



**Project Pickup  
Reels in  
Fishing Line**

PAGE 10

**Blue Angels Headline  
California Capital  
Airshow Next March**

PAGE 8



# Land Park News

VOL 33 • ISSUE 17

Bringing You Community News For Over 30 Years

SEPTEMBER 13, 2024

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INSIDE**

**CITY OF TREES  
ANIMAL HOSPITAL**



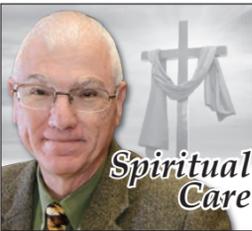
PAGE 4

**BELOVED PITBULL  
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PAGE 6

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PAGE 9



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## Chalk Art is for Everyone



Xixin Huang is a 17-year-old St. Francis High School student from Singapore.

**Story and photos  
by Mitch Barber**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - More than 200 sidewalk squares were sponsored in the 34th annual Chalk It Up! Festival this past Labor Day weekend at Fremont Park on the border of downtown and midtown between 15th and 16th, and P and Q streets.

A square costs \$250 to sponsor. The money goes to schools and organizations that provide field trips, easels and paintbrushes, after-school mentorship programs and more.

According to the Chalk It Up website at chalkitup.org, "Chalk It Up's mission is to empower and support the next generation of Sacramento artists through targeted art grants for



Sidewalk chalk awaits its retrieval by artists at Chalk It Up at Fremont Park.

young artists and the programs that inspire them."

Established in 1991, the nonprofit organization promotes and supports youth arts by offering small grants to kindergarten through 12th-grade

classrooms, and youth arts projects throughout the Sacramento region.

This year, Christy Jourdan ran the Chalk It Up! Festival; it is her fifth year as executive director and 11th as a volunteer. She said that 150 volunteers at the park "make it happen."

When asked what is new for this year, Jourdan answered, "We're super-stoked about our sponsor Taco Bell Cantina." The restaurant is at 900 K St. and owned by Dave Smith, dubbed "Taco Dave."

"This event has a \$90,000 price tag on it," Jourdan said. "Somebody like Taco Dave comes in, wants to know how he can help."

Jourdan said Smith's contribution went toward a big tent for the beer  
*Continued on Page 3*



Calling or texting the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at any time of the day, any day of the week, could help save someone's life. Suicide is the 12th leading cause of death overall in the U.S. Graphic courtesy of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

**Call 988  
to Save  
a Life**

By MPG Staff

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (MPG)** - September is Suicide Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness and discuss this urgently increasing crisis, according to NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness).

NAMI has sobering statistics: Suicide is the second leading cause of death among those aged 10 to 14, the third leading cause of death among those aged 15 to 24 and the 12th leading cause of death overall in the U.S.

Or, as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports, more than 49,000 people in the United States died by suicide in 2022. That's one death every 11 minutes.

And millions more experience suicidal thoughts.

Suicidal thoughts can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background, according to the NAMI website at nami.org. While suicidal thoughts are common, however, they should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues.

Many events and activities promoting suicide prevention awareness will be held locally, regionally and nationally throughout September.

During Suicide Prevention Month, NAMI and numerous other mental health organizations stress that all of us can help prevent suicide by reaching out to those who need help.

The National Institute of Mental Health lists five action steps to help someone having suicidal thoughts.

The first step is Ask "Are you thinking about suicide?" It's not an easy question to ask but it can help start a conversation.

The second step is Be  
*Continued on Page 2*

## Downtown Partnership Releases Livability Strategy

**Traci Rockefeller  
Cusack, T-Rock  
Communications  
News Release**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Downtown Sacramento Partnership has published a document titled "Downtown Sacramento Livability Strategy."

The 40-page document is composed of three sections, starting with an explanation of what a neighborhood needs from the community viewpoint as well as from the perspective of developers, listing out critical items that need attention and prevent progress.

The document then outlines a list of six urgent



Downtown Sacramento Partnership has released a strategy to improve livability in the area. Photo courtesy of Downtown Sacramento Partnership

priorities that require immediate attention to create a livable, lovable downtown, before concluding with a call-to-action for

elected and community leaders to take action on the items listed.

