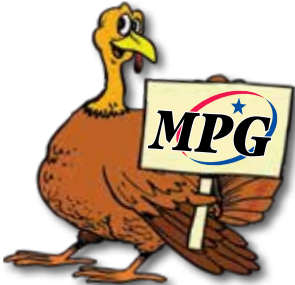




Everyone
Can Light
the World
PAGE 10

We Wish Our
Readers A Happy
Thanksgiving



AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

VOLUME 19 • ISSUE 22 Serving Fair Oaks, Orangevale & Sacramento County NOVEMBER 22, 2024

**SEE
INSIDE**

**RAMS CHARGE
INTO CIF
PLAYOFFS**

**GOALKEEPER
NAMED PLAYER
OF THE WEEK**

PAGE 3

**SALMON HAVE
RETURNED**

PAGE 5



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Another Record-Breaking Year!



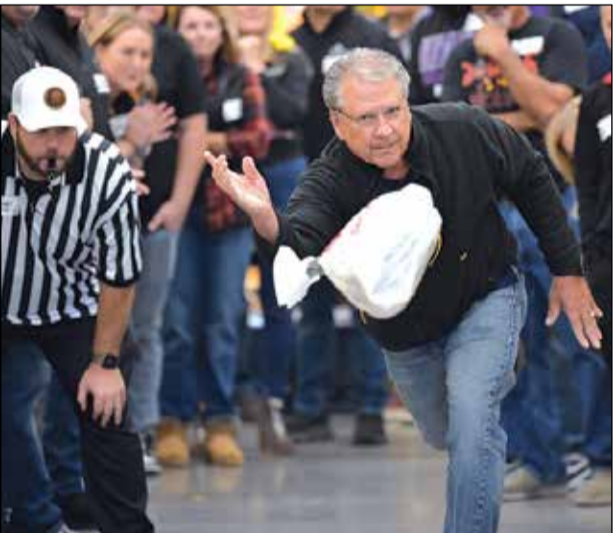
Here is the Turkey Bowl giant check presentation, with Supervisor Sue Frost, Paul and Roman Kellner of Grocery Outlet and Angela Lee representing the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Foodbank.

Story by MaryAnne Povey
and photos
by Tim Engle

FAIR OAKS/ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG) - Gobble, gobble! Turkey Bowl 2024 was a feather ruffling success!

Once again, the community came together in an extraordinary way, making this year's Turkey Bowl a phenomenal success. Not only was the ambitious goal of \$20,000 reached but it was surpassed by community members raising more than \$21,000 to provide Thanksgiving meals for 500 families through the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank.

This beloved annual tradition featured 16 enthusiastic teams battling it



Hopefuls use turkeys as bowling balls in this philanthropic tradition.

out for the title of Turkey Bowl Champions 2024. The frozen food aisle at Grocery Outlet was alive with excitement, teamwork and creativity as bowlers in festive costumes competed not only in bowling but also in gathering pledges and sponsorships.

Together, they made this year's event truly unforgettable.

"Each year, this event amazes me," said long-time supporter and platinum Turkey Sponsor Supervisor Sue Frost. "I'm so impressed with how everyone comes together to help others in need. It shows the true heart of this community."

Roll the drumsticks, here are the results. First-place went to Palmer Poultry Pummelers with team members Sean Palmer and Keith Wright, and second-place honors went to Squires Squawkers, Brad Squires and Lance Loveday. It was a close and thrilling competition.

Continued on page 4

Christmas in Fair Oaks is For Entire Family



The Fair Oaks Tree Lighting is a great way for the family to kick off Christmas season. Photo courtesy of Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District

**Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District
News Release**

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - 'Tis the season to celebrate beloved traditions and create new memories!

The Fair Oaks elves — the Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District and Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce, along with our community partners—are thrilled to bring you a December filled with holiday magic and joy through our complete December Holiday Guide.

The full guide is available at issuu.com/forpd. Click on the Christmas in Fair Oaks Holiday Guide located under "publications."

Whether you're looking for festive events, classes or programs to get you in the holiday spirit, there's something for everyone. Here are just a few highlights.

