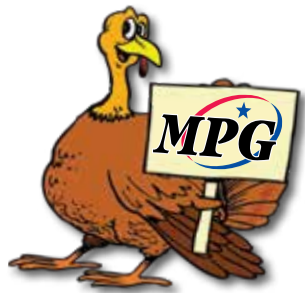




Everyone Can Light the World

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We Wish Our Readers A Happy Thanksgiving



Citrus Heights Messenger

VOLUME 14 • ISSUE 47 Serving the City of Citrus Heights & Sacramento County NOVEMBER 22, 2024

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Milestones and Gratitude



From left, City Councilmember Tim Schaefer, Citrus Heights Mayor Dr. Jayna Karpinski-Costa, Vice-Mayor MariJane Lopez-Taff and City Manager Ashley J. Feeney are at the 2024 State of the City Address. Photo by Paul V. Scholl

By Thomas J. Sullivan

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - The annual 2024 Citrus Heights State of the City Address on Nov. 14 in City Council Chambers proved to be quite a high-light reel of achievement.

In all, the city welcomed some 740 new businesses during the past year, including the recent grand opening of HomeGoods, Amazon Fresh and Club Studio Fitness, just to name a few.

The annual State of the City address supports one of the city's strategic goals: to enhance community vibrancy and engagement, said

Mayor Dr. Jayna Karpinski-Costa who provided opening remarks before City Manager Ashley J. Feeney then summarized the city's accomplishments in greater detail.

The Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce hosted a welcome reception prior to the State of the City address in Council Chambers.

Mayor Karpinski-Costa recognized business owners, elected officials including county Supervisor Sue Frost, neighborhood leaders, Citrus Heights Police Department members and city staff for their dedication and collaborative spirit.

She also thanked Vice-Mayor

MariJane Lopez-Taff, and Councilmembers Tim Schaefer and fellow council member Porsche Middleton who was unable to attend.

"We've taken big steps to beautify our community by creating a comprehensive toolbox to achieve a new level of cleanliness and pride," Karpinski-Costa said. "Businesses propel our community and I hope to make the city of Citrus Heights a top choice for business innovation in the region."

The city will take steps in January to launch a new Neighborhood Area

Continued on page 3

City Launches Community Engagement Projects

By Shaunna Boyd

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - During the Nov. 13 Citrus Heights City Council meeting's public comment portion, resident Melissa Hayden said she volunteers her time to trap, neuter and release (TNR) feral cats in the city.

But Hayden said it is difficult to get enough spay and neuter appointments to make a significant difference in the feral cat population.

Hayden said that the city's Police Services Manager has "destroyed the TNR programs completely in our city. ... I'm sitting here doing the job for them, because it is not being done."

Hayden suggested that the city needs better communication between the animal services department and the community, because many residents don't know that the city has a new contract with the Bradshaw Animal Shelter. Hayden also pushed for the city to find a way to establish an animal shelter and clinic in Citrus Heights.

Resident Deborah Bueti also volunteers trapping feral cats and said she was unsuccessful trying to call the Bradshaw shelter for spay/neuter appointments. Bueti also suggested that the city needs to move money around to fund its own spay/neuter clinic, saying, "This seems like a city with a little bit of money and a lot of heart. ... I know we can make it happen."

Citrus Heights City Manager Ashley Feeney responded to the public comments and spoke up for the animal services team.

"Our animal service unit cares deeply for animals, cares deeply for service for the community. ... That team has worked diligently to improve service," Feeney said.

The team has moved from offering coverage five days a week to seven days a week, Feeney said, and the contract with the Bradshaw facility "has service enhancements for the community and we're continuing to look at service enhancements."

While Feeney added that the council is still studying other options for doing more in the future, he said, "I also don't feel the personal attacks are helpful for bringing solutions. And as city manager, if there's something a member of the public would like to speak to me about, my door is always open to them."

Continued on page 4

Rock 'N' Roll at Blood Drive



Bloodmobile workers remain in good spirits serving almost 200 donors from all over the county and beyond over the three-day Citrus Heights blood drive. Vitalant staff included: Scott McCombs, Lindsey Peterson and Bill Hunt. Photo courtesy of Vitalant

By Vitalant Staff

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - Marketplace at Birdcage will again host its three-day Bloodmobile blood drive at 6177 Sunrise Blvd. in Citrus Heights.

What better way to say

thank you for all you are grateful for than to take a short pause before the holiday rush to help save a life or help a patient in need in many other ways.

This year's drive is being held from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Nov. 29, Nov. 30 and

Dec. 1.

To make an appointment, go to vitalant.org/98Rock.

Since 1992, Vitalant has partnered with Sacramento's largest rock station, 98 Rock, to help ensure patients have the blood they need throughout

the holiday season. Patients don't take a holiday from needing blood.

All blood types are critically needed, especially type O. Type O is often needed in emergency situations as well as for routine

Continued on page 13



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Everyone Can Light the World



Light the World images dazzle Times Square visitors during the Christmas season. Photo courtesy of Gary McFadyen

By Danny Wells

You might have noticed the press coverage last year for the Light the World images that filled the large screens of Times Square in New York City. Visitors to Times Square were in for a surprise when its famous billboards became a larger-than-life tribute to the true reason for Christmas: Jesus Christ.

Instead of the usual array of promotional brand logos and marketing graphics to entice viewers to purchase more products, the screens were filled with images of the baby Jesus, lying in a straw-lined manger, with a new star in the heavens luminating his face.

The billboard takeover at Times Square in New York City was part of Light the World initiative, an annual movement from The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to bring people from all over the world together to share the light of Jesus Christ during the Christmas season.

The beautiful nativity scene that emerged from the blackout was a tender reminder of the Savior's birth and why we need His light and love in our lives. The event was truly a Silent Night surprise as thousands of people stood in awe

Watching the miraculous events of the first Christmas on the mammoth screens overhead.

The good news is that one does not have to travel to Times Square to embrace the Light the World experience. Following the doctrine of all faiths to "love our neighbors as ourselves," everyone this holiday

season can do something to light the world for another, such as donating cans to your local food bank, leaving a kind note for your mail and package carrier, visiting an elderly neighbor, texting someone a note that says "I'm so grateful for you," paying for the person behind you in line, asking a co-worker how you can lighten their load and leaving a small gift at a neighbor's doorstep.

You can download a list of 50 ideas for Lighting the World at www.lighttheworld.org. Or visit www.JustServe.org, enter your zip code, and find dozens of volunteer service opportunities within a couple of miles from your home.

There is a plethora of variety in these community service prospects for individuals, couples, families,

or large groups.

One of our holiday family favorites is to prepare gift bags for children living in the margins. Our family, including children and grandchildren, numbers 26, and each of us has an assignment to bring something to add to the gift bags.

We set up a couple of large tables near our Christmas tree and have an assembly line to fill the bags, tie with ribbons and deliver to one of the several organizations that support needy children. It is a joy watching our grandchildren delight in filling these gift bags for others.

Another part of Light the World is the Giving Machines, vending machines with a twist. The Giving Machines have become known

internationally for offering livestock that charities distribute to families to help them feed themselves or start small businesses. In a single year, givers purchased 41,000 chickens, 25,000 ducks and 3,800 beehives. Chickens, goats, piglets and beehives provided through the Giving Machines have benefited 20,000 families in Kenya and Tanzania over three years.

One year a family in Kenya received three chickens. Three years later, those three had grown to a flock of over 7,000 that provided food and income to support not only their family but the entire village. Giving Machines partner each year with both global charities and local nonprofits to allow people to donate items to people in need and have raised more than \$32 million

since 2017.

The Giving Machines will be back in Northern California this year. The big red vending machines will again be at the Westfield Galleria Mall in Roseville and at the Vintage Fair Mall in Modesto as two of the 106 global locations.

Learn more at <http://givingmachinegreatersacramentomodesto.org>.

In a time of a most polarized society, embracing Light the World brings people together, helps us to focus on others, and begets joy to both the receiver and giver. Now that you are aware of the possibilities, one question remains: What are you going to do this year to help Light the World?

Danny Wells is a Vacaville resident and can be reached at danny@dannywells.com. ★



The Giving Machines have become known internationally for offering livestock that charities distribute. Photo courtesy of Gary McFadyen



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Ryan Enright, Organist

First United Methodist Church
2100 J Street, Sacramento

Milestones and Gratitude

Continued from page 1

Awareness program, she said. “We’ve listened to feedback from residents who don’t know why they should join a neighborhood association and how they can get involved,” Karpinski-Costa added.

The city is divided into 11 neighborhoods with nine different neighborhood organizations representing each area, with areas 7, 8 and 9 being combined. A Neighborhood Association, also referred to as a Neighborhood Area, is a group of neighbors working together and sharing common concerns to help make their neighborhood safer.

A year-in-review flier highlighted monthly milestones that shaped the community during the past year in areas of public safety, infrastructure, community engagement and economic growth.

Two citywide mailers, 584 shared social media posts and 38 e-newsletters and news flashes were distributed during the past year. A comprehensive Citrus Heights Cares guide was also mailed to all residents.

The Citrus Heights Business Attraction Incentive Program was recognized to help provide DarkHeart Brewery with a financial incentive to relocate from Sacramento to Sylvan Corners this year.

The Citrus Heights City Council will hear a proposed amendment for Sunrise Mall under the Sunrise Tomorrow plan in January. While the city does not own the mall site, Karpinski-Costa said, its redevelopment will be driven by the property owners who bring forward projects consistent with the (Sunrise Tomorrow) plan vision.

“Our commitment to public safety and making the city of Citrus Heights a safe place is unwavering,” said Feeney.

“Together, we’re building a strong, connected community.”

Feeney recognized the critical role of agency partners and the City Council in being mindful stewards of fiscal resources where careful budget management has added \$5.7 million into the city reserve for Fscal Year 2023-24.

Police staffing has normalized, Feeney said.

“We’re attracting interested personnel from other areas to join CHPD,” Feeney said.