"The Downtown Sacramento Livability

Strategy reinforces the significant progress being made at the local level and serves as a call to action

*Continued on Page 5*

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# Call 988 to Save a Life

*Continued from Page 1*  
**there:** Listening without judgment is key to learning what the person is thinking and feeling.  
 The third step is **Help keep them safe:** Reducing access to highly lethal items or places can help prevent suicide.  
 The fourth step is **Help them connect:** Connecting the person with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (call or text 988) and other community resources can give them a safety net. You can also assist by reaching out to a trusted family member, friend, spiritual advisor or mental health professional.  
 The fifth National Institute of Mental Health step is **Follow up:** Staying in touch with the person after they have experienced a crisis or been discharged

from care can make a difference.  
 Studies show that supportive, ongoing contact can play an important role in suicide prevention.  
**How You Can Help**  
 The advocacy groups say to educate yourself and others about suicide prevention by checking out the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at [www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988).  
 And visit the Suicide Prevention Resource Center at <https://sprc.org/>: Each year, the resource center creates many ways to get involved in Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.  
 The U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration invites residents throughout the country to

participate in 988 Day on Sept. 8. 988 Day is a national initiative dedicated to raising awareness about the federal agency's 988 resource and emphasizing the importance of mental health and suicide prevention.  
 According to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline website at [988lifeline.org](http://988lifeline.org), "We can all help prevent suicide. The 988 Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States."  
 The National Institute of Mental Health website at <https://www.nimh.nih.gov> lists warning signs that indicate someone might be considering suicide.

During National Suicide Prevention Month, the institute reminds residents that warning signs include the following:  
 Talking about wanting to die or wanting to kill themselves  
 Talking about feeling empty or hopeless or having no reason to live  
 Talking about feeling trapped or feeling that there are no solutions  
 Feeling unbearable emotional or physical pain  
 Talking about being a burden to others  
 Withdrawing from family and friends  
 Giving away important possessions  
 Saying goodbye to friends and family  
 Putting affairs in order, such as making a will  
 Talking great risks that could lead to death, such as driving extremely fast  
 Talking or thinking about death often.

Graphic courtesy of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Other serious warning signs that someone might be at risk for attempting suicide include:  
 Displaying extreme mood swings, suddenly changing from very sad to very calm or happy  
 Making a plan or looking for ways to kill themselves, such as searching for lethal methods online, stockpiling pills or buying a gun  
 Talking about feeling great guilt or shame  
 Using alcohol or drugs more often  
 Acting anxious or agitated  
 Changing eating or sleeping habits  
 Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.  
 According to the National Institute of Mental Health, suicidal thoughts or actions are a sign of extreme distress and should not be ignored.  
 If these warning signs apply to you or someone you know, the institute urges you to get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behavior is new or has recently increased.★

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# Chalk Art is for Everyone

Continued from Page 1

garden and a picnic area. The Chalk It Up! Festival included live music, food trucks and vendors all three days.

All ages came out to illustrate with chalk on the sidewalk squares.

Mason, 12, was in his second year drawing at the event. With his family urging him on, Mason drew a character named Satoru Gojo from the anime (Japanese animation) called "Jujutsu Kaizen."

Yixin Huang from Singapore, a 17-year-old St. Francis High School student, had an art square sponsored by Girls Rock Sacramento, and she was encouraged by the presence

of her parents from China. Sisters Alani, 8, and Alaysiya, 11, worked on adjacent squares. Alani said of her art, which included a rendition of the character Strawberry Shortcake, "I love strawberries. It's a sweet treat theme." Her sidewalk square had multiple squares drawn within it with sweet edible treats represented.

Alaysiya worked on "virtual singers," including Hatsune Miku.

An adult artist from the Cordova High School Class of 2018 was at Chalk It Up for his third time and said about his art, "I just use my imagination. It's a concept based around nature and nurture. It's introspective."



Alani shows off her finished work.



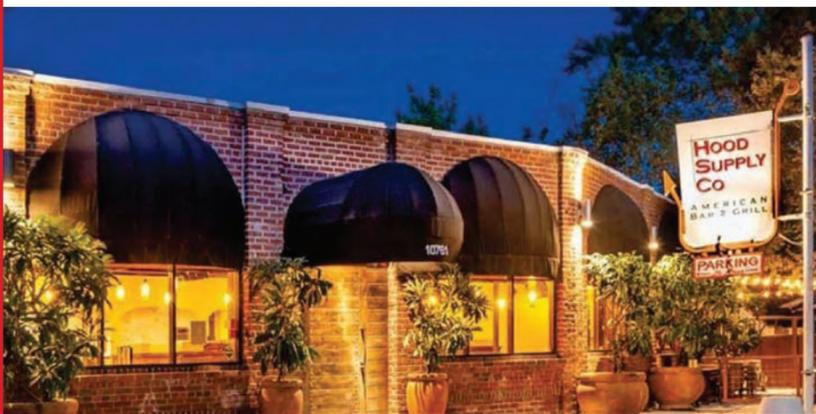
Mason shows off his artistic talents.