- Fair Oaks Tree Lighting – Dec. 5**
From 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., join us for the annual tree lighting celebration with activities, food and photos with Santa at Fair Oaks Park, 11549 Fair Oaks Blvd.
 - Meristem's Annual Winter Faire – Dec. 7**
Discover handcrafted gifts and winter treats at this cherished seasonal fair. The fair will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Meristem, Stegmann Hall, 9200 Fair Oaks Blvd.
 - Gift-Making Class for Teens – Dec. 12**
This is a hands-on workshop perfect for teens ages 12 to 17 to create meaningful, handmade gifts. The cost is \$35 per person. From 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., the event will be held at McMillan Center, 11549 Fair Oaks Blvd.
 - Cookie Decorating and Toy Drive – Dec. 13**
Bring the family for a fun-filled afternoon of cookie decorating and a chance to give back by donating a toy to local
- Continued on page 3*

Club Studio Thanked for Opening

Story by Ornella Rossi
and photo by Annie Kerr

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - Club Studio, a new, cutting-edge 36,000-square-foot health club, opened its doors in Citrus Heights and the Chamber of Commerce put together a noon ribbon-cutting ceremony Nov. 8 to celebrate the accomplishment.

Club Studio offers top-tier amenities, including a variety of group fitness classes such as reformer Pilates, cardio and strength training, spinning, boxing, yoga, trampoline classes and more. The club also provides wellness services, including steam rooms, dry heat saunas, a full-service spa and cutting-edge cryotherapy treatments.

The center also houses Beaming Wellness, a smoothie and protein shake bar that offers pre- and post-workout snacks, while



Club Studio Fitness' Brandon Garcia prepares to cut the ribbon with Club Studio Fitness coworkers and Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce members.

the Kalologie Medspa brings advanced wellness services to the facility.

The parent company behind Club Studio, Fitness International, is well-known for its portfolio of fitness brands, including LA Fitness, City Sports Club and Esporta Fitness. The Citrus Heights location at 5419 Sunrise Blvd. marks one of the company's latest ventures as part of an ambitious expansion plan.

Local government representatives praised the new business for its contribution to the community during the Nov. 8 event.

"It's so exciting to see new businesses coming to Citrus Heights. I've never seen this level and volume of equipment.

Continued on page 3

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.

