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East Sacramento News

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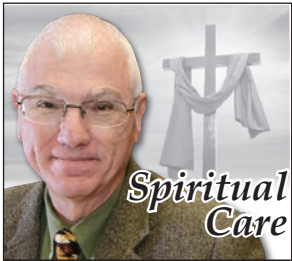
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Wickedly Boooootiful

Halloween-obsessed curator's collection is a treat to behold



Mike Ricci poses with his prized possession, an original 1920s piece from Germany. The pumpkin, bought in 1981, is the item that launched his collection.

**Story and photos
by Kristina Rogers**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Many Land Park neighbors are simply spellbound by the Halloween season. You can tell who they are when the skeletons and spiderwebs begin to appear

around Oct. 1. Mike Ricci, who grew up in Land Park at 8th Avenue next to Vic's Ice Cream, can relate. "As a kid, I've just always been fascinated with Halloween," Ricci said. His obsession with collecting Halloween

decorations began as a child in the 1950s. "We had a big backyard with a shed. Around fifth grade, I asked my parents if I could turn it into a haunted shed for Halloween and they agreed. At the time, there was a Stop & Shop at

the corner of Sutterville Road, so I walked over and bought all kinds of Halloween stuff. After that, I began collecting papier-mâché pumpkins and that's how my love for it all started," Ricci said. Eventually Ricci grew

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CHP Receives Native-Tribal Traffic Grant



The Native-Tribal Traffic Education grant will support a series of programs focused on safety, education and cultural understanding. Photo courtesy of California Highway Patrol

**California Highway Patrol
News Release**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The California Highway Patrol (CHP) is honored to announce its receipt of the Native-Tribal Traffic Education

Program (TTEP) grant, a transformative initiative to build stronger relationships and improve outreach with Native American communities throughout California. This grant will support a series of programs focused on safety,

education and cultural understanding. The Native-Tribal Traffic Education Program grant provides resources to create specialized training, community outreach and educational events that increase

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It's Election Season

**Make Your
Plans to Vote**

**Sacramento County
News Release**

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - We are days away from the Nov. 5 General Election and ballots should be in hand (and hopefully already filled out and on their way back to the Elections Office, either by mail or Drop Box).

But never fear; if you haven't yet returned your voted ballot, you still have plenty of time.

For those voters or soon-to-be voters that need to register or update their voter registration file, Monday, Oct. 21 was the last day to make those changes or register online. While that deadline has passed, you can still visit the Elections Office in person or visit one of the Vote Centers that opened, starting Oct. 26, to conditionally register and vote.

**Vote: Pick a Way,
Any Way**

Choose how, when and where you want to vote.

By mail: All registered voters received a ballot in the mail. Place the voted ballot inside the envelope provided, sign the envelope and return; your postage is paid! Ballots must be post-marked by Nov. 5 to count.

Vote Center: With the passage of the California Voter's Choice Act, traditional polling places were replaced with Vote Centers that are open for up to 11 days, including Election Day.

This means that voters can choose when, where and how they want to vote at any Vote Center in the county. Avoid the lines, vote early.

At the Vote Center, you can drop off your completed ballot or vote in person. There is even weekend voting.

Eighteen Vote Centers are open for 11 days, beginning Oct. 26.

An additional 70 Vote Centers are open for four days, beginning Nov. 2.

Eligible residents can also register to vote, update

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Hospital Guild Back Open to Volunteers

By Carol Barr, Mercy General Hospital Guild

Editor's note: Mercy General Hospital offers many services, including heart and vascular care, a family birth center and cancer care. The Sacramento hospital, part of the Dignity Health network, is dedicated to delivering high quality, compassionate care and access to Sacramento and nearby communities.

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Mercy General Hospital Guild is back open to all volunteers since the pandemic years. We are hoping that some will want to give back to your community by volunteering. The address for Mercy General Hospital is 4001 J St., Sacramento. Volunteers only work in four-hour shifts, which are 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., 12:30 to 4 p.m. or in some cases, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The basic requirement is only two shifts a month. The yearly



The Mercy Hospital Guild volunteers served 608 hospital staff members tea sandwiches and baked goods at the annual personal tea in May.

fee for membership is \$20. There are many departments where volunteers can work. The AlexGSpanos information desk is located in the main lobby. Patients are directed to registrars so they can have their procedures completed from that desk. We also direct patients and their families to see loved ones or find the locations of their procedures. The Mercy Medical

Plaza Information Desk is located in the doctors' offices building next door, and patients are directed to their doctors' offices or outpatient surgery there. The Surgery/Cardiac Waiting Area is located on the second floor of the main hospital. We keep families informed of their loved ones' surgery and its completion. The gift shop is located on the first floor of the

main hospital. There are always beautiful clothes, jewelry and gifts, and seasonal art pieces to purchase as well as books, candy and snacks. If a volunteer would rather work from home, pillowcases that are made for all our cardiac patients, plus there are creations made for our seasonal sales throughout the year. The fun activities are planned for the staff at the hospital. These include bake sales, ice cream socials, vendor sales and the annual personal tea held each May. There is office work available in the new Guild office located in the main hospital basement. The staff organizes hours and keeps information like addresses and requirements current for all volunteers. If you are interested in getting an application, please call 916-453-4699. The requirements will be explained to you and an application will be available. ★

County's Favorite Pet Festival Returns Nov. 2

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The four-legged friends of Sacramento County have something to wag their tails about as the third Annual Roy C. Marcum Animal Care Faire returns to Bradshaw Animal Shelter on Saturday, Nov. 2 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 3839 Bradshaw Road. This free-admission pet festival is open to the public and promises a day of fun for animal lovers of

all ages. Attendees can explore pet-related booths, support local small businesses and makers, savor treats from a variety of food trucks, try their luck at raffles and enjoy Pet Photos by Olin. Plus, there will be adorable adoptable pets to meet. Dogs on a six-foot leash or shorter are welcome at the event. Thinking about adopting a furry friend? Bradshaw Animal Shelter will be open to the public from noon to 5 p.m., with waived adoption fees for

dogs and cats. Included in each pet's adoption is their spay/neuter surgery, microchip, up-to-date vaccinations, monthly preventatives and a one-year license for Sacramento County residents. Festivalgoers will receive an official event tote bag filled with goodies while supplies last. Food trucks will include Señor Burger, Pinorrito, The Fry Boys, Daisy's Desserts and Softy Star Sweets. The Roy C. Marcum Animal Care Faire was



Adopted pets will be available at the Nov. 2 Pet Festival. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County established in 2022 to honor fallen Sacramento County animal control officer Roy C. Marcum, who was killed in the line of duty on Nov. 28, 2012. The event commemorates Officer Marcum's legacy while promoting responsible pet ownership and animal welfare. Special thanks sponsors Sky River Casino, Kim Pacini-Hauch RE/MAX Gold Sierra Oaks and Berg Injury Lawyers. Their generous support makes this event possible! ★

Embrace your well power.

This Open Enrollment, choose a plan that gives you access to Dignity Health.

Life is full of surprises and choices. And when it comes to your health care, those choices matter. This year during Open Enrollment, choose a health plan that connects you to Dignity Health Mercy Medical Group's top doctors. You can see them online or at one of our more than 20 clinics throughout Greater Sacramento, which offer many services in one place. Even better, our doctors are backed by nationally recognized hospital programs for heart, stroke, cancer care and more. Learn about the Dignity Health difference and the plans we accept at DignityHealth.org/OpenEnrollment.



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ABOUT TOWN

‘Think You Can Belt’ Song Event Nov. 16

Time to get all dressed up and celebrate SARTA’s 40th Anniversary at Howe Ave Theatre (in Howe Park, Sacramento) on Saturday, November 16 from 7:30 -9:30 pm.

Enjoy an evening of fabulous singing, a delicious dessert bar, sparkling beverages, and exciting drawings! An incredibly talented cast of a dozen singers will delight audiences with songs from the present and days gone by!

Tickets for this amazing event are \$30 for SARTA members and \$35 for non-members. To purchase tickets in advance, please visit www.sarta.com/cabarettickets.

For more information, please contact sarta@sarta.com or call 916-443-8229. SARTA is a 501(3) non-profit theatre arts service organization.

