

Christmas Berries Grace the American **River Parkway PAGE 10**

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FORPD Board Approves **Donation** Recognition and Public **Art Policy**

By Shaunna Boyd

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - At the November Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District (FORPD) Board of Directors meeting, Park Facilities Superintendent Sean Ventura provided an update about ongoing safety measures for the Miller Park disc golf course.

Ventura said some of the major safety issues are errant throws, blind spots, course proximity to pedestrian pathways and areas of co-mingled usage. To mitigate these issues, the district has relocated some tee pads and baskets and shifted the location of some park features, such as benches and covered barbeques. The district plans to install trees and is also looking at quotes for fencing to create physical barriers between the course and general park areas.



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Sue Frost Honored by Community

By Elise Spleiss

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Hundreds of well-wishers kept the secret from guest of honor Sue Frost that she was about to have an unforgettable evening on Saturday, Nov. 23.

Colleagues, family and friends from many counties were all quietly inside the Orangevale Community Center by 5 p.m., when shortly after, the door opened slowly. Frost entered and photographer Cathy Kurtz took eight rapid photos before Frost realized what was happening. Her husband, Jack, made a thumbs up, happy that this secret had finally been revealed and he could relax.

Before becoming a county supervisor, Frost was elected to the Citrus



Sue Frost walks into her surprise party at the Orangevale Community Center. Photo by Cathy Kurtz

2012, served as Vice-Mayor in 2014 and eventually served as Mayor in 2015. In 2017, Heights City Council in Frost assumed the role

of District 4 County Supervisor, being reelected in 2020 with her term ending Jan. 6, 2025.

The well-planned and

well-executed event on every front was managed and produced by All Events Management *Continued on page 2*

The district has also instituted course closure hours and Ventura said they are seeing success with that so far, with support from the disc golf community.

There is new signage at each tee warning players to watch for other park users and not to throw into a busy fairway, making it clear that players are responsible if they strike another park user.

A neighboring fence was repaired and "that neighbor is very happy," said Ventura. Properties that border the park now have no trespassing signs and warnings not to attempt retrieval of any lost discs.

During Public Comment, one Fair Oaks resident said he wanted to see a complete shutdown of the disc golf course until all safety improvements are made. Since it is a park located right next to a school, Ventura said the safety of children needs to be prioritized over disc golfers.

Another resident, Lindsay Kopperud, who first brought this issue before the board earlier this year, asked, "Why am I not being reached out to?" She said the district is not asking for parents' input about what changes will best serve their children. Moving baskets onto the grass fields and putting fences around the wooded areas will limit where children can play. Kopperud said she understands the district is trying to find a

Continued on page 6

www.AmericanRiverMessenger.com

Sue Frost Honored by Community

Continued from page 1 Group, Lisa Montes. "Milestones," one of their specialties, was achieved in every way this night.

The program began with a video, asking friends and colleagues to say one word about Frost and other memories. Part of the video prompted a standing ovation by the Sacramento Taxpayers Association as it began with the slow, unfolding text with the works of Frost, set to the music of "Star Wars."

Words attributed to Frost by many included grace under fire, grass roots, community, authentic, determined, genuine, common sense, calm and collected, dedicated, tenacious, true to your word, principled and much, much more. One speaker recognized Frost as being best known for listening and helping people.

One description that got much applause and agreement was that Frost is the "most nonpolitical politician."

Others described how Frost thinks carefully



Assemblyman Josh Hoover presents Sue Frost with a plaque of recognition. Photo by Cathy Kurtz

about each issue, analyzing it carefully, and does research before making her decision. She also has no qualms about explaining her decision, no matter how it will be taken and sticking to that decision.

Examples given were being instrumental in helping make major changes across the board and across the state to combat the negative effects that Covid was producing, such as keeping children out of school and



Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Sheri Merrick presents Sue Frost with a plaque of recognition. Photo by Cathy Kurtz

closing down businesses.

Frost also helped save the Rancho Murietta Hotel and other small businesses by fighting county bureaucracy.

A large part of the evening was taken up by v

many proclamations and awards given out, along with many more stories and memories by speakers from the audience, adding their experiences and appreciation for Frost's work. Jack Frost, thinking he would get the last word in after 12 years, realized that was yet to happen. He did thank God and all who have helped them. He also thanked Rosario Rodriquez, who owns a taqueria in Folsom, "for the wonderful dinner." Rodriguez will be installed as District 4 Supervisor, filling Frost's spot.

Jack Frost also thanked sponsors Sacramento County Probation, Sacramento Taxpayers Association, Howard Jarvis Tax Association, American Legion Post 637 and Stones Casino. The dessert was provided by the Orangevale Chamber of Commerce. Carlos Verette acted as emcee and as deejay, filling the room with music.

This evening was one to remember. A prayer was said, thanking Jack and Sue Frost for all they have accomplished in the last 12 years and hoping they find ways to continue to make a difference in the new chapter of their lives. ★

Honoring Sue Frost:

A Celebration of Leadership and Dedication





By Sue Frost

As my tenure as Supervisor for District 4 comes to a close, I am overwhelmed with appreciation. It has been a profound honor to serve the diverse and vibrant areas of Sacramento County. From the soulful avenues of North Highlands to the tranquil settings of Rancho Murieta, each community has its own unique charm, and a collective will to enhance our region. During my years in office, I've had the pleasure of seeing and contributing to significant improvements that have positively impacted the lives of our residents. Together, we have achieved notable progress, all aimed at enriching the Sacramento Region. We successfully allocated \$4.5 million in ARPA funds to bolster services and housing initiatives across District 4. These projects have spurred growth and enhanced the quality of life in our communities. Significant projects include the revitalization of the Rio Linda Firehouse and restoring Fire Engine #2 to operational status. These upgrades are critical, ensuring that our emergency services are well-prepared

Orangevale Community Update

Serving You: The Honor of My Lifetime

to safeguard our community. Community gatherings like the Rio Linda/Elverta Country Faire and the Christmas Light Parade have not only spread cheer but also fostered a strong sense of togetherness.