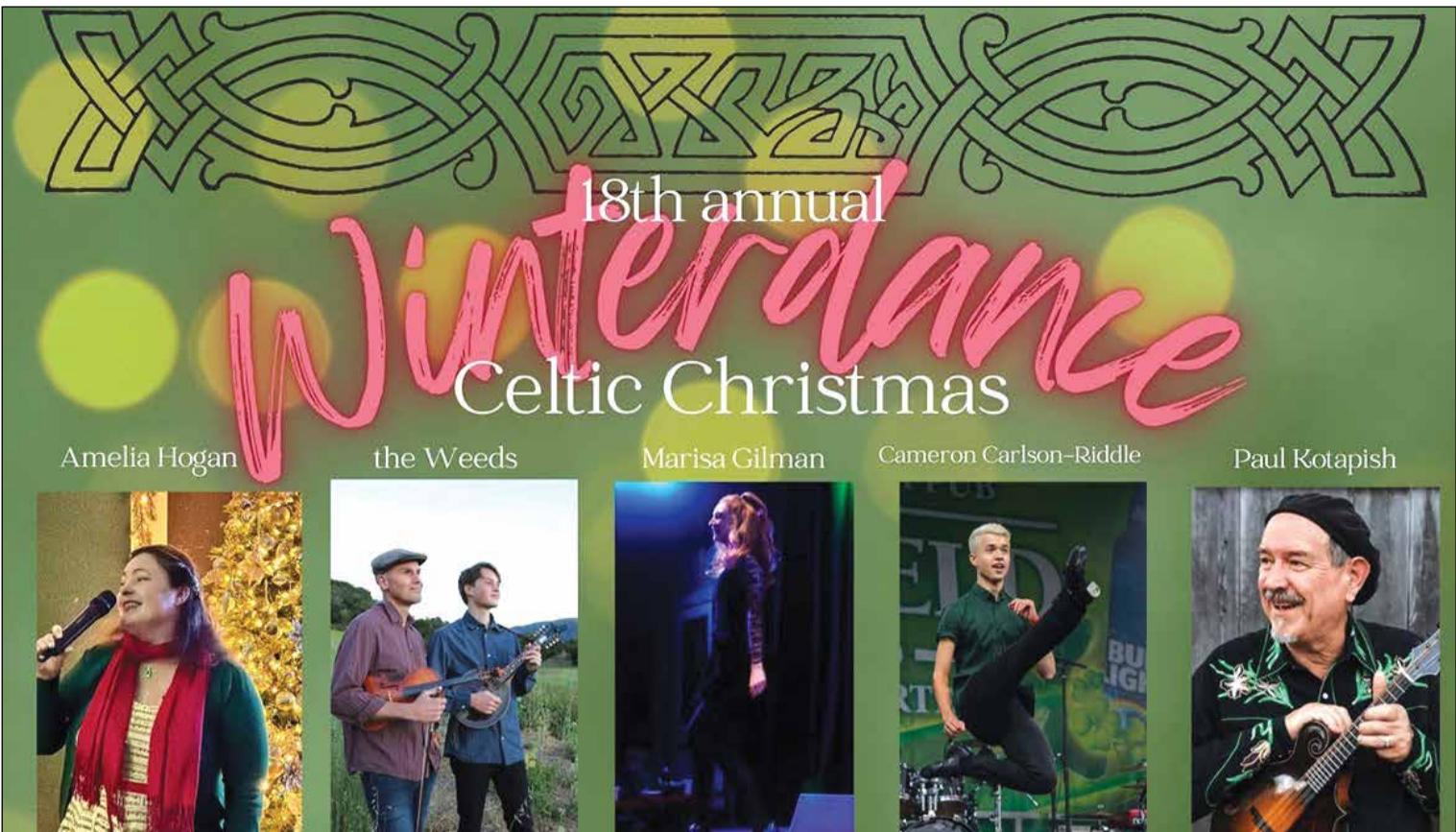
At 7 p.m. Dec. 13, the Winterdance Celtic Christmas Celebration will be held at St. Michael's Episcopal at 2140 Mission Ave., Carmichael. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m.

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 Carson 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 pet 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. ★

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Pitted Green Olives **\$4.99** /ea

Club Studio Thanked for Opening

Rams Charge into CIF Playoffs



Pictured here is the exterior of Club Studio Fitness, which opened Sept. 16.

Continued from page 1

Congratulations on your grand opening,” said a representative for Assemblymember Josh Hoover.

A representative for state Sen. Roger Niello added, “We would like to congratulate you and thank you for bringing such a state-of-the-art facility to our community. You’ve chosen an amazing location here.”

Citrus Heights Vice-Mayor MariJane Lopez-Taff also welcomed Club Studio, stating, “I want to officially recognize Club

Studio. Thank you for coming to our community and bringing vibrancy to our area.”

The new facility offers an average of 120 classes per week, with an average of 20 participants per class. Garcia also announced that Club Studio is only the fifth location out of more than 90 planned clubs. In addition to the Citrus Heights’ Club Studio opening, two more locations are planned to open soon, one in Elk Grove in early 2025 and another in Walnut Creek in the coming weeks.

★



Casa Roble quarterback Aidan Lopez scrambles from the pocket against Union Mine on Nov. 15. Photos by Tim Engle

By MaryAnne Povey

ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG)

- The Casa Roble Rams capped off a memorable season with a spirited playoff run that showcased their resilience and determination. After a thrilling 27-26 first-round victory over the Foothill Mustangs, the Rams advanced to the CIF Sac-Joaquin Section Division V quarterfinals, where they fell to Union Mine in a 55-41 shootout.

In the opening round, Casa Roble relied on standout performances from senior Braylen Blevins, who rushed for 195 yards and three touchdowns, and quarterback Aidan Lopez, who connected with Connor Campbell for a key score. A late defensive stand sealed the win, sending the



Rams defense prepares for the next snap against Union Mine on Nov. 15. Photos by Tim Engle

Rams to the next round.