In all, some 23 police roles were filled during the past year, adding to Impact Team, traffic and special investigation functions.

From January 2024 through November 2024, the Citrus Heights Police Department (CHPD) answered 71,771 calls for police service. Officers conducted 2,672 arrests and gave 3,018 traffic citations, which are up 19 percent this year.

Members of the Citrus Heights Police Department dispatch department were praised for 96.87 percent emergency-call response within 15 seconds. Three prosecutions under the city’s Chronic Nuisance Offender program were reported and the first Sacramento County homicide charges against a fentanyl dealer were filed. A school safety liaison program was also added.

Efforts by the Citrus Heights Police Department to combat organized retail theft enforcement using funds from a \$2.9 million grant for proactive prevention is proving successful, Feeney said.

The city has also launched a second round of community

projects grants, disbursing \$150,000 in community support funding to local nonprofits.

The city also issued 29 permits for the construction of accessory dwelling units (ADUs), performed more than 6,700 building inspections, completed 4,025 building plan reviews and

throughout the city, sponsored by Leatherby’s ice cream.

The city celebrated the grand opening of Sunrise Point Apartments, the first affordable housing units built in the city in 20 years and the Fair Oaks Senior Apartments with 108 new affordable units. Some \$2.65 million in federal funds toward the construction of 26 new Habitat for Humanity residential homes on Sayonara Drive was also secured by the city.

A luncheon Meals on Wheels café program returned for seniors at the Crossroads Community Park adjacent to the Sylvan Public Library.

The program was made possible through a partnership with the Sunrise Recreation and Parks District and Meals on Wheels and funded through the city’s Community Support Funds and the 2024 Community Development Block Grant, Feeney said.

The city observed “Good Neighbor Week” Sept. 28 through Oct. 4 and sponsored ArtBeat, a vibrant music and arts event at the Market Place at Birdcage shopping center.

A new Citrus Heights Volunteer Hub, a web initiative, was also launched to engage and connect interested volunteers and local nonprofit organizations that seek help with specific projects and special events, Feeney reported.

Feeney cited the success of the city’s “see, click and fix” initiative that encourages the public to help beautify their city and the ongoing work of the Beautification Crew, which

picked up 82.24 tons of trash and debris and retrieved more than 1,396 shopping carts during the past year.

Through a coordinated, proactive effort to address general blight and illegal camps, the city is enhancing public spaces, infrastructure and community pride, Feeney said.

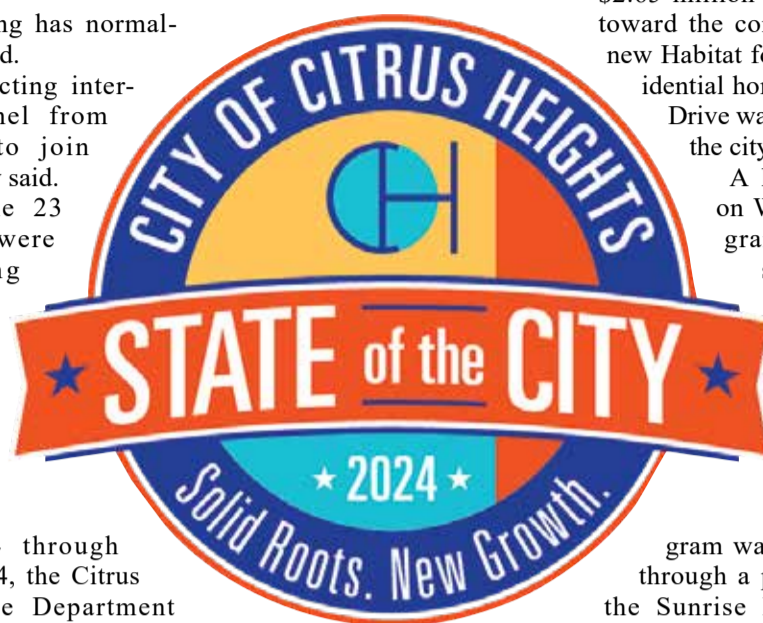
As a result of its efforts, the city has been awarded the Helen Putnam Award for Excellence by the League of California Cities for both its Beautification Crew Program and its Cares campaign.

The city is taking a multi-faceted approach to the city’s unhoused population by providing programs and service through multiple agencies to “help the unhoused while supporting accountability, and upholding order and public safety,” Feeney said. Community Health Worker program enrolled 95 individuals and housed 25 in the first seven months.

A new partnership with the local Sacramento County Bradshaw Animal Shelter that provides 24-hour, seven days a week phone coverage through the 311 call center was also started.

Major street improvement projects during the past year included the Dewey and Van Maren Drive infrastructure upgrades and construction of ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)-compliant curb ramps, and completion of the first phase resurfacing of San Juan Avenue. Construction of the Old Auburn Gateway Activation project has begun. The city also completed 94,845 square feet of mill and fill street repair improvements.

A rebroadcast of the 2024 State of the City Address can be viewed on Metro Cable’s YouTube channel and on the city website at citrusheights.net. ★



issued more than 3,200 building permits.

Feeney also recognized the collaborative inter-agency work that resulted in the grand opening of Arcade Cripple Creek Trail, which was awarded the American Public Works Association Project of the Year.

The city also hosted 10 community events during the past year, frequently deploying its block party trailer, which is available for public rental, to the popular Stars and Stripes July 4 Celebration and Sunday Funday in Rusch Community Park, which each attracted more than 7,500 attendees.

Many residents enjoyed an opportunity to meet their neighbors during one of the second annual “City Scoop” summer ice cream socials held

Winterdance Celtic Christmas Celebration Announced

Winterdance News Release

CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG) - A joyful and cherished holiday tradition returns this December, marking the 18th Annual Winterdance Celtic Christmas Celebration.

Angelic singing, instrumental wizardry and championship Irish step dancing combine to lift your hearts this holiday season.

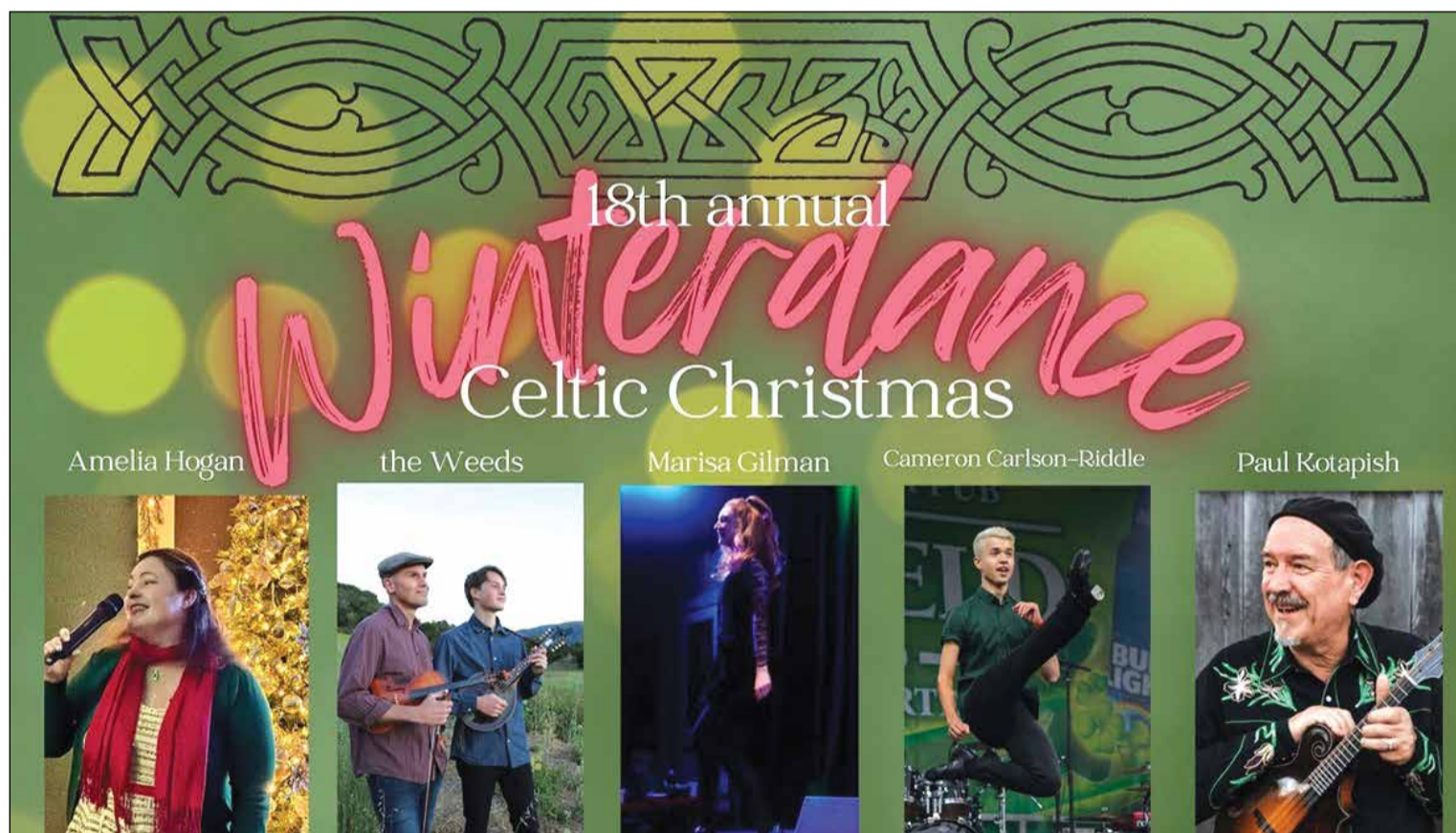
At 7 p.m. Dec. 13, the Winterdance Celtic Christmas Celebration will be held at St. Michael’s Episcopal at 2140 Mission Ave., Carmichael. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m.