Elks 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 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

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

Wednesday Night Dinner, 5:30 to 7 pm. See 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

Local Museums Offer Spirited Activities

The greater Sacramento area is rich with an amazing array of state-of-the-art museums and historic sites that offer visitors the chance to explore California’s art, history, and science treasures all year long. This fall, many members of Sacramento Area Museums (SAM) are offering fun Halloween and harvest-related events and activities. A sampling of the spirited activities is below (but please check

with the various museums and/or destinations for other events and more detailed information):

Wee Halloween at the Crocker Art Museum – Oct. 26: Little ghosts and goblins (and the adults who accompany them) are invited to delight in a family-friendly Halloween festival and enjoy awe-inspiring performances, fun artmaking activities, spooky stories, a costume contest, trick-or-treating for art supplies, and more! Pose for the perfect photobooth portrait and boogie at the dance party. www.crockerart.org

Pumpkins and Planes Halloween at the Aerospace Museum of California – Oct. 26: Don’t miss the spooktacular ‘Pumpkins & Planes’ event at the Aerospace Museum, offering a thrilling blend of aviation and Halloween fun for all ages. Visitors can enjoy interactive Trick-Or-Treat stations, create their own necklaces, make gooey slime, build candy cane structures, or challenge friends and family to a game of corn hole. Also, daring visitors can enter the haunted house themed Jolly Green Giant and enjoy delicious Halloween snacks from the Old Crow Café. For tickets, please visit <https://aerospaceca.org/product/pumpkins-and-planes-2024/>.

Halloween Fun at Fairytale Town – Oct. 31: Get ready for a fa-boo-lous Halloween at Fairytale Town! They are kicking off the day with a not-so-spooky

dance party, where visitors can show off their best dance moves then join in on a friendly scavenger hunt filled with fun surprises, and, of course, trick-or-treat with lots of yummy treats, all from 10 am to 1 pm. It’s a day of laughter, costumes, and sweet delights – perfect for all ages. www.fairytaletown.org

Trick or Treat at the Sacramento Children’s Museum – Oct. 31: Calling all boos and ghouls, the community is encouraged to visit the Sacramento Children’s Museum for trick-or-treating from 10 a.m. to noon featuring multiple candy stations, outside play, art activities and more. Costume dress-up is highly encouraged. The event is free with the donation of a new or gently used children’s book. Capacity is limited and advance registration is required at <https://sackids.org/trick-or-treat-at-scm/>

About Sacramento Area Museums: Comprising approximately 25 greater Sacramento area museums, SAM’s mission is to raise awareness of local museums by giving the community the opportunity to discover the region’s fine art, history, science, and wildlife treasures achieves its mission through implementing cooperative promotions and developing strategic marketing alliances, by encouraging sharing of knowledge and resources among its partner institutions. For more information, visit www.SacMuseums.org. ★

Skunks Test Positive for Rabies within Land Park

Sacramento County News Release

LAND PARK, CA (MPG) - A Sacramento Zoo visitor was bitten by a skunk on Oct. 15. The skunk was behaving aggressively. Sacramento Zoo officials captured and euthanized three skunks within the area after the incident and submitted them to the Sacramento County Public Health Laboratory for rabies testing.

On Oct. 17, confirmation was received that two of the three skunks tested positive for rabies.

Sacramento Zoo officials captured and euthanized a fourth skunk on Oct. 17. That skunk will be sent for rabies testing.

Rabies is a severe

infection of the nervous system caused by a virus that is most often transmitted through the bite from an infected animal. Rabies can infect all mammals, including humans.

Preventative treatment is available for humans after exposure but must be started promptly.

Once clinical signs of rabies are seen, the disease is almost always fatal. If you are bitten by an animal believed to have rabies, contact Sacramento County at 3-1-1 or (916) 875-4311.

In California, rabies is identified in about 200 animals every year, most often in wildlife like bats and skunks. Domestic animals such as dogs, cats, and horses can also get rabies,

but this is not as common due to legal requirements for rabies vaccination. For more information, see California Department of Public Health’s website.

With Land Park having popular destinations for families, such as the Sacramento Zoo, visitors should take these steps to minimize exposure to rabies:

Avoid contact with wild animals; call animal control if you see sick or injured wildlife.

Report unusual behavior of wildlife or domestic animals (e.g., stumbling, seizures, aggressiveness) to local animal control.

Immediately wash all animal bites with soap and water and seek medical attention. ★

Sacramento Regional Transit News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - As part of a state-wide initiative to improve public transit safety, the Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) is launching a comprehensive customer survey to better understand and address the safety concerns of transit riders. This effort is part of California’s commitment to creating safer and more inclusive public transportation systems.

The survey, developed by the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University, was mandated by California Senate Bill 1161 (2022) to gather detailed information on the prevalence, locations, and characteristics of street harassment faced by public transit passengers. In addition, California Senate Bill 434 (2023) requires the state’s 10 largest transit agencies, including SacRT, to use this tool to specifically engage riders from underrepresented communities, whose experiences may have been historically overlooked, and collect their insights on transit safety.

“Understanding the rider experience is essential to ensuring that all SacRT passengers feel safe when using public transportation,” said Henry Li, SacRT General Manager/CEO. “This survey will help us take action where it matters most to improve the overall transit experience for everyone.”

The survey will focus on various aspects of transit safety, such as the types and frequency of street harassment, how perceptions of safety influence riders’ decisions to use transit, and other related topics. The collected data will help SacRT and other transit agencies develop strategies and implement measures to create a safer environment across the entire transit network.

SacRT will conduct the survey throughout October 2024. with All transit riders are encouraged to participate.

As an incentive, riders who complete the survey will receive a \$10 credit applied to their Connect Card or ZipPass account.

To learn more, visit sacrt.com/ridersurvey. ★

IRS Encourages Tax Checkup to Avoid Surprises Next Year

IRS News Release

WASHINGTON (MPG) - The Internal Revenue Service has encouraged taxpayers to consider using the end of summer to make tax withholding or payment updates to avoid a potential surprise next year at tax time.

While most taxpayers get a refund after filing their taxes, many also find they unexpectedly owe taxes.

This can be due to a life or job change for which they did not make the necessary tax adjustment during the year.

Those who should be especially careful are Gig economy workers, those with a “side hustle” and anyone earning income not subject to withholding.

These individuals should check the amount they pay, or the amount of tax they have withheld throughout the year, to bring the tax they pay closer to what is owed.

The IRS has a special Tax Withholding Estimator that can help taxpayers align their tax withholding or tax payments with what they owe.

The IRS reminds taxpayers that tax planning done now can save time and frustration later. Here are some important things to



Now is a good time to check withholdings to avoid stress and surprises at tax time. Image by Mikhail Nilov/Pexels

keep in mind:

How Refunds Work

The federal tax system is pay-as-you-go. Taxpayers pay tax as they earn wages or receive income during the year. For many, taxes are withheld from their paycheck by their employer and then given over to the IRS on their behalf. Others, such as gig economy workers, make or should make quarterly estimated tax payments throughout the year to stay current. A refund normally

results when too much is withheld or paid throughout the year.

Recent IRS statistics show that two-thirds of taxpayers received a refund so far in 2024. As of mid-May, nearly \$270 billion in refunds went to taxpayers with the average refund just under \$2,900.

Avoid an Unexpected Bill

On the other hand, many taxpayers end up with estimated tax penalties because they underpay

throughout the year. The penalty amount varies but for some it can be several hundred dollars. Adjusting withholding on paychecks or the amount of estimated tax payments can help prevent penalties.

This is especially important for self-employed people, including those in the gig economy, those with more than one job and those with major changes in their life, like a recent marriage or a new child.

With that in mind, the

IRS encourages using the IRS Tax Withholding Estimator tax payments with what they owe.

Tax Withholding Estimator

This handy tool on IRS.gov helps people figure the amount of federal tax they should pay during the year.

All that’s needed to use it are pay stubs for all their jobs or other income information, such as from side jobs, self-employment or investment income and a

copy of their 2023 tax year return.

People can use the Tax Withholding Estimator to estimate their federal income tax withholding, see how a refund, take-home pay or tax due are affected by withholding amounts and choose an estimated withholding amount that works for them and their family.

If a withholding change is needed upon completion, taxpayers should adjust their withholding by submitting a new Form W-4 to their employer or pension provider. They can also adjust quarterly estimated tax payments as appropriate.

IRS also reminds people to use the Tax Withholding Estimator if there’s a major life change such as a new job or other paid work, major income change, a marriage, childbirth or adoption and a new home purchase.

While the Tax Withholding Estimator works for most taxpayers, people with more complex tax situations should instead use the instructions in Publication 505, Tax Withholding and Estimated Tax. This includes taxpayers who owe Alternative Minimum Tax or certain other taxes, and people with long-term capital gains or qualified dividends. ★

Court, Law School Support Guardianship Program

Sacramento Superior Court News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento Superior Court has partnered with Lincoln Law School of Sacramento to provide in-person courtroom assistance to individuals representing themselves in guardianship cases.

“This endeavor improves the public’s access to justice while providing law students with valuable hands-on experience,” said Presiding Judge Bunmi O. Awoniyi.