I had the privilege of leading efforts that substantially supported local veterans' services, aiding veterans and non-profits, and fostering economic vitality. The enhancements to the Orangevale Library and our support for the Orangevale History Museum have played pivotal roles in preserving our local heritage and expanding access to educational resources. The Orangevale-Fair Oaks Big Day of Service exemplifies the positive outcomes that arise from community cooperation and common goals. In safety and preparedness, we secured a significant \$400,000 grant from Caltrans to fortify emergency evacuation routes for Rancho Murieta, enhancing the area's readiness for any emergency. This year, I played a pivotal role in fostering unity and collaboration in North Highlands by engaging with local leaders committed to enhancing well-being and economic vitality. This collaboration led to the successful "Celebrate North

Highlands" event, which brought together over 2,000 residents on Sept. 28, to celebrate the spirit of the community.

I have always stood firm in my commitment to our local economy, advocating for a strategic approach to reopening that maintained the competitiveness of our businesses and kept our shopping local. My commitment to openness and honesty has been central, admitting to and learning from any missteps to maintain a transparent relationship with you. Reflecting on these efforts, I am proud of what we have accomplished together. Serving you has been a tremendous privilege, and I am thankful for the opportunity to have been part of your stories and your advocate. Thank you for your trust. your active participation, and your steadfast commitment to our community. Although my role as Supervisor is concluding, my dedication to supporting and uplifting our region remains steadfast.

Many banners were hung up honoring Sue Frost's service as a County Supervisor. Photo by Cathy Kurtz

By MaryAnne Povey

Friends, colleagues, and supporters of Sue Frost gathered together in a surprise celebration at the Orangevale Community Center to honor her eight years of dedicated service as Sacramento County Supervisor.

The evening was a true reflection of Sue's broad impact, with guests spanning the communities she served and including elected officials at every level—local, state and federal. The diversity of the crowd highlighted Sue's ability to connect with people from all walks of life and her dedication to addressing issues that matter most to her constituents.

Sue, who was genuinely surprised, was visibly moved by the outpouring of gratitude and appreciation. Throughout the evening, personal stories were shared, emphasizing her tireless advocacy for local issues and her ability to ensure everyone felt heard. Her leadership and commitment have left a lasting legacy in the communities she served.

A special thanks goes to all who contributed to making the event a success. Her husband, Jack, played a key role in orchestrating the surprise. All Events Management handled the event logistics seamlessly, while Anthony Garcia, Chamber President, impressed with gourmet desserts. Cathy Kurtz captured the evening beautifully through her photography, ensuring every moment was documented.

Sue Frost's retirement marks the conclusion of a remarkable chapter of public service. Her contributions to our communities have been invaluable, and she will be greatly missed. We wish her the very best as she moves into this next stage of life and thank her for her years of dedication and leadership.

If you would like to stay in touch with me, please feel free to reach me at sue@suefrost.com.

Thank you all for a wonderful and impactful journey. God Bless.

Sue

Community Partners Celebrate the Holiday

By Judy Andrews

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - Community partners from Orangevale and Fair Oaks nonprofit organizations recently got together to spread holiday cheer at their first annual collaborative social event on Dec. 12 at the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Community Foundation Office.

Hosted by the foundation, invitees included the Orangevale Community Council (OCC) and Fair Oaks Community Action Partnerships (FOCAP) members.

"The goal of both organizations is to help unite our community efforts, and together as a caring network, we learn about our neighbors and additional resources each group can provide to its community members," said Brad Squires, Founder/CEO of the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Community Foundation. "Our communities are stronger when leaders are connected."

Squires also leads the Orangevale Community Council, which is part of the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Community Foundation. Fair Oaks Community Action Partnerships was created in 2015 by Pete Schroeder as a means for Fair Oaks non-profits to connect and support each other.

"This was a successful first-time social occasion for our organizations, and we look forward to future collaborations and ongoing partnerships," Schroeder said.



Orangevale and Fair Oaks community partners recently enjoyed social time together at a holiday event in their honor. Photo by Judy Andrews

Record Turnout at 19th Annual Orangevale Christmas Tree Lighting



Easystumps was one of the sponsors of the event.

Story by MaryAnne Povey, photos by Jayden Velasquez

ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG) -The 19th annual Orangevale Christmas Tree Lighting, hosted by OV Parks, brought the community together for a magical evening filled with holiday cheer, fun and

festivity. Under a beautiful December moon, families gathered to celebrate the season with laughter, music and the spirit of togetherness that makes Orangevale so special.

Buddy the Elf was in rare form, bringing energy and humor to the evening as he introduced performances by local choirs. These talented groups filled the air with joyful songs, spreading holiday cheer throughout the crowd. Buddy's antics didn't stop there; he delighted attendees by breaking into song himself, serenading them as they made their way to the grand finale of the night: the tree lighting.

Santa Claus, the evening guest of honor, stole the show with his warmth and charm asking children how he could make their



Children are in awe as they watch the tree light up Orangevale.

Christmas better. One little girl's heartfelt response was memorable - she wished only for a smile, which ironically brought tears to her mother, reminding everyone of the simple joys of the holiday season.

The night culminated in the highly anticipated lighting of the towering community Christmas tree. The crowd eagerly joined in a countdown as Santa waved his magical candy cane, illuminating the tree in a dazzling burst of lights that filled the area with festive glow. It was a moment of anticipation and joy that captured the true spirit of the season.

This special event wouldn't have been possible without the generous support of local organizations, including the Orangevale Women's Club, the Orangevale Grange, the Orange Vale Water Company, the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Foodbank, the Orangevale History Project, Casa Roble Interact Club, the Orangevale Chamber of Commerce, Orangevale Live and Easystumps. Their contributions and dedication ensured that the night was one to remember.

As we reflect on the joy and magic of this special evening, we wish everyone a happy holiday season. May this time be filled with love, laughter, and the simple pleasures of being surrounded by family and friends.