Alaysiya worked on virtual singers, including Hatsune Miku.

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Teresa Olson  
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# City of Trees Animal Hospital Grand Opening Sept. 21

## City of Trees Animal Hospital News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - City of Trees Animal Hospital is thrilled to announce its grand opening, marking the realization of a lifelong dream for Dr. Matthew Wooddall, a Central Valley native.

This new, privately owned veterinary practice is committed to offering high-quality, affordable and compassionate care to pets while fostering a sense of community and support for their families.

Founded in 2023, City of Trees Animal Hospital is more than just a place for veterinary care; it is a trusted community resource. Dr. Wooddall and his team are on a mission to set the standard for veterinary excellence, focusing on creating an environment where pets and their families feel welcomed, supported, and empowered.

By providing affordable and compassionate care, the hospital ensures that the health and well-being of every animal are prioritized.



Visitors can tour the cat room during City of Trees Animal Hospital's open house Sept. 21. Photos courtesy of Nick Barry

"This hospital is the culmination of a lifelong dream for me," said Dr. Wooddall. "After more than two decades in the veterinary field, including working as a general and emergency veterinarian in Stockton, Lodi, and Sacramento, I wanted to create a place that truly serves the community and builds a strong bond between pets, their families, and our team."

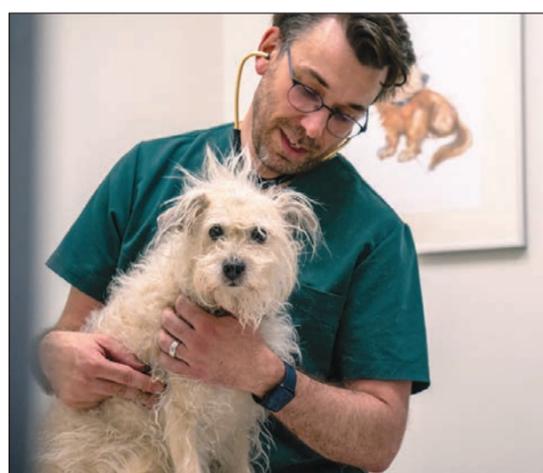
Dr. Wooddall's journey in veterinary medicine began in February 2000 as

a kennel assistant in Lodi. After earning a Bachelor of Biology from UC Santa Barbara in 2010, he attended UC Davis Veterinary School, returning to his Central Valley roots.

He has spent the last decade caring for animals in various veterinary settings and also founded Hard Luck Animal Welfare Advocates in 2023, a non-profit that partners with the City of Stockton to provide veterinary care for local animals in need.

City of Trees Animal Hospital is located at 6429 Riverside Blvd. in Sacramento, and the team is excited to welcome the community to its open-house-style grand opening celebration on Saturday, Sept. 21 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

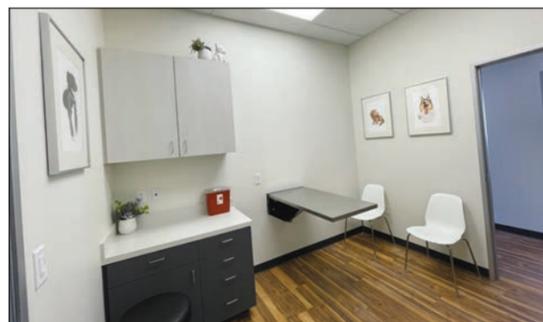
The event will include music, face painting, treats for pets and people, hospital tours and a chance to meet many talented local artisans whose artistic touches make our hospital feel welcoming!



Dr. Matthew Wooddall examines a canine patient.



City of Trees' X-ray room is ready for patients.



Local artists' work decorates the dog room at City of Trees.

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# Risk of West Nile Virus Continues



The Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito & Vector Control District urges residents to prevent mosquito bites as West Nile virus is still a risk. Photo courtesy of the Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito & Vector Control District

and protect themselves,” Goodman said. While West Nile virus is the main concern, the invasive mosquitoes, *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* continue to spread throughout both counties. Invasive mosquitoes are a public health threat because they are capable of transmitting debilitating diseases such as Zika, dengue and chikungunya. Invasive mosquitoes were detected for the first time within district boundaries in 2019 and since then have been spreading quickly, according to the district. To report a mosquito breeding source or for current information about any treatments planned, visit [www.FIGHTtheBITE.net](http://www.FIGHTtheBITE.net). ★

## Sacramento Yolo Mosquito & Vector Control District News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - While Labor Day is the last holiday of the summer, mosquito activity and the risk of West Nile virus continue for all area residents.