This year’s show welcomes back the soaring vocals of San Francisco’s Amelia Hogan, Molly’s Revenge fiddler John Weed, and the banjo and mandolin artistry of rising artist, Tyler Weed. Making his Winterdance debut on guitar, mandolin and vocals, we’re honored to share the stage with Wake the Dead’s Paul Kotapish.

All Ireland champion Irish step dancers, Marisa Gilman and Cameron Carlson-Riddle, will bring a percussive and visually stunning element to this 18th year of Winterdance.

Many longtime fans of Winterdance and Molly’s Revenge will notice that Stuart Mason is no longer part of the lineup. After 17 years, our life-long musical partner and dear friend, “Uncle” Stuart Mason, will be stepping down from the Winterdance cast. Stuart’s life is filled with fish to catch and a growing and abundant stack of trapet portrait holiday orders that he and his Christmas elves are rushing to fulfill.

Almost two decades ago, Molly’s Revenge began our Winterdance holiday celebration. Combining lively instrumental Celtic music with seasonal carols and Irish dance, the cast has evolved over the years but continues to offer a compelling and popular holiday show. We continue this tradition in the hopes that we can play a small part in



Winterdance Celtic Christmas Celebration will be held at St. Michael’s Episcopal Dec. 13. Photo courtesy of Winterdance

nurturing community, unity and festivity through song, story and dance. We look forward to seeing familiar faces, making new friends, and hope to see you there!

Amelia Hogan is an impeccably authentic singer of Celtic music, and her “lilting, buoyant, distinctive voice” (AM Kennedy, Irish Music Magazine) comes through in honeyed tones on Irish, Scottish, British and American-styled vocals. She sings both contemporary and traditional music well versed in the Irish tradition of Sean-Nós, or “old style”, a highly lyrical solo a cappella style. Amelia is a headliner at the SF Free Folk Festival since 2004; frequent host of the internationally known Starry Plough Sunday night session (Berkeley CA.) headliner at The Irish Club of Alaska’s Galway Days Festival; a regular at the An Goilin Singers Club in Dublin, Ireland; a special guest and community partner with the

Consul General of Ireland, San Francisco; Ongoing partner with the United Irish Cultural Center in San Francisco, headliner and special guest performer and regular of Hyde street Pier NPS Maritime History Museum Sea Music Festival and concert series.

John Weed, fiddler for Molly’s Revenge and New World String Project, has spent the last 30 years immersed in various fiddle styles. With an affinity for folk traditions, John’s exploration has emphasized Irish, Scottish, Swedish, and Old-Time fiddle. While he holds a bachelor’s degree of music from CSU Chico, the musical education that charted his path began through a long series of Irish sessions.

There, he learned the nuance of aural passing of melodies and the tradition of conversing in a deeply musical manner. John’s passion for the vital expressiveness of the session lead to performing across the United States and internationally. In

addition to being a full-time performer and instructor, John is currently on faculty at Palenke Arts, a multicultural arts organization in Seaside, California.

Paul Kotapish Equally confident and inventive on every fretted instrument, Paul has distinguished himself on the stage for over 30 years. Most recently, Paul has made a name for himself with his concerts and recordings with Kevin Burke’s Open House, a headlining act in Celtic and international folk festivals across the country. His blazing guitar and mandolin work also help drive The Hillbillies From Mars, Sylvia Herold’s Euphonia, and other Northern California-based acoustic groups. Paul is also widely respected for his work as editor and feature writer at Acoustic Guitar Magazine.

Tyler Weed was raised in a musical family. His journey began on guitar which quickly led to earning money backing

his father on fiddle. He then discovered flat-picking melodies while also developing a passion for jazz. This allowed him to be equally comfortable playing in the old-world fiddle styles as well as using swing-accompaniment on Irish melodies.

Heavily influenced by Bay Area mandolin great Marla Fibish, he developed nuances traditional Irish tunes on mandolin — picking patterns for the different dance tunes, tone projection, and styling, which continues in his playing today. Tyler represented the next generation of mandolin players at his performance at 2023 San Francisco Festival of Mandolins. He has since journeyed into the world of tenor banjo. His banjo style can be characterized by ornate, percussive triplet stylings with a driving, yet hypnotic groove.

Tickets cost \$35 in advance or at the door. Children’s tickets are \$20. To purchase in advance, visit mollysrevenge.com/shows. ★

I Didn't Know I Loved It That Much

Dr. James L. Snyder

One important thing I have learned is that you don't appreciate something until it's missing. I've learned that by many things that I just took for granted.

Last week, for example, I had some problems with my truck, so I had to take it in for service. It took longer than I had expected, but that's how life is.

I had a doctor's appointment across town that day, and I wasn't expecting my truck to be unavailable. I knew I would have to make different arrangements.

I had two choices. First, I could cancel my doctor's appointment, but you know how that can be trying to reschedule the next appointment. Second, I could ask The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage if I could drive her sissy van across town to my doctor's appointment.

I cannot tell you how hard I wrestled with that. I did not want to cancel my appointment, and I did not want to drive that sissy van. Sometimes, life offers you situations just like this. No matter your choice, it will not be the right one.

Finally, I put my pride in my back pocket and asked The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage if I could use her sissy van to go to my doctor's appointment.

It's been a long time since I've seen her smile like that. She said, "Of course, my dear. You can take my car and go to your doctor's appointment." Then she giggled. I hate it when she giggles.

Standing at the door with the keys in her hands, as I was going out, she handed them to me and said, "Drive safely." Then, another one of her giggles.

I took the keys and thanked her for allowing me to use her

sissy van. I looked at her with an artificial smile and said, "Thank you my dear. I promise I'll drive safely." Of course, I don't know what that means.

The first chore I had with the sissy van was opening the door and getting inside. There was no way I was going to get inside that sissy van the way it was set. I had to push the seat back as far as it would go. Then I got in the seat behind the steering wheel, squishing my body as I got in.

No matter how far back I pushed the seat, my knees were still under my chin.

Next was the steering wheel. It took me 10 minutes to figure out how to adjust that steering wheel, and I still couldn't get it to where it was comfortable for me to steer. I was beginning to remember the last time I was in the sissy van, and those weren't such pleasant memories.

The next thing was the mirrors; the mirror inside the sissy van and the two mirrors outside on each side of the vehicle. It took me a while to figure out how to do that because it's been a long time since I adjusted any mirrors in my vehicle.

I did have somewhat of a scare with the indoor mirror. As I adjusted it, a very scary face popped into view. I almost screamed, but then realized it was my face.

Finally, I got everything pretty close to normal and was ready to leave. I put the key in, turned it, and the sissy van started up right away. I sighed a deep sigh of relief.

I slowly put it in reverse and backed out of the driveway. Standing in the doorway of our house as I was leaving was The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, laughing and waving at me as if she was crazy.

Finally, I was on my way to my doctor's appointment. As I was driving, I was so nervous I was wondering if maybe I

should make an appointment to see a psychiatrist. I was crazy at this moment.

I finally could settle down and enjoy the ride.

When I arrived at the doctor's office, I pulled in and parked the sissy van. I thought everything was in order, but then I tried to get out of the sissy van.

The door opened relatively quickly, but that's as far as it went. I twisted and turned, but I could not get out of my seat. My legs were jammed under the steering wheel, and I couldn't twist.

If only Chubby Checker could be here to help me twist.

It took me rather a few minutes, and I eventually was able to extract my body from the sissy van slowly. I got out, stood up, and looked back to ensure all of me was extracted.

Driving back after my doctor's appointment, I happened to think of how much I really loved my truck. Everything about it fits me perfectly, and driving it is my greatest pleasure.

I didn't know how much I loved my truck, and I was forced to drive The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage's sissy van. When I return, I will spend a little time telling my truck how much I appreciate it.

I often think about what the Apostle Paul said, "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth" (2 Thessalonians 1:33).

I am committed to thanking God for everyone in my life while I can still do it.

Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala, FL with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, e-mail jamessnyder51@gmail.com, website www.jamessnyderministries.com ★



Dave Ramsey

Dear Dave,

I'm 20-years old, and I'm in a bad spot. I've been a jerk for the last year, not listening to my parents about anything. Now, I've got over \$10,000 in debt from running up bills on credit cards and writing some bad checks. Two weeks ago, I also lost my job and totaled my car. I'm about to lose my apartment, too, because I don't have the money for rent. A friend of mine said I could stay with him for a while, but I'm really scared. My parents say I created this situation all by myself, and I need to figure out a solution all by myself. Would you please give me some advice? I don't even know where to start.

– Justin

Dear Justin,

It sounds like you're about as close to rock bottom as a person can get. I know it's a scary situation, especially for a young person. I've done stupid stuff, too. And the

Dave Ramsey Says

When You Hit Rock Bottom

stupid things I did had lots more zeroes on the end than you're looking at right now. So, I've got some good news for you. There's hope! The simple fact that you're looking for help, and have realized the way you've been living is stupid, means you want to change. That's a good thing.

Still, when you do stupid things, you've got to pay what I call "stupid tax." I'm talking about the consequences of your actions. It sounds like you're going to have get two or three jobs, and find a really cheap car that will get you around for a while. If you do this for maybe 12 to 18 months, and live on a very strict monthly budget, you'll probably be able to pay off all that stupid tax you've accumulated.

I think you've also recognized the fact that you left your integrity and self-respect on the sidelines for way too long. That means doing the right things really needs to be a priority from now on. The cool thing about the practical issues you mentioned—finding an-

other permanent place to live, something to drive and paying off the debt—is that all this will get better because you've made a conscious decision to be better.

You might want to think about finding and regularly attending a good church, too. Any understanding and caring pastor would be honored to pray with you, and walk with you as you get your life back together and headed in the right direction.

God bless you, Justin. You can do this!