In the quarterfinals, the Rams’ offense shone again, led by Lopez, who threw for 297 yards and three touchdowns, and Elijah Huddle, who recorded 127 receiving yards and two total touchdowns. Despite their efforts, turnovers and Union Mine’s high-powered offense proved too

much to overcome.

For many seniors, this season marked the end of an era, including Coach Chris Horner’s son, Ethan, an outstanding receiver. It was a season defined by heart and grit, and while the Rams’ playoff run has ended, their legacy and the bonds they formed will last a lifetime.

★

Christmas in Fair Oaks is For Entire Family



The Gift-Making Class for Teens on Dec. 12 is a great way for teenagers to make personal, handmade gifts. Photo courtesy of Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District

Continued from page 1

children in need. From 2 to 5 p.m., people of any age are welcome to attend. The event is going to be held at 8908 Madison Ave., Suite B.

With so many events happening, there’s bound to be something festive and fun for all ages in Fair Oaks this holiday season!

For the latest updates, event details, and

information on surprise pop-up events, be sure to follow us on the official Christmas in Fair Oaks Facebook page.

We hope you enjoy all that Fair Oaks has to offer this season. From our family to yours, the Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District and Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce wish you a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Rockin’ New Year!

★

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Voting Underway for Best of Fair Oaks



Judy Andrews
By Judy Andrews,
Fair Oaks Chamber
of Commerce

Voting is now underway for the Best of Fair Oaks 2024. Join us in celebrating your favorite businesses, individuals and organizations that make our community a great place to live, work, and play! And if you don't see your favorite listed, you can still nominate them through Dec. 11. Nominees must reside within the Fair Oaks boundary or be current and active members of the Fair Oaks chamber. The voting ends on Dec. 19 and winners will be announced in person on Jan. 16 at the Best of Fair Oaks Awards Gala at North Ridge Country Club. Vote today at bestoffairoaks.com. Get ready for the annual Christmas in Fair Oaks Tree Lighting celebration

happening Thursday, Dec. 5, from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Fair Oaks Park (11549 Fair Oaks Blvd.). This holiday tradition will feature live music, community stage performances, craft vendors, children's activities, food trucks, hot cocoa, Santa and Mrs. Claus, and more. The event is free for the whole family and presented by the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District, Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce, and sponsored by Fair Oaks Arborist. Remember, Shop Small Business Saturday is Nov. 30! Many of your favorite local shops will offer discounts and sales through the weekend. Support the Fair Oaks business community by visiting them and doing some holiday shopping.

Upcoming Events

Dec. 5 – Fair Oaks Community Christmas Tree Lighting, 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., Fair Oaks Park, 11549 Fair Oaks Blvd. Don't miss this annual holiday tradition.

Dec. 6 – Jingle Bowl, 3 to 5:30 p.m., Fireside Lanes, 7901 Auburn Blvd., Citrus Heights. Get the holiday rolling at this fun

and festive bowling benefit. Tickets are \$25 per person. Register today at fairoakschamber.com.

Dec. 13 through Dec. 19 – Light Up! Fair Oaks Decorating Contest. Ring in the holidays with this special holiday light and house decorating contest. Sign up for your Fair Oaks house to enter through Dec. 7. Presented by the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District. For more information, visit forpd.org.

Dec. 19 – Chamber Monthly Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Join us for our festive holiday luncheon and ugly holiday sweater contest. The location will be announced soon.

Dec. 19 – Best of Fair Oaks Voting ends. Visit bestoffairoaks.com to submit your votes before the 5 p.m. deadline.

Jan. 16 – Best of Fair Oaks Awards Gala, 5 to 8:30 p.m., North Ridge Country Club, 7600 Madison Ave. Pre-registration is required. Tickets will be available soon.

For more information on these events, please visit fairoakschamber.com. ★
See you in Fair Oaks!

Another Record-Breaking Year!



The first and second-place winning teams pose for a photo with turkeys in tow.

Continued from page 1

with everyone bringing their A-game and plenty of enthusiasm.

