the morning for a good story about the market. He would phone Vic or send him an email in the middle of the night. Clazie even learned how to send text messages rather than calling.

Barbara Cherry was also recognized at the Lodge meeting for taking first place in CHEA’s Lodge Website. Cherry has been Elks 6’s Lodge webmaster since 2007.

She was also the webmaster for the GreenHaven Pocket Farmers Market and was a very valuable asset to Cima in managing the first two years of operation. The website featured over 30 individual vendors, which were updated with weekly

specials. Customers could browse the website in search of items, taking the customer to every vendor that had their item.

The GHPfarmersmarket.com website is registered for Google Analytics.

When a person enters key search words from a web browser, such as: GHP, Farmers, Market, etc., Elks 6’s GHP website comes right up. Barbara added additional meta tags to the search engine, which

brought search results directly to the GHP market website.

Vic Cima retired because of health reasons, but Cherry has continued as the webmaster, accountant, and bookkeeper this year under Nicole Holton Alvarado. Cherry continues to keep the vendor link up-to-date on a weekly basis and continues to post information about GHP’s upcoming market “guest appearances.”

After ER Hill presented Cherry with her Special Citation, PER Clazie told the members present, “This is a very special presentation this evening. It is extremely rare that one Lodge takes first place in all

“As a journalism student my future wife, who was an English major, proofread my stories. Over 60 years later she is still proofreading them today.”

—Stephen Clazie



Elks 6’s Exalted Ruler Sue Hill, left, presents three first-place Special Citations that Barbara Cherry and Stephen Clazie earned in the California-Hawaii Elks Public Relations contest. Together they swept the first-place awards in all three categories of Division III competition. That is very rarely accomplished. Barbara took first place in CHEA’s Lodge Website. She was the webmaster for the GreenHaven Pocket Farmers Market. Clazie’s Special Citations were for best Community Service & Image Brochure about the GreenHaven Pocket Farmers Market, and a Special First Place Citation for Best Event Brochure; “Elks 6 Remembers Veterans.” Photo by Nicole Holton Alvarado

three events of CHEA’s public relations contest. This is something that only the most distinguished, impressive, and outstanding Lodges like Santa Maria Elks Lodge #1538 accomplish.”

Clazie noted Barbara Cherry has been a wonderful asset to Elks 6 for a number of years, and added he wanted to make one more comment before Barbara Cherry got to say it.

He said, “As a journalism student my future wife, who was an English major, proofread my stories. Over 60 years later she is still proofreading them today.”

Cherry added that she worked with Joan Clazie at an officers’ retreat at Bruce Synhorst’s Lake Tahoe cabin on Elks 6’s first website over 17 years ago. She concluded, “I brought the technical skills, and Joan did all of the writing.”

ER Hill also presented Steve Clazie a second Special First Place Citation for

Best Event Brochure. Elks 6 submitted Clazie’s story, “Elks 6 Remembers Veterans,” which was published on the front page of the November 24 issue of both Pocket News and Land Park News. The story was also published in the December issue of Sacramento Elks Lodge 6. One of the photographs from that story was published in the winter edition of The California-Hawaii Elk.

Linda Pohl is a longtime member of Elks 6, and she is a sales executive with Messenger Publishing Group. She has been a major supporter of the Lodge, and a valuable asset in getting publicity for the Lodge in both Pocket News and Land Park News. Ms. Pohl was in attendance for the special presentation, and Elks 6’s ER Sue Hill asked her if she wanted to say anything.

Her only response was, “Steve Clazie is a beautiful writer!” ★

Youth Offered Free RydeFreeRT Cards

Sacramento Regional Transit News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Area youth can enjoy more freedom this summer to get to jobs, shopping centers, restaurants and more via Sacramento Regional Transit District’s RydeFreeRT, the fare-free transit program for students/youth.

The cards are valid for transitional kindergartners through 12th-graders.

New RydeFreeRT cards with a valid date of June 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, are now available for students to ride for free the entire SacRT transit network, including

Sacramento Regional Transit District fixed-route buses, light rail and Smart Ride on-demand micro transit service.

RydeFreeRT is available daily during regular SacRT service hours.

To ride free, students/youth need a valid RydeFreeRT card. Youth who are experiencing homelessness or taking part in foster programs can participate in the program, regardless of current residence or school address.