– Dave

Dave Ramsey is a national best-selling author, personal finance expert and host of The Ramsey Show, heard by more than 20 million listeners each week. He has appeared on Good Morning America, CBS Mornings, Today Show, Fox News, CNN, Fox Business, and many more. Since 1992, Dave has helped people regain control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for the company, Ramsey Solutions. ★



Citrus Heights Community Update

Why Sacramento Should Reject a New Sales Tax

this because the idea doesn't meet the needs of most county residents, especially those living in rural communities like Orangevale and Rio Linda who rely heavily on roads.

We've seen similar tax proposals fail before, like Measure B in 2016, which didn't address the real concerns of our community. Our roads rank among the worst in the nation, affecting us all every day.

There is an obvious need for serious improvements to our roads and highways. This isn't just about patching up potholes but making big changes to cut down on traffic, make our drives safer, and improve our quality of life. We need to make sure that every dollar spent is watched over closely and used well.

I'm not a knee-jerk opponent of all taxes. But I firmly believe in being transparent about how any new tax money would be used, ensuring

there's a clear end date for these taxes. We need to be careful and clear, demonstrating exactly what improvements will be funded and when the taxes will expire to avoid undue financial pressure on our taxpayers. Our residents want to see real, lasting results from their taxes, not more empty promises.

Our main goal should be to focus on actions that genuinely improve our roads. This is the practical and necessary choice for our community's well-being.

Thank you for reading – and as always, if you want to contact me, call me at 916-874-5491, or email me at SupervisorFrost@sac-county.gov.

Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost represents the 4th District, which includes the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, North Highlands, Rio Linda, Elverta and Rancho Murietta. ★

City Launches Community Engagement Projects

Continued from page 1

Councilmember Tim Schaefer said, "We have a city manager that is incredibly accessible. ... If you have an issue with a problem in the city, he is available."

At a prior meeting, City Council considered a resolution to approve the Measure A Sacramento Countywide Transportation Mitigation Fee Program (SCTMFP) Nexus Study and Amended Agreement on Operating Protocols. The program is an existing half-cent sales tax approved by voters in Sacramento County and renewed in 2004. The revenue generated is used to fund capital projects within the county. Based on the results of the nexus study, the Sacramento Transportation Authority (STA) has issued an amended agreement with approved land uses and updated fees.

"All the agencies that are recipients of the Measure A revenues are required not only to adopt the ordinance but impose the impact fees and remit those to the STA for distribution," General Services Director Regina Cave said.

Under the new fee program, Cave said, the majority are equal to or less than the current fees.

At the prior meeting, Councilmember Schaefer worried that the report was building a case for another Measure A and he asked for more time "to digest this." City Council agreed to continue the item to the Nov.13 meeting.

When the item continued, General Services Director Cave reintroduced the report and said, "The city does benefit greatly from Measure A," receiving about \$3.4 million each year, in addition to other Measure A funding for capital projects.

Councilmember Schaefer said that his initial concern was that the city was paying more into the fund than it was receiving. But after getting some more background from Cave, Schaefer said he now understands that "we are benefiting more than we're paying into this" and that "the funding supports a

lot of capital projects" that are important to Citrus Heights.

"My concerns are resolved at this point," Schaefer said.

The council voted unanimously to approve the nexus study and the new fee schedule.

The council then heard an update about various community engagement projects underway in the city.

Adopt-a-Trail will encourage community ownership and pride by allowing community groups to adopt portions of the Arcade-Cripple Creek Trail and the Old Auburn Multi-Use Trail. Staff said that community groups are already out there working to keep the trails clean, and this program will provide tools and resources, as well as help to raise awareness about the trails.

The Neighborhood Area Toolbox will assist Neighborhood Area groups with promotion and awareness, providing resources to help them with managing activities, recruitment and retention of volunteers, event planning and project execution.

A new Neighborhood Area Mailer project aims to increase community engagement through the design, coordination and distribution of a city-wide mailer promoting all the local Neighborhood Areas.

And finally, an unsung hero award, called Citrus Heights Cares Champion, will recognize volunteers in the city who go the extra mile. The nomination period will take place in March, followed by online voting and an awards ceremony in April.

Vice-Mayor MariJane Lopez-Taff, who previously requested a volunteer award program, said, "I am so excited to see it coming to life."

Lopez-Taff, said the Neighborhood Areas "are doing amazing work and these new programs will help support them."

There will be no City Council meeting the week of Thanksgiving, so the next scheduled meeting will be at 6 p.m. Dec. 11 at Citrus Heights City Hall, 6360 Fountain Square Drive. ★



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Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



The Sacramento Kings were 2-2 in the past week, but that doesn't begin to tell the tale.

Beginning with a disappointing 116-96 loss to the San Antonio Spurs and concluding with a thrilling 121-117 win over the Utah Jazz, the Sac Town ballers had an up and down week that ended on a high note.

Sadly, injuries played a role, sidelining big man Domantas Sabonis and newcomer all-star DeMar DeRozan, both with lower back issues.

In between the Spurs and the Jazz, saw the Kings take a tough overtime loss to a talented Minnesota Timberwolves team, and win decisively over the Phoenix Suns by the score of 127-104.

The real story of the week was none other than the offensive show put on by point guard DeAaron Fox, who scored a total of 109 points in back-to-back games against the Timberwolves and the Utah Jazz.

Setting a Sacramento Kings scoring record, DeAaron put the team on his back against the Timberwolves, scoring 60 points and shattering his previous personal record. Just one game later, with Malik Monk, DeMar DeRozan, and Domantas Sabonis sidelined with injuries, Fox backed up his 60-point performance with 49 more, this time in a win over the Jazz.

Thanks to the offensive explosion of DeAaron Fox, the Kings now have a player in the top ten in scoring. DeAaron is currently #6 in the NBA in scoring, and remarkably the Kings are the only team in the NBA to feature three players with a scoring average of 20 points or higher per game.

In addition to raising his scoring average, DeAaron is fifth in the league in steals, averaging 1.8 per game. I look for Fox to challenge the top spot in steals as the season wears on.

Overall, the Kings are off to an 8-6 start, and most pundits and fans alike are well aware that their record could be decidedly better.

It took a few games for DeRozan to become completely comfortable with his teammates, and that should be taken for granted.

Since the first few games, DeMar has been the perfect fit, and teams are having

a difficult time trying to figure out who the go-to player is going to be. The Kings are spreading the boy to everyone on the court including Keegan Murray, who has had an up and down start to the season as it relates to scoring.

Keegan has made a noticeable move forward as he has focused on rebounding and improving his defensive efficiency.

Domantas continues to rebound with ferocity, and the rebounding champion of the past two seasons, is currently #2 in the NBA behind big man Nikola Jokic.

Nursing a sore back, Sabonis is on the sidelines, and with nothing definite coming from the Kings organization, Domantas is day to day.

So, what kind of a report card should the Kings receive as they play in their 15th game against the Atlanta Hawks on Monday night.

I give the team a solid B, considering the addition of DeMar DeRozan and understanding it takes time for a starting five to jell.

Let's not forget the energy and scoring punch that Malik Monk brings to this team, and the sooner we see Malik back in action, the better off the Kings will be. Reportedly, Malik has a week to go before he'll be ready for any hardwood action.

Sadly, after witnessing what I consider to be one of the worst officiating seasons in the past 50 years last season, the zebras were back to their old ways Saturday night and were it not for Kings ability to challenge two horrific calls by the referees, the Kings would have likely lost to the Utah Jazz.

I have no answer for what the NBA needs to do, but clearly the officiating is sadly lacking in quality, and this has not always been the case.

I credit the NBA with putting challenges into the mix, but there is still more that needs to be done.

Meanwhile, keep the faith Kings fans. This team is showing a lot of bright spots, so let's get everyone healthy and see if the Sac Town boys can get on a winning streak!

All the best Kings fans!

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

California's Transition Off Carbon Fuels Could Upset Gasoline Supply, Prices



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

California motorists buy and consume a billion gallons of gasoline each month and are very sensitive about pump prices, which are markedly higher than those in other states. Naturally, they are a political football.

Gov. Gavin Newsom has repeatedly characterized refiners as price gougers, even though most of the differences are caused by taxes, fees and regulatory mandates. Recently, he persuaded the Legislature to pass a watered-down version of his proposal requiring refiners to maintain higher reserves to avoid price spikes.

However the gasoline situation is far more complicated than Newsom's approach, and California may be facing a period of volatility on both supply and price as it attempts to wean itself from combustion-powered transportation, its largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions.

The California Air Resources Board is on the verge of expanding its program of reducing the amount of carbon in the current gasoline recipe, regarded as an interim step before completely converting vehicles to electricity or some other non-polluting power.

Last year, CARB published an analysis of the proposed Low Carbon Fuel

Standard to provide "the economic incentives to produce cleaner fuels like electricity, hydrogen and biofuels that are needed to displace fossil fuels and reduce transportation sector emissions."

The report estimated that adoption could immediately increase gas prices by 47 cents a gallon and then, "on average, from 2031 through 2046 the proposed amendments are projected to potentially increase the price of gasoline by \$1.15 per gallon, the price of diesel by \$1.50 per gallon and fossil jet fuel by \$1.21 per gallon."

The cost estimate generated a storm of media and political attention and CARB backed off, continuing the adoption process but refusing to put a number on the potential pump price. Last week, the board's top official conducted an electronic press conference in which he stressed positive impacts, but continued to sidestep questions about consumer impacts.

"It's a win-win," executive officer Steven Cliff insisted. "We get public health benefits, we reduce health costs, we see lower costs of driving and we help turbocharge those investments in clean energy infrastructure that helps drive our zero emissions future."

CARB now intends to act on the policy three days after Election Day, without offering any estimate of consumer costs — a potential signal that those costs will be hefty.

While Newsom wants to be remembered as someone who tried to reduce gasoline prices, his governorship probably will be one that substantially increased them.

The other uncertainty is whether California will have

enough gasoline, even a variety with less carbon, over the next two decades as it transitions away from carbon fuels altogether.