In another category of competition of collecting the most pledges, the top three teams included the Tri Tippers of L & M Liquor & Deli and All Events Management, Derek Maldonado and Vanessa Kinch bringing in \$1,787, followed by the Fun Fowls Feeding Families team of Berkshire/Hathaway Home Services, Lisa Samson and Stacie Davis bringing in \$1,198 and Squires Squawkers, Brad Squires and Lance Loveday collecting \$1,137 from family, friends and fans.

Of course, it couldn't have been done without the support of generous sponsors starting with the Platinum Turkey Sponsor: Supervisor Frost, who graciously welcomed the crowd and was recognized for her support over the past five years.

Other generous sponsors include Gold Turkey Sponsors: Supervisor Rich Desmond and Taco Bell.

Silver Turkey Sponsors were Orangevale Chamber of Commerce, Luz Johnson, Sapphire Oaks Wealth Advisors, Scotty's Hideaway and Kathleen Massae, Realtor – Compass.

And finally Bronze Clucker Sponsors: OV Moms Club, 7-11, Katie Yount State Farm, Mount Vernon Memorial Park, OV Rotary, A-Team Restoration, Brad Squires, Nor Cal Orthodontics, Dad's Kitchen, House to Home Moving, American River Urgent Care and Cal-Acoustic Interiors.

Special thanks to the new Grocery Outlet owners, Paul and Roman Kellner, who wholeheartedly embraced the spirit



Attendees came dressed in festive gear, some wearing turkey costumes, to promote giving during the holiday season.

of the event and helped make it a success.

This year's event featured a fantastic raffle, with donations from the community. And let's not forget the delicious food that fueled the bowlers provided by Badfish Coffee & Tea, Chick-fil-A Granite Bay and La Placita.

This year's Turkey Bowl proved, once again, the incredible heart and generosity of the community. Thank you to everyone who played a part in making this event possible: your support is what keeps this tradition alive and thriving.

Here's to another year of community spirit and making a difference. Wishing everyone a very happy and blessed Thanksgiving. ★

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Contest Rules

Business must be located in Fair Oaks or be a Fair Oaks Chamber member.
All votes must be cast online at
BestofFairOaks.com
Only one vote per category per person.
All voting entries must have complete information
or the votes will not be counted.

You're Invited!

Tickets are expected to sell out fast.

Don't miss your chance to attend the 8th annual "Best of Fair Oaks" event.

This year's event will be held:

Where: North Ridge Country Club, 7600 Madison Ave, Fair Oaks

When: Thursday January 16, 2025

Cost: Tickets starting at \$45 - Tables & Sponsorships Availalbe

Email Info@FairOaksChamber.com or call 916-967-2903



PoppTalk

With Mary Jane Popp

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 cornmeal 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 October, 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



Salmon Have Returned to Nimbus Fish Hatchery



Nimbus fish hatchery staff lead youngsters in exploration of the salmon life-cycle. Courtesy photo

By MPG Staff

GOLD RIVER, CA (MPG) - The American River Fall salmon run is underway and the Nimbus fish hatchery is welcoming visitors with tour opportunities to learn about the amazing life cycle of salmon and steelhead.

The Nimbus Hatchery raises Chinook salmon and steelhead for release to the American River.

The salmon run occurs in fall, with hatchery operations taking place from the beginning of November through mid-December. The steelhead trout run occurs in winter, with hatchery operations taking place from January through February.

The Nimbus Hatchery Visitor Center offers free fun and educational activities for children and adults of all ages. Enjoy the on-site nature trail along the American River and the American River Parkway trail directly adjacent to the Nimbus Hatchery at 2001 Nimbus Road, Gold River, to view wildlife including migratory birds, signs of mammal activity and interesting insects.

Visit the Nimbus Fish Hatchery for a free, family-friendly guided tour to explore the fish hatchery and neighboring American River on the second Saturday of each month.

Tours are canceled in heavy rain. The tours start at 11 a.m. and are first come, first served with a maximum group size of 25 people. The tour is ADA accessible and suitable for all ages.

Peak season tours are offered from November through February, with Chinook salmon processing in November and December, and steelhead trout processing in January and February. Any tours booked between March and October are considered non-peak season as the hatchery fish ladder



An adult salmon is harvested for eggs or roe as a tour-group watches at the Nimbus fish hatchery. Courtesy photo



The Nimbus fish hatchery visitor center is the place to learn about the American River Fall salmon run. Courtesy photo

is closed during that time period.