Nonprofits Host Soup and Crab Feed Nights



Judy Andrews

By Judy Andrews, Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce

The Fair Oaks Historical Society and Rotary Club of Fair Oaks are preparing to host their annual fundraising events in February. Both organizations are long-time Fair Oaks Chamber members who rely on public support to serve the community. Tickets are available to purchase now but they are selling out fast!

18th Annual Soup Night, Feb. 8

The Fair Oaks Historical Society will host its 18th Annual Soup Night from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 8 at Faith Lutheran Church (4000 San Juan Ave., Fair Oaks). This is the group's largest fundraiser of the year, helping keep the Fair Oaks History Center operating while preserving the town's history and heritage.

Located at 10340 Fair Oaks Blvd., the History Center is managed by volunteers and open to the public between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

"This year's Soup Night raised \$10,000, which covered the cost of replacing the roof at the History Center," said Fair Oaks Historical Society President Claudia Thorn.

Tickets for Soup Night 2025 cost \$35 per person or \$280 for a table. The menu will include soup, salad, bread, and dessert. Thorn shared that, so far, five local restaurants will donate soups: O Café Bakery Bistro, Brahma Bar and Grill, Fair Oaks Brew Pub, Café Italiano and Carmelita's. Vegetarian soup options will also be made available.

The event will feature a silent auction and raffle. The Fair Oaks Historical Society is accepting auction and raffle donations through Feb. 1. Donations can be dropped off at the History Center during open hours.

For ticket information, please contact Claudia Thorn at (916) 747-1535 or cjthorn17@comcast.net. To learn more about the Fair Oaks Historical Society and History Center, please visit www.fairoakshistory.org. **2025 Mardi Gras Crab**

Feed, Feb. 15 The Rotary Club of

Fair Oaks is planning its 32nd annual Crab Feed and Auction from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 15 at the Citrus Heights Community Center (6300 Fountain Square Drive, Citrus Heights). Proceeds from this event go toward the Rotary Club's Foundation, which supports community and international projects.

"The Crab Feed is the cornerstone of our fundraising efforts, enabling us to carry out over 40 local service projects each year and invest around \$50,000 back into our community," said Fair Oaks Rotary Club President Keith Walter.

Tickets are \$80 per person or \$800 for a table and include all-you-caneat crab, minestrone soup, pasta, salad and bread. Desserts will be available for a donation during the Dessert Auction. Beer and wine will also be available for a fee. The dress code is Mardi Gras-themed or casual.

Tickets can be purchased at www.rotaryfairoaks. org. If you have questions, please contact Victoria Porter at (916) 208-8626.

The Rotary Club of Fair Oaks has been serving the community since 1948, providing countless volunteer hours and hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations and sponsorships. The Rotary Club welcomes new members. Learn more at www.rotaryfairoaks.org.

See you in Fair Oaks! ★





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Family Hits Jackpot for Local Charities

By Gary Zavoral

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Seven is a special number for Kelvin and Leslie Moss of Granite Bay. They have seven children, and their last child was nicknamed "Seven." And, on the night they went to the Sacramento area's charitable vending machines, there were seven members of their family present.

And sevens are especially lucky for struggling individuals and families throughout the Sacramento region and the world. Because last week, the Moss family typed in "777" into a Light the World Giving Machine and donated 30 gifts to those in need. It is considered a "Giving Machine jackpot," worth \$2,035 for five local charities and two global ones.

"We didn't know we'd do this until we got there that night. We had seven children, and seven of us were at the Giving Machines that night. It just felt right to choose 777," mother and grandmother Leslie Moss said. "We really felt we hit the jackpot for our community. It was a great night."

Light the World Giving Machines, sponsored and financed by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, are at the Westfield Galleria at Roseville for a third year and are filled with cards detailing charitable gifts. When one item is purchased, the card falls to the bottom, just like a candy bar drops when purchased at a vending machine. Joining Kelvin and Leslie at the Giving Machine were son-in-law Eric Stratton and four grandchildren.

"It was really fun to see every single card drop to the bottom one by one," said Leslie. "The kids would shout as they dropped: 'Someone is getting new underwear!' 'Someone is getting diapers for their baby!'" And so on, she says, until all 30 cards dropped.

Twenty-five of the 30 gifts are for individuals or families in the greater Sacramento region who are suffering financially or emotionally,



From left, Eric, Win, Daisy, Freddy and Bennett Stratton show off some of the gifts for others that they purchased. Photo courtesy of Gary Zavoral

and the gifts are designed to provide food, comfort, counseling and other services to help them on their path toward self-reliance. The Moss family knows a bit about suffering emotionally, as they lost three of their sons to accidental deaths in the past four years.

"Our grandchildren were really on board with this, in giving to others who are less-fortunate and suffering at this time," Leslie said. "They wanted to make sure that heaven could be involved, that their uncles could be there, too."

Before heading to the Giving Machines, Grandma and Grandpa talked to the children about what the Giving Machines are all about and to think about the specific gift they wanted to choose for a needy person or family.

"We talked about how usually with a vending machine you get something for yourself, but with the Giving Machine, this time you are getting something to help someone else," Leslie said. "They were so thoughtful about why they chose that specific gift."

Bennett, 14, chose suicide

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prevention therapy from Lighthouse Counseling & Family Resource Center because "it's the gift that will keep giving," Leslie said. Lighthouse, based throughout Placer County, provides counseling, educational classes and programs and assists clients in obtaining resources to help them through a challenging time. The other gifts in the Giving Machine for Lighthouse that the Moss family also purchased are child abuse and domestic violence prevention counseling sessions, one week worth of diapers for a single mother with a newborn, and a threeday supply of emergency food.

Winston, who goes by Win, is 8 years old, and he chose three days of safe shelter for a family or individual in need, provided by Catholic Charities throughout the Sacramento region. Win chose that, Leslie says, "because whenever he sees a homeless person, he feels so sad for them and wants to help take care of them." Other gifts for Catholic Charities are an infant care kit for a new mother, a "dress for success" gift that provides a job seeker a new outfit, one week of food for a senior experiencing food insecurity, and job training for someone entering the workforce.