California once had dozens of refineries producing the state's unique fuel blend, but in recent years just nine. After the Legislature gave Newsom the new laws on gasoline reserves, one refiner, Phillips 66, announced that it would shutter its plant in Southern California that's no longer profitable. The company said the closure had nothing to do with politics.

Very quickly, Valero, which has two refineries in the state, hinted that it may follow suit. CEO Lane Riggs said during a conference call that "all options are on the table" for the company's two California refineries, one in Benicia and the other in Wilmington, because of increasing state regulation of operations.

"Clearly the California regulatory environment is putting pressure on operators out there and how they might think about going forward with their operations," Riggs said.

Transitioning transportation to non-carbon power — while maintaining sufficient and reasonably priced supplies for gas-powered cars until they're replaced — was destined to be a fraught process.

If poorly managed, it could be a monumental disaster.

Dan Walters is one of most decorated and widely syndicated columnists in California history, authoring a column four times a week that offers his view and analysis of the state's political, economic, social and demographic trends. ★

Ben Ali Shrine Band Honors Veterans with Concert

Story and photo by Elise Speiss

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - Another Veterans Day tradition continued on Nov. 11 as the Veteran's Community Center family and friends gathered at noon for a one-hour concert. The seats were full, with standing room only available for the much-anticipated concert.

Emcee Mark Glover thanked those who attended and especially the veterans. The noon timing allowed those who attended the Sylvan Cemetery service, including Citrus Heights City Council members and the city manager, to travel two miles down the road to attend the concert despite the rainy weather.

Director Tonya Whennen led the 30-piece band, beginning



The audience at the Veterans Community Center enjoyed a one-hour concert of patriotic music on Veterans Day by the Ben Ali Shrine Band under the direction of Tonya Whennen.

with the traditional Armed Forces Medley with veterans standing as

their branch anthem was played. One highlight was a dramatic

rendition of the theme from the \$10,000,000 movie franchise,

"Raiders of the Lost Ark."

Another stirring piece was an inspirational composition including short snippets of several military tunes from well-known band composer James Swearingen, including "Lest We Forget."

The weather brought all 30 members of the band inside, which made for an intimate atmosphere to enjoy the music and camaraderie as veterans were honored and remembered.

The concert concluded with the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," written by Julia Ward Howe. A large array of homemade deserts, coffee and fellowship finished out the day.

Donations were accepted in support of the work of the Shriners Hospital for Children in Sacramento. ★

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COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Informing, Empowering and Engaging Readers with Their Community



By Patsy McGavock

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - When it comes to supporting student success across one of the largest and most diverse school districts in California, San Juan Unified School District brings families, schools and communities together.

San Juan Unified is the state's eighth largest school district, according to the California Department of Education's Oct. 28 report, with more than 70 different languages spoken. It's also the fifth largest immigrant-enrolling district, according to an August 2023 case study by Policy Analysis for California Education, focused on newcomer support in the San Juan Unified District.

The case study reports that "San Juan Unified School District recognized the need to listen first, then act; hire staff from the immigrant community; engage parents as leaders and partners; and expand its support through strong community-based partnerships."

Natalia Aguirre-Mazzi of the districts Family and Community Engagement (F.A.C.E) department works with school sites to accomplish some of those goals. When speaking of engagement she describes three tiers: school, family and community support surrounding student success.

"When a school brings a need or is working on ways to engage parents, Family and Community Engagement looks at the full story of the time and resources parents are able to bring. If there are gaps, we look for ways the broader community can help," said Aguirre-Mazzi.

She also helps make volunteer registration and screening more accessible to potential volunteers through monthly after-hours fingerprinting clinics and mobile clinics via the Family and Community Engagement mobile at local school and district events. Volunteers must be cleared to work directly with children.

While caregivers fill most volunteer

The Local School Connection

Family and Community Engagement

opportunities, community partners come along side to support.

"When there's a call out from a school for help, we see the spots fill. The spirit of volunteerism is there," said Aguirre-Mazzi. "We see and support many different family structures. Sometimes people, when they are new to the district, are not aware that not all youth have a two-parent or even one-parent household."

Work schedules, living arrangements, transportation and even language differences can create barriers.

The Family and Community Engagement team builds community partners to accommodate those needs, such as engaging a service club to help maintain a school garden and gathering parents who speak the same language around that project.

"The extra support makes a big difference," said Aguirre-Mazzi.

Opportunities are varied and year long, said Aguirre-Mazzi. Volunteers chaperoning a fall field trip may see the wonder of a kindergartener's independent venture to a pumpkin farm. Civic organizations and community members may support a student in need with warm winter clothes or school supplies during the holidays. As spring comes, those who have been looking for opportunities often come in to lift the load as donations slow down and longtime volunteers need a rest.

Community intervention specialist James 'Trey' Taylor at Mesa Verde High School, a Title 1 school, said the community support makes individual students feel valued and more capable of success.

"Some kids don't have the infrastructure to understand that they need to be here, regularly, to be successful. It helps those kids who don't have that support; slowly and surely teaches them the skills to be successful," said Taylor.

For the past two years, Taylor has reached into the community and attended events like Sunday Funday to build partnerships that help incentivize attendance and academics, support basic needs and build positive relationships

with community and law enforcement. Restaurants sponsor perfect attendance lunches and supply gift cards for improved student grades. Service clubs sponsor Honor Society luncheons and sports teams. Sunrise Food Ministries provides supplies for students in insecure housing and the Citrus Heights Police Department sponsors Trunk or Treat and Shop with a Cop.

At Woodside K-8, Vice-Principal Debra Johnston said they built a combination of parent and community support. As a new administration, they are growing staff awareness of how parents can further support and partner. Along the way, they are building community partners by bringing Woodside to the community. Staff attend community events like Sunday Funday, National Night Out and Citrus Heights Area Seven Eight Nine (CHASEN) meetings. Staff ask students what they'd like on campus and work with those partners to make it happen.

Connecting thought community events has caught on, Johnston added, as other schools ask about and have started attending the community events Woodside attends.

A lot of it is communication, said Aguirre-Mazzi, letting those sites or families with a need know there's a resource already waiting and available.

"Often, we'll hear, 'I didn't know there's a community partner who does that. Or, in their effort to respect the teachers' role and space, potential volunteers may not know they are welcome to ask where they can help,'" Aguirre-Mazzi said. "Everyone has something to give when it comes to supporting our youth."

If supporting students' success is the community connection for you, either as an individual or an organization, contact your closest school's administrative office or the San Juan Unified School Districts Family and Community Engagement Department.

Patsy McGavock is a volunteer writer and community advocate seeking to "inform, empower and engage readers with their community." ★



Gobble Gobble

When you're digging into that scrumptious Thanksgiving meal and settling in to watch umpteen football games, are you thinking back to that first Thanksgiving? Well, I got the scoop from historian Ken Davis, the author of the "Don't Know About" series. The feast was more like surf and turf with venison, turkey, mussels, and scallops. Makes sense since they were close to the ocean. And the turkey was not a fat platter turkey filled with stuffing, but wild turkey (the critter, not the libation). And no pumpkin pies, just pumpkins. Dessert was most likely commmeal breads and puddings. By the way, the Pilgrims actually had a true day of thanksgiving with a day of prayer and fasting, not feasting. And the Pilgrims did not call themselves by that name. They referred to themselves as "saints" and "First Comers." Only later did William Bradford call them Pilgrims. And here's one for you. Of the 102 people on board the Mayflower, only 50 were so-called Pilgrims. The others were members of the Church of England who had signed on simply as laborers, soldiers, or those who were looking to gain property in the "New World." The Pilgrims actually called them "Strangers."

Remember all those pictures of Pilgrims and Indians sitting down for a peaceful meal? Okay, it worked for a generation, and then it was followed by fighting and bloodshed as relations with the Native Americans deteriorated when the colonists took land from the indigenous people. You'll love this one. What we call Thanksgiving was, in fact, a harvest festival and celebrated in Octo-

ber, not November 1621. They were just grateful to be alive. After their first bleak winter, half of their company died.

Did you dress up as a Pilgrim for Halloween in black with clunky shoes and buckled hats? Well, they didn't even wear black. But I bet you looked great! So when was the modern day Thanksgiving born? It was first celebrated as an official holiday in 1777 to mark the



patriot victory at Saratoga in the Revolutionary War. When Washington tried to proclaim a Thanksgiving Day, Congress complained that he had no right to make such a proclamation.

Presidents routinely proclaimed the day but the custom died out at the beginning of the 19th century. But 1837 came around and so did Sarah Joseph Hale (She wrote the poem "Mary Had A Little Lamb") and initiated a campaign to reinstate the holiday. Lincoln finally proclaimed a national holiday in 1863. Suffice to day, our day of indulging, watching games and shopping came lots later and remains to this day. Let's just remember that we might go back to the beginning with a prayer for all we have to be thankful for. Reach out to someone alone or hurting and share. It doesn't have to be a feast, just a simple taste and a kind word.

There is some sadness in my heart as I lost my beloved Rick, my husband of nearly 53 years last December, but I am thankful for the beautiful years we had together! Hopefully, you are blessed with loving family. Much happiness to you all. ★

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
Image by Print On Demand from Pixabay

25,000-Plus Illegal Cannabis Plants Removed



Pictured here is illegal cannabis growing at Anza Borrego Desert State Park. Photo from California State Parks

California Department of Parks and Recreation News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - California State Parks continues to combat illegal cannabis grows within and near state park properties through its Cannabis Watershed Protection Program (CWPP).

During the 2024 season, the Cannabis Watershed Protection Program's special enforcement team led 16 operations in or near state parks' properties resulting in seven arrests and the removal of 25,558 cannabis plants, 4,820 pounds of processed cannabis and 18 firearms. Numerous environmental crimes related to water diversion and water pollution were also documented.

"Illegal cannabis cultivation poses a serious threat to California's unmatched natural resources, and we continue to make progress identifying and eradicating grow sites in and around state parks," said State Parks Director Armando Quintero. "The State Parks Cannabis Watershed Protection Program team will never stop working to protect these most valuable public lands and ensure their environments are safe for generations to come."