On Aug. 30, the Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito & Vector Control District reminded the public to protect themselves from mosquitoes, especially as many would be at

outdoor activities for the long holiday weekend.

“Mosquito samples and dead birds are still testing positive for West Nile virus,” said District Manager Gary Goodman on Aug. 30. “While we have been enjoying the cooler weather, temperatures are expected to climb back up next week. This means mosquitoes will be out and there is still a possibility of being bitten and becoming sick with West Nile.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

recommends using an insect repellent that contains the active ingredients DEET, Picaridin, IR3535 or the plant-based Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. Be sure to always follow label directions when applying repellent.

This season, virus activity has been steady and widespread in both Sacramento and Yolo counties.

“We still have a few weeks before the summer season officially ends so it’s very important for everyone to do their part

## Downtown Partnership Releases Livability Strategy

*Continued from Page 1*  
for additional measures to address both the supply and demand sides of the urban neighborhood continuum,” said Scott Ford, Deputy Director with Downtown Sacramento Partnership.

“It challenges all of us to think differently about the future of downtown, to double down on the

production of housing at all levels of affordability, and to achieve livable amenities which support a highly desirable and sustainable mixed-use neighborhood in the heart of California’s capital region.”

A timely release, the Downtown Sacramento Livability Strategy is published following a slew of headlines and comments

over the last year on housing and building conversions.

U.C. Berkeley’s Terner Center for Housing Innovation recently published a research and policy piece on construction defect liability law and slowing California condo development.

“Amongst the many successes downtown

Sacramento must be, it must also be a great urban neighborhood with a lot more housing,” said Brent Toderian, co-author of the Downtown Sacramento Livability Strategy and previous State of Downtown speaker.

“This strategy won’t sit on a shelf collecting dust, because Sacramento leaders and downtown

champions can’t let it. It’s been crafted to tackle the toughest challenges with unusual bluntness, to ensure it provides the most important guidance in any future conversation about the downtown’s future. It’s specifically designed to be game-changing.”

Unlike similarly published documents, the Downtown Sacramento Livability Strategy is not meant to be a report. Rather, this document is

intended to serve as a strategy for leaders, and shift mindsets to change the way people think about urban living.

“The sole intent is to be a transformational turning point for downtown. Anything less should be considered a failure,” added Toderian.

The report is at <https://www.downtownsac.org/about/reports-publications/downtown-sacramento-livability-strategy>. ★

## Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



Football season has begun, but make no mistake about it, basketball fans are eagerly anticipating the upcoming camp and preseason for the Sacramento Kings.

This year’s team will take on a decidedly offensive look, as they have added a perennial 20 points per game with DeMar DeRozan to their already potent offense.

Last season with the Bulls, DeRozan averaged 24 points per game, but he has exceeded 27 points per game twice in his already legendary career. This bodes well for the hometown team, as three-point shooters like Keegan Murray, Malik Monk, and De’Aaron Fox will undoubtedly get better looks, as defenders try to control the frenetic mid-range game of DeMar DeRozan.

The Kings can actually put 5 scorers on the court at the same time, and although Keon Ellis is known for his ferocious defense, his offensive game has come to life as well. We saw a man among boys in the NBA summer league, as Keon did pretty much what he wanted as he scored at will against the newcomers and younger players in the league.

Keon’s experience from last year, particularly as a starter, will in all likelihood lead to a standout year in the upcoming campaign.

Starters for the Kings that we can already pencil in include Domantas Sabonis, De’Aaron Fox, Keegan Murray, and of course the standout offseason acquisition of DeMar DeRozan. That leaves one spot to be filled, and everyone seems to be coming up with their own personal favorite. The leading candidates are Malik Monk, Keon Ellis, and Kevin Huerter who is returning from a shoulder injury that cut short his 2023/2024 season.

Huerter and Ellis are accustomed to starting, but Malik Monk has made it known that he would like to transition from the 6th man position to the starting lineup.

The unknown quotient is coach Mike Brown who has a difficult decision to make. Hopefully he will give each of the three an opportunity to start in preseason games, but the preseason is short, and the body of work will be minimal to make a decision.

There are those for whom it’s not who starts but who finishes, but I respond by

saying, starting is a place of pride, and I’ve yet to meet the player that would rather come off the bench than start a game.

Trey Lyles has never gotten the love from coach Brown that Keon Ellis receives, and I contend that Trey has acquitted himself well, and to the point that his name should be in the conversation. When Trey plays alongside Sabonis the Kings present a much more formidable front line, and Lyles could be the missing ingredient the Kings need to help clean the boards.