A guardianship is a legal arrangement in which a court appoints a family member

or other interested person to make decisions for a minor whose parents have passed away or are unable or unwilling to care for the minor. A guardianship may also be to obtain legal status in the United States for an immigrant under 21.

In these cases, the person being cared for is called the ward, and the person appointed to care for them is the guardian.

Guardianship can involve making decisions about housing, medical care, legal issues, financial issues and services, and education. There are two types of guardianships:

Guardian of the person: The guardian

has the right to make legal decisions in the ward's life, such as where the child goes to school and their medical care.

Guardian of the Estate: The guardian manages the ward's resources.

In California, guardianship suspends a parent's rights but does not terminate them. The guardianship continues until the ward is emancipated, adopted, turns 18 (excluding legal status for immigrants), passes away, or until further court order.

Each Friday, Lincoln Law School student volunteers are available in Department 129 in the Probate Division at the William R. Ridgeway Family Relations

Courthouse to help litigants representing themselves complete the required forms to obtain the orders they need on the same day as their hearing.

This allows parties to leave with orders in hand rather than having their hearings continued.

This new partnership between Sacramento Superior Court and Lincoln Law School of Sacramento has resulted in fewer delays for the litigants and children needing care and support, has reduced the caseload for the Court, and has provided law students with an opportunity to gain valuable experience. ★

It’s Election Season — Make Your Plans to Vote

Continued from Page 1

their registration and cast their ballot at a Vote Center, even on the day of the election.

Drop Boxes: Voted/signed ballots may

be placed in any of the 60 secure Drop Box locations throughout Sacramento County.

When using a Drop Box, ensure that it is an official, secure box provided by

the Sacrament County Election’s Office. All official county drop boxes have the Sacramento County wave logo on them.

A complete list of Vote Center and Drop Box locations can be found at elections.

saccounty.net.

For more election and voter information, visit the Sacramento County Voter Registration and Elections website at elections.saccounty.gov.

To register to vote, visit the California Online Voter Registration website at <https://registertovote.ca.gov>. ★

Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



Preseason games don’t matter. No one cares about preseason games. Preseason games are just about getting the players in shape. Coaches and fans don’t care about wins and losses in preseason games.

Wrong! Wrong! Wrong!

The truth is losing matters, and unfortunately it creates a tone and can be contagious.

Preseason games show teams what they have, and winning creates positive habits that more often and not carry over into the regular season.

So, if I’m right, what do Kings fans make of a zero-win preseason record?

You should be concerned, but not worried. There’s a difference, so don’t wring your hands just yet.

The good news is the Kings starters overall looked pretty good. In the first two preseason games against the Golden State Warriors, the Kings starters played the Warriors to a standstill for the first half of both games.

The starters did not participate in the second half of either game, and the Kings were forced to take a long look at their bench strength.

I’m not certain how deep coach Brown intends to go as it relates to bench players, but my guess with the recent signing of Doug McDermott, he will probably play 10 or even 11 players.

What we know is that due to injuries to Trey Lyles and Kevin Huerter, the Kings have yet to see a true picture of what their regular season bench will look like.

Both Lyles and Huerter are experienced NBA players, and both can have an immediate impact when they enter a game. Both are good passers, can drive effectively to the hoop and have a better than average three-point game.

What we also know is that Malik Monk is likely to be the first player off the bench, so when Lyles and Huerter return, we can see with some certainty who the first three off the bench will undoubtedly be.

Although in a pinch Lyles can play the five, it is more likely that veteran Alex Len will be called on to give Domantas Sabonis a blow every game, and at times

in the preseason Len has been a bright spot. I have long believed that Len may have another level to his game, and I’m hopeful that if he sees consistent playing time, his game will demonstrate the kind of NBA confidence the Kings have longed for. Seven footers with skills are in short supply, so giving Len every opportunity to shine just makes lots of sense. At age 31 Len is still in his prime, and with every season he brings much needed veteran experience to the lineup and represents a rim protector when Sabonis is off the floor.

So, with Huerter, Lyles, Monk, and Len coach Brown is nine deep, so who do the Kings have that could also make a contribution?

I would hope that the signing of Doug McDermott is not just ceremonial, so this veteran sharpshooter should be seeing 10 to 15 minutes nightly.

If last season proved anything to me it was that coach Brown is anything but predictable as it relates to his bench rotation, and I believe his frenetic experiments last year were a contributor to the Kings missing the first round of the playoffs.

Settling into a bench rotation builds confidence in players and gives the team an opportunity to gel. I’m crossing my fingers that any experiments have concluded in the preseason, and the regular season will bring a level on continuity that was missing last year.

Do I think the preseason matters? Of course I do. But I also know the Sacramento Kings have yet to lose a game *in the regular season, and I believe in the players we have.*

I hope you will all join me in applauding our gladiators as they step on the hardwood for the first time on Thursday night (Oct. 24) and open the regular season against the Minnesota Timberwolves.

The NBA schedulers did the Kings no favors as they will face the number one ranked defensive team in the NBA, but I say bring them on.

Put a smile on your faces Kings fans, and let’s celebrate on Thursday night!

Your thoughts are always welcome at vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com. ★

Transportation Impacts Outcomes for Dialysis Patients, Study Finds

UC Davis News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - An estimated 35.5 million Americans have kidney disease and more than 554,000 of them are on dialysis, according to the National Kidney Foundation.

Dialysis is a treatment to replace the filtering function of the kidneys. It removes waste and extra fluid from a person’s blood, and then returns the filtered blood into their body.

Most patients go to a dialysis center three times a week, where each treatment takes three to four hours to complete. Skipping dialysis can be harmful — causing fluid overload, high potassium and elevated phosphorus levels — and can lead to severe health problems.

Dialysis requires consistency and a significant time commitment. But what happens when patients don’t have reliable transportation? How consistently can they receive dialysis treatment?

That is a question UC Davis Health researchers are asking.

Through a collaborative effort between Family and Community Medicine and Nephrology, a team of researchers are conducting a study to better understand the impact transportation and different modes of transportation have on dialysis patient outcomes.

“As a nephrologist, I see patients missing their dialysis appointments on a daily basis due to the variable quality of their transportation,” explained Baback Roshanravan, associate professor of nephrology at UC Davis Health. “However, we have little research about who qualifies as transportation insecure and how we can best help them.”

Transportation Data Collection

For the study, researchers will be working with a prospective cohort of 300 patients. Through U.S. Renal Care, they will collect transportation screening data from dialysis centers across the country and then look at each patient’s outcomes following one-year of treatment.

The researchers will also analyze a quantitative data set looking at the associations of patient outcomes and particular modes of transport, including services provided by Medicaid, paratransit, public transportation or private pay transportation.

“Our hope is this data will help guide us on how to screen for patients who are transportation insecure and help us develop the best strategies to better support them,” said Na’amah Razon, assistant professor of family and community medicine at UC Davis Health and principal investigator of the study.

Measuring Transportation Insecurity

Researchers will also evaluate different tools to measure the extent transportation impacts dialysis patient outcomes.

One of the tools is the Transportation Security Index developed at the University of Michigan.

It is the first validated measure of transportation security that offers insights into who experiences transportation insecurity and enables researchers and practitioners to determine which interventions can improve this condition.

“The transportation security index is modeled after the food security index,” explained Razon. “The survey is composed of items that focus on the material and relational aspects of transportation insecurity.”

Razon added, “We don’t really have a common language with a shared definition to talk about or measure transportation insecurity. This index could help us identify the symptoms of transportation insecurity and think about specific interventions that could move the needle.”

The study is being funded by the Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award (K23) from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK).

Collaborators include researchers from the University of Michigan, Stanford University, University of California San Francisco and Vanderbilt University. ★

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County ROAR Program Receives Funding

Halloween Safety Tips

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Department of Health Services (DHS) has received an \$8 million grant from the California Board of State and Community Corrections, funded through Proposition 47, to launch a new program focused on helping formerly incarcerated individuals reintegrate into society. The Reentry Opportunities and Access to Resources (ROAR) program will address core challenges like recidivism, homelessness and unemployment for individuals reentering the community after incarceration. The grant, which was awarded in October 2024 will fund efforts through June 1, 2028.

ROAR aims to reduce recidivism rates by 35% by connecting individuals with community-based resources and support

before they are released. The program plans to expand eligibility for reentry services and establish partnerships with correctional facilities to provide “warm handoffs” for those reentering the community. By connecting individuals with community providers who can help them find housing, job training or mental health services, DHS hopes to offer a fresh start for those reintegrating into society.

Homelessness is a significant barrier for individuals leaving incarceration, and ROAR is set to address this challenge with re-housing funds and access to shelter beds. The program’s objective is to reduce homelessness among its participants by 60% and lower unemployment by 50%, with job training and workforce development as core components of the strategy. Data from the Homeless Management Information System and reports from

community-based organizations will be used to track these efforts.