At California's largest state park, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, the enforcement team removed 4,672

cannabis plants, approximately 500 pounds of waste and 1,000 feet of irrigation line. The enforcement team works closely with both the Department of Justice's Eradication and Prevention of Illicit Cannabis program and Gov. Gavin Newsom's Unified Cannabis Enforcement Task Force.

The state park units that the Cannabis Watershed Protection Program enforcement team led law enforcement operations in or around this year were Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, Clear Lake State Park, Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park, Lake Oroville State Recreation Area, Onyx Ranch State Vehicle Recreation Area, Saddleback Butte State Park and Smithe Redwoods State Natural Reserve.

Additionally, the enforcement team and other Cannabis Watershed Protection Program staff fully remediated 23 historic grow sites occurring on state park property. These efforts resulted in the removal of approximately 16,000 pounds of waste, including 33,000 feet of plastic irrigation tubing and more than 600 pounds of fertilizer. The environmental impacts of these illicit grow operations can be devastating, such as polluting waterways and altering native ecosystems, and remediation is the first step in addressing effects they have on the landscape. ★

SMUD Lists Unclaimed Checks on its Website

SMUD News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Do you have an uncashed check from SMUD?

The names of customers and vendors who have not yet cashed checks dated Sept. 30, 2021 or earlier are now available on smud.org.

The list of names will be posted until Dec. 23.

To file a claim on an uncashed check, the claimant's name must be included on the list to be valid.

To make a claim, call 916-732-7440 and supply the claimant's name, current address, telephone number and the address

for the period between Oct. 1, 2020 and Sept. 30, 2021.

Claims can also be mailed to Sacramento Municipal Utility District Unclaimed Monies, 6201 S St., Mail Stop B352, Sacramento, CA 95817-1818.

Each year, SMUD posts this information to find the money's rightful owner. Claims must be made by 5 p.m. Dec. 23, or they become the property of SMUD under California Code Section 50050-50057.

Replacement checks will be issued only to the payee or, upon proof of death, to the payee's beneficiary. ★

WE SUPPORT FIRST RESPONDERS

Social Security Matters

Older Veteran Asks about Special Social Security Credit for Military Service



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I served in the U S Army from January 1958 to Feb 1961. What increase should I receive for those years and who do I call and at what phone number?
Signed: Proud Veteran.

Dear Proud Veteran: First, thank you for your military service! I expect you are referring to the "special extra credits for military service" which are available to some who served in in the US Military in earlier years. It is important to note that these "extra credits" take the form of an adjustment to your military pay record while serving and are not an incremental amount added to your monthly Social Security benefit because you served.

Military pay has been subject to deductions for Social Security since 1957. Thus, while serving between 1958 and 1961 you paid SS tax on your military earnings. But, for purposes of determining your Social Security benefit, your military earnings record would be increased by \$300 for each quarter you served on active duty,

up to a maximum of \$1,200 increase per year of service. That means for 1958 - 1960, when calculating your SS benefit, \$1,200 would be added to your military earnings record for each year you served. FYI, for those who served after 1967, this adjustment was automatically made by Social Security. But for service years prior to 1967 (as in your case) you would need to inform Social Security of your service when you claimed SS and provide a copy of your military form DD-214 (your discharge papers). SS would then make the appropriate adjustment to your military earnings record prior to calculating your benefit amount. And, for clarity, additional credits for military service are not available to those who served after 2001.

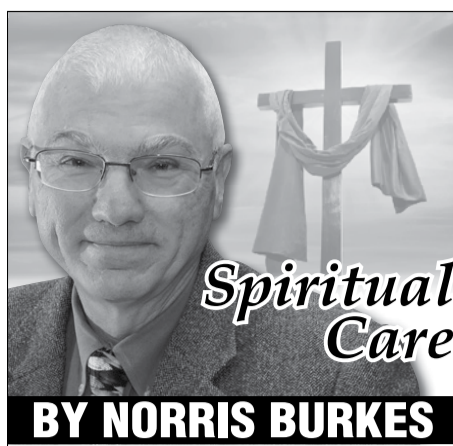
A key point to understand is that this adjustment to your military pay may - or may not - affect the amount of your Social Security benefit. Social Security determines your benefit amount based on your highest earning 35 years over your entire lifetime (adjusted for inflation). If, after you served in the military, you had at least 35 years of civilian employment where you earned more than your military pay, it is probable that your military pay is not included when calculating your Social Security benefit. If that is the case, it is likely that the "special extra

credits for military service" would have no effect on your Social Security payment. If, however, your military pay (including those special extra credits) for any year is more than you earned in civilian life, then you can contact Social Security (1.800.772.1213), provide them with a copy of your DD-214, and ask that they recalculate your Social Security benefit to include the extra credits for your years of military service.

Again, thank you for your service to our country, and please do not hesitate to contact us again if you have any further questions. FYI, you may also find the "For Veterans" section of our AMAC Foundation website interesting (www.amacfoundation.org)

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. ★

Retirement, Really?



BY NORRIS BURKES

"Do you think you'll ever fully retire?" my wife, Becky asks a few times a month.
"Definitely!"
"Mostly."
"Maybe?" I say, adding an I-dunno-know for good measure.

She asks, because she knows I struggle sometimes to write this weekly syndicated column, travel to speak in different venues, and pastor a small church.

Trying to explain my reticence, I simply say, "I'm just not sure of the best timing."

In past years, you readers have sent me many emails with quick and sound responses to my writings. You've rolled out the red carpet for me during our dozen+ years together, hosting me for speeches in your colleges, hospitals, churches and civic organizations.

You've traveled with me to Honduras for Chispa Project, the charity my daughter Sara began for establishing libraries in Honduran elementary schools. Many of you are generous, regular donors.

When I think of full retirement, I'm struck with a sudden case of FOMO. "Fear of Missing Out." I don't want to miss out on more wonderful exchanges, meetings, and friendships this writing ministry has brought to me.

But alas, I've come up with a compromised writing retirement, giving us at least two ways to stay in touch no matter when I fully retire.

First, I'd like you to sign up to get my weekly column by email. You can do this by sending me a quick email to comment@thechaplain.net.

Or even easier, sign up for my weekly email at www.thechaplain.net/newsletter. The website also contains everything I've ever written or will write. Check out the audio versions of past columns too. Remember to spell chaplain correctly, not

chaplin. We've talked about this.

Second, while you're on my website, consider ordering one or more of the four books I've written. These books are a compilation of my columns from the past twenty years. And of course, I'll autograph them.

Keep the book on your nightstand or reading rack so you can read one 700-word story each time you crack open the book. You can read the books in any order and jump around between stories.

"No Small Miracles" contain stories I wrote as a pediatric hospital chaplain. "Hero's Highway" recounts my deployment to a combat hospital in Iraq.

"Thriving Beyond Surviving" is a compilation book of the columns I wrote about faith, family, fun and forgiveness. And my most recent book, "Tell it to the Chaplain" recalls my chaplain experiences in the hospital, hospice, and the military.

The last section of "Tell it to the Chaplain" tells the story of Chispa Project, so I especially hope you'll read that one. Thanks to readers like you, we've reached over 22,000 kids in Honduras get their first books by creating school libraries with my daughter's charity.

To say thank you, and "spark" you into action one more time, my family and I will be matching all reader donations up to \$5,000 postmarked between now and Giving Tuesday on December 3. I hope you'll take up my challenge for this ambitious goal. You can donate online at www.chispaproject.org/chaplain or send a check made to "Chispa Project" to 10566 Combie Rd. Suite 6643 Auburn, CA 95602.

Every \$100 gives 4 kids a school library, training their teachers and parents, and providing books, shelves and colorful, painted murals. There are no words that can completely describe the joy that fills a child's face when they hold their first picture book. It's why I go back year after year to volunteer. (Details for 2025 volunteer trips at www.chispaproject.org/volunteer)

Finally, know that I'm not completely retired. I remain the pastor of Community Church, Nevada City, CA. It's a little country church of two dozen in California's Sierra Gold Country. They've been patient with me, but they miss me when I travel at least 8 Sundays a year as grandkids and foreign adventures keep calling.

Keep me in your prayers and thoughts, as I will for you. Thank you, for your faithful reading and support. ★

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Women's Empowerment Receives \$60,000 From U.S. Bank



Graduates from Women's Empowerment's latest job readiness session gather after their ceremony in September. Photo courtesy of Kristin Thebaud Communications

Kristin Thebaud Communications News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Women's Empowerment has received a \$60,000 contribution from U.S. Bank to provide Sacramento women experiencing homelessness with job-readiness programs, paid job training and transitional workforce housing so they can secure employment with upward mobility as they work toward affording permanent housing.

"U.S. Bank continues to be an important partner in our work," said Lisa Culp, executive director, Women's Empowerment. "We are grateful for this contribution to support unhoused women as they search for permanent homes during the ongoing housing crisis."

Each woman in Women's Empowerment's initial two-month employment-readiness and empowerment program receives free transportation assistance and childcare for children up to age 5 in the group's onsite child development center. She works one on one with a social worker, housing specialist, employment specialist and volunteer career mentor, and attends a range of classes on job-readiness, empowerment and more.

Graduates of the two-month program can enroll in Women's Empowerment's paid job training programs in manufacturing, property management, mobility, solar energy, medical assisting and more. Women's Empowerment also offers its Trellis Gardens transitional workforce housing program for graduates who have secured employment, but still cannot afford market-rate housing for their

families. At Trellis Gardens, they can live in cottages for 12 to 18 months as they work to increase income, savings and credit scores and prepare to move into permanent housing.

"Supporting the development of a dynamic workforce is an investment in today and our future," said Ashley Bocek, community affairs manager, U.S. Bank. "We're proud to work with organizations like Women's Empowerment to help people succeed in their careers, gain greater financial literacy and build thriving communities."