The truth is, whether Huerter, Monk, Ellis, or Lyles, all four of these players represent quality NBA talent, and Brown has some notable ballers to make his final selection.

All that said, the bench will be strong this year, and if Alex Len can take just one more step, I believe this 1st round draft choice from 2013 could finally live up to the potential that so many pundits believed that he had when originally drafted.

I like Len’s game, and his effort is unquestionable. He acquits himself well when Sabonis needs a breather, and if he can take that next step, I can see moments when he and Sabonis are on the court together.

If I haven’t yet mentioned your favorite player, dark horses like Colby Jones, Jordan McLaughlin, Boogie Ellis, or newcomers Orlando Robinson and Isaiah Crawford are waiting in the wings to make their presence known.

Just as Keon Ellis emerged last season, one of these players is waiting to show the Sacramento Kings fans that they deserve some accolades, and it will surprise me if I’m not surprised by one of the aforementioned candidates.

Let’s not forget that we haven’t even mentioned Kings’ top draft choice Devin Carter, and although he is scheduled to miss the first half of the upcoming season, Devin no doubt will be eagerly awaiting his opportunity to show the Sacramento fans why this 22-year-old was drafted #13 overall.

Get ready Kings fans, for a season that will rival any you’ve seen so far, and as always if you have comments, please send them to [vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com](mailto:vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com).

All the best! ★

## ABOUT TOWN

### Open House Sept. 21 at City of Trees Animal Hospital

City of Trees Animal Hospital will host a grand opening open house from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 21 at 6429 Riverside Blvd. in Riverside Plaza .

The event will include music, face painting, treats for pets and people , hospital tours and a chance to meet artisans whose work adorns the facility.

For more information, call 916-281-0202.

### Kennedy High 1969 Reunion Oct. 19

The John F. Kennedy Senior High School Class of 1969’s 55-year reunion is set for Saturday, Oct. 19 from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. at Dante Event Center, 2330 Fair Oaks Blvd.

Registration is \$75.69; after Sept. 19, \$85.69. Includes dinner, no-host cocktails. Questions? Text or call Ruth Trubschenk Lundsten, 916-718-8826.

### Land Park Volunteer Corps Gardening Days

Wear your gardening gear and join LPVC at Base Camp behind Fairytale Town’s parking lot. All ages welcome.

Volunteers receive free coffee and donuts in the morning.

A hot lunch is served after work. Arrive Saturday morning for the following dates and times:

Oct. 5, 9 a.m.

Nov. 2, 9 a.m.

Depending on weather, dates and times may change.

### Elks Lodge Calendar of Events

**Oktoberfest**, 5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 14. Grand Isle Fire Brigade Street Band, German food, beer and drinks. \$15 advance, \$20 at the door.

**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 and Thursday 10 am, Wednesday 2 pm, Friday 10 am

**Yoga**, Monday 12 pm, Wednesday

3:30 pm. Lodge members free.

**Martial Arts**, Monday 5 pm

**Pickleball**, Multiple days each week.

Noon Monday, 3:30 p.m. Wednesday Mon & Wed 9 am-12 pm, Thu 4:30-7:30 pm, Sun 4-7 pm

To sign up or confirm schedule, join [playtimescheduler.com](http://playtimescheduler.com)

**Improv Night**, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 6-8 pm

**Wednesday Night Dinner**, 5:30 to 7 pm. See [elks6.net](http://elks6.net) for weekly menu.

**Sactown Swing**: lessons 7 p.m.; swing social 8 p.m.

**Karaoke**

7 p.m. Thursdays and Saturdays

**Friday Happy Hour**, Friday 4-7 pm

### Sacramento Area Museums Offer Plenty of Experiences

The Greater Sacramento region is rich with museums and popular destinations that offer plenty of must-see and must-do experiences to explore. The community is encouraged to show support for local museums by making plans to visit favorite locations (or discovering new ones).

A sampling of must-see and must-do experiences and special activations offered by local museums include the following:

**California State Railroad Museum & Foundation** – Through the end of September, weekend excursion train ride guests delight in the sights, smells, and sounds of an authentic, historic locomotive as it rolls along the levees of the Sacramento River for a six-mile, 45-minute round-trip excursion.

Appealing to all ages, the experience offers guests the chance to enjoy train travel from an earlier era. For more details and/or to book a train ride, please visit [www.californiarailroad.museum](http://www.californiarailroad.museum).

