



San Juan Board
of Education Welcomes
New Members

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Messages of Love

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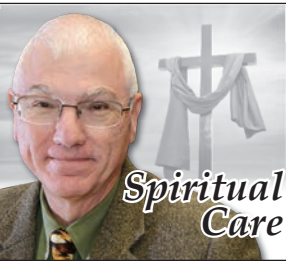
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FOX WILL BE
BACK MARCH 7



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YOU NEVER
EVEN CALL ME
BY MY NAME



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Sac State Kicks Off Spring Semester



Sacramento State President Luke Wood delivered his annual Spring Address to the campus community on Jan. 16, highlighting faculty success and discussing the budget challenges the University faces in the coming year. Photo by Bibiana Ortiz, Sacramento State University

By Cynthia Hubert,
Sacramento State University

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Even as it faces significant budget cuts, Sacramento State has much to celebrate as it approaches its Spring 2025 semester, President Luke Wood said Jan. 16.

In his annual Spring Address, Wood acknowledged challenging financial times ahead, as the university faces an 8% cut in state funding in the coming year, translating to \$45 million at Sac State. But he pointed to enrollment gains, athletic success and faculty achievements among many positive developments propelling the University forward.

The event was one of two held on Jan. 16 to kick off the new semester. In the afternoon, Wood presided over Convocation, the Sac State's formal welcome to new students. The Spring 2025 semester officially began Jan. 21.

During his Spring Address, Wood noted that graduation rates continue to rise, and while other universities are struggling to maintain enrollment, Sac State is trending upward.

Thanks in part to partnerships with regional school and community college districts, Sac State will welcome 2,300 new scholars to campus this spring, Wood said. Those students will join a campus community that

continues to value underserved communities, even as other universities downsize or cut programs dedicated to diversity and inclusion, he added.

"We will continue to provide pathways for upward social mobility, and we will do so unapologetically, as that is a core part of our mission," he said.

Wood also, however, acknowledged that the university is facing a tough budget situation, and "will have to do less with less."

"We will have to identify what it is that we can't continue to do anymore in order to reduce stress on staff and faculty," he said. "We can't be all

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Ballot Measure Proposes Secession



California Secretary
of State News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - California Secretary of State Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D., is addressing misinformation surrounding a ballot measure recently cleared for signature gathering and encouraging Californians to educate themselves about the initiative process and the measures currently in circulation.

On Jan. 23, Weber announced the approval of a new ballot initiative for signature gathering, a routine step in California's direct democracy process.

The proposed initiative, if enacted, places the following question on November 2028 ballot: "Should California leave the United States and become a free and independent country?"

For statewide initiatives, the state attorney general prepares the legal title and summary required on petitions. Once finalized, this language is sent to both the proponent and the secretary of state, officially enabling the measure to proceed.

Announcing these approvals is standard practice designed to promote transparency and encourage public awareness.

"It has come to my attention that misinformation is being circulated, falsely claiming that I am 'organizing an effort for California to secede from the United States,'" stated Weber. "This is absolutely false. Such misinformation, whether intentional or not, is unacceptable, as it erodes trust in our democratic institutions. I urge everyone to turn to trusted sources like my office or their local elections office to verify information about ballot measures or any election-related matters."

Weber emphasized that announcements of approved ballot measures are not endorsements but a legal requirement that supports transparency and civic engagement.

"I encourage all Californians to educate themselves about the initiative process and to explore the measures currently in circulation," Weber added.

For more, see the Statewide Initiative Guide at elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/ballot-measures/pdf/statewide-initiative-guide.pdf.

★

Schools Begin to Embrace AI for Instruction

By Adam Abolfazli,
Rio Americano High School,
Sac School Beat

When ChatGPT, a generative artificial intelligence software, was first popularized in December 2022, schools scrambled to crack down on its use by students, worried that the essay-writing tool would wipe out genuine work.

But two years later, the conversation in schools has drastically changed. In some places, outright rejection of AI has turned into an embrace of its abilities.

School districts in Sacramento, rather than moving to block AI, are now exploring how to implement it in classrooms for both student and teacher use, investing in contracts with AI startups and training educators and families.

Whereas before districts raced to prevent students from using AI to cheat or complete assignments, many have said it is now inevitable that it will become integrated with education, and that there may be even more opportunities for teachers than for students.

In some schools, the teachers rely on AI just as much as the students.

One District and School Offer an Example (or a Warning)

One district, San Juan Unified, is choosing to embrace the rising popularity of AI, albeit slowly.

Select classes in the district, which serves 40,000 students in the Sacramento region, are piloting the use of AI program MagicSchool. The platform, which the district is testing for free, was offered to all teachers



Education switches direction on artificial intelligence. Photo courtesy of Pixabay

for their own use.

But certain teachers at 15 district schools are actually trying out the application with their students, district spokesperson Raj Rai said.

The student version designs personalized lessons and claims to help build AI literacy.

A previous pilot with Guardrailz, an AI software that creates custom

research bots, was ended.

"These tools were selected because they have the most supports for students while also offering the best security, privacy and safety features," the district said in a statement. "Both tools have features that help students understand concepts, get additional practice to improve skills

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Milstein is Sacramento's New Interim City Manager



Leyne Milstein brings 28 years of experience to her role as interim city manager. Photo courtesy of the City of Sacramento

City of Sacramento News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento City Council has unanimously approved a contract appointing Leyne Milstein as the city's interim city manager.

Milstein officially assumed the role on Jan. 14, stepping in to oversee Sacramento's 6,000 full-time, part-time and seasonal employees, manage an annual operating budget exceeding \$1.6 billion, and implement policy direction from the council.

"Thank you, Leyne, for agreeing to step up and serve in this position as we recruit over the next few months," said Mayor Kevin McCarty at the Jan. 14 City Council meeting.

Milstein, who has served as Sacramento's assistant city manager since 2017, also made history with her appointment, becoming the first woman to hold the position of interim city manager.

"I am honored to serve as interim city manager

and to continue working with our dedicated city staff, City Council and community," Milstein said. "As we head into 2025, my focus will be on working with the City Council to balance the budget while minimizing impacts to city services, including labor negotiations for the 11 contracts that are expiring."

Milstein brings 28 years of experience in government management, policy and finance at both the state and local levels. She has been part of the city's executive management team since 2008 and served as assistant city manager since November 2017. In that role, Milstein oversaw the finance, human resource, and Information Technology departments, as well as citywide initiatives such as cannabis policy and enforcement and diversity and equity programs.

Milstein's tenure with the city also includes serving as the director of the finance department from 2008 to 2017, where she was responsible for the

city's financial management. Earlier in her career, Milstein worked for the State of California, including roles at the Department of Finance and the State Public Works Board.

Milstein holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California, Davis, and a master's degree in public administration from California State University, East Bay (formerly Hayward). Her professional accomplishments include serving as president of the Fiscal Officers Department for the League of California Cities and as a member of the Government Finance Officers Association Committee on Governmental Budgeting and Fiscal Policy.

Her appointment follows the council's December decision not to renew the contract of former City Manager Howard Chan.

The council is conducting a national search for a permanent city manager, with Milstein serving in the interim. ★

2025 Black History Month Discussed



Black History Month was founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson in February 1926. Photo courtesy of asalh.org

By Association for the Study of African American Life and History, asalh.org

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Black History Month is an annually observed month-long celebration of African American life, history and culture.

Founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson in February 1926, what was formerly known as Negro History Week became a month-long celebration as a way to promote, research, preserve, interpret, and disseminate information about Black life, History, and culture to the global community.

The relevance of February goes back to 1926, when Dr. Woodson first established "Negro History Week" during the second week of February. And why that week?

Because it encompasses the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, both men being great American symbols of freedom.

More importantly, Dr. Woodson chose them for reasons of tradition. Since Lincoln's assassination in 1865, the black community, along with other Republicans, had been celebrating the fallen President's birthday. And since the late 1890s, black communities across the country had been celebrating Douglass'. Well aware of the pre-existing celebrations, Woodson built Negro History Week around traditional days of commemorating the black past.

The 2025 Black History Month theme, African Americans and Labor, focuses on the various and profound ways that work and working of all kinds,

free and unfree, skilled, and unskilled, vocational and voluntary, intersect with the collective experiences of Black people.

Indeed, work is at the very center of much of Black history and culture. Be it the traditional agricultural labor of enslaved Africans that fed Low Country colonies, debates among Black educators on the importance of vocational training, self-help strategies and entrepreneurship in Black communities, or organized labor's role in fighting both economic and social injustice, Black people's work has been transformational throughout the U.S., Africa, and the Diaspora.

The 2025 Black History Month theme, "African Americans and Labor," sets out to highlight and celebrate the potent impact of this work. ★

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(Up to 4 pitchers) (Below Dishes To Choose From)

\$3 For 14 people \$230.00 + Gratuity
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(14 inch) (Up to 4 pitchers) (Below Dishes To Choose From)

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(14 inch) (Up to 7 pitchers) (Dishes To Choose From Below)

\$3 For 28 people \$385.00 + Gratuity
3Hours Karaoke + 3Pizza + Pitcher Soda + 8 Main Dishes (Party Room)
(14 inch) (Up to 7 pitchers) (Dishes To Choose From Below)

Dishes To Choose From

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Korean: Bulgog, Kimchi, etc.
Mexican: Tacos, Burritos, Quesadillas, etc.
Vietnamese: Pho, Spring Rolls, etc.
Chinese: Dumplings, etc.
Japanese: Sushi, etc.
Indian: Curry, etc.
Thai: Pad Thai, etc.
Other: etc.

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Sweet Rice Dumpling Skin 10 oz, 14 oz
REG. \$3.99/EA
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Corn Dog Mozzarella Cheese 14.1 oz
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WEEKLY MEAT SPECIALS

Beef London Broil/Top Round Roast/Pulpa Para Hornear/Roast sin Hueso **\$4.99** /lb

Beef Ribeye Roast - Boneless Chuletón de Ternera/Asado Deshuesado **\$7.99** /lb

Boneless & Skinless Chicken Thigh Meat Carne de Muslo Deshuesada **\$1.89** /lb

Pork Butts Boneless Colillas de Cerdo sin Hueso **\$1.99** /lb

Pork Baby Back Ribs Costillas de Cerdo **\$2.99** /lb

Pork Hocks Corvejones de Cerdo **\$3.99** /lb

WEEKLY HALAL SPECIALS

Boneless & Skinless Chicken Thigh Meat Carne de Muslo Deshuesada **\$1.99** /lb

Australian Lamb Lamb Stew/Bone In Huevo de Estofado de Cordero Australiano **\$3.49** /lb

Beef London Broil/Top Round Roast/Pulpa Para Hornear/Roast sin Hueso **\$4.99** /lb

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Serrano Pepper **69¢** /lb

Rainbow Bell Pepper 2 lbs **\$3.79** /bag

Red Potato **79¢** /lb

Mini Sweet Pepper 1 lb **\$2.69** /ea

White Dragon Fruit **\$2.29** /lb

Comice Pear **99¢** /lb

Russet Potato 10 lbs Bag **\$2.99** /bag

Seafood Mushroom 150 g **89¢** /ea

AMERICAN/HISPANIC GROCERY

Quaker Oats 42 oz **\$4.99** /ea

Quaker Oats 1 Minute & Old Fashioned 42 oz **\$2.99** /ea

Las Palmas Red Chile Sauce 19 oz **\$2.29** /ea

RJ's Soft Eating Licorices 7 oz **\$2.99** /ea

Johnny's Au Jus Sauce 8 Loz **\$3.49** /ea

Crisco Pure Vegetable Oil 1 gallon **\$13.99** /ea

ASIAN GROCERY

Chaokoh Coconut Milk 13.5 Loz **\$1.99** /ea

Zhenjiang Black Vinegar 18.6 Loz **\$1.69** /ea

Dragonfly Young Green Jackfruit 20 oz **\$1.59** /ea

Del Monte Pineapple Juice 46 Loz **\$4.29** /ea

Tasco Young Coconut Juice 16.9 Loz **\$1.29** /ea

EUROPEAN GROCERY

Zvijeda Sunflower Oil 3 liters **\$16.99** /ea

Safat Mediterranean Grapeseed Oil 2 liters **\$9.99** /ea

Whole Dill Pickles 680 gr **\$3.99** /ea

Indo-European Cucumbers Pickles 23 oz **\$1.99** /ea

Tea Time Assorted Cookies 400 gr **\$3.69** /ea

KOREAN/JAPANESE GROCERY

Rhee Chun Rice 5 lbs **\$5.99** /ea

Shin Ramyon Box 16 x 120 g **\$12.99** /ea

Deer Anders Red Ginseng Extract 30 x 70 ml **\$19.99** /ea

Udong Bai-Top Shell 400 g **\$6.99** /ea

Lotte Choco Pie Regular & Black Sugar 12 x 28 g **\$2.99** /ea

Color Corn Snack 330 g **\$3.99** /ea

HOUSEWARES

PAON SEVEN-EIGHT HAIR COLOR (REFILL ONLY) **\$6.99** /ea

ELECTRIC BBQ GRILL **\$39.99** /ea

ELECTRIC RICE COOKER (4 CUPS) **\$4.99** /ea

ELECTRIC RICE COOKER (6 CUPS) **\$5.49** /ea

ELECTRIC RICE COOKER (10 CUPS) **\$5.99** /ea

FROZEN & FISH DEPT

Frozen Clam Meat 1 lb **\$4.99** /ea

EUROPEAN DELI

Pan Roasted Turkey Breast **\$11.99** /lb

Columbus Applewood Ham **\$7.99** /lb

Kalamata Olives w/ Garlic & Pepper **\$5.39** /lb

Cerignola Olives **\$6.69** /lb

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San Juan Board of Education Welcomes New Members

San Juan Unified School District News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On Dec. 17, San Juan Unified held a special ceremony to welcome new and returning members to the Board of Education. Pam Costa (Area 2) started her fourth term, while Nick Bloise (Area 4) and Abid Stanekzai (Area 1) joined the board for the first time. At the meeting, Ben Avey (Area 6) was chosen as president for 2025. Tanya Kravchuk (Area 5)

was selected as vice-president, and Manuel Perez (Area 7) will be the clerk. Bloise lives in Carmichael and has lived in Sacramento County his whole life. He served more than 23 years in the U.S. Army and retired as a major. He enjoys helping his community by serving on local boards and running a small genealogy business. Stanekzai works hard to support the community. Since 2021, he has helped run programs that improve lives and bring people

together. He has three children who go to Greer Elementary School, where he has been an active parent. Costa has served on the San Juan Unified Board of Education for 12 years. She has been a student, teacher, principal and director in the district. Now, she is a proud grandparent who stays involved in the schools. To learn more about the Board of Education, visit the San Juan Unified website at <https://www.sanjuan.edu>. ★



On Dec. 17, the San Juan Unified School District Board of Education held a ceremony to welcome new and returning members. Photo courtesy of San Juan Unified School District



Former KXTV ABC 10 reporter Deborah Hoffman of Sacramento has been appointed chief deputy director at the Office of Tax Appeals by Gov. Gavin Newsom. Photo courtesy of CalVet.ca.gov

Gov. Newsom Announces Appointments

Office of Gov. Newsom News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On Jan. 28, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced the following appointments: Deborah Hoffman of Sacramento has been appointed chief deputy director at the Office of Tax Appeals. Hoffman has been special advisor at the California Department of Veterans Affairs since 2020, where she was previously senior advisor for Communications

from 2019 to 2020. She was undersecretary of the California Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency from 2017 to 2019. Hoffman was deputy press secretary in the Office of Governor Brown from 2015 to 2017. She was assistant secretary of Public and Employee Communications at the California Department of Corrections from 2012 to 2015. Hoffman was deputy secretary of Communications and External Affairs at the

California Environmental Protection Agency from 2011 to 2012. She was communications director and policy consultant in the Office of Senator Fran Pavley from 2009 to 2011. Hoffman was a reporter at KXTV ABC10 News Sacramento from 1995 to 2009. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism from California State University, Northridge. This position does not require Senate confirmation, and the compensation

is \$187,104. Hoffman is registered without party preference. Krista Dunzweiler of Sacramento has been appointed chief deputy general counsel in the Office of Legal Affairs at the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, where she has been chief deputy general counsel since 2019. Dunzweiler held several positions at the California Department of Justice from 2014 to 2019 including deputy attorney general IV and deputy attorney general III. She was an associate at Locke Lord LLP from 2011 to

2014, Bullivant Houser Bailey from 2008 to 2011, Diepenbrock Harrison from 2006 to 2008, and at Weintraub Genshlea Chediak from 2004 to 2006. Dunzweiler earned a Juris Doctor degree from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, and a Master of Arts degree in Communications and a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Psychology from the University of the Pacific. This position does not require Senate confirmation, and the compensation is \$229,236. Dunzweiler is a Democrat. ★

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Gov. Meets with Small Business Owners Impacted by Firestorm

Office of Governor Gavin Newsom News Release

LOS ANGELES, CA (MPG) - Continuing to have an eye toward recovery and rebuilding, Governor Gavin Newsom on Jan. 21 met with workers and small business owners impacted by the devastating Los Angeles firestorm to hear their stories and highlight the state’s work to help communities rebuild.

The Governor visited NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in La Canada Flintridge for a conversation with employees impacted by the Eaton Fire. Hundreds of Jet Propulsion Laboratory employees lost their homes, with over 100 more likely to be displaced due to damage to their homes. Joined by Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chair Kathryn Barger, Governor Newsom talked with the employees about rebuilding efforts, as well as concerns about home insurance.

As the largest employer of those impacted by the Eaton Fire, Jet Propulsion Laboratory started a disaster relief fund to help employees, which has already raised over \$2 million. Jet Propulsion Laboratory manages the Deep Space Network, a global web of antennas that communicate with spacecraft. The NASA facility has partnered with CAL FIRE to use soil moisture sensors to support the state's fire management and prevention efforts. JPL also helped California launch pollution-tracking satellites last year and partners with the state on drought monitoring.

Governor Newsom also visited with small business owners Kevin Hockin and Rosanna Kvernmo. They started Side Pie as a pizza pop-up during the



Governor Newsom met with small business owners to see how the recent wildfires have impacted them. Photo courtesy of the Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

middle of the pandemic. After it went viral, they expanded into a brick-and-mortar shop in Altadena in 2021. They received news while at Disneyland with their daughter that they had lost their restaurant and that their home suffered extensive smoke damage. Kevin and Rosanna plan on rebuilding when safe to do so.

“Thousands of hard-working Californians lost their homes, their businesses and their livelihoods to this firestorm. From the hundreds of workers at NASA’s iconic Jet Propulsion Laboratory who lost their homes to folks like Kevin and Rosanna who lost their Altadena pizza shop – the numbers will never capture just how life-changing these fires were for Californians. It will take years to rebuild and fully recover but California will be there every step of the way,” said Governor Gavin Newsom.

Also on Jan. 21, Governor Newsom stopped by CAL FIRE and CDCR conservation camp crews filling sandbags that will be placed in firestorm-affected

areas to help protect against potential flooding and mudslides. Yesterday, the Governor issued an executive order to help mitigate this risk and protect communities by hastening efforts to remove debris, bolster flood defenses, and stabilize hillsides in affected areas.

Helping Small Businesses Recover

Since the firestorm, California has worked with federal and local providers to help businesses with the resources and support they need to recover and rebuild.

200+ business advisors from Small Business Support Centers funded through the California Office of the Small Business Advocate’s (CalOSBA) Technical Assistance Program are staffed across the region.

This includes business advisors from the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Women’s Business Center (WBC) who can answer loan application, insurance, employee support and business recovery questions. They are co-located



Governor Newsom speaks with CAL FIRE employees in the wake of the Los Angeles fires. Photo courtesy of the Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

at the Disaster Recovery Center at Pasadena City College and the Disaster Loan Outreach Center in Camarillo (Ventura County).

Small Business Development Center and Women’s Business Center advisors are also present at the various Business Recovery Centers organized by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

California Office of the Small Business Advocates has launched a Resource Guide for small businesses impacted by the wildfires through its Outsmart Disaster website, and is conducting a series of online trainings in both English and Spanish.

The California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (IBank) is offering loan programs for businesses from one to 750 employees affected by the LA wildfires.

Disaster Relief Loan Guarantee Program (DRLGP) issues loan guarantees up to 95% of the loan through IBank’s partner Financial Development Corporations to help small business borrowers

impacted by disaster who need term loans or lines of credit for working capital.

Additionally, Governor Newsom has issued a number of executive orders in response to the Los Angeles fire storms to help aid in rebuilding and recovery, create more temporary housing, and protect survivors from exploitation and price gouging.

Get Help Today

Californians can go to CA.gov/LAfires – a hub for information and resources from state, local and federal government.

Individuals and business owners who sustained losses from wildfires in Los Angeles County can apply for disaster assistance online at DisasterAssistance.gov, by calling 800-621-3362, or by using the FEMA smart phone application. Assistance is available in more than 40 languages.

If you use a relay service, such as video relay service (VRS), captioned telephone service or others, give FEMA the number for that service. ★

State Water Project Increases 2025 Allocation Forecast

California Department of Water Resources News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - On Jan. 28, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced an update to the State Water Project allocation forecast for 2025. The allocation has increased to 20 percent of requested supplies, up from 15 percent in December. The State Water Project provides water to 29 public water agencies that serve 27 million Californians.

While January has been incredibly dry across California, storm runoff into the state’s reservoirs came in higher than forecasted at the end of December allowing for a modest allocation

increase. Storms in late November and early December had a positive impact by saturating the ground, allowing for storms through December to more efficiently runoff into reservoirs.

More storms are needed, and the long-range forecast does hint at a return to wet conditions in early February that could bring much-needed rain and snow.

“We are in the middle of our biggest months for precipitation for California, and unfortunately January has been very dry, putting a significant dent in our season,” said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. “A return to wet weather is critical for our season’s success and it will take many more storms to make up the deficit

and further boost water supply deliveries.”

Despite the dry conditions, California has effectively managed its reservoirs to keep storage above average for this time of year. Lake Oroville, the State Water Project’s largest reservoir, is currently at 127 percent of average for this time of year. San Luis Reservoir, which is jointly operated by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, is at 102 percent of average for this time of year.

Reservoirs in Southern California are also near or above their historical averages.

Each year, the department provides State Water Project allocation forecasts based on available water storage, projected water supply, and water demands. Allocations are updated

monthly as snowpack, rainfall, and runoff information is assessed, with a final allocation typically determined in May or June.

As the winter progresses, if California sees an increase in rain and snowfall, the allocation forecast may increase. Learn more about how the State Water Project allocation process works at <https://water.ca.gov/News/Blog/2025/Jan-25/Get-the-Facts-About-the-State-Water-Project-Allocation>.

The allocation forecast notice to State Water Contractors and historical data on SWP allocations are available at <https://water.ca.gov/programs/state-water-project/management/swp-water-contractors>. ★

FAIR Applauds Passage of the Laken Riley Act

Federation for American Immigration Reform News Release

WASHINGTON, D.C. (MPG) - The following statement was issued by Dan Stein, president of the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) in response to final passage of the Laken Riley Act by Congress.

“The Federation for American Immigration Reform applauds Congress for its swift action in passing the Laken Riley Act with bipartisan support. Fittingly, final passage by the House of Representatives comes eleven months to the day after the Georgia nursing student was brutally murdered by a criminal illegal alien who had been allowed to enter our country and remained at large even after being charged with serious offenses in New York City.

“The Laken Riley Act will be one of the first pieces of legislation President Trump signs into law in his new administration. In his inaugural address, the president spoke of the need to restore common sense to government, and enacting legislation that requires Immigration and Customs Enforcement to detain more criminal aliens certainly fits that description.

“It is especially heartening that the bill that emerged from the Senate Monday and passed today in the House is stronger than the original version. Led by Senators Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and John Fetterman (D-Pa.), that chamber, by

a 75-24 margin, added key provisions from Sarah’s Law to the final bill. The amendment is named for Sarah Root, another promising young woman who was killed in 2016 by an illegal alien drunk driver who was released from federal custody and allowed to run free. This added provision requires DHS to issue detainers and take into custody aliens who are charged with, arrested for, convicted of, or admit to having committed crimes that resulted in death or serious bodily injury.

“Along with the executive orders signed by President Trump on his first day in office, the bipartisan support for the Laken Riley Act gives Americans hope that enactment of other commonsense border and immigration enforcement measures, that truly protect the interest and security of the American people, can be achieved in the 119th Congress.”

About FAIR

Founded in 1979, the Federation for American Immigration Reform is the country’s largest immigration reform group. With over 3 million members and supporters nationwide, the Federation for American Immigration Reform fights for immigration policies that serve national interests, not special interests. The Federation for American Immigration Reform believes that immigration reform must enhance national security, improve the economy, protect jobs, preserve our environment, and establish a rule of law that is recognized and enforced. ★

New Testing Finds Illegal Levels of Bisphenol S in Receipt Paper

Center for Environmental Health News Release

CALIFORNIA (MPG) - On Jan. 14, the non-profit watchdog Center for Environmental Health (CEH) announced new legal action against eight companies for exposing customers to Bisphenol S (BPS)—the lesser-known but also harmful chemical cousin to Bisphenol A (BPA)—in receipt paper.

Bisphenol S, like Bisphenol A, is a hormone-disrupting chemical that mimics estrogen and can disrupt the normal functioning of the body, including metabolism, growth and development and reproduction.

Bisphenol S was added to the list of chemicals known to the state of California to cause cancer and reproductive issues at the end of 2023, which allowed businesses a one-year grace period to ensure that their products either did not contain this chemical, or included a clear and reasonable warning for the presence of Bisphenol S. After Dec. 29, 2024, the Center for Environmental Health conducted testing to determine if receipt paper still included this chemical in levels that can harm human health and found eight companies in violation of California Proposition 65.

The retailers are Exxon, Walmart, Saks Off 5th, Aesop, Dick’s Sporting Goods, Ross, Ace Hardware and Lowe’s.

Previously, the Center for Environmental Health reached legal agreements with over 10 major retailers and suppliers of receipts, requiring that they remove Bisphenol A from their receipt thermal paper. While the receipts were reformulated to remove Bisphenol A, Center for Environmental Health’s recent investigation showed the

presence of Bisphenol S.

“For more than two decades, CEH has ensured that companies and manufacturers that remove one toxic chemical from their products do not replace it with another toxic, regrettable substitute,” said Kizzy Charles-Guzman, CEO at Center for Environmental Health. “These companies have the opportunity to lead by improving their product specifications so that the receipt paper they purchase is safer for their workers and customers.”

In 2021, Center for Environmental Health co-created a certification program that highlights products—including thermal paper used for receipts—that do not contain harmful chemicals.

“Studies show that BPS, like BPA, can be absorbed through skin when handling receipt paper, even for short periods,” said Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon, senior director of the Toxic Exposures and Pollution Prevent Program at Center for Environmental Health. “When companies know better, they must do better. We are calling on retailers to demand a healthier specification for receipt paper from their suppliers, and suppliers have an opportunity to meet this demand and certify their products under CEH and Clean Production Action’s standard.”

To reduce exposure to Bisphenol S, Center for Environmental Health recommends that whenever possible, consumers either decline receipts printed on thermal paper, or opt to receive receipts via email for their purchases. Store workers who must handle receipts should wear gloves if possible or avoid using alcohol-based hand cleaners before handling a receipt because it can significantly increase the absorption of Bisphenol S. ★

Teens Create Messages of Love

MPG Staff

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Two high school students have found a way to give back to young patients and their families at Shriners Hospital in Sacramento this Valentine's Day. Norcal Gift From the Heart Foundation's second annual Valentine's Day Drive is under-way and preparing to shower patients and their families with handmade Valentines and hundreds of toys and teen items on Feb. 14.

Oak Ridge High School Junior Aislynn Hartman, 16, and Ponderosa High School Sophomore Sophia Alonso, 15, created their nonprofit organization, the Norcal Gift From the Heart Foundation, in 2024 with the mission of encouraging philanthropy among students in their community while focusing on the specific support of children's charities.

The nonprofit Norcal Gift From the Heart organization is based out of Gold River. "It all started with the simple idea of collecting handmade Valentines with loving messages for teens," Hartman said. "The first year, it was just the two of us and we asked our own schools to help us make Valentines but this year, more than 12 schools in four counties have agreed to either make Valentines or collect toys for Shriners."

While their first year was largely focused on all the paperwork necessary for starting a nonprofit organization and getting their IRS tax-exempt status, the teens shared that this year has been dedicated to spreading the word and encouraging other schools to help them reach their goal of collecting 1,200 valentines.

To reach this goal, Hartman and Alonso created a Student Ambassador program, recruiting



Marina Middle School students enthusiastically join Norcal's Valentine's Day Drive for a second year. Photo courtesy of Norcal Gift From the Heart



Co-founder Sophia Alonso, right, poses with Holy Trinity student Mary Cabaral. Photo courtesy of Norcal Gift From the Heart



The girls are confident they will reach their goal of 1,200 cards this year. Photo courtesy of Norcal Gift From the Heart



Co-founder Aislynn Hartman admires cards made by students at Holy Trinity Parish School on Jan. 17. Photo courtesy of Norcal Gift From the Heart

students from area high schools and providing them with the tools and public speaking points to launch the program on their own campuses.

"Our foundation supplies pre-made valentine kits for all the schools that want to participate. The kits include things like stickers, card-making materials and sample messages," said co-founder Alonso. "This year, we also created a special QR code to link our Amazon Gift List to our website and social

media so donors could ship a toy or teen item directly to the foundation." Both girls agreed that their favorite part of the drive is reading the sincere personal messages and seeing how much effort kids put into making their cards.

"We hope the kids and teens at Shriners really feel all of our love this Valentine's Day," Hartman added.

Also feeling the love is Hartman's mother, Kellie Hartman.

"Exposure to running her own business is not new to Aislynn, who spent much of her life working at her parents' businesses growing up. Her father, Galen Hartman, owned Ground Zero Auto Body Inc., located at 11297 Coloma Road, for 25 years before transitioning to teaching auto body at Mather Center," Kellie Hartman said. "At an early age, Aislynn learned data entry and greeting customers. I own a family law office in Gold River, where Aislynn works as

a part-time law clerk. It simply made sense to start her nonprofit in Gold River, since that has always been where she spends her time outside of school and the community has always been so supportive of her family's businesses."

For more information or to get involved, go online to Norcalgiftfromtheheart.org or look for Norcal Gift From the Heart on Facebook and Instagram. The foundation accepts donations all year. ★

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Aggies Earn Riders of the Week Awards

UC Davis Athletics News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

- Seasoned UC Davis student athletes Jessie Rechts and Margaret Franke were named conference riders of the week in Eastern College Athletic Conference's Jan. 28 release.

Rechts, a senior from San Diego, claims her second Fences Rider of the Week accolade on the season and third in her overall career. Going second in the event while riding Bear, captain Rechts scored an 85 for her equitation over the Fences in a thrilling matchup versus the Delaware State Hornets. She won against her Hornet opponent with a large 23-point differential and



UC Davis student athletes collected Rider of the Week accolades on Jan. 28. Photo courtesy of UC Davis Athletics

took home the Most Outstanding Performer award in the event.

Over on the Flat, Franke collects her first Rider of the Week nod of the season following her impressive slew of credentials from previous years of competition such as being named the conference's Flat Rider of the Year. With a fascinating 31-point difference, Franke and Otis played a hand in the 5-0 Aggie sweep on the Flat versus the Minnesota Crookston Eagles. Her performance was scored a brilliant 84, and she took home the Most Outstanding Performer award in the event.

In Fences, Rechts has tallied up six wins on the season, while Franke has collected seven victories on the Flat. ★

Hornet Soccer Adds UCLA Transfer

Sacramento State University News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - On Jan. 28, Sacramento State University head men's soccer coach Michael Linenberger announced that Amjot Narang, a midfielder who has played the last three seasons at UCLA, has transferred and will join the Hornets for the 2025 season.

Narang, a 6-foot-1, 160-pound midfielder, becomes the third student-athlete to join the Sacramento State soccer program this spring along with freshman Allbranly Gue and junior college standout Eli Reyneveld.

"We are very excited to add Amjot to our team for fall 2025," Linenberger said. "He is a classy central midfielder who has incredible technical ability and vision on the ball. He can dictate the tempo and rhythm of the game as a box

to box midfielder. He will immediately make us better."

A native of El Dorado Hills, who prepped at Oak Ridge High School, Narang appeared in 22 matches over the last three seasons with the Bruins, posting a pair of assists in 2023 as a sophomore and appearing in a career-high 312 minutes last season. He was a fall Academic All-Big Ten selection in 2024 and was a member of the UCLA Director's Honor Roll.

Prior to heading to Southern California, Narang was ranked as the No. 7 prospect in Northern California by Top Drawer Soccer and played club with the Sacramento Republic FC Academy. He made his debut with the first team on Aug. 31, 2021, against San Diego Loyal and helped lead the U19 squad to the final four of the "MLS Next" Tournament. ★

Midfielder Amjot Narang is transferring from UCLA to Sacramento State for the 2025 season. Photo courtesy of UCLA Athletics



A's Announce 2025 Promotional Schedule

Major League Baseball News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA - The A's 2025 promotional schedule for their inaugural season at Sutter Health Park will feature 14 giveaway items including three bobbleheads, four fireworks shows and more. Single-game tickets will go on sale on Friday, Jan. 31.

Opening Series Giveaways. Every fan who attends the A's inaugural game at Sutter Health Park on March 31 against the Cubs will receive a green-and-white trucker hat donning the new Sacramento jersey patch that the team will wear this season in addition to a Rickey Henderson rally towel.

The following day, every fan in attendance will receive a 2025 magnet schedule and on the final day of the opening series, each fan will receive a Rickey Henderson t-shirt in honor of the greatest A's player of all time.

Player Bobbleheads. The A's are giving away three bobbleheads throughout the course of the season to celebrate the exciting talent on the field in 2025. On Sunday, June 8, fans will receive a Home Run Counter Bobblehead of 2024 Silver Slugger Award-winner Brent Rooker. Two

weeks later, on Sunday, June 22, fans will receive a Mason Miller bobblehead in honor of the flamethrowing closer's All-Star 2024 campaign. Finally, a Lawrence Butler bobblehead will be given away Thursday, July 10, which also happens to be the superstar's 25th birthday.

Wearables Galore. The rest of the giveaways feature a plethora of wearable items, including an A's basketball jersey on April 26, a straw hat on May 6, a cooler bag on May 22, an A's backpack just in time for the back-to-school rush on Aug. 3, a hat on Aug. 26, a t-shirt on Sept. 14, and a crewneck sweatshirt on Sept. 26.

Four Fireworks Days. The 2025 home schedule will feature four super-sized fireworks shows. Following the games on June 7 vs. the Orioles, July 4 vs. the Giants, Aug. 16 vs. the Angels, and Sept. 27 vs. the Royals, fans will be treated to a fireworks display they won't want to miss.

Heritage Nights Return. The A's will bring back heritage nights for the 2025 season beginning with Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Night on May 20. African American Heritage Night will be held on June 19 to honor Juneteenth, and Sept. 23 will mark Hispanic Heritage Night. ★

Sacramento Kings News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

- The Sacramento Kings and Golden 1 Center unveiled a new PATH Grab-and-Go location, integrating Amazon's Just Walk Out technology to enhance the fan experience. This innovative store debuted at the Jan. 22 game against the Golden State Warriors and will be available during all Kings home games, as well as most concerts and events at Golden 1 Center.

"Sustainability is a core value of Golden 1 Center, and this Grab-and-Go location not only provides fans with convenient access to PATH's eco-friendly aluminum bottles but also reflects our shared dedication to environmental responsibility," said Sacramento Kings President of Business Operations John Rinehart. "By also adding PATH refillable water stations, we are furthering our commitment to reduce waste and protect our environment for future



Grab-and-Go location at Golden One Center provides fans with convenient access to PATH's eco-friendly aluminum bottles containing still purified water. Photo by Sacramento Kings

generations." "Golden 1 Center is setting the standard for convenience and sustainability in sports venues," said PATH Partner Cedric Benaroch. "This innovative Grab-and-Go location not only makes it easier for fans to enjoy PATH's sustainable aluminum bottles, but it also highlights our shared commitment to enhancing the fan experience while prioritizing the planet. Additionally, the PATH refillable water stations allow fans to stay hydrated while reducing single-use waste, reinforcing our mission to create lasting change."

The new PATH Grab-and-Go location will offer a selection of beverages, including co-branded

PATH aluminum water bottles, featuring a sleek, redesigned black finish. These lightweight bottles contain still purified water with electrolytes for taste and serve as a stylish, reusable souvenir for fans. PATH water has been available at Golden 1 Center since the 2021-2022 season, and as part of this partnership, water refill stations presented by PATH will also be available throughout the arena.

Shopping at the PATH Grab-and-Go is fast and simple. Fans start by scanning their credit card or mobile wallet at the gate to enter. Once inside, they can grab what they need and simply walk out. Payment is automatically processed as they leave. ★

Aggies Post Top Fall Quarter Academic Marks

UC Davis Athletics News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

- Tying for the sixth-highest quarterly GPA in Division I history, UC Davis student-athletes again set the standard in the classroom posting a fall quarter cumulative GPA of 3.25.

The Aggie women's team tied

for its fourth highest Division I GPA with a mark of 3.35 and the UC Davis men posted a 3.07 GPA tying for the eighth highest mark in the Division I era.

An impressive 12.95 percent of Aggie student-athletes finished with a quarterly GPA of 4.0, with 89 Aggies breaching the mark during the fall quarter. 272 Aggies finished with a

3.5+ quarterly GPA (39.59 percent) and 476 student-athletes posted a mark of 3.0+ GPA, encompassing 69.29 percent of all student-athletes.

Women's golf posted the highest quarterly team GPA with a mark of 3.68, tying for the program's fourth-highest GPA in Division I history. Men's cross country led the men's teams

with a 3.25 GPA (fifth highest in Division I) and that mark was also the seventh highest posted by an Aggie Division I men's team.

AGGIE NOTES

Women's water polo had its highest team GPA of the Division I era with a mark of 3.51. Men's basketball had the program's second highest

GPA of the Division 1 era with a 3.14. Baseball had the program's fourth highest team GPA of the Division 1 era with a 3.05. Women's tennis had the program's fourth highest team GPA of the Division 1 era with a 3.51. Women's lacrosse had the program's fifth highest team GPA of the Division 1 era with a 3.44. ★

City, SacRT Planning to Weatherproof Transportation

City of Sacramento News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - As summer heat and winter storms become more frequent and intense due to climate change, the City of Sacramento and the Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) are taking action to prepare its public transportation system for potential challenges. Through a new planning effort called SacAdapt, the agencies are creating

an actionable roadmap to strengthen Sacramento’s transportation infrastructure against the impacts of extreme weather. This plan is funded by a Caltrans Adaptation Planning Grant and will address issues like extreme heat, flooding, and high winds, ensuring the city’s transportation system is resilient and ready for the future. “The key starting point is understanding all of the ways that extreme weather

is impacting our transportation system today,” said city Sustainability Analyst Sarah Kolarik. “We want to hear from the public, how has extreme weather affected the way you get around Sacramento?” Sharing your voice will help ensure the plan reflects the real experiences and everyday needs of all Sacramentans. Get involved by filling out an online survey by Feb. 28 to share how storms, heat or other extreme weather has impacted

how you travel in Sacramento. The survey can be accessed through the project website at, cityofsacramento.gov/public-works/climate/Initiatives/adaptation-resilience/sacadapt. Paper surveys can also be completed in-person at any Sacramento community center during the month of February. Project updates will be shared on the project website and through the Sustainable Sacramento newsletter. ★

Sac State Kicks Off Spring Semester

Continued from Page 1

things to all people in all areas, but we can be really great in the areas that we excel in.” He devoted a significant part of his speech to honoring extraordinary faculty and staff members. Sac State soon will be classified by the Carnegie Foundation as an elite research institution that brings in tens of millions of outside dollars and awards a significant number of doctoral degrees, Wood noted. Among the researchers Wood highlighted were Alex Petitt from the department of Physics and Astronomy, who has received a \$230,625 National Science Foundation award for his research in modeling spiral galaxies; Praveen Meduri, in Electrical and Electronic Engineering, who received a \$344,000 National Science Foundation grant to study ways of improving student outcomes in online STEM courses; and Nate Dutra from the Deaf Studies program, who

won a \$3.4 million grant from the National Institutes of Health for work on language acquisition among Deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Wood also called attention to faculty members who have produced journal articles, published books and served as media experts on important topics. “The future is bright because of all of you,” the president said. “You embody the Hornet spirit by ensuring that we can advance our mission day in, and day out.” Later that day, the University held its semiannual Convocation to welcome new students starting this semester. The event marks the formal beginning of students’ academic careers at Sacramento State, serving as a bookend to the Commencement ceremony that marks the completion of their degree. Presiding over the ceremony, Wood frequently referred to the University as “Our Sacramento State,” saying it belongs to the community, its alumni, faculty and staff.

“And most importantly it belongs to our nearly 31,000 students who are on their pathway to creating a better life for themselves and their family. That includes you, here today,” Wood said. “This University belongs to you. You are not a guest at this moment, this day. This is your hive. This is your home.” Wood also offered advice to incoming students. “Get involved on campus,” he said. “Remember that half of what you learn at Sacramento State occurs outside of the classrooms, and laboratories, and studios, and the other half occurs inside those classrooms, laboratories and studios. You have the opportunity to get involved outside the classrooms.” He urged students to use their time at Sac State to figure out their life’s purpose. “It’s not really just about your degree,” Wood said. “It’s not even about your goals to become a scientist, business leader, health care professional, policy maker,

educator, partner or community leader. It’s about what you do when you’re empowered with that title or that role to change the world.” “Embrace every good and challenging experience as an instructive lesson on how we can and should change the world and lead this city, this university and this world.” During the ceremony, students and family and supporters pinned each other with special Sac State pins, a symbolic acknowledgement of their induction into the Hornet Family and the role parents, friends and other loved ones play in students’ success. Alyssa Dillingham, 21, a transfer student from American River College who will be studying Childhood Development, attended Convocation with her parents. “Coming from ARC, we didn’t get to experience things like this,” Dillingham said. “This was a different way to start the school year off with good vibes.” Her parents, Joe and Bennae, said they were “beyond proud” to attend the ceremony with their daughter. “We want to celebrate her and honor her hard work,” Bennae Dillingham said. ★

Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



Mark your calendars for March 7 in the friendly confines of Golden One Arena, as it should be a night to remember. Yes, on that night when the San Antonio Spurs arrive, you’ll have the opportunity to once again witness the fastest man in the NBA, and you guessed it, none other than former King DeAaron Fox.

Emotions are running high right now as arguably the best overall player in Sacramento Kings history leaves the Sactown family to join the San Antonio Spurs.

What do I think of that? Sad simply doesn’t get it. There’s a hole in my heart, but a gratitude for a player that turned back the clock when it comes to professionalism and fan involvement.

DeAaron has comported himself with a degree of elegance and grace seldom seen in professional athletes. I feel that Sacramento is not only losing an amazing athlete, but an amazing family as well. Make no mistake about it, the Foxes are a package, and they will steal your heart.

I fondly recall a moment earlier this season in which DeAaron took a hard fall at the edge of court where the baseline meets the sideline. He went head over heels, and as he rolled over to get up, who was there to assist but none other than his wife who was sitting on the front row with his son. It made me smile as DeAaron was helped to his feet by Recce, and then it was on with the game.

I will miss watching his young son clapping gleefully, and DeAaron streaking to the hoop and scoring baskets that would be beyond the capability of most NBA players.

I won’t forget his record setting 60-point performance against the Minnesota Timberwolves, albeit in an overtime loss, but it took nothing away from the highest scoring single game total in franchise history.

I can’t help but smile and nod my head when I remember DeAaron taking several minutes to talk with my grandson and sign his treasured DeAaron Fox rookie card prior to a game last season. The photos of that moment along with the card itself will be something my grandson will never forget, and it simply is who

DeAaron Fox really is.

Sunday Feb. 2 will be a day that most Kings fans will never forget, and as big a trade as the Luka Doncic for Anthony Davis was over the weekend, for those of us that love the Kings, it pales in comparison.

The nuts and bolts are that DeAaron Fox is going the San Antonio Spurs in a 3-team trade that also sends Jordan McLaughlin to the Spurs, and Keven Huerter to the Chicago Bulls.

What the Kings receive in return is 2-time all-star Zach Lavine who at age 29 is right in the heart of his prime. Zach was the longest tenured player on the Bulls squad, so like most Kings fans, Chicago is likely shedding tears. Lavine is scoring 24 points per game this season, which is just a hair below the scoring output of Fox.

Not to be ignored by any means in this blockbuster trade, are the 6 draft choices that come with the trade. The Kings receive 3 #1’s and 3 #2’s and it will be years before the Sacramento Kings and their fans are able to see the full completion of this trade.

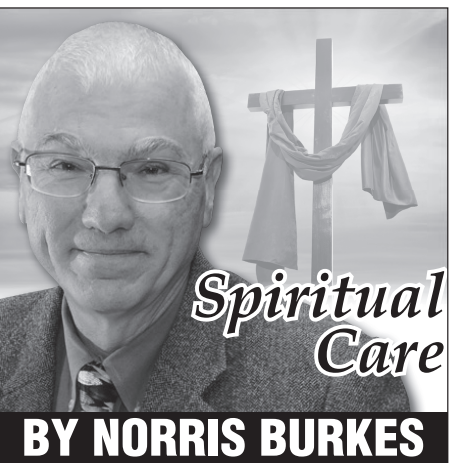
Zach Lavine does not solve the missing component at the power forward position, but many believe that another move is coming prior to the trade deadline this week. Auspicious in all of this, is the remarkable 3-point shooting that Lavine brings with him. Currently shooting just over 44% ranks among the league leaders, and as Keven Huerter departs, leaving Sacramento as somewhat of a disappointment from beyond the arc, a 44% 3-point shooter is just what the doctor ordered. That combined with a field goal percentage of over 50% is notable for a guard in the NBA, so let’s all take a deep breath, and a collective wait and see approach.

Will I miss DeAaron Fox? Do I believe he is the #1 overall best first round pick in the history of the Sacramento Kings? I say heartily, YES!

Godspeed DeAaron Fox and may you and your family thrive in San Antonio! You will be missed!

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

You Never Even Call Me By My Name



During my adolescent years, I rarely introduced myself with verbal clarity. My soft introductions were hard to hear and communicated more doubt than any kind of confident identity.

I’d try to tell people that my name was Norris, but they’d often respond with a one-word question. “What?”

If I repeated my introduction, my inquisitors only became more frustrated. “What? Did you say Morris?”

Even if they heard “Norris,” they might say, “Yes, but what’s your first name?” The assumption was that Norris could only be a surname.

So, by the time I graduated from high school in 1975, I’d had enough of the confusion. I anticipated an opportunity to end it when I accepted a summer job at a church conference center outside Santa Fe, New Mexico.

A few weeks later, I entered the grounds ready for a change. The first person I met introduced himself and I responded with the first syllable of my middle name, “Ed.” I was not only using my middle name, but I’d adopted the abbreviated version.

I still remember his reply – “What? Did you say Fred?”

It was quickly apparent that my lack of confidence was still causing me to mumble my name. “Ed” rolled off my tongue with no more clarity than did “