Substance use and mental health issues are common among justice-involved individuals, with nearly 25% of Sacramento’s incarcerated population affected by substance use disorders alone. ROAR will work to increase participation in mental health and substance use treatment programs by 50%, helping participants build a foundation for stability. By recruiting more service providers and strengthening referral networks, ROAR seeks to offer targeted, timely support to those in need.

With funding secured, Sacramento County will begin developing an implementation plan and budget for ROAR and is aiming to create lasting change and reduce the barriers faced by formerly incarcerated individuals in Sacramento.

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Halloween is upon us and Sacramento County has important tips for parents to help make sure children have safe trick-or-treating adventures. Follow the tips below and have a fun and safe Halloween every year!

See and Be Seen

Pick out costumes that don’t interfere with vision, add reflective tape on the front, back and sides and use accessories that are soft or flexible.

Before Going Out to Trick-Or-Treat

If your child has food allergies, it’s important to remind teachers and supervising adults about what they cannot eat. Just before going trick-or-treating, give your kids a healthy snack or light meal. On your way out the door, bring a flashlight, take safe routes, use sidewalks and crosswalks and have children look both ways before crossing the street. If you are driving in residential areas on Halloween, slow down and be extra alert for children crossing the street.

When You Get Home

Inspect treats for tampering, unusual appearance or discoloration, tiny pinholes, or tears in wrappers – throw away anything suspicious and do not eat any

homemade treats unless you know the person who made them.

For young children, consider choking hazards such as the size and texture and remove gum, nuts, hard candies or small toys.

Handing Out Treats

Be sure to turn on your outside walkway lights, and use battery flicker lights for carved pumpkins instead of lighted candles. Give out only factory-wrapped treats and consider handing out healthier treats like mini-boxes of raisins or crackers.

You could also give out non-food items, like stickers, bookmarks, coloring books and crayons.

Don’t Forget Your Pets

While Halloween is fun for children, it can be spooky for your fur children. Keep these tips in mind to ensure your pet feels comfortable and safe. Dressing up pets might be fun for you, but some pets get truly distressed and may even bolt to try to get the costume off. Keep pets safely indoors and put on their I.D. collars with up-to-date license tags – do not take them trick-or-treating.

Consider setting up shop on your driveway so that your doorbell does not continuously ring and further distress animals. Lock candy safely away, a dog’s keen sense of smell will lead them right to the treats that can be life-threatening.

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Nine Commission-Supported Bills Signed into Law

Little Hoover Commission News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Nine bills supported by the Little Hoover Commission were signed into law this year, including four measures that will strengthen efforts against intimate partner violence and other legislation to address labor trafficking, organic waste disposal, and customer-centric government.

“Seeing our recommendations embraced by the legislature and Governor Newsom and then turned into concrete policy improvements speaks to the Little Hoover Commission’s bi-partisan approach to solving California’s complex challenges,” said Commission Chair Pedro Nava. “We are honored that our work is helping to protect many of California’s most vulnerable.”

The Commission is a nonpartisan 13-member body appointed by the Governor and legislative leadership, and charged with making recommendations for policy changes that will foster efficiency, economy, and improved service in state government. The Commission supports legislation and other actions that implement its recommendations.

The four bills addressing intimate partner violence implement recommendations stemming from Commission reports. Among other reforms, those reports urged a focus on prevention and early intervention, accompanied by adequate funding.

Three of the bills address prevention and early intervention:

AB 2308 (Davies) extends from 10 to 15 years the maximum duration of a protective order issued against people convicted of certain domestic violence offenses.

SB 1394 (Min) creates new ways for survivors to stop a

domestic abuser from tracking their car.

SB 989 (Ashby) enhances investigation procedures in cases involving domestic violence-related deaths.

AB 2432 (Gabriel, Cervantes, Reyes), establishes a California Crime Victims Fund, which will disburse fines paid by corporations convicted of illegal activity, to assist victims, including survivors of intimate partner violence.

“These new laws will make a real impact in the lives of people who experience intimate partner violence,” said Commissioner Janna Sidley, the Commission’s on IPV subcommittee chair “We want to congratulate Assemblymembers Davies, Gabriel, Cervantes and Reyes and Senator Min, for their important work in getting these bills passed, and the Governor for signing them.”

Two approved bills further the goals of recommendations from three Commission reports on labor trafficking. Detecting labor trafficking is difficult as few understand the nature of the crime, and implementation of state human trafficking laws has focused on sex trafficking.

Even when these crimes are successfully identified, cases that bring traffickers to justice remain rare. The Commission recommended that the state empower state agencies to investigate labor trafficking crimes and conduct public education and outreach campaigns to increase awareness of all forms of human trafficking.

AB 1888 (Arambula and Ramos) establishes a dedicated labor trafficking unit within the California Department of Justice to receive labor trafficking reports from law enforcement agencies and other entities and refer those reports to appropriate agencies for action. AB 1966 (Davies) requires

ticket sellers to include information and resources for human trafficking victims with all ticket purchases for events at an entertainment venue.

“These reforms will help California serve those victimized by labor trafficking, an often-hidden crime,” said Commission Vice Chair Anthony Cannella. “Assemblymembers Arambula, Ramos and Davies should be very proud of this important milestone.”

In a 2023 report, Reducing California’s Landfill Emissions: SB 1383 Implementation, the Commission determined that California is falling short in the fight against harmful landfill emissions, a major contributor to climate change. The report featured recommendations that would help further the state’s efforts to curb methane emission, including:

Build as much flexibility as possible for local governments to recycle their organic waste.

Expand the list of compliance pathways and products eligible to count toward a jurisdiction’s procurement requirements.

Plan for the necessary infrastructure to achieve the state’s environmental goals, facilitate community composting, speed up the permitting process, and make any necessary changes to the relationship between state and local governments to better reflect shared responsibility for waste management.

Two approved bills will further the goals of these recommendations. AB 2346 (Lee) provides flexibility to local governments in how they comply with procurement requirements for recovered organic material. SB 1046 (Laird) requires a Program Environmental Impact Report for small and medium composts facilities to streamline permitting and help the

state meet its climate goals.

AB 2455 (Gabriel) modernizes whistleblower laws and add protections to prevent the misuse of state funds and is in line with numerous Commission recommendations through the years regarding fiscal accountability.

Here are details of the nine bills that were supported by the Commission and that were signed into law this year.

Intimate Partner Violence

SB 989 (Ashby) expands law enforcement and coroners’ duties when a deceased person has a history as victim of domestic violence. Allows additional access to coroner records for family members when litigating a victim’s death.

AB 2432 (Gabriel, Cervantes, Reyes) establishes the California Crime Victims Fund in the State Treasury and would require that moneys deposited in the fund be continuously appropriated to the Office of Emergency Services to support crime victims’ services.

AB 2308 (Davies) authorizes a court to issue a protective order for up to 15 years. Authorizes the issuing court, upon a written petition by the prosecuting attorney, defendant, or victim, to modify or terminate the protective order for good cause if the parties receive notice at least 15 days before the hearing on the petition. Expands the scope of a crime to create a state-mandated local program.

SB 1394 (Min) establishes a process for the rapid termination of a domestic abuser’s access to app-connected, remote, and GPS-based vehicle technology. Requires car manufacturers to disable an abuser’s access to remote vehicle technology within two business days of a survivor’s request provided sufficient documentation, such as proof of legal possession of the vehicle or

a domestic violence restraining order that awards possession of the vehicle in question.

Labor Trafficking

AB 1966 (Davies) requires a primary ticket seller to include information regarding nonprofit organizations that provide services or support in the elimination of slavery and human trafficking.

AB 1888 (Arambula and Ramos) establishes the Labor Trafficking Unit within the Department of Industrial Relations to receive, investigate, and prosecute complaints alleging labor trafficking and take steps to prevent it. The Unit will also coordinate with the Labor Enforcement Task Force, the Criminal Investigation Unit, the Department of Justice, and the Civil Rights Department to combat labor trafficking.

Organic Waste Disposal

AB 2346 (Lee) authorizes local jurisdictions to be credited for the procurement of recovered organic waste products through an agreement with a direct service provider. Recovered organic waste that local jurisdictions procure from specified compost operations also count towards the local jurisdiction’s procurement target.

SB 1046 (Laird) requires CalRecycle to prepare and certify completion of an environmental impact report that would streamline the process for jurisdictions to develop small and medium organic waste composting facilities.