**Sacramento History Museum** – Through Jan. 7, 2025., the museum is proud to present a limited-time exhibition titled “America’s Monsters, Superheroes and Villains: Our Culture at Play” from SuperMonsterCity. The engaging exhibition will be filled with 400+ vintage and original toys, comic books, games, posters, packaging, TV commercials, movie trailers and more. For details, visit [www.SacHistoryMuseum.org](http://www.SacHistoryMuseum.org).

For more information about upcoming activities offered by Sacramento area museums, visit [SacMuseums.org](http://SacMuseums.org). ★

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# Beloved Land Park Pitbull Celebrates Birthday with Neighbors

This article appears in response to "Pitbull Attack a Lesson for Dog-Walkers," which appeared in the Aug. 23 Land Park News.

By Paul Shapiro and Toni Shapiro

On March 19, 2020, we received an urgent email from Front Street Animal Shelter: "We just learned that our shelter may shut down. We need to get dogs out immediately while we still can."

As animal lovers who six months earlier had bought a South Land Park home that still had no animals in it, we figured we may as well pitch in during the pandemic and foster a dog in need. The situation at the shelter was so dire, we learned, that unlike the normal process, there'd be no application and no orientation; you just showed up that day and had a dog placed in your car.

So began our relationship with a friendly but nameless stray pitbull with no known backstory.

About two years old and athletic, with a

physique that resembles a certain former California governor, Eddie — named after Paul's late, quite muscular, grandfather — was a perfect 50-pound gentleman. He was house-trained, friendly to all people and animals, and had a primary mission in life simply never to be alone.

Ironically, we met more of our neighbors in the first couple weeks of pandemic isolation — all while walking Eddie through the neighborhood — than we did the first six months since moving in. Yes, there were some people with irrational fears of pitbulls who crossed the street when Eddie strutted by, but many neighbors purposely stopped to pet this new canine entrant to the community.

The American Temperament Test Society ranks pitbulls as one of the most affectionate and least aggressive dog breeds. Once known as "nanny dogs" in the early 20th century due to their gentle nature around children, Eddie proved to embody this history. He quickly became a beloved fixture in our neighborhood.

So when we decided to become

foster-failures and make Eddie a permanent part of our family, many in South Land Park rejoiced. Quickly he had dog dates set up at neighbors' houses, pool parties and even gifts from strangers. Our neighbors were now our friends.

Fast forward 4.5 years, and we just threw Eddie his seventh birthday party, hosting 11 of his canine friends and 20 of their human companions at our home. With no dog fights — and no human fights either — Eddie, proudly wearing a birthday hat, was the center of attention, surrounded by dog cake and toys.

It's hard to overstate how much happiness Eddie's brought to our life, and how much more he's made our house feel like a home. Whether walking in the neighborhood, at the dog park or along the Sacramento River, Eddie routinely runs into people who know and love him, enriching our lives and making our community a little more tight-knit.

Paul Shapiro and Toni Shapiro live in South Land Park. You can follow Eddie on Instagram: @eddiethepittie



Eddie the pitbull at his seventh birthday party. Photo courtesy of Paul and Toni Shapiro.

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**Publisher, Paul V. Scholl**

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# Blue Angels Headline Capital Airshow Next March

## California Capital Airshow News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The California Capital Airshow, presented by Sacramento County in partnership with the City of Rancho Cordova, on Sept. 6 announced its 19th annual Airshow will return to Mather Airport on March 22 and March 23, 2025.

The two-day traditional event will be headlined by the U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels.

“We are so excited to have the Blue Angels back!” said California Capital Airshow Executive Director Darcy Brewer. “Their return to Sacramento has been highly anticipated and we’re proud to

be one of the team’s first steps following their winter training.”

The Blue Angels’ last performance at the California Capital Airshow was in 2019.

The team’s performance at the 2025 Airshow marks its 79th season, during which the team will perform 64 demonstrations at 32 locations across the country.

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The Blue Angels return to next year’s California Capital Airshow at Mather Airport on March 22 and March 23. The renowned Blue Angels, pictured here, performed at the California Capital Airshow in 2019. Photo courtesy of Mark E. Loper Photography

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# Don't Tell it to the Chaplain

I Last year I wrote a book called, "Tell It to the Chaplain." If you've seen it, then you're likely wondering why this headline makes the opposite request.

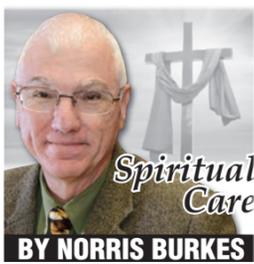
My title refers to certain phrases people use that cause me to jokingly reply, "Don't ever say that to a chaplain."