Daisy, 5, "couldn't bear to think about someone going to bed without a blanket and a pillow," so she wanted to give the "Pillow & Bedding" provided by Al-Misbaah Charitable Aid, Leslie said. The Sacramento-based charity has helped numerous refugees and vulnerable families get established in Northern California. The other gifts for Al-Misbaah are socks and hat for someone who needs the extra warmth, a hygiene kit to help a community member stay clean, a backpack filled with school supplies for a student, and a bicycle for a child for exercise, adventure and to ride to and from school.

Daisy's twin brother, Freddy, "loves to play soccer, and he couldn't figure out how any child could go without a soccer ball," Leslie said. So, he chose the gift of four soccer balls for a school to help teach students teamwork and promote fitness. That gift is offered by Right to Play, a global charity that helps children in impoverished

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nations thrive by promoting the "power of play." The other gifts in the Giving Machine purchased are 20 storybooks for primary schoolchildren and menstrual hygiene kits to help female students stay in school.

The Moss family purchased all those gifts, along with others from three other charities. They are:

First Step Communities in Sacramento and Roseville, which provides interim housing and emergency shelter in the Sacramento area and Roseville. Their gifts in the Giving Machines are a kit of hygiene essentials, new underwear, a warm blanket and pillow, a winter coat and 100 laundry vouchers.

Rancho Cordova Food Locker's Community Food Hub, whose gifts in the Giving Machines are two gallons of milk for children, an emergency weekend food pack for students, a one-month supply of fresh produce for a family, a kit of essentials to feed 10 senior citizens, and a group cooking class to teach 25 families cooking techniques and nutrition principles.

The global charity Academy for Creating Enterprise, which provides business opportunities for individuals and families in impoverished countries. The two gifts in the Roseville Giving Machines are a basket as a way to carry goods for a new business owner and, probably the most unique gift in the machines, two piglets to help a family start a business.

"It was just an awesome experience for us to give to so many people at the same time," Leslie said. "We hope to do again next year and make it a family tradition."

The Light the World Giving Machines are located on the first floor of Westfield Galleria at Roseville, near the giant Christmas tree. The Giving Machines will keep giving through New Year's Day.

To see all the gifts available, their prices and links to all the charities, go to the Sacramento and Modesto Giving Machines website at www. givingmachinesgreatersacramento. org/.

com



Voting Has Completed OU TE INVITED to the Best of Fair Oaks Awards Event

Tickets are expected to sell out fast. Don't miss your chance to attend the 8th annual "Best of Fair Oaks" event.

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Where: North Ridge Country Club, 7600 Madison Ave, Fair Oaks
When: Thursday January 16, 2025
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Email Info@FairOaksChamber.com or call 916-967-2903



Ho Ho Ho Traditions

Image by Ylanite Koppens from Pixabay

Christmas is special for all in so many ways with traditions galore. We hold true to them, but do you know how they got started? Let's explore!

WHY IS CHRISTMAS ON DE-**CEMBER 25th?** The name Christmas comes from the Mass of Christ or Christ-

Mass, and it was the only one that was allowed to take place after sunset and before the next sunrise, so people had it at midnight. So Christ-Mass is shortened to Christmas. No one knows the real birth day of Jesus. No date is given in the Bible. The first recorded date of Christmas being celebrated on December 25th was in 336, during the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine who was the first Christian Roman Emperor. A very ear-

ly Christian tradition said the day when Mary was told that she would have a very special baby, called the Annunciation, was on March 25. Nine months after March 25 is December 25th. March 25th was also the day some early Christians thought the world had been made, and also the day that Jesus died.

CHRISTMAS TREES? Nobody is really sure when Fir trees were first used. It probably began about 1000 years ago in Northern Europe, and many early Christmas trees were hung upside down from the ceiling using chains hung from chandeliers or lighting hooks. The first documented use of a tree at Christmas and New Year celebrations is argued between Tallinn, Estonia and Riga, Latvia. Both claim they had the first trees.

POINSETTIAS? Maybe because



Joel Roberts Poinsett, first Ambassador from the USA to Mexico in 1825. Visiting the Taco area of Mexico in 1828, he became very interested in the plants. He took some back to his plantation in South Carolina, began growing them, and sending them to friends and botan-

ical gardens. And it's all because of a Mexican legend about a poor Mexican girl called Pepita who had no present to give the baby Jesus. You can fill in the details.

CANDY CANES? The first recorded 'candy stick' comes in 1837 at an exhibition in Massachusetts. It was straight white sugar sticks, a few years later the red stripes were added. Could it be that a Catholic priest invented the 'Keller Machine' that made

the sticks curved? Sometimes Christian meanings are given to the canes. The 'J' can also mean Jesus. The white of the cane the purity of Jesus, the red stripes for the blood he shed when he died on the cross. The peppermint flavor can represent the hyssop plant that was used for purifying in the Bible. You choose!

CHRISTMAS CARDS? Maybe in the UK in 1843 with Sir Henry Cole who helped set-up the new Public Record Office, now called the Post Office. Sir Henry had the idea with his friend artist John Horsley. Lots of changes, but today it's accepted around the world.

But whatever traditions you follow, it is a time to share and care with love in your heart! MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ONE AND ALL AND TO ALL GOOD CHEER!



Enrique Villarauz FREE ESTIMATES



Dear Dave,

A friend told me about your Baby Steps plan, and after years of living paycheck-to-paycheck and running up credit card bills, I'm ready to get control of my finances. I just have one question. Baby Step 1 is saving \$1,000 for a beginner emergency fund. Do you recommend getting current on past due bills before starting Baby Step 1?

- Miles

Dear Miles,

Congratulations! I'm glad to hear you're finally sick and tired of being financially sick and tired. This is the perfect question for someone is your situation, because it gives me a chance to walk you all the way through the Baby Steps. So, let's go!