Customer-Centric Government

AB 2455 (Gabriel) modernizes local and state whistleblower hotline laws and add protections to prevent the misuse of state funds. These changes are meant to improve accountability, increase public trust, and ensure government actions and transactions are transparent. ★

Taxpayer-Funded Political Advocacy is Illegal

By Jon Coupal

As the November election gets closer, there are increasing complaints from voters over local governments openly supporting tax hikes. While local government officials are free to support or oppose ballot measures, they may not authorize the use of public funds on any election matter – be it for or against a candidate or initiative.

Despite the illegality of taxpayer funded advocacy, officials have an incentive to try it anyway because the potential ROI (the return on investment) of millions – if not billions – in new tax revenue would dwarf any fine or other punishment they might face.

That must change. The same First Amendment rights that allow individuals to speak on ballot issues also prohibits the use of taxpayer funds for political advocacy. In 1976, the California Supreme Court ruled, “The use of the public treasury to mount an election campaign which attempts to influence the resolution of issues which our Constitution leaves to the ‘free election’ of the people (see Const., art. II, § 2) ... presents a serious threat to the integrity of the electoral process.” *Stanson v. Mott* (1976) 17 Cal.3d 206, 218.

Such a “serious threat” deserves a response of imposing real penalties on bad actors including large fines, personal liability on the part of those authorizing those expenditures and, yes, even jail time.

The agency charged with policing campaign finance violations is the Fair Political Practices Commission, which can be an aggressive enforcer against these expenditures. For example, the FPPC imposed a \$1.3 million fine against Los Angeles County for using taxpayer funds for political ads touting Measure H, a sales tax increase on the ballot in 2017. It was the largest fine ever imposed by the FPPC.

The fine against L.A. County was precipitated by a complaint filed by the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association. It was hoped that the fine levied by FPPC would serve as a warning to government entities in California that they must obey all state laws and regulations relating to both reporting campaign expenditures as well as providing disclosures on campaign advertising. And, to some extent, it has.

However, as noted earlier, the ROI for violations can overcome the deterrent effect of a large fine. Sure, a \$1.3 million dollar fine imposed on the County of Los Angeles seems big. But because the Measure H tax

has generated more than \$2.4 billion since its passage, L.A. politicians could easily conclude, “it was worth it.”

That’s why stiffer penalties are needed to ensure that no amount of ROI would lead a politician to conclude “it was worth it.”

So, what can voters do if they see a taxpayer-funded political ad that crosses the line from “informational” material to outright “advocacy?”

At a minimum, voters may forward a copy or screen shot of the questionable ad and send it directly to the FPPC’s “ad-watch” program, where citizens can report government-financed communications that they suspect cross the line into political advocacy. According to the FPPC’s website, its rules on reporting and disclosures “also apply to communications from public entities when their activity meets the thresholds to qualify as a ‘committee.’ This happens when a state or local governmental agency pays public moneys for a communication to the public and the communication expressly advocates the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate or the qualification, passage, or defeat of a clearly identified measure, or, taken as a whole and in context, unambiguously urges a particular result in an election.”

In addition to FPPC engagement, voters have alternative remedies. While the FPPC’s jurisdiction is limited to enforcing the disclosure of campaign spending and the timely reporting of those expenditures, the courts – both federal and state – are not so limited. Taxpayers have the right to proceed directly to Superior Court for claims asserted under the First Amendment of both the U.S. and California Constitutions.

Finally, voters can always contact the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association which has created a Public Integrity Project under the auspices of HJTA’s affiliated Foundation. HJTF’s Public Integrity Project has already proven to be an additional enforcement tool against illegal expenditures of public funds and other violations of law that hurt taxpayers and voters.

It’s bad enough when local politicians work to raise taxes when Californians are already paying one of the highest tax burdens in America. But it’s adding insult to injury to have those efforts supported with the same public funds that could be spent on legitimate government services.

Jon Coupal is president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association. ★

National Federation of Independent Business News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - A double dose of bad news sprung from the latest Optimism Index released by the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB). The Index showed a 33rd consecutive month below its 50-year average but its uncertainty component raised more than a few eyebrows, rising 11 points to 103.

“Small business owners are desperate to cling to any good news they can and finding nothing to grasp,” said John Kabateck, state director for the National Federation of Independent Business in California. “I give equal blame to Congress for dragging its feet on making the Small Business Deduction permanent, and to California for – where to start? – passing new laws curbing the free-speech rights of employers, imposing new requirements on independent contractors, adding new unlawful employment practices, knitting a crazy quilt of minimum-wage laws, and requiring workplace violence prevention plans from every employer no matter the need, time required or paperwork involved. Have the time? I have more. Hopefully, things have gotten so rock bottom with small business and

working families that it will motivate voters to make positive changes at the ballot box this November.”

“Small business owners are feeling more uncertain than ever. Uncertainty makes owners hesitant to invest in capital spending and inventory, especially as inflation and financing costs continue to put pressure on their bottom lines,” said the National Federation of Independent Business Chief Economist Bill Dunkelberg.

The average rate paid on short maturity loans was 10.1%, up 0.6 of a point from August. The last time it was this high was February 2001.

Thirty-four percent (seasonally adjusted) of owners reported job openings they could not fill in the current period, down six points from August.

Seasonally adjusted, a net 32% reported raising compensation, down one point from August and remaining the lowest reading since April 2021.

Twenty-three percent of owners reported that inflation was their single most important problem in operating their business (higher input and labor costs), down one point from August but remaining the top issue. ★

Democrats Double Down on End of Session Chaos

Office of Assemblyman James Gallagher News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Democrats are doubling down on their mismanagement and undemocratic tactics during a chaotic end of session. In response to an investigation request from Assembly Republican Leader James Gallagher (R-Yuba City), Democrats insisted no rules were violated and everything ran smoothly, despite barring Republican members from participating in discussion and limiting debate to just 30 seconds per member.

“Democrats’ refusal to address the chaos on the last day of session is disappointing, but not a surprise,” said Gallagher. “By cutting off debate, Democrats silenced the voices

of our constituents and did a disservice to Californians who deserve a transparent law-making process. We’re not done fighting for what’s right, because Democrats’ business as usual is no longer acceptable.”

Democrats’ response, where they claim “no rules were violated in the final hours of session,” ignores underlying concerns around limiting debate on important legislative issues. Instead, Democrats have justified their actions by citing precedent and twisting parliamentary rules to retroactively defend their actions.

Assemblyman James Gallagher represents the 3rd Assembly District, which encompasses all of Glenn, Sutter, Tehama and Yuba counties as well as portions of Butte and Colusa counties. ★

Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association’s Statewide Ballot Measure Information, Voting Recommendations

Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association News Release

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (MPG) - Below are Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association’s (HJTA) statewide ballot measure information and voting recommendations. For more information, visit the association’s website at www.hjta.org.

NO on 2
Why we’re against it

Proposition 2 is \$10 billion of bonds, new state debt, to pay for school facilities. It is almost certain to result in higher property tax bills, because school districts must provide a “local match” of funds in order to receive money from the Prop. 2 state bonds. That will lead to districts issuing new local school bonds, which are paid for by adding new charges to property tax bills. Enrollment is declining in both K-12 district schools and community colleges and the declines are projected to continue. But Proposition 2 commits California to pay an estimated \$18 billion, including interest, for school buildings that may not even be necessary. VOTE NO ON PROPOSITION 2.

Proposition 3
HJTA takes no position on this measure

Proposition 3 removes language from the state Constitution that defines marriage as between a man and woman. It adds the language, “right to marry is a fundamental right.” This measure has no effect on the current law, because the U.S. Supreme Court held that the federal Constitution protects the right to marry.

NO on 4
Why we’re against it

This is the \$10 billion “climate bond” that state politicians have long planned. California already has too much bond debt, over

\$78 billion outstanding as of Jan. 1. Then \$6.38 billion was added with Proposition 1 in March. Proposition 4 would add another \$10 billion in bond debt to pay for climate “programs.” It’s reckless to use borrowed money, an estimated \$18 billion with interest, to pay for “programs,”



Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association

established in 1978

including salaries for all the groups that receive the money. Bond financing only makes sense for necessary projects that will last more than the 30 years it takes to repay the debt. The governor has already declared a budget emergency because the state spends more than it takes in. Spending even more “on the credit card” is a bad idea. VOTE NO ON PROPOSITION 4.

NO on 5
Why we’re against it

Proposition 5 is ACA 1, a direct attack on Proposition 13. It makes it easier to raise taxes by eliminating the longstanding two-thirds vote of the electorate required to pass local bonds (borrowed money that must be repaid with interest). All new bond measures for “infrastructure” (nearly everything is “infrastructure”) and for public housing projects would pass with just 55% approval instead of the current 66.7%. Local bonds are paid for with extra charges on property tax bills, adding to the tax burden on homeowners and businesses, leading to higher rents for tenants and higher consumer prices for everyone. If Proposition 5 is

not stopped, property tax bills are likely to go up after every election, forever. Proposition 5 will raise the cost of living in California, which already has the highest poverty rate in the country when the cost of living is taken into account. VOTE NO ON PROPOSITION 5.