According to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s website, the American River provided about 100 miles of stream in which salmon and steelhead could spawn and rear until 1958. Most of the spawning and rearing areas were cut off when the Folsom-Nimbus project was completed in 1958. Nimbus Hatchery was built to replace the salmon and steelhead runs blocked by Nimbus Dam.

Annual California Department of Fish and Wildlife counts of salmon spawning in the American River provided justification for building the hatchery, according to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife website. In cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation built the hatchery and currently pays the Department of Fish and Wildlife to operate and maintain the hatchery.

For more information about the tours, call 916-358-2884 or email molly.shea@wildlife.ca.gov. ★



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Introducing the New Orangevale and Fair Oaks Farmstand

Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank Farm News Release

ORANGEVALE/FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - Something exciting is sprouting at the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank Farm—a new farmstand that will offer fresh, local produce and help our community flourish!

The vision is to sell produce sourced directly from the farm and other local farmers and handmade food products from the community. It is anticipated to open in spring 2025 and operate every Saturday year-round. Local nonprofits and clubs will also be able to use it for fundraising.

Proceeds will support the growing Food Bank and Farm. The food bank sees 10 to 20 new families seeking help daily. In 2023, the Food Bank Farm produced 14,500 pounds of fresh, organically grown vegetables to support our community.

The Orangevale-Fair Oaks Community Foundation, which runs these programs, developed the farmstand plan with the help of a \$250,000 grant from Republic

Services and Rebuilding Together Sacramento. Recognizing the need for more fresh produce and the popularity of programs like veggie boxes, the Foundation expanded its services.

“Our thriving farm started as an empty parking lot and a dream. The farmstand is the next step,” said Foundation Founder and CEO Brad Squires. “The farmstand will feed our community, support local farmers, and allow us to make a greater impact. It is another way to show the Orangevale-Fair Oaks community that we care!”

Thanks to the grant and the hard work of volunteers, the farmstand was built from the ground up and completed by the end of September. Painted with “The Farmstand Est 2024,” it begins a new chapter for the Food Bank and Farm.

Stay updated by signing up for our email newsletter at foodbank.farm and following us on Facebook and Instagram.

Farmers interested in partnering with the farmstand can email info@foodbank.farm. We look forward to welcoming you to the farmstand in 2025! ★

California’s Climate Rules Leave Working Class Behind



Ted Gaines
Commentary
by Senator Ted Gaines

The next time Governor Newsom puts on his detective hat and tries to get to the bottom of the “price gouging” that is supposedly driving absurdly high gas prices in California, he should start with the most obvious culprit in the state: himself.

Earlier this month, Newsom’s California Air Resources Board (CARB) voted to approve changes to the state’s Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS), potentially adding \$.65 cents a gallon to the already punitive cost of gasoline. Although consumers may be recoiling at the thought of even higher prices, political leaders must be relishing the opportunity to make it more difficult to own and operate an internal combustion vehicle.

It’s obvious that California Democrats and their national counterparts are pushing the state and nation into a rapid Electric Vehicle (EV) future that is having dreadful consequences for families and workers.

Of course, this leftist project is under the guise of “doing something” about climate change, regardless of practicality or without any cost-benefit analysis.

Newsom, for example, issued an executive order mandating that by 2035, all vehicles sold in California are zero-emission, a

standard met only by plug-in electric vehicles. Although nobody, including the governor, can say with any precision how an all-electric vehicle fleet would change global climate, if at all, it’s easy to see how current EV policies are harming consumers today.

EV subsidies are forcing lower- and working-class fuel consumers to pay for wealthy folks’ expensive electric vehicles. “Greening” the electricity supply in California has been a major driver of skyrocketing electricity rates. After all, what good would it be to run electric vehicles on coal power? This has pushed up rates nearly 4-times faster than the national average over the past decade. Pacific Gas & Electric’s residential electricity rates are double the national average.

As reported in The Wall Street Journal, “California households owed \$2.1 billion in unpaid utility bills at the end of 2023, more than four times the amount in 2019.” While climate effects may be tough to predict, policy makers should have seen this outcome from a mile away.