In 2023, 165 jobs were secured by Women's Empowerment graduates, and 189 graduates secured or maintained housing. Since 2001, 1,903 women have graduated from the program with more than 4,000 children. Women's Empowerment is funded through private donations from the community and grants. To make a donation: Womens-Empowerment.org.

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Publisher, Paul V. Scholl

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New Republic FC Stadium Back on Track

By Daniel Canfield

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - A project that was on life support had some much-needed life injected into it on Tuesday, Nov. 12, when the Sacramento City Council voted unanimously to approve the framework for a \$321 million downtown railyards soccer stadium and entertainment venue. A long-awaited development needed to provide a permanent home for the Sacramento Republic Football Club (FC).

According to the information provided by council staff in support of the proposal, the projects being approved include a soccer stadium with supporting infrastructure occupying approximately 31 acres, as well as a new 3600-seat live entertainment venue that would occupy existing historic buildings in the railyard.

The agreement, albeit non-binding, does include information regarding project costs, economic impact and anticipated public and private funding sources. The estimated \$321 million price tag breaks down to, \$175 million for the new stadium, \$56 million for the new live entertainment venue and \$90 million for associated



Here is an architectural rendering of the new Sacramento Republic FC stadium to be built in the historic Sacramento Railyards district. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Republic FC

infrastructure. The projects altogether are expected to generate more than 1,500 jobs for the Sacramento region. The agreement includes a provision by which the city would waive reimbursement for municipal services for off-site police, fire, emergency medical services, traffic control and code enforcement for stadium events for up to a maximum of \$300,000 per year for a ten-year period.

The official press release from the city indicates the new stadium will be supported and privately financed by the Wilton Rancheria Tribe which became majority owners of Sacramento Republic FC on Nov. 7. The press release includes a quote from Mayor Darrel Steinberg on the importance of the council's vote.

"We are breaking barriers and making history here in Sacramento," said Mayor

Steinberg. "Wilton Rancheria is the first tribe to own a professional men's sports team in North America, and the projects in The Railyards will double the size of the central business district—what an incredible opportunity! This is the foundation for something beautiful today that will become even more beautiful in the years and decades to come."

In a Nov. 7 press conference, in advance of the Nov. 12

council vote, city officials joined together with representatives of Sacramento Republic FC, Downtown Railyards Venture LLC and Wilton rancheria Tribe members to celebrate the new energy being pumped into the soccer stadium/railyard development. At the press conference, Wilton Rancheria Chairman Jesus Tarango commented on the importance of the project.

"I am deeply proud to witness this moment, which stands as a profound testament to the resilience and determination of the people of Wilton Rancheria," said Chairman Tarango. "In just over a decade, our Tribe has transformed from landless to becoming a significant economic force in the region. The opportunity to drive a project of such scale and importance, on land where our ancestors once walked, is deeply meaningful. This is not only a chance to honor our history and uplift our community, but also to envision a future where we are not only part of Sacramento's past, but an integral part of its future as well."

According to the city, the stadium project is scheduled for completion by late 2026, and the entertainment venue by 2027. ★

Sac State Tennis Doubles Duo Reach Semifinals



Sacramento State doubles duo of Maddy Ferreros and Irene Riva showed well at last weekend's ITA Conference Masters event in Rome, Ga. Photo courtesy of Sac State Athletics

Sacramento State Athletics News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento State doubles duo of Maddy Ferreros and Irene Riva showed well at last weekend's ITA Conference Masters event in Rome, Ga., reaching the main draw semifinals and falling just one win shy of a berth into the 2024 NCAA Individual Championships.

Facing teams from across the nation, the Hornet tandem opened their run with a straight-set victory over Emilia Valentinsson and Sara Zalukar from Miami University, 7-5, 6-3, then outlasted Bryant's team of Caitlyn Munson and Natalia Vela in three sets, 5-7, 6-4, 10-4.

Ferreros and Riva continued to roll on day two, easing past the Naval Academy's Emily Tannenbaum and Parvathi Shanker, 6-2, 6-0, before suffering their first loss of the tournament in the semifinals to Appalachian State's Savannah Dada-Mascolli and Isabella

Romanichen, 6-3, 6-1.

With the top three doubles teams earning a spot in the NCAA Tournament, Ferreros and Riva faced off against Celia-Belle Mohr and Sophia Webster from Vanderbilt for third place, winning the first set in a tiebreaker, 7-6 (5), before falling by the scores of 6-0 and 10-5 to finish fourth.

In singles, sophomore Lou Baudouin fell in her main draw opening round match to Charleston Southern's Marina Skegrog, 2-6, 6-4, 6-2, but rebounded in the consolation draw defeating Illinois-Chicago's Mayu Ushio, 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, and advancing to the semifinals with a walkover against South Carolina State's Sofiya Chursina.

In the semis, Baudouin was finally subdued, falling to South Dakota's Beata Havlickova, 6-0, 6-4.

The Hornets have wrapped up the fall portion of the team's schedule and will open the spring championship season on Jan. 26 at home against the University of the Pacific. ★

Hornet's Goalkeeper Sierra Sonko Earns Player of the Week Honors

Sacramento State University Athletics News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Redshirt freshman goalkeeper Sierra Sonko came up aces not once, not twice, but three times in penalty kicks for the Sacramento State women's soccer team last week during the Big Sky Conference Tournament, stopping a pair of attempts in all three contests to earn National Player of the Week honors from Top Drawer Soccer on Tuesday, Nov. 12.

It's another award added to the mantle for the Seattle, Wash., native, who was named the Big Sky Tournament Most Valuable Player for her performance in net as the Hornets claimed their first league tournament championship, and the automatic NCAA berth that goes with it for the first time since 2010.

Having appeared in one match and playing in only five minutes during the regular season, Sonko answered when called upon for No. 5-seeded Sacramento State, stopping a pair of penalties following a 2-2 draw against No. 4-seeded Northern Arizona and repeating the feat against regular season champion, host, and top-seeded Montana after the Hornets and the Grizzlies played to a scoreless draw.

Two days later, it took eight rounds of penalties to finally decide a winner, but Sonko stopped defending tournament champion Idaho on its fourth attempt as the Hornets drew even and then denied the Vandals on what turned out to be their final attempt of the day to secure the victory.

Following the match, Sonko became the third Sacramento State women's soccer player to be named the Big Sky Tournament's MVP, joining Katie McCoy (2007) and Elece McBride (2010). She was one of six named to the all-tournament team along with teammates Teysha-Ray Spinney-Kuahuia, Ellie Farber, Sydney Sharts, Dalen Lau, and Izzy Palmatier, matching the most selections in school history along with the 2007



Hornet's redshirt freshman goalkeeper Sierra Sonko earned National Player of the Week honors from Top Drawer Soccer on Tuesday, Nov. 12. Photo courtesy of Sac State Athletics

and 2010 squads.

Riding a nine-match (3-0-6) unbeaten streak dating back to their last loss on Sept. 29, the Hornets open the 2024 NCAA Tournament against top-seeded and host USC on Sunday, Nov. 17 at 2 p.m. at Dignity Health Sports Park Track Stadium in Carson, Calif.

Broadcast information for the match has not yet been finalized, but tickets are now on sale via the link posted on the women's soccer schedule page at HornetSports.com. ★



River Cats Earn Gold, Three Bronze Medals from GOAL

Sacramento River Cats News Release

WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Thanks to the continued implementation of sustainability practices, the Sacramento River Cats have been awarded four medals from Green Operations & Advanced Leadership (GOAL) for their work on Waste Reduction, Diversity & Inclusion, and Sustainable Partnerships.

For efforts throughout the 2024 season, the River Cats were awarded one Gold Medal as a Partner with Sustainability Solution-Focused Brands, and

three Bronze Medals in the following categories: Measure & Report Waste Data, Engage & Participate with Community, and Activate Partnerships to Support Community Impact Initiatives.

The GOAL Medals are an opportunity to recognize leadership in a variety of sustainability-related topics from Environmental, to Social, to Governance topics. The ESG categories are

broken into to topics that GOAL Members

can be recognized for various actions at either a

bronze (good), silver (better), or gold (best) level.

"It is such an honor to be recognized by GOAL as leaders in sustainability, and all in great company with many other fantastic sports venues," said Sacramento River Cats Vice President of Facilities and Events Brittney Nizuk. "We are only getting started at Sutter Health Park, and we look forward to continuing the path towards greening

and environmental resiliency through new operating procedures, partnerships, and education."

GOAL provides their members with sustainability support including quantitative data collection, qualitative sustainability storytelling, sustainability validation, and a network of like-minded leaders. GOAL's First Annual Venue & Event All Stars Award Ceremony was held on the evening of Monday, Oct. 14 after the day's GOAL Invitational. This event celebrated best practices in global venue operations, including a spotlight on sustainability. ★