First, make sure all your necessities are taken care of. By necessities, I'm talking about food, clothing, shelter, transportation and utilities. Then, get current on anything you owe, or make payment arrangements for past due bills. After you've done this, it's

Dave Ramsey Says The Roadmap to Financial Peace

time to take your very first Baby Step.

You've already mentioned getting \$1,000 in the bank for a starter emergency fund. That's Baby Step 1. After that comes your debt snowball, which is Baby Step 2. Here, you'll pay off all your debts from smallest to largest—except your home. Attack the first balance on your list by paying as much as you can each month, while making minimum payments on the other debts. When you've paid off the first one, add what you were paying on it to the payment on your next debt and start attacking it. As the snowball continues to roll over, you're picking up more and more money to apply

In Baby Step 3, you'll save money and increase your emergency fund from \$1,000 to a full three to six months of expenses. You're going to be surprised how fast you can save money when your income isn't flying out the door to pay off debt every month.

to your debts.

Now, it's time to really start looking toward the future. In Baby Step 4, start investing 15 percent of your income for retire-

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ment. College funding is next in Baby Step 5 for any kids you have, or plan on having one day. And here's a big one. Baby Step 6 is where you pay off your home early. How great will that feel?

But Baby Step 7 is the real deal. Now, you start building wealth and giving with outrageous generosity. When you've completed all the other Baby Steps, and are able to do these two things, you've achieved the pinnacle of smart money management. Or in other words, you've reached the point of financial peace.

Make it happen, Miles. 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. ★



Bv Patsv McGavock JustServe.org **ORANGEVALE/FAIR OAKS**. CA (MPG) - Last November

other community organizations and preserving history. They were the foundational force behind the Orangevale History Project. They raise funds through semi-annual community bunco and craft-

Woman's Thursday Club. "This is not just a social club. We are focused on

giving," Garcia said. Garcia stepped quickly into a chair position, which seems remarkably common.

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was a time of searching. My father passed, the last of my parents and grandparents. I sought comfort and wisdom beyond my own 43 years and a consistent place of strength and community when loneliness closed in.

Active in church, school and community service, I realized I'd spread myself thin, serving everywhere but connecting less and less. Constant doing can be isolating. Considering myself, I remembered the Woman's Club, growing monthly, from the Orangevale Community Council meetings. That resonated with me. It felt right and I was decided.

My first Woman's Club meeting surprised me. Welcoming, competent looking women greeted me with an agenda, information and visitor's tag. The room buzzed with activity. Ages varied from new mother to senior, though mostly vibrantly retired. The wealth of community and club events underway was overwhelming yet exciting. So many choices to fit my skills and interests while growing friendships with women older than I to learn from.

By "living the volun-teer spirit," Woman's Club members seek to enhance lives through hands-on, impactful service. Dedicated to the cultural, educational and social wellbeing in the community, they are locally driven, while also supporting projects with national or global effect.

In Orangevale, this looks like collecting goods, cleaning streets, funding scholarships, supporting ing together for craft fairs.

Members plant trees in memory of loved ones, send cards to ill members and connect through weekly walks and monthly lunches.

"We rise by lifting others," states their guiding principles. While membership has ebbed and flowed since formed in 1913, 91 women currently fill the roster, with yes, more joining nearly monthly. Meetings are open and held 11 a.m. the first Thursdays at the Orangevale Grange from September through May.

Equally well-organized, the Woman's Thursday Club of Fair Oaks feels cozier. Their clubhouse fits about 60 and is used as smaller groups gather for general meetings or common interests such as books, bridge, fiber arts, gardening and games. Focused strongly on women and children they support schools, scholarships, food banks, unhoused and neonatal needs. They fundraise through an annual fashion show and separate plant sale while maintaining ties to local organizations such as the Fair Oaks Historical Society. Not associated with the international General Federation of Women's Clubs, they keep their focus local. They meet second Thursdays at noon at the clubhouse, 10625 Fair Oaks Blvd.

Nearly every part of our community is touched by Woman's Club members.

"These are involved women," said Lisa Garcia. She grew up walking past the clubhouse on her way to school. Recently returning to Fair Oaks, she jumped at the chance to join the

Orangevale President Judy Elston moved from visitor to chairperson to president within eight months.

"Crazy but true," Elston said. "The collective spirit and empowering nature of this club nurtured my confidence to lead." She said the club creates space where every member can grow, contribute and shine.

"Our club stands as a beacon for the tangible difference we make through varied, collective endeavors," Elston said.

Laurie White, an Orangevale members since September, introduced herself frankly.

"I see the growing needs in our community. I couldn't sit by and not do something about it," she said.

"We advocate because there is a need; we volunteer because we are needed," summarized the General Federation of Woman's Clubs website.

Like Elston, I've been nurtured by the Woman's club, by their wisdom, passion, enlivening feeling of generating ideas for good and most of all by the special joy of serving, together.

If this article has stirred a resonant feeling of rightness in you, joining or supporting the Women's Club might be the community connection for you.

Get Connected at: www. orangevalewomansclub.org or www.fairoakshistory.org/ wtcfo.

Patsy McGavock is a volunteer writer seeking to inform, empower and engage readers with their community. She can be reached at PatsyMcGavock. JustServe@gmail.com

How California Can Fix Its School Crisis. Two Projects Point the Way



By Dan Walters CALMatters.org

When the state Department of Education released academic test scores of California's public school students in October, it cast them in positive terms.

"Overall," the department said, "the percentages of California students meeting or exceeding standards (demonstrating proficient or advanced grade-level knowledge and skills) in (English language arts), mathematics, and science increased, from 46.7% to 47% percent in (English language arts), from 34.6% to 35.5% in math, and from 30.2% to 30.% in science."

What the department didn't say is that those minuscule increases from the previous year meant that California remains one of the states where academic achievements are still below what they were prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As CalMatters' account of the test scores notes, "both English language arts and math scores are 4 percentage points below their 2018-19 levels, which were among the highest scores for California students since the state began administering the Smarter Balanced test in 2014-15."