Students and youth who do not have a RydeFreeRT card can visit Sacramento Regional Transit District’s Customer Service and Sales Center at 1225 R

St. (adjacent to the 13th Street Station) or a participating Sacramento library. For more information, visit rydefreert.com or call 916-321-BUSS (2877).

Launched in 2019, RydeFreeRT was the first unrestricted youth fare-free ride program in the country, according to Sacramento Regional Transit District. The 265,000 youth living in Sacramento Regional Transit District’s service area, from transitional kindergarten to 12th grade, including home-schooled students, foster and unhoused youth, can ride all buses and light rail trains for free, all day, any



Youth from transitional kindergarten through 12th-grade can ride free for the summer with the RydeFreeRT card. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Regional Transit District

day of the year.

The RydeFreeRT program has helped boost student ridership, which now accounts for nearly 25% of all Sacramento

Regional Transit District bus and light rail rides over the last year. In fact, student ridership is on pace to carry 4.2 million youth in Fiscal Year 2024,

double what it was in 2019 pre-pandemic.

Note: The RydeFreeRT program does not apply to those over 18 years old that are pursuing their GED. ★



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K-ZAP Radio Launches ‘Feed the Kitty’ Donation Drive

K-ZAP News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento's beloved K-ZAP, the all-volunteer LPFM rock/blues radio station broadcasting 24/7 at 93.3 FM in the metro Sacramento area, on the K-ZAP apps and streaming at k-zap.org, launched its “10 To Feed the Kitty” donation drive on June 9. The station is calling on its listeners to donate just \$10 each to help keep the lights on and the tunes rolling. Founded by former staff members of the legendary Sacramento radio station KZAP, Dennis Newhall and Tom Cale, K-ZAP has been a staple in the Sacramento community since its return to

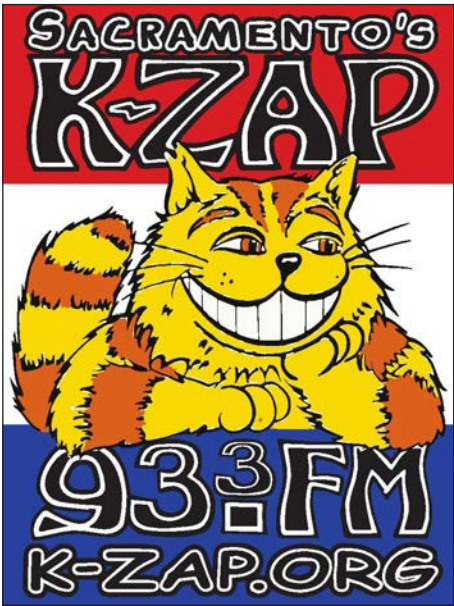


Peter Rizzo is the promotions director and underwriter at K-ZAP. Photo courtesy of K-ZAP

the airwaves on July 4, 2015. Now, as the station approaches its ninth anniversary, it is looking to the community for support to continue its mission

of providing quality rock/blues music to Sacramento and the world. “We’ve been rocking Sacramento for nine years now, and we want to keep the party going,” said Newhall, station general manager and owner. “With the ‘10 To Feed the Kitty’ campaign, we’re asking our listeners to help us reach our goal of raising \$100,000 by July 4. It’s a small amount that can make a big difference.” The “10 To Feed the Kitty” donation drive will run from now until July 4. Listeners can donate online at k-zap.org/ donate using their credit, debit card or Venmo. In addition to the online campaign, K-ZAP

will be promoting the drive at various events in the community, including the Carmichael Concerts in The Park on June 15 and the Red White & Blue Celebration at La Sierra Community Center on June 29. “We’re not asking for a lot, just \$10 from each of our listeners,” said Peter Rizzo, promotions director and underwriter. “We know that a little can go a long way, and we’re hoping that with the support of our community, we can continue to provide the best rock/blues music to Sacramento and the world.” For more information, contact Newhall at dnewhall@k-zap.org or Rizzo at prizzo@k-zap.org. ★



K-Zap has been a widely beloved radio station in the Sacramento area for many years. Photo courtesy of K-ZAP

Walking with American Heroes

Continued from page 1

Franco said it’s about recognizing all the stages of military service; young recruits, active military, veterans, retired and those who have passed away.