NO on 6
Why we’re against it

Proposition 6 bans mandatory work requirements for state prison inmates. It doesn’t seem fair to further increase the burden on taxpayers by creating the conditions to negotiate higher wages for inmates who are paying off their debt to society by serving their sentences in state prison. VOTE NO ON PROPOSITION 6.

NO on 32
Why we’re against it

Proposition 32 would raise California’s hourly minimum wage from \$16 to \$18 and then adjust it annually for inflation. Unfortunately, raising the hourly minimum wage has sometimes reduced weekly wages as businesses cut hours and lay off workers. The best way to raise incomes in California is to stop driving job-creating businesses out of the state or into the ground. Raising the minimum wage is counter-productive. It also increases the state’s expenses by raising government labor costs. VOTE NO ON PROPOSITION 32.

NO on 33
Why we’re against it

Proposition 33 is a rent control measure that would lead to a reduction in the supply of rental housing. It repeals a sensible 1995 law, the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act, which put limits on rent control laws to ensure that

housing providers could make a fair return on their investment and stay in business. Repealing Costa-Hawkins would mean cities could enact radical rent control, even on single-family homes and condos, and prevent property owners from resetting the rent to the market rate after a tenant voluntarily moves out. Proposition 33 would lead to a sharp reduction in new apartment construction as lenders evaluate financial risk due to potential rent control laws. That will worsen the housing shortage in California. Voters have already rejected this proposal twice before, in 2018 and 2020. VOTE NO ON PROPOSITION 33.

YES on 34
Why we’re for it

Some nonprofit healthcare organizations that receive federal funds to provide health care services have abused the system to spend large amounts of money on political causes. Proposition 34 would end this practice and require that healthcare providers spend most of the money they receive from a federal prescription drug discount program on direct patient care. VOTE YES ON PROPOSITION 34.

Proposition 35
HJTA takes no position on this measure

California currently taxes managed care organizations (MCOs) such as Anthem Blue Cross and others. The MCO tax is set to expire in 2026, and we expect the Legislature to make it permanent. Proposition 35 would also make it permanent but would require the revenue from the tax to fund Medi-Cal, the government health insurance program for low-income residents, instead of being used to close gaps in the state budget. About 14 million California residents rely on the Medi-Cal program for their health care needs.

YES on 36
Why we’re for it

Proposition 36 is the “Homelessness, Drug Addiction and Theft Reduction Act,” backed by law enforcement groups and retailers. It makes thoughtful changes to Proposition 47 (2014), which reduced some theft and drug felonies to misdemeanors. Proposition 36 would get tougher on third offenses and also offer drug and mental health treatment as an alternative to incarceration. It would allow judges to sentence some individuals to state prison instead of county jail. The surge of retail theft, vehicle break-ins and open drug use on California’s streets has increased the burden on first responders, and on taxpayers, as well as raising insurance costs throughout the state. VOTE YES ON PROPOSITION 36.

Local Measures
In Folsom
No on Measure G

A sales tax increase of 1%, sponsored by “citizens.”

In Yuba City
No on Measure D

A 1% sales tax increase. ★

Stop Criminals, Drugs, Theft

By John McGinness

California voters will have several very important decisions to make as they complete their November 2024 ballots. One that has the potential to reverse a decade of deterioration of the state’s criminal justice system is Proposition 36.

To adequately analyze the merits of Proposition 36, a quick review of history is in order. Ten years ago, voters approved Proposition 47 based upon assurance that it would improve public safety. The voters were deceived – Proposition 47 eliminated compounding consequences for several theft and possession and use of dangerous drugs. Many crimes were reduced from felonies to misdemeanors, eliminating the deterrent value of discipline.

The results have been devastating for the state of California. Urban, suburban, and even rural areas once used for recreation have been taken over by critically addicted people living like walking zombies. Retail businesses have become so frequently victimized by “smash and grab” thieves that merchants have been forced to lock up much of their merchandise out of reach, inconveniencing legitimate customers and staff. Fentanyl poisoning has become the leading cause of death for Americans 18-45-years-of-age. On average, over 200 deaths by fentanyl poisoning occur in the United States every day. Consider the tolerance

society would have in an environment in which 200 people were killed in a commercial airline crash every day – public outcry would be extreme and warranted; change would be mandated by an outraged public. Yet persons in positions of leadership seem oblivious or apathetic to the plight of our youth.

Proposition 36 will restore the ability of the criminal justice system to impose compounding consequences on chronic habitual offenders for the sake of discouraging unacceptable behavior. Specifically, offenders convicted not once, but twice of possession of hard and dangerous drugs will be eligible for felony prosecution or completion of a court-supervised treatment for addiction. This course of action was common before the passage of Proposition 47, when drug court was a viable option for those first charged with felony drug possession. The impetus for treatment is now gone by virtue of chronic drug offenders suffering through addiction and only being cited for misdemeanor violations of law. That means no time in custody in California, and no incentive to participate

in court supervised treatment. Those cited typically ignore their citations, fail to appear in court and continue to live their destructive lifestyle, wreaking havoc on the streets, parks and public facilities throughout the state. Proposition

consequences be brought against those who habitually violate the law for the sake of discouraging habitual lawlessness.

Critics have asserted that Proposition 36 represents a reversion to days of mass incarceration. It does not!

Proposition 36 is a bipartisan concept created by elected attorneys of diverse political and philosophical affiliation, supported by big city mayors from California’s diverse communities, to provide incentive for treatment for those chronically addicted to dangerous

lost to drugs on the streets represents an apathetic disregard for our fellow human beings. Swift, lawful action taken to put these lost souls on the path to a vastly better existence is the compassionate and appropriate action to be taken by the electorate of this state.

Ten years ago, the political leadership of the state of California misled the voters, assuring them that Proposition 47 would enhance public safety, that eliminating thoughtful punitive consequences for lawlessness would somehow make the schools and neighborhoods safer. Many of those same people are again describing Proposition as something vastly different than what it is. Proposition 36 is a plan to reduce homelessness, drug addiction, and theft in California. Law-abiding taxpayers deserve better, future generations of Californians deserve better and those in the grip of addiction need our help. Please do not be fooled by the same people who misled the voters to pass Proposition 47.

Please help save California. Vote “Yes” on Prop.36.

John McGinness, MS, is the retired sheriff of Sacramento County, an adjunct professor of criminal justice and host of the John McGinness Show on KFBK. He can be reached at 916-924-3901

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36 will give incentive to those who badly need treatment. Those who complete the treatment and graduate from the program will have the opportunity to have their record expunged and avoid incarceration, liberating them to live rich full lives.

Proposition 36 will also reclassify fentanyl as a hard drug, and provide enhanced penalties on those who possess fentanyl while armed with a firearm.

As or thieves, Proposition 36 will impose the potential for felony consequences for persons twice convicted of petty theft and charged with a subsequent theft case. It simply demands that

drugs, as well as common sense solutions to those who habitually break the law and diminish the quality of life for law abiding Californians.

If concern for law abiding citizens and those seeking to safely pursue their dreams in this state is insufficient to motivate voters to support this thoughtful proposition, consider the wellbeing of the people directly adversely impacted by the results of the horrific current state of law. Since 2014, when Proposition 47 passed, the number of chronically addicted people living on the streets of California has exploded. Failing to recognize the wellbeing of those

Interactive Database Reports if Agencies Fiscally Healthy

California Policy Center News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - California Policy Center released a Local Fiscal Health Dashboard on Oct. 4 that tracks the financial health of California cities, counties and school districts. The interactive database allows users to track how elected officials are managing local budgets, support ongoing budget decision-making and identify financial red flags.

The new dashboard is especially timely for California voters who have local tax and bond measures on their November ballots. Each city, county and school district has been awarded a fiscal health score and letter grade from A to F, depending on how well they have managed their finances. Government entities are also identified and color-coded as low, moderate or high-risk for fiscal distress.

"We're excited to be able to offer local officials and voters this important tool for tracking their city's fiscal performance," said Lance Christensen, vice-president of government affairs at the California Policy Center. "Today, many local governments are asking taxpayers for more money to fund lower-quality services. Californians have the right to know where their hard-earned dollars are being effectively used and where they are not."