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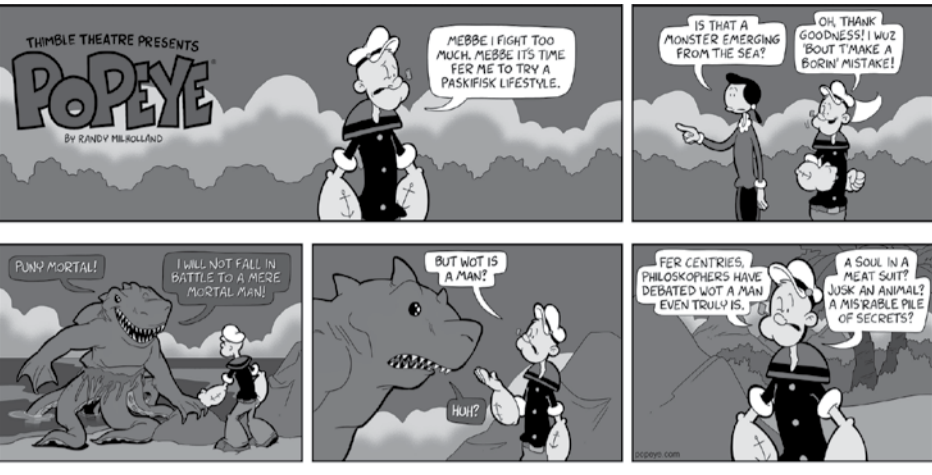
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 13. *Telephobia, or fear of this device
 15. "He's Just Not That ___ You", movie
 16. 2D measurement
 17. Gives a helping hand
 18. *Ludomania, obsession with ___
 20. Therefore
 21. Poetic feet
 22. Accident
 23. *___mania, obsession with wealth and power
 26. Type of throw, in baseball
 30. Miner's load
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 37. Last word of "America the Beautiful"
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 40. Largest Asian antelope
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 43. Slimy phlebotomists
 45. *___phobia, fear of public speaking
 47. Took the bait
 48. Tempter
 50. Dumbstruck
 52. *Gamophobia, fear of ___
 55. September stone
 56. Cantina cooker
 57. Apple leftover
 59. Lakes, in Scotland
 60. ___gin
 61. "On a ___," or carefree
 62. ___mania, obsession with oneself
 63. Cough syrup amt.
 64. Additional
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 1. *___phobia, fear of bees
 2. Bananaphone preceder
 3. Itty bit
 4. Language disfunction
 5. Indigenous person of Lesser Antilles
 6. Track and field star, 1936 Olympics
 7. Tear in pantyhose
 8. Struck with a mallet
 9. Back arrow key
 10. Indeed
 12. Against the stream swimmer
 13. Say "pretty please"
 14. *___phobia, fear of snakes and crocodiles
 19. Uncooperative, like a mule
 22. "Battleship" success
 23. Kind of mushroom
 24. Grind down
 25. Glittery stone
 26. Carpet style
 27. Lily genus, pl.
 28. Angers
 29. "All for one and one for all," to Musketiers
 32. Egyptian goddess of fertility
 33. Hair raiser
36. *___effect, or compulsive handwashing
 38. Pileus, pl.
 40. Entomologist's catcher, sometimes
 41. Agora, plural
 44. Tannery supply, pl.
 46. Delphi talker
 48. Room partitions
 49. Lowest deck on a ship
 50. Full of excitement
 51. Home to Baylor University
 52. Lion's share
 53. Hockey score
 54. Commits a faux pas
 55. A in IPA
 58. Increase

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

LDS Holds Blood Drive Dec. 5

Holidays and Remote Work Affect Blood Supply



Vitalant hopes to acquire more donors at the Dec. 5 blood drive in Citrus Heights. Photo by LuAnn Hunt on Unsplash

By Patsy McGavock

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - Listing what has changed since COVID-19 could fill a book or burn out over-talked conversations, yet understanding unexpected connections to why some things have changed allows tangible action to help.

Blood drives are no exception. As a quarterly blood drive prepares to open its doors from 2:30 to 5:45 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 5 at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, organizers hope to reach more donors. The blood drive will take place at 7009 Van Maren Lane in Citrus Heights.

Vitalant, running the Dec. 5 blood drive, has noted two emergency blood shortages this year, one in January and one in July.

“Ever since the pandemic, and the resulting increase of people working remotely, it’s been more challenging,” said Stephanie Kresse, a Vitalant account manager. “People are not in the offices, so not at the drives.”

In the Sacramento region, hundreds of people who previously donated at blood drives at their workplace are no longer in the habit of donating, according to Kresse.

When fewer people donate blood, even small disruptions to blood donations can have big effects on the supply needed for emergency blood transfusions. Seasonal patterns of life also present challenges, such as changes

in summer schedules and the changes right around the corner. Holidays, winter weather, seasonal flu and illness also disrupt regular routines and regular donations.

Committed donors who donate regularly make a life-saving difference. A growing force of new, regular donors could turn the tide.

Community organizations and businesses who have a physical location can also help meet the need by hosting additional blood drives. Those interested can contact www.vitalant.org/host-a-blood-drive.

Appointments take about an hour and can be scheduled at donors.vitalant.org using the blood drive code SMFR048 or by calling Vitalant at 877-258-4825. Walk-ins are welcome and accommodated if space allows.

Possible donors are encouraged to check Vitalant’s website prior to signing up to ensure they are qualified to donate.

Whole blood donors must be at least 16 years old, weigh a minimum of 110 pounds, be in good general health, bring a photo I.D. and, if a minor, have a signed parental consent form available at Vitalant.org. Low Hemoglobin count, meaning low iron levels, is a common reason that donors are deferred.

The Vitalant tag line encourages, “Because of you, life doesn’t stop.” Be one of those who keeps a heart beating. ★

Rock ‘N’ Roll at Blood Drive



Volunteers Che'la Woodson and Lyne Benson smile during the 'Rock N Roll Up Your Sleeve' blood drive at the Marketplace at Birdcage Center in 2023. Photo courtesy of Vitalant Communications

Continued from page 1 lifesaving surgeries, cancer treatment and more. Blood donations are being distributed to hospitals as quickly as donations are collected.

All donors will receive a Rock ‘N Roll Up Your Sleeve blood donor T-shirt.

As a special thanks for donating around the Thanksgiving holiday, all donors will receive a \$20 gift card, redeemable via Donor Rewards. For more information, visit 2024 Gobble Up (vitalant.org).

Donors will also have the chance to win one of three \$10,000 prepaid gift cards, redeemable via Donor Rewards. For more information, visit 2024 Make Difference (vitalant.org).

Three more local 98Rock blood drive locations are scheduled. On Dec. 26, the Sacramento Kings/Vitalant Blood



Deejay Joe Brazil was new to 98.5 Rock for the 2023 drive, and is enthusiastic about their work in the community, not only during the holiday blood drives but year-round. Courtesy photo

Drive will be held at Market Square at Arden Fair Mall. Donors get two in-hand tickets to a Kings game.

For four days, from Jan. 8 to 11, the KCRA/Vitalant blood drive will be held at two locations:

Sierra College in Rocklin (all four days); and the Scottish Rite Masonic Center on H Street on Jan. 8 and Jan. 9. For these events, call 877-258-4825 and ask for information on the 98 Rock bloodmobile drives. ★

KP International MARKET

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916.853.8000

Market - 7 Days: 8am - 9pm
Food Court - 7 Days: 11am - 3:00pm
Korean/Mex/Viet: 7:30pm last call
Chinese/Japanese: 7:00pm last call

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12/15~12/25
10AM-8PM FOOD COURT

FROZEN & FISH DEPT

 Frozen Cockle Clams 400 g REG. 12.99/EA \$7.99 /ea	 Frozen Bulgogi Bibimbap 270 g REG. 6.99/EA \$3.99 /ea
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WEEKLY MEAT SPECIALS

 Beef London Broil/Top Round Roast Pulpa Para Hornear Ribas sin Huevo \$4.59 /lb	 Beef Ribeye Roast - Boneless Chuletón de Terneza Acado Desahuesado \$6.79 /lb	 Beef Ribeye Steak - Boneless Filete Chuletón de Terneza Desahuesado \$7.19 /lb
 Chicken Breast Tenderloins 2.5/lbs Bag \$8.99 /ea	 Pork Butts Bone In Tronco de Puerco con Hueso \$2.49 /lb	 Country Style Pork Loin Ribs - Brils Costillas de Cerdo 5 Pcs/6 Lbs con Cebollitas \$2.79 /lb
 Chicken Drumsticks Piernas de Pollo 69¢ /lb	 Lamb Loin Chops Chuletón de Lomo de Cordeiro \$9.99 /lb	 Pork St. Louis Ribs - Single Pack Costillas de San Luis \$3.99 /lb

FRESH PRODUCE

 Aloe Vera 79¢ /lb	 Yali Pear \$1.19 /lb	 Seafood Mushroom 150 g 89¢ /ea	 English Cucumber 99¢ /ea
 Satsuma Mandarin 99¢ /lb	 Persimmon Fuyu 99¢ /lb	 Yellow Onion 39¢ /lb	 Russet Potato \$2.99 /bag

AMERICAN/HISPANIC GROCERY

 Essentials Paper Towels 4 pk \$6.99 /ea	 Bahlsen Waffles Chocolate Wafer 3.5 oz \$1.99 /ea	 El Pato White Distilled Vinegar 128 oz \$2.99 /ea	 Nescafe Instant Coffee 12.55 oz \$14.99 /ea	 Carnation Evaporated Milk 12 Ltr \$1.99 /ea
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ASIAN GROCERY

 Three Ladies Viet Rice Vermicelli 2 lbs \$4.99 /ea	 Sun Luck Mirin 10 oz \$3.99 /ea	 Kopiko Cappuccino & Blanca 30 pk \$10.99 /pk	 Cheese Crackers 2 kinds 67 oz \$3.49 /ea	 Bamboo Tree Coconut Water Bar 1 liter \$1.99 /ea
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EUROPEAN GROCERY

 Romanino Extra Virgin Olive Oil 1 liter \$10.99 /ea	 Arroz Walnut & Quince Preserve 430 gr \$1.99 /ea	 Babkin Sunflower Seed 500 gr \$2.99 /ea	 Soldierz Milk Cream Fudge 1 kg \$9.99 /ea	 Minkka Koolipi Water 300 gr \$2.19 /ea
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KOREAN/JAPANESE GROCERY

 Brown Rice 15 lbs \$9.99 /ea	 Sea Salt for Kimchi 2.5 kg \$10.99 /ea	 Red Pepper Flakes 1 kg \$9.99 /ea	 Dried Buckwheat Fingers 6 oz \$5.99 /ea	 Red Bean Buns 2.52 j \$4.99 /ea	 Sweet Korean Pancake Mix 400 g \$3.99 /ea
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HOUSEWARES

 BIGEN SPEEDY HAIR COLOR (REFILL ONLY) \$5.99 /ea	 KAISEN WOK PAN 33 CM \$14.99 /ea	 WATERMELON SLICE KNIFE \$3.99 /ea
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