As the commander of the Veterans Affiliated Council Board of Directors, he’s clear about being a civilian who has never served but wants to give back. “Both my grandfathers and great-grandfathers served. I’m a Navy brat and was born in Balboa Navel Hospital. My mother was an American migrant farm worker working different crops from Texas to California. When she joined the U.S. military, she had nothing but the shirt on her back. The military gave her structure, a community and a family. She’s very successful and has done a wonderful job.” Today his mother is an engineer with a home in a nice, Sacramento County suburb.

His point was, “If you truly put your best foot forward and do for your country, there’s a lot your country will do for you.”

Veteran Jim Faulkinbury planted flags with his daughter Kara and grandson Isaac. He served in the Air Force in the Middle East. He also works with the Sons of the American Revolution and the American Legion. Isaac, a Boy Scout, told me what he thinks about his grandad: “He’s pretty impressive. I think it’s cool that he tracked satellites like Apollo 14. And he was on the site where Sputnik was tracked.” The family celebrates Memorial Day each year and ends it with a family dinner.

Nearby, Marisa Salisbury, who is a leader for Boy Scout Troop 53, and her son Charles were working hard too.



5,000 flags were put on the graves of servicemen and women at Sacramento Historic City Cemetery.



Veteran Jim Faulkinbury stands between his daughter Kara and Grandson Isaac.

Salisbury said Charles has been in Scouts since he was in fourth grade, when he was two feet shorter. Now he towers over his mother. She said, “I think it’s wonderful to remember these people and what they did to protect us. I want Charles to have that kind of valor and be brave.”

Franco explained, for those interested in a military career, Scouts is an excellent path. Typically, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are in the top 1% who get accepted to military academies like West Point. And those who make Eagle Scout are looked at even more closely. Why? Franco said, “Because it

shows a strong commitment to their community. They know how to work together and follow a chain of command.” These are skills that are very attractive to military recruiters. And as Franco’s family has learned, the benefits of a military career can lead to further success in civilian life, as well. He believes the military is a great option for underprivileged kids since it offers structure and opportunity. Walk with Me and the Veterans Affiliated Council also put veteran needs in front of politicians and legislators with events like the recent Los Angeles Congressional Veteran



A vet and Scout walk together to place flags and talk.



Leroy John Adams and a Boy Scout work together to honor the veterans’ grave sites.

Forum. Franco said, “We work to hold our legislators accountable, so they follow through with what they promised us. Putting veterans in the forefront of this is the key.” Anyone who’s aware of the current state of veterans’ support and benefits understands

how vital this is. Memorial Day weekend is only the recent effort. Walk with Me supports military appreciation throughout the year such as Veteran’s Day, 9/11, the 4th of July and Armed Forces Day. And they support efforts all over the

state of California. As the young Scouts and their families continued to plant flags and prepare for the weekend festivities, I noticed the planting is a ceremony itself. Reading the gravesites of soldiers and considering what they did for their country is a valuable reflective moment. William Franco explained, “This makes it more tangible, instead of just the preverbal bumper sticker ‘We honor our veterans.’ We ask, okay, well how? By doing what? Paying your taxes? This is the true piece where you get to feel it, eat it, breathe it. Being able to see the youth work with veterans and honor our fallen heroes really warms my heart.”

To learn more about Walk with Me and other Veteran organizations go to: www.calvac.org. To learn about the Sons of the American Revolution go to: www.sar.org. ★



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Fighting Through Homelessness to Housing

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Keri and Sandra look fondly at each other with a bond forged by two people who have shown up for each other during some hard times. Sandra went through other case managers but somehow when she met Keri, she knew that Keri would be the one to help her change her life.

“She loves her clients; you can just tell,” Sandra said. “And she always tells the truth. I appreciate that.”

Keri lowers her head in acknowledgment; it’s true, she does love her clients. But she’s quick to return the compliment: “Sandra always showed up. She always does the work. She is on it.”

The mutual respect they have for one another might seem trivial, but it isn’t. Missed connections and opportunities are the top reasons folks don’t get housed. Lost paperwork, lost phones, lost and broken relationships.

Keri is a Community Health Worker with Community Health Works (CoHeWo), an outreach organization contracted by Sacramento County to do encampment outreach in the parkway, unincorporated county and with the multi-disciplinary teams in the City of Sacramento. CoHeWo outreach staff provide support and services ranging from helping to get an I.D. to rehousing, furnishing a new apartment or helping with a deposit. But more than anything, CoHeWo staff relentlessly

show up with compassion and a drive to make a difference in the lives of their clients.