Sacramento-area cities had mixed results, from an "A" for Elk Grove while Folsom flunked the test. The grades for several cities in the region, listed alphabetically, include Citrus Heights, B; Colusa, C; Dixon, B; Elk Grove, A; Galt, B; Gridley,

Local Fiscal Health Dashboard Scoring Table

Letter Grade	Fiscal Health Score out of 100	Description - Overall Fiscal Risk
A	85 to 100	Low Risk of financial distress
B	70 to 84	Low Risk of financial distress
C	60 to 70	Moderate Risk of financial distress
D	50 to 60	Moderate Risk of financial distress
F	49 and under	High Risk of financial distress
N/A	No Data	Jurisdiction is delinquent in publishing timely financial audits
Exempt	Exempt From Reporting Requirement	Local entity's federal awards expenditures were less than \$750K

Local Fiscal Health Dashboard Scoring Table

B; Lincoln, B; Live Oak, C; Marysville, C; Rancho Cordova, B; Sacramento, D; West Sacramento, B; and Yuba City, D.

The Local Fiscal Health Dashboard fills a void in government transparency data left after the California State Auditor's Office unexpectedly discontinued its popular Local Government High-Risk Dashboard in October 2023. California Policy Center's new dashboard was created to replace and expand on that data to ensure local governments maintain transparency and accountability when it comes to their budgets.

California Policy Center's dashboard uses public data from Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports (ACFR) that local governments are required to submit every year to get access to federal funds. The dashboard provides key financial metrics to allow local elected officials, analysts, reporters and citizens to understand how cities are performing overall and

in comparison to other cities, and spotlight concerning financial trends.

"The public should have access to the tools necessary to ensure government budgets are transparent and government officials are held accountable," Christensen said. "Californians can't allow government officials to sweep bad fiscal news under the rug."

Tracking local financial metrics, such as liabilities and revenue trends, is crucial. California has more than \$1.6 trillion in unfunded liabilities (debt) at both state and local levels. Many cities have potentially catastrophic unfunded pension liabilities. Other municipalities are making budget decisions based on incomplete, missing or delayed financial reports.

Cities are required to file their Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports, often referred to as annual audits, every year. Most municipalities submit the financial reports within nine months of fiscal year end (as required

by the federal and state governments) but many others are routinely and egregiously late in filing their required annual financial reports, according to the California Policy Center. That means local officials are left to make budgeting decisions without current fiscal information.

Out of 482 cities, 86 (or 17.8%) received an "A" grade; 21 (4.4%) received an "F" grade, indicating they are at high-risk of fiscal catastrophe and 70 cities (14.52%) are delinquent in submitting their 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. (Sixteen cities are exempt from reporting.)

But 189 cities, counties and school districts have still not submitted Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports for 2023. Twenty-six of those cities, counties and school districts that are missing their 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report are asking voters to OK a local tax increase on the November ballot and/or approve new bonds

totaling \$534.6 million in new borrowing.

"When cities don't turn in their fiscal reports on time, city officials have to make important budget decisions without the data they need," Christensen said. "Even worse, many of the cities that aren't on top of their financial reports are proposing tax increases and putting local bond measures on the ballot."

Based on the dashboard data, California Policy Center has identified 10 of the best and worst performing cities statewide when it comes to financial health. The dashboard designates the level of financial risk as low, moderate or high.

This financial risk determination is achieved by evaluating each entity on 10 key fiscal metrics: General Fund Reserves, Debt Burden, Liquidity, Revenue Trends, Pension Costs, Pension Funding, Pension Obligations, Other Post Employment Benefit Obligations, Other Post Employment Benefit

Funding, and Net Worth.

The 10 cities earning the highest fiscal health scores and an "A" grade are Eastvale (Riverside County), Indian Wells (Riverside County), Danville (Contra Costa County), Rancho Mirage (Riverside County), Lake Forest (Orange County), La Quinta (Riverside County), Laguna Woods (Orange County), Dublin (Alameda County), La Mirada (Los Angeles County) and Jurupa Valley (Riverside County).

Ten of the worst performing cities are considered high-risk for fiscal stress, including the ability of the city to pay its bills in the short and long term.

Cities earning the lowest fiscal health scores and an "F" grade are Ukiah (Mendocino County), West Covina (Los Angeles County), Richmond (Contra Costa County), Calexico (Imperial County), San Gabriel (Los Angeles County), Oakland (Alameda County), Orange (Orange County), Pinole (Contra Costa County), Atwater (Merced County) and Escondido (San Diego County).

Other cities that received an "F" include San Buenaventura/Ventura, Grover Beach, Banning, Lake Elsinore, Folsom, Costa Mesa, Montebello, Downey, Monrovia, Hayward and Lindsay. With many cities having yet to file Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports for Fiscal Year 2023 and in some cases, Fiscal Year 2022, this list of worst cities is subject to change. Some cities with poor financial metrics are often late filers.

Information about California cities, counties and school districts can be found at californiapolicycenter.org/fiscal-health-dashboard. ★

BERC Awards Honor Eco-Friendly Businesses

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - On Sept. 26, Business Environmental Resource Center (BERC), a division of the Sacramento County Office of Economic Development, presented the 18th Annual Sustainable Business Awards in partnership with the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD). Eight businesses were recognized as part of the Sacramento County Sustainable Business Program.

The ceremony recognized the top contenders in eight unique categories whose work practices demonstrate an outstanding commitment

to enhancing sustainability in Sacramento County.

Sacramento County Sustainable Business Award Recipients

- Energy Conservation: Teichert Materials
- Water Conservation: Meristem
- Solid Waste Reduction: GreenWaste Florin Perkins
- Green Design: ReIMAGINE Mack Road Community Venter
- Pollution Prevention: Badfish Coffee and Tea
- Transportation & Air Quality: Community Resource Project
- SMUD Clean Power City: Sustainable Building: Stanford Settlement Neighborhood Center
- SMUD Clean Power



Eight businesses in Sacramento County were recognized Sept. 26 for their commitments to sustainability. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

City: Carbon Free Transportation: Folsom Cordova Unified School District

Congratulations to

the Sacramento County Sustainable Business Award Winners for 2024!

Throughout the year, Business Environmental

Resource Center conducts community outreach to identify business participation in the Sustainable Business Program.

This no-cost membership platform provides the business community with marketing toolkits, educational opportunities, community engagement events and connections to grant or incentive opportunities in the space of environmental sustainability.

Business Environmental Resource Center's Sustainable Business Program is the region's benchmark for businesses considering or already engaged in eco-friendly practices.

Since the Program's inception, Business Environmental Resource Center has issued more than 800 certifications and has awarded more than 200 unique businesses. ★

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CLASS OF 1975

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WHEN: MAY 31, 2025

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ARREST LOGS UPDATED DAILY

The Chaplain's Day Off

Long before the 1986 movie “Ferris Bueller’s Day Off,” I, too, imagined a day off work of fun and frivolity.

After all, who hasn’t feigned illness to take a day off from work?

This was my self-justifying question as I called the Baylor University Bookstore one Friday morning in the fall of 1978. When my manager picked up the line, I winked knowingly at my new girlfriend sitting beside me.

“I’m not feeling well today.” Cough, cough. “I can’t come in until Monday.”

“Then you’re fired!” he said.

I wasn’t expecting the finality in his answer. I could hear a pulse in my

ears.

“Don’t come back,” he added before slamming down the phone receiver.

My face flushed and my eyes suddenly felt over-hydrated. I was having a grief reaction, anticipating the loss of the prestige I’d enjoyed interacting with university professors and freshman co-eds.

How had I miscalculated this scenario? Was my boss aware of the love-struck

hormonal illness with which I was afflicted? How would I afford to take my girlfriend to the back-to-school dance?

I had to make this right for many reasons. The bookstore was the center of university life and I didn’t want to be dodging my boss for the next year. I needed to apologize.

How does one apologize for such bald-faced lying?

First, it’s always good to allow a cool-down period. I waited a few weeks for the back-to-school rush to end and called for an appointment.

Once inside the manager’s office, I kept it simple. I admitted that I hadn’t been sick. Plain and guileless. “I’m sorry for lying.”

I didn’t excuse my action

or bring my girlfriend into the picture.

Second, I expressed understanding for his situation. I admitted that I abandoned my colleagues, causing them to be short-handed at his busiest time of the year.

Third, I asked for forgiveness. He granted that.

Finally, I think I surprised him when I asked his help to clarify the lessons I needed to learn.

That question brought his deepest thought.

“Who is it you want to be?” he asked.

“Pardon me?”

“Well, I know you’re a ministerial student, so I know WHAT you want to be. But beyond that, WHO do you want to be?”

I thought I got his drift,

but I wasn’t entirely sure.

“I think above all,” he said, “you want to be a person who people trust. I think you want to be a person who keeps his word.”

“I see three lessons,” he continued.

“First, don’t lie. Lying demonstrates that you don’t believe you’re capable of being who you want to be. Don’t sell yourself short. I know you are capable of being who you want to be.”