When they cock their head in search of an explanation, I tell them that I'm a retired healthcare chaplain and I may inject a totally different meaning into common sayings.

For instance, I once asked my photojournalism professor if he could stay after class to explain my new camera.

"I really can't," he said, "I'm on my way out."

"Please don't say that to a chaplain," I replied. "'On the way out' means you're going to meet God."



BY NORRIS BURKES

"No - no. I have a faculty meeting," he said. "And God's not often there."

On another day, I ran breathlessly to an airline gate, only to be told by the agent, "They've already departed."

Ouch. Don't say that to a chaplain.

"Departed" describes someone who has taken flight to their celestial destination. At some point, chaplains call these folks the "dearly departed."

On a different occasion,

my neighbors described how they moved out of the city into our forested lake community in the California foothills.

"It just feels like we're in a better place now," the husband blurted.

I winced at "a better place" since the phrase most often describes the afterlife.

In another example, I was walking with my friend Roger through a sports stadium when he abruptly stopped at a concession stand to buy a Pepsi.

"Keep walking," he said, "Meet me on the other side."

Of course, I knew he was simply asking me to meet him at our seats on the other side of the stadium.

But as a chaplain, he should have known that I'd make a heavenly inference

that we'd not meet again until we got to the "Other Side."

Finally, I once stood on the banks of the Jordan River as our Israeli tour guide pointed toward the land "just beyond the river."

I nudged my wife and said, "I wish he wouldn't say that."

I started humming the refrain to Fanny Crosby's hymn, "Near the Cross." "In the cross, in the cross, Be my glory ever; Till my raptured soul shall find Rest beyond the river."

Becky groaned, recognizing this as one of my favorite fragments.

I jest with these phrases because I love puns, but I also appreciate them as a comforting way to remember the three people I've lost in the past four years.

My brother, the one I called "Brotherman," died of COVID in December 2020. He was so full of conspiracy theories that he wasn't contented in this world, so I really do feel a sense of comfort knowing he's very much "in a better place."

And, as you know, I lost my mother last month. I thank all of you who sent me numerous messages and cards.

But most reassuring is how I still hear the notes of her operatic voice singing those Crosby hymns. "Near the Cross" was among her favorites, and I take consolation believing she's found her "rest beyond the river."

However, my most difficult loss came four years ago this month, when I lost my life-long best friend, Roger Williams.

On the last day I saw him, we sat on his couch, shoulder to shoulder, the same way we'd stood for

45 years. As we said our temporary goodbyes, I held his cooling hand and laid my head on his shoulder. Then, in between my sobs, I told him that I'd see him "on the other side."

"That's OK, Norris," he said. "It'll be all right." Soon he was asleep. Four days later, Roger died at 63 years of age.

So, sometimes all I have left to say is "See you, Mom. See you, Roger. See ya, Brotherman. I'll meet you all "in a better place," "on the other side" just "beyond the river."

For an autographed copy of "Tell It To The Chaplain," order on my website or send a \$20 check to 10566 Combie Rd. Suite 6643 Auburn, CA 95602. (\$70 will get you all four books.)

Email comments to comment@thechaplain.net or by text or voicemail to (843) 608-9715. ★

# Gallagher Criticizes Undemocratic End of Session

## Assembly Republican News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On Sept. 9, Assembly Republican Leader James Gallagher (Yuba City) demanded answers from the Assembly Rules Committee in the wake of several parliamentary violations that crushed debate and caused chaos at the end of the 2024 legislative session.

In the final hours of the session, Democrats illegally amended the Assembly's rules to limit debate on bills

to just 30 seconds per person and refused to recognize multiple Republican lawmakers attempting to speak on behalf of their constituents.

Additionally, Democrats repeatedly and improperly ignored motions to permanently adjourn the special session convened to take up Gov. Newsom's gas storage mandate proposal.

"A vital part of a thriving democracy is fair and equitable debate. The people of California didn't get that this year," said Gallagher. "Californians deserve

an investigation into the unlawful and undemocratic actions taken by the supermajority that silenced Republican voices and stamped out important discussions. We're elected to provide a voice for our constituents - if Democrats continue to run the Assembly as chaotically and unfairly as they did, that can't happen. Our constituents deserve answers."

On top of Democrats' actions to silence Republican lawmakers, poor time management and political squabbles led to a frantic rush to consider dozens of bills in

the final minutes of the legislative session.