Sandra lost her job driving for Lyft at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. After 20 years as a security guard, she decided to make a change to a job that allowed her to set her own hours and income, and also pay for an apartment and a steady rotation of leased cars. When the pandemic hit, Lyft fired her. She sued for wrongful termination but the case was tied up for years. Her income vanished. Her ability to pay for her apartment and car: gone. She lost her home and her car within a matter of months and had very little money to live on. Sandra spent a few weeks on her daughter’s couch, but the strained relationship wore out her welcome faster than expected.

Sandra bounced around between living in a tent on the river and near Township 9, living in the City Safe Ground, and eventually living in her car after winning her wrongful termination suit. She went through and graduated from several programs, including Salvation Army, Women’s Empowerment and Mather Community Campus.

“Being homeless is a fight, every day,” Sandra said. “People slashed my tent and stole my stuff. I try to keep to myself; I don’t want trouble. It is dangerous out here as a woman alone.”

One day, a border collie dog jumped into the back of her car. The dog



Sandra finds lots of happiness through her canine companions. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

refused to get out and had no collar. Sandra took her to the nearest vet to scan her for a chip. With no chip detected and a seemingly instant bond, Sandra decided to keep her and name her Lady. Sandra scheduled her for spay surgery, but Lady got pregnant before that day came. Sandra was able to rehome all the puppies, except one: a spirited, split-nosed mix that stole her heart and captured the attention of everyone he met! Lucky became quite an attraction. His nasal cavities formed independently, creating a unique look.

When Keri took over

Sandra’s case, Sandra knew that somehow, this community health worker was different. She would be the one to get her into housing. Keri and Sandra looked for places to get shelter, but Sandra’s situation proved difficult. Because of her two big dogs, Sandra’s options were very limited. While some shelters now accept pets, pets have historically been a huge barrier to people getting shelter. Sacramento County has been working to change those restrictions with its Safe Stay shelter model that allows people to shelter, with their pets, in

individual units. No one should have to choose between the safety of shelter and their pet.

Keri worked with Sandra for nearly six months before she was able to get her a referral into the Wong Center, now known as Mutual Housing’s project “The Boulevard.” The Boulevard is an affordable housing project with 127 units, 50 of them funded by the Sacramento County Division of Behavioral Health to be used as Permanent Supportive Housing for clients exiting homelessness who also have behavioral health challenges. Applications can be extremely competitive, given the incredible need for affordable housing in the region.

Keri and Sandra worked tirelessly to get all the documents Sandra needed to qualify for her apartment: financial receipts, EBT documentation and Chime receipts. She was able to get into the lottery system for a unit.

“Getting an affordable housing unit requires so much work. You have to jump through a lot of hoops. So many people don’t want to do it, but I was willing to. I did the work. That is why I got in. I met so many people out on the river who really just want winter housing. But I was desperate for permanent housing.”

On March 19, 2024, Sandra, Lady and Lucky moved into their brand-new apartment at The Boulevard. The County’s contract with CoHeWo paid for furniture, towels,

a microwave and cleaning supplies to get her started.

“I know I am lucky to be here, but I also know I earned this,” Sandra said. “I did the work I needed to do. I showed up. I checked in every week. I never gave up. And I had Keri. She helped me so much.”

Sandra is the supervisor of the Garden Club at the Boulevard. She is responsible for making sure the garden is watered and the children stay out of it. At night, she volunteers her time as their security guard. She hopes that she will one day have another paid job doing what she enjoys. Sandra loves to draw, paint and make jewelry.

Making skull jewelry is her favorite design. Everyone loves Lady and Lucky. Lucky, with his bizarre nose, is a great conversation starter.

For now, Sandra can stay at The Boulevard, but one of her main barriers to long-term housing is that she doesn’t have any source of income. Focused on stabilizing her life, with a strong emphasis on her health, is her No. 1 priority.

Sandra has had various forms of cancer for more than 30 years. Establishing a healthcare provider through CalAIM Enhanced Care Management (ECM) will get her the help she needs. Sandra’s referral has been approved and she is just waiting for a primary care provider to be assigned.

“I’m positive God still has a plan for me,” Sandra said. “I am not through yet.” ★

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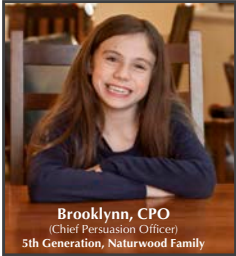
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