“Second, if I’m not mistaken, Jesus said, ‘Let your yes be yes, and your no, no. Whatever is more than these is from the evil one.’”

In other words, my ex-boss was telling me to be sure of what I want before I commit to

something. And when I do commit, I should keep my word.

“Third.” He cleared his throat, trying to remember his third point.

He gave up on that. “Just remember those two for now. Don’t lie and keep your word.”

The bookstore manager was OK in my book ... even if he didn’t give me my old job back.

Fortunately, he gave me a good reference to a better-paying job as a night watchman in a local bank. Good thing, too. I could afford to take the girl to the dance.

Unfortunately, since I can’t dance, she broke up with me.

Happily, I met and married my wife Becky a few years after that. But that’s a story for another day. ★

Email comments to comment@thechaplain.net.

Wickedly Booootiful

Continued from page 1

up and left for college. While he was gone, his mother gave away the pumpkin decorations, believing her son was done with them.

“Those things would be worth a fortune now,” Ricci mused.

It’s clear he’s recovered from the loss. Ricci began collecting again in 1981. Each September, Ricci retrieves over 21 plastic tubs from storage and turns his two-bedroom, one-bath Sacramento condominium into a magical celebration of the season. It’s a process, as each item is labelled, photographed and categorized. Whether it’s 50 cents or over \$50, he treats every item with special care.

Ricci prefers vintage-style Halloween decorations and has several types of collections, such as various pumpkins with wicked smiles and black cats in witch hats. These are scattered among an array of glasses, cups, sparkly baubles, cards, wall hangings, candles and trinkets.

Although many items are reproductions, there are a few originals. His most prized possession is a German decoration made the 1920s, which he bought for \$10 at a Jackson antique store.

Novice collectors could

online or scour Goodwill stores. A treasure could be anywhere.

And Ricci isn’t afraid to add extra bits of glitter and flotsam if it seems appropriate.

He’s also a bit proponent of supporting local artists and makers. Ricci will search for pricier one-of-a-kind pieces at specialty stores, holiday craft fairs and from local artists.

Ricci admitted he’s felt the squeeze of inflation.

“A box of 12 Halloween ornaments used to cost \$29.99, now they cost \$59.99. I’m grateful I purchased most of the items when I did!” Ricci said.

Yet it doesn’t deter him from going on the hunt for new additions.

Excursions through Northern California are part of the fun too. Ricci might drive backroads past the Valencia club and up to Auburn, Grass Valley and Nevada City.

He’ll travel to the Roseville Antique Mall or

wander through Amador City and stop in Jackson or Dry Town. A few trips to Petaluma have been productive as well.

And he isn’t always hunting alone. Kathy Jensen, his “forever girlfriend” of 22 years, flies down from their home in LaConner, WA, to join Mike in finding new treasures and exploring NorCal together. Since they go back and forth between homes during the year, they enjoy “Halloween hunting” up in Washington, too.

Walking through the condo, visitors can tell Ricci has a great aesthetic eye. If he wanted to open a Halloween shop, he’d be a natural at creating enticing displays. But the retired banker and mortgage

lender prefers collecting as a hobby. So instead, he and Jensen entertain friends at the condo, immersing guests in the Halloween spirit.

Ricci has considered the future of this special well-curated collection. Things will not be broken up and sold at an estate sale.

There is enough to spread around to his grandkids; Lilly, Micheal Joseph, Emma and Marget. Much of it will be gifted to specific friends who love Halloween as much as he does.

Right now, at 73, Ricci has plenty of years left to revel in his hobby. You might find him out searching around Sacramento this week hunting for the next treasure. ★



Vintage-style Halloween ornaments on all of Mike Ricci's shelves are a delight.



The condo is filled with collections of fanciful pumpkins.



This is a one-of-a-kind art piece Ricci found in Jackson.



Ricci said a favorite is the pumpkin skeleton on the chair.

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Call the Voter Helpline: (916) 822-5618



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Trick or Treat at Safetyville

Volunteers Can Help with Tax Prep, Literacy

By Daniel Canfield

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - This Halloween season, Safetyville will be hosting “Trick or Treat Safetyville,” which will provide a safe environment for kids of all ages to trick or treat. The event is planned for Saturday, Oct. 26, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Messenger Publishing Group reached out to Safetyville Executive Director Mindy Johnston for comment on the upcoming event.

Johnston explained, “Trick or Treat Safetyville is Safetyville’s largest fundraiser of the year and this year we are also celebrating our 40th birthday. Events like Trick or Treat help to keep our costs low for the school field trips and help ensure that our littlest citizens are safe out in the real world.”

Johnston went on to describe the planned events.

“We’ve got an amazing day of trick or treating, sweet treats, games, activities, music and more, including a magician performing during the 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. sessions. A mascot parade with regional mascots, including SafetyBill and the River Cats mascot Dinger, will happen during the 1 p.m. session and a family



costume contest during the 3 p.m. session with a great family day outing as our grand prize.

We will also feature a pumpkin patch for pictures and purchases along with a hay maze to wind through in our Old Sacramento Patio.”

Admission to the Trick or Treat event is \$7.50 per person and free for children under age 2. This event will take place rain or shine: no refunds.

Safetyville is located at 3909 Bradshaw Road, Sacramento.

When not hosting community events such as Trick or Treat Safetyville, Safetyville offers field trips for kindergartners through second graders that focus on bike and pedestrian safety as well as fire safety and how to call 911.

Visit the Safetyville website for tickets and more information on the event and Safetyville programs at safetycenter.org/trick-or-treat-safetyville. ★

Kristin Thebaud
Communications
News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Local residents can help end poverty for families in the capital region by volunteering with United Way California Capital Region in its Free Tax Prep and literacy tutoring programs. From teens to seniors, volunteers can receive valuable experience while making an impact on their community.

“Whether they’re more into numbers or letters, math or reading, our volunteers of all ages provide a critical human touch to our programs as they develop relationships and directly empower local families with tools to rise from poverty,” said Dr. Dawnté Early, president and CEO, United Way California Capital Region. “Our literacy volunteers work with children to help them excel in school so they can succeed in college and career. Our Free Tax Prep volunteers work with families to ensure they receive every dollar possible in tax credits so they can increase the amount of money in their bank accounts and support their families and their children’s education.”

Local residents who are interested in education, child development or literacy and have a couple of hours to commit each week can become literacy volunteers, either virtually or in person. These volunteers facilitate



A volunteer works with a child through United Way California Capital Region’s literacy tutoring program. Photo courtesy of Kristin Thebaud Communications

tutoring sessions at local elementary schools and implement engaging literacy activities. Volunteers receive hands-on experience as they network and gain skills in tutoring, teaching, mentoring and volunteer management, all while making a meaningful impact on children’s lives. To learn more about becoming a literacy volunteer, visit the United Way website at www.yourlocalunitedway.org.

Volunteers looking to dedicate four to eight hours each week and learn valuable tax filing information can sign up to help with United Way’s Free Tax Prep program. Free Tax Prep volunteers directly impact individuals and families as they work to help them file their taxes and apply for the maximum tax credits possible. Commitments span five to six months, with 40 hours of tax training between November and January, and tax season running January through May.

To learn more about becoming a Free Tax Prep

volunteer, visit the United Way website at www.yourlocalunitedway.org.

Founded in 1923, United Way California Capital Region has been a transformative force in the Sacramento community for more than a century, serving Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento and Yolo counties. The local United Way’s Square One approach to ending poverty is grounded in a public health model and uses a threefold strategy to address community needs from birth and beyond: helping children excel in school, investing in families and strengthening schools.

United Way supplies books to young children, provides literacy tutoring, addresses housing and food security, leads the region’s largest tax preparation initiative and launched Sacramento’s first guaranteed income program.

For more information or to make a donation, visit www.YourLocalUnitedWay.org. ★

CHP Receives Native-Tribal Traffic Grant

Continued from page 1

awareness of tribal sovereignty and respects cultural traditions. The program also aims to address the unique challenges that Native American communities face.

“This grant is a significant milestone for our department and the communities we serve across California,” said CHP Commissioner Sean Duryee. “It allows us to enhance safety and foster cultural understanding through essential resources

and educational programs.”

Grant funds will be used to conduct workshops and training sessions for CHP personnel, emphasizing culturally-informed law enforcement practices and the historical context of Native American relations.

The program will also support the development of educational materials that provide safety information and resources tailored to Native American communities.

This initiative aligns with the CHP’s

commitment to improving community relations and enhancing public safety through education and outreach.

By working closely with tribal leaders and members, the CHP seeks to address specific concerns and provide meaningful support to Native American communities throughout the state.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. ★

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