That’s not even counting economic pain caused by the never-ending attacks on the petroleum industry here, which cost jobs and add around \$1.50 in government costs to a gallon of gas, before the LCFS bump earlier this month. Soon, Californians could be paying more in taxes and fees for every gallon of gas than some states pay for an entire gallon.

Elitist Progressives put unpredictable and microscopic changes in potential future weather ahead of blue-collar jobs and affordability today. It’s no wonder that the Republican party is making huge inroads among

working class voters.

These policy-induced high energy costs are one of the reasons why, when adjusted for cost of living, California has the highest poverty rate in the nation.

Between California’s highest-in-the-nation gas taxes and stealthy taxes such as the LCFS, California is banking profits from oil that would make John D. Rockefeller blush. Poorer Californians, who already spend more of their incomes on basics such as transportation, are paying the price.

California is also about to ban Diesel RV sales in the state in a few weeks, choking off another practical, affordable living and travel option for our citizens. It never ends. Just for once, I’d love to see a more balanced approach from our politicians that acknowledges California environmental policy is creating the nation’s worst poverty. If that is a price the dominant political class is willing to inflict on our citizens, so be it. It would be nice to at least hear it.

But I stand with the working-class families who are struggling to get by and the many companies who are trying to survive in this hostile state. I support American sovereignty and American jobs. The government gas price gouging and reckless push towards electric vehicles must stop.

Senator Ted Gaines (Ret.) was elected to represent the Board of Equalization’s First District. He is a leading taxpayer advocate, defender of Prop. 13, and is committed to providing trustworthy and transparent representation for nearly ten million constituents in 34 counties of northern, eastern, and southern California. For more information, visit www.boe.ca.gov/Gaines. ★

Let The Games Begin: 2026 Campaign for California Governor Now Looms



By Dan Walters,
CALMatters.org

California has a lengthy — very lengthy — list of critical economic, social and policy issues that are very likely to remain unresolved when Gavin Newsom vacates the governorship 26 months hence.

The nation’s highest levels of poverty and homelessness, shortages and rising costs of housing, exploding energy bills, an uncertain water supply, street crime, chronic educational shortcomings, a bullet train project that seems to be going nowhere, and multibillion-dollar budget deficits are merely the most obvious flashpoints.

Most were evident when Newsom was elected governor in 2018, promising vigorous efforts to neutralize them, such as his ridiculous pledge to build 3.5 million units of housing, but most have become even more intractable during his reign.

Given that unfortunate history, why would any sane person volunteer to step into Newsom’s shoes? The fact that quite a few Californians are weighing 2026 bids for the governorship testifies to the essentially irrational nature of political ambition.

The next political cycle begins with no clear front-runners, which is a bit unusual. Rather, we have at least a dozen potential candidates, none of whom can claim more than

fractional support, plus one huge unknown factor: Vice President Kamala Harris’s career plans after losing her presidential bid.

A new poll by UC Berkeley’s Institute of Governmental Studies confirms the lack of a front-runner and, just for fun, tests the possibility of a Harris comeback run for governor, ala Richard Nixon’s vain attempt to become governor in 1962. While nearly half of voters surveyed said they would consider supporting Harris for the governorship, it could be as polarizing as her White House campaign.

“Considerations of Harris as a potential gubernatorial candidate are highly partisan,” the poll found, “with 72% of Democrats saying they would be very or somewhat likely to consider supporting her, while 87% of Republicans would not. Among voters not affiliated with either major party, 24% would be very likely and 13% somewhat likely to support a Harris 2026 bid for governor.”

Discounting a Harris candidacy, the poll found that another newly defeated Democrat, U.S. Rep. Katie Porter, sits atop the field, with 13% of voters ranking her as their first or second choice, followed closely by Chad Bianco, the Republican sheriff of Riverside County, at 12%.

Porter gave up her Orange County congressional seat this year to run for the U.S. Senate, but lost in the primary to another member of Congress, Adam Schiff, who claimed a Senate seat last week.