Alix Gallagher, director of strategic partnerships at the education research nonprofit Policy Analysis for California Education, told the San Jose Mercury News that the slow recovery from the pandemic indicates that the massive federal and state funds given schools to cope with the pandemic failed to prevent declines.

"What we would want to see is that with those additional funds, we had a really strong recovery. Instead, what we saw were really modest gains," Gallagher said.

The department's obfuscation continued a month later when it released its "dashboard" of public education markers that trumpeted nonacademic factors, such as increases in attendance and decreases in student suspensions, but ignored California's subpar academic outcomes, which should be the most important.

That's not surprising, given that the state's education bureaucrats consciously developed the multipoint dashboard to conceal the chronic lack of academic achievement.

A state-by-state report on school system transparency of academic test results issued by the Center for Reinventing Public Education, based at Arizona State University, gives California a "D" for its lack of clarity.

"I have a Ph.D. in education policy and I can barely navigate these sites," Morgan Polikoff, a USC professor who worked on the report, told CalMatters. "How do we expect a typical parent to access this information and make sense of it?"

Are California's stubborn failings in teaching basic subjects such as math and reading, which the educational establishment hopes no one will notice, fixable?

Two recent projects to improve academic skills indicate that learning can be improved with sustained effort that uses proven techniques and shuns trendy short-term

fixes that school systems often adopt in their desperate efforts to raise test scores.

Policy Analysis for Public Education, a think tank jointly operated by several major universities that studies California schools, cites the math project in Lake Tahoe Unified School District's Sierra House Elementary School and a reading program in Grass Valley School District as successful examples.

In both, California Education Partners, a school reform organization staffed by academic experts, provided three years of hands-on help to improve instruction, and PACE evaluators found significantly positive results. "The Sierra House model serves as a blueprint for building adult capacity and fostering instructional coherence," they said, while Grass Valley's phonics-based reading program was adopted district-wide and "improved student outcomes."

California's educational crisis is palpable. Not only do California schools fare very poorly vis-a-vis other states in federal academic testing seventh from the bottom — but there's a yawning "achievement gap" between low income and English learner students and their more privileged classmates that widened during the pandemic.

Rather than hide the problem with gimmicks such as the school dashboard, California should own up to it and embrace successful examples such as those in Tahoe and Grass Valley.

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.

FORPD Board Approves Donation Recognition and Public Art Policy

Continued from page 1

compromise to make the course safer but "it feels like they are prioritizing disc golf," calling it "an obvious bias." She added that at a public outreach meeting on this topic, there was a focus on informing the public about the district's mitigation plans, rather than asking for public input.

Several other residents agreed that safety and access for children needs to be the priority and that the district should be looking at alternative locations instead of spending money on mitigation measures.

Board Chair Ralph Carhart said the district is trying to balance various interests, but if the current improvements don't solve the problem, the board will continue working on it.

Arts and Entertainment Manager Jen Schuler introduced a proposed Public Art Policy, which would guide the selection, installation and maintenance of art within the park district. The policy also includes the creation of a review committee, comprising members of the community, art experts, district staff, and other local stakeholders to review possible art selections and also to evaluate any future removal of art from the district, if that becomes necessary.

Director Raymond James Irwin said the creation of the committee seemed "overly, unnecessarily regulated." He asked if the committee would have decision-making power to deny the removal of a piece of art.

Schuler said that the proposed committee is an attempt to avoid public backlash to art removal, similar to what occurred when Hugh Gorman's mural was removed as part of the demolition and subsequent construction in the Village.

Director John O'Farrell said the decision to remove the mural "was very controversial, because it belonged to him. It was not ours."

Schuler clarified that the process would differ, depending on if the art was on loan from an artist or owned by the district.

Irwin suggested that the district should own any art being put on display.

Director Darren Mounts agreed that if an artist wants their art displayed within the park district, "we own it. Period."

District Administrator Mike Aho clarified that all contracts with the artists will have to be reviewed and approved by the board, so they will make the final decision, regardless of any recommendations from the review committee.

Vice-Chair Delinda Tamagni said the review committee provides an opportunity to get feedback from the community. But Irwin said he would prefer to get feedback during public comment at the board meetings, rather than from a small selection of people appointed to the committee.

O'Farrell made a motion to approve the legal review of the art policy as written. It was seconded by Vice-Chair Tamagni and passed 4-1, with Irwin dissenting.

The board also considered a Donation and Donor Recognition and Gift Policy, which would provide clear guidelines for the acceptance and usage of financial donations, as well as time and service donations, and a process for honoring the donors for their contributions. The proposed policy covers amphitheater chair dedications and donor wall, naming rights, memorial benches, scholarships, sponsorships, etc.

Irwin moved approval of the item, and it was seconded by Director Mounts and approved unanimously by the board.

During items from board members, Tamagni asked for an update at the next meeting about possible alternative locations for the disc golf course.

Aho also updated the board about the Village construction schedule, stating that the projected opening is now April 2025. He also said a plan to do some road paving this fall didn't work out, due to stormy weather in November.

"I am disappointed but this is the hand we're dealt, with the weather and the structuring of the road we're working with," said Aho.

Chair Carhart said that the district will actually save some money on paving now, because a two-phase paving schedule will be condensed and completed at one time in the spring.

The next Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Board meeting is scheduled for Dec. 18.



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Things can change quickly in Kings Town, and the happenings of the past week certainly demonstrate exactly that.

The hardcourt gladiators from Sacramento are currently on a torrid 3-game winning streak, looking ahead to Monday night's game against the Denver Nuggets.

If you hadn't paid attention and just tuned into the Kings, you'd discover a team that is just finding themselves 26 games into the regular season, after losing every game in the preseason.

Fans and pundits alike have riddled the airwaves with remedies for multiple losing streaks, along with advice to coach Brown as to who should be his starting five.

I am more than happy to announce that coach Brown's decision to finally insert Malik Brown into the King's starting lineup has produced four wins in the last five games, and everyone is now wondering why it took three seasons to figure this one out.