Despite spending hours on ceremonies and speeches, adjourning early the night before, and not convening until 2:30 p.m. on the final day, legislators crammed through bills with little to no debate while multiple other proposals failed to meet the midnight deadline for passage.

View Gallagher's letter at <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/ysjjs94vcs0bjkg12isc5/Request-to-Investigate-Floor-Actions.pdf?rlkey=5z2fwdk4fgxo406jflb6f-084p&e=1&d=0> ★

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# Project Pickup Reels in Fishing Line

Story and photos by Susan Maxwell Skinner

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - A volunteer team has taken on a mission to clear miles of abandoned fishing line from local rivers and waterways.

Calling themselves "Project Pick Up Fishing Line," 10 nature lovers are leading other helpers to comb riverbanks for an almost invisible danger.

"Fishing line causes suffering and death to birds and a host of other river inhabitants," explained Jann Nichols, the group founder. Nichols, a photographer, has documented many situations of animal entanglement.

"In some cases, rescuers have freed birds from hooks and line," she reported. "In tragic cases, animals don't survive. Pets can also come to grief on trails through similar accidents."

Nichols acknowledged that lines get snagged and accidents happen.

"But usually, our volunteers are easily able to free and dispose of fishing gear," she said. "If we can do this, so could anglers. We're also collecting hundreds of items of trash left in fishing spots. Litter is not abandoned by accident."

Project Pick-Up has successfully lobbied for county agencies to place receptacles and signage in fishing spots.

"We want people to be aware that a careless act can endanger lives,"



Project Pick Up Fishing Line volunteers join activist Jann Nichols (center, in black) at Mather Lake in Rancho Cordova. In one year on the job, they have bundled and bagged many miles of discarded line.

Nichols said. "We also want them to know there are people you can call to save a trapped or injured creature."

Nichols and friends were recently on hand when a swan died after ingesting fishing line at Cameron Park Lake in El Dorado County. Its organs were so damaged and the bird in such distress that euthanasia was the rescuers' only resort.

"He'd swallowed so much line that his intestines were accordioned," explained rescue expert and Project Pick-Up volunteer Leslie Ackerman. "It was heartbreaking. A beautiful bird's agony is something you never forget. The incident inspired us even more to continue our cleanup efforts and to educate people."

In their spare time, the volunteers address areas that they say are most abused. Mather Lake in Rancho Cordova, the American River at Watt Avenue, Cameron Park Lake and Willow Creek in Folsom are top trouble spots.

"We come back from these places with grocery bags filled," Nichols said. "Fishing lines, hooks and lures from the ground or from trees and grasses," Nichols added. "Honestly, the stuff is all over the place. For many people, it's invisible. To our eyes, line catches the light like spider webs. Often, we need long grabbers to reach it. Sometimes, divers find line tangled underwater. They help us dispose of it. Fishermen sometimes help us, too. Along with

the careless culprits, many responsible people use the river."

The volunteers keep their harvest as evidence of how pervasive the problem is. They assembled more than 2,000 hooks and sinkers for a recent Mather Lake display.

The haul also included dozens of bulging bags of lines.

"Aquatic birds are often drawn to anglers in the hope of a feed," Nichols noted. "They can swallow a lure or get snagged. If a hook is lodged on their body, feeding and mobility is threatened. Suffering and death often follow."

"I started this project last year when I saw a young osprey tethered to the nest," she recalled. "Its parents had brought in a branch entangled with



Thousands of discarded lures and hooks are among dangerous items retrieved by Project Pick Up Fishing Line volunteers.



Exhausted and nearly drowned by a hook and line encounter, a gull is rescued at Sailor Bar in Fair Oaks.

fishing line. The baby was snarled for a week, close to fledging time. I couldn't sleep for worrying. It took some time for rescuers to access the nest but the baby was saved."

"Around that time, several cygnets died from line entanglement at Cameron Park Lake," Nichols continued. "I decided to do whatever I could to prevent this from happening again. I started picking up line wherever I saw it."

Nichols was soon joined by friends who wanted to help.

"They'd also seen injured wildlife in situations they could not forget," Nichols said.

"Seeing animal suffering is a powerful motivation."

The volunteers fund their own activities. Equipment includes gloves, clippers and long-handled retrievers. Sunscreen is another essential.

"It's hard work but it's also nice to be out in nature," Nichols said. "You know you're helping wildlife and pets have a safer environment."

Visit Project Pick up Fishing Line on Facebook or visit [www.tanglefreewildlife.com](http://www.tanglefreewildlife.com).  
To report wild animals in need of rescue, contact Wildlife Care Association at 916-965-9453. ★

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