Among Democratic voters, Porter scores 22% support, more than twice what her most likely

Democratic rivals garner. Lt. Governor Eleni Kounalakis, former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra, the state’s former attorney general, all are in the 10-11% range.

Among Republican voters in the survey, Bianco and state Sen. Brian Dahle are virtually tied at about a third each.

The chances for any Republican to become governor are almost nil, given the overwhelming Democratic voter majority, but the state’s top-two primary system makes Republican candidates more relevant against a large field of Democrats.

That tactical element was very apparent earlier this year when Porter faced Schiff and a third Democrat, Rep. Barbara Lee. Schiff spent heavily to help Republican Steve Garvey finish in second place in the primary, ensuring a November win.

Counting Porter, there are five reasonably viable Democrats who might run next year — not only Kounalakis, Villaraigosa and Becerra but Attorney General Rob Bonta. A five-way split of Democratic voters would make it easier for a Republican to finish second in the primary, as Garvey did, and indirectly help the leading Democrat to become governor.

Let the games begin.

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. ★

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 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)

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By Patsy McGavock
JustServe.org

ORANGEVALE, FAIR OAKS, 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 district's 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, F.A.C.E 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," Aguirre-Mazzi said.

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 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," Aguirre-Mazzi said.

"We see and support

The Local School Connection

Family and Community Engagement

many different family structures," Aguirre-Mazzi said. "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," Aguirre-Mazzi said.

Opportunities are varied and year long, according to Aguirre-Mazzi. Volunteers chaperoning a fall field trip might see the wonder of a kindergartener's independent venture to a pumpkin farm. Civic organizations and community members might 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.

At Orangevale Open K-8 on the border of Fair Oaks and Orangevale, the demographics support parent-led and teacher collaboration in a highly-organized structure laid out in the school's SITE guidelines. Parents form an additional leadership team in each classroom and coordinate grade cohorts, along with teachers, to support small group learning, campus wide community events, fundraisers and fieldtrips.

"This supportive environment means students have more vibrant activities, richer experiences from the experience, knowledge and skills volunteers bring as they work with teachers," shared Principal Rick Boster. "There are always needs," he adds. "Start small – one successful event to the next. It can't be just one person – it's the team, shared vision, shared mission. Even a small team can begin great things."

At Woodside K-8, on the border of Orangevale and Citrus Heights, Vice-Principal Debra Johnston said they build a

combination of parent and community support. As a new administration, they are growing staff awareness of how parents can support and partner. Along the way, they have built community partners by bringing Woodside to the community. Staff attend community events such as Sunday Funday, National Night Out and Citrus Heights Area Seven Eight Nine (CHASEN) meetings. Staff ask students what they would like on campus and work with those partners to make it happen.

When students worked with staff to secure a bottle-filling water fountain, Rotary gifted each student a refillable bottle. They also supply new shoes to students. In the garden space, Kiwanis supports resources and Heights Church sends youth volunteers. CHASEN rallies neighbors to volunteer at school events and even sends a representative to Woodside's "small but mighty" Parent Teacher Organization meetings.

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

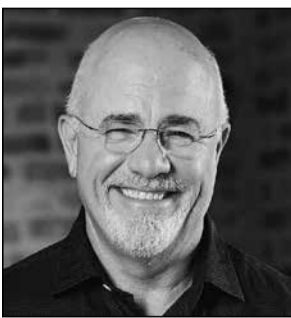
Mesa Verde High School, a Title I school in Citrus Heights, Vice-Principal Cristina Zepeda shared the extensive community partner network staff have built supporting needs as simple as food and supplies for students with unsecure housing, to incentive programs celebrating perfect attendance and improved grades.

"Students who have an adult, not just a parent, intentionally involved in their life, that is the greatest metric of that students' success," Boster said.

Concluded Aguirre-Mazzi, "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 community advocate "informing, empowering and engaging readers with their community." Find your passion and get involved. ★



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. ★

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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. ★*

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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-Mascoll 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 Baudoin fell in her main draw opening round match to Charleston Southern's Marina Skegro, 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, Baudoin 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. ★

Everyone Can Light the World

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



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

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



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



Children try out the Giving Machine, a vending machine that gives back. Photo courtesy of Gary McFadyen

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. ★



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