But rather than casting aspersions, I will take the high road, and just give him an attaboy for making a decision that was long overdue. Malik is thrilled to be where he always thought he should be, and now coach Brown can simply focus on his bench that is currently ranked in the bottom of the league.

Kevin Huerter is showing signs of returning to form and seems to be comfortable taking the 6th man position that was formerly Monk's, so it's really the next three or four rotations that are going to tell the tale.

What has created chaos with the team is the night-in and night out inconsistency as to who will sit the night out completely, or who will garnish the majority of the minutes.

Big man Alex Len cannot catch a break, as he all too often finds himself at the end of the bench being a spectator for the entire game. This 7-foot giant has NBA game, and from my perspective, it's up to coach Brown and his staff to build this big man's confidence. One way you do that is by giving him a consistent rotation that he can count on every night.

Len has played several good games and shows real promise, only to find himself relegated to the bench the very next game with no explanation except for the dreaded, coaches' decision.

The Kings can keep scouring the league for another trade/acquisition, or just look at their own bench, and perhaps realize that there is more talent already on this team than they are giving them credit for.

I for one believe that Alex Len has a big upside, but it takes a coach and staff that are willing to build a player's confidence if you want to see the desired result.

So far, I'm giving this staff a failing grade as it relates to evaluating talent, and you need to look no further than the inexplicable trade of Davion Mitchell to qualify my comments.

The Kings are still feeling the void left in Mitchell's absence, and all he is doing in Toronto is making Canadian fans fall in love with him. From the Kings bench to the Raptor's starting point guard, Davion is making the Toronto GM look like a basketball wizard.

The Kings cannot afford to continue undervaluing talent, or simply not see the forest for the trees. Let's get everything out of the team currently constituted, and that means starting with consistency as it relates to players coming off the bench. If Huerter is the 6th man, who is #7, 8, and 9? At this point no one but coach Brown knows, and he doesn't know until just before gametime.

Here's the good news! At 13-13 it's time to hit the reset button. Yes, the Kings are at 500, and now is the time to start making a run that can propel this team to the playoffs.

The starting five of, Fox, Monk, DeRozan, Murray, and Sabonis are a formidable group to guard, and I look forward to watching this team come out of the blocks on all 8 cylinders every night.

So, take heart Kings fans, because the best is yet to come, and that's without a trade or an acquisition.

Merry Christmas to one and all and go Kings!

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



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Hornet Football Coach Resigns

By Daniel Canfield

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On Friday, Dec. 6, Sacramento State University announced that Hornet Football head coach Andy Thompson had resigned to pursue other career opportunities. Thompson's departure after two years at the helm of the Hornet Football program comes at the conclusion of a 2024 campaign that saw the Hornets finish with a 3-9 overall record and 1-7 in Big Sky Conference play. Sac State dropped the final five games of the 2024 season including the annual causeway classic matchup with UC Davis which was played on Nov. 23 at Hornet stadium.

The official news release from the university includes a gracious statement from Athletic Director Mark Orr regarding Thompson's tenure with the Hornets. "We want to thank Coach Thompson and his family for all they have done for Sacramento State football over the last five seasons." Orr said. "Under his watch, the program has achieved its highest level of success. We wish him the best of luck in the future."

In his two years as head coach Thompson posted



Sac State's Football program is in search of a new head coach to replace Andy Thompson who resigned on Dec. 6 to join the Stanford University football coaching staff. Photo by Sacramento State Athletics

an overall record of 11 wins and 14 losses. In his first year as head coach in 2023, the Hornets enjoyed an 8-5 record and made it to the second round the 2023 FCS Playoffs. Unfortunately, that success was not seen again in the disappointing 2024 season.

Thompson had been on the Hornet coaching staff since the 2019 season. As defensive coordinator, Thompson was instrumental in the Hornet football program earning Big Sky Conference titles in 2019, 2021 and 2022. Following the conclusion of the 2022 season, Thompson was promoted to the Hornet head coach position which had been vacated by Troy Taylor who left Sacramento State to take

the head football coaching position at Stanford University.

On the heels of the official announcement from Sacramento State Athletics regarding Thompson's departure on Dec. 6, Stanford University officially announced that coach Thompson would be joining the Stanford Football coaching staff

as Stanford Football's assistant head coach and co-defensive coordinator. Reuniting Thompson with his former boss and former Hornet head coach Troy Taylor.

The Hornet Football program owes a debt of gratitude to Coach Thompson as his involvement with the program led to success and accolades not previously enjoyed by the Hornets. Best wishes to Coach Thomspon in his new position, as long as Stanford football's interests do not conflict with Hornet football's interests.

Sacramento State officials announced that a national search will begin immediately to find the next head coach for the Hornets.

Jesuit High's Cross Country Coach Honored



Jesuit High School News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) -Jesuit High School Cross Country Head Coach Walt Lange received a prestigious honor on Saturday, Dec. 7, as he was named the Joe Newton Coach of the Year at the Nike Cross Nationals (NXN).

This award, named after legendary coach Joe Newton of York High School, celebrates lifetime achievement in high school cross country. Newton's teams captured at least 24 Illinois State Championships, and his legacy extends far beyond victories, having profoundly shaped the lives of countless young athletes. Coach Lange, with an extraordinary 55 years of coaching at Jesuit High

School, including 54 years as head coach, now joins the ranks of elite coaches recognized on a national stage. Known for his humility, Lange's contributions to high school cross country and the countless lives he has impacted over the decades make this recognition richly deserved.

"I'm overjoyed that

Jesuit High School's Cross County Head Coach Walt Lange, photographed here with his 2024 State Championship team, was named the Joe Newton Coach of the Year at the Nike Cross Nationals on Saturday, Dec. 7. Courtesy Photo

the boys were there to witness this moment," shared Assistant Coach David Zielke, reflecting on the significance of the occasion.

Lange's dedication, passion, and lifelong commitment to developing athletes both on and off the course embody the Jesuit tradition of excellence and service. Congratulations to Coach Lange on this remarkable and well-deserved honor!

UC Davis To Join Mountain West Conference

UC Davis News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The University of California, Davis has accepted a formal invitation to join the Mountain West Conference beginning July 1, 2026.

"We are thrilled to join the Mountain West Conference, and we look forward to an incredible experience for our student-athletes and for our fans," said UC Davis Chancellor Gary S. May. "Our transition to the highly regarded conference will introduce our Aggie community to a broader audience, in major metropolitan areas and through increased media coverage. It also provides us with an opportunity to align with universities that share similar academic strengths while also expanding our competitive presence in the Western United States."

The Aggies will compete in all Mountain West Conference-sponsored sports, except for football, which will continue to participate in the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) in the Big Sky Conference. Men's and women's water polo as well as beach volleyball will seek to remain in the Big West through affiliate membership but are prepared to explore other options, if necessary. No changes will occur with membership agreements for equestrian, field hockey and lacrosse.

"Adding UC Davis further strengthens the trajectory of the Mountain West as it continues to build its brand that has proven to elevate institutions and student-athletes," said MW Commissioner Gloria Nevarez. "Chancellor Gary S. May and Director of

Athletics Rocko Deluca have shared their strategic plan and financial vision for enhancing student-athlete development, welfare, and competitive

excellence, and I believe UC Davis brings a wealth of positives in the continuing growth of the Mountain West."

The announcement comes on the heels of a historic fall sport season for the Aggies in which all eight varsity fall sports teams qualified for postseason competition.

Men's soccer secured a Big West championship and a trip to the NCAA tournament. UC Davis football finished the regular season seeded fifth in the nation with a bye in the first round of the NCAA Division I Football Championship followed by a win against Illinois State on Dec. 7. They will play South Dakota on Saturday, Dec. 14 at noon in the quarterfinals.

> Women's soccer and women's cross coun-

try ended the season in second place in the Big West Conference, with men's water polo, men's cross country and women's indoor volleyball fin-

ishing third in the Big West and field hockey finishing sixth in the America East.

"We are grateful to the Mountain West Conference membership for this incredible opportunity and for sharing our vision of academic and athletics excellence," said UC Davis Director of Athletics Rocko DeLuca. "Our campus leadership, students, Aggie alumni, fans, the Davis community and the broader Sacramento region all recognize the unique spirit of UC Davis and carry Aggie Pride with them each and every day. They have invested their time, talent and resources in supporting our growth, and the success of our fall sports is a clear reflection of those efforts. Now is the time to showcase Aggie Pride on a national stage, and the Mountain West's brand and strategy align perfectly with our aspirations."

Additional costs to support the transition, including travel, staffing and support services, will be primarily offset by increased revenues from ticket sales, donations, multimedia rights and, for the first time, revenue distributions from the conference. A ramp-up period of three to four years is anticipated before revenues fully reach projected levels. The university does not plan to use existing institutional funds to support the transition.

Starting no later than the 2026-27 academic year, the Mountain West will feature the United States Air Force Academy; University of California, Davis; Grand Canyon University; University of Hawaii at Mānoa; University of Nevada, Reno; University of New Mexico; San José State University; University of Nevada, Las Vegas; University of Texas, El Paso and the University of Wyoming.



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Christmas Berries Grace the American River Parkway



By Derek Minnema

Christmas berries adorning the American River Parkway with their brilliant red clusters have symbolically been spreading Christmas cheer along California's waterways since long before the state was settled.

Spanish missionaries arriving in the late 18th century were struck by the resemblance of the plant to European holly, traditionally used as Christmas celebrations throughout Europe. The plant's association with Christian symbolism was immediate and profound. The bright red berries, appearing at their peak during the Christmas season, were seen as representing Christ's blood, while the sharp-toothed evergreen leaves reminded the faithful of the crown of thorns placed upon Jesus's head during the crucifixion.

This symbolism resonated deeply with early Christian settlers, who saw divine providence in finding such a powerful reminder of Christ's sacrifice in their new homeland. The berries' annual December emergence aligned perfectly with Advent, the Christian season of preparation for the celebration of Christ's birth. Just as the Star of Bethlehem guided the Wise Men, these red berries served as natural guides along the paths of early Christian travelers in California.

Today, along the American River Parkway in Fair Oaks, these biblical berries continue their winter display, creating a



Overlooking San Juan Rapids, winter berries brighten a December sunset. Photo by Susan Maxwell Skinner

timeless connection between past and present. On a crisp December morning, with temperatures hovering around 55 degrees, mountain bikers and equestrians shared the damp trails, their paths lined with the festive shrubs. Recent rains had left the soil perfectly tacky for bike riding, and the air carried that distinctive winter freshness that makes every breath feel like a blessing.

The integration of natural space and residential areas in Fair Oaks creates a unique community character that reflects the peaceful coexistence of nature and civilization. Unlike many Sacramento suburbs that surrendered to high-density development, Fair Oaks has maintained its semi-rural atmosphere, with the American River Parkway serving as a green ribbon that ties the community together.



Planted on Landis Avenue by early Carmichael colonists, an ancient persimmon tree is framed by winter berries. Photo by Susan Maxwell Skinner

The Christmas berries mark the changing seasons along the parkway's winding trails, their transformation from white spring blossoms to red winter fruits mirroring the Christian liturgical calendar. The berries begin to turn red as Advent approaches, reaching their peak brilliance during the Christmas season, when Christians worldwide celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The berries' persistent presence through winter mirrors the endurance of faith, while their sharp leaves remind believers of Christ's later sacrifice.

As another December unfolds, I find myself increasingly grateful for these simple gifts, Open spaces that give us room to breathe, trails that bring neighbors together and these beautiful berries remind us of Christmas past and present. Whether watching a friend's horse carefully traverse the path or pausing to let a mountain biker pass with a wave and a smile, I'm reminded that the best Christmas presents don't come wrapped in paper. They grow wild along our trails, they float down our river and they live in the hearts of the community we've built together.

Derek Minnema is a Fair Oaks resident, who can be reached at DerekMinnema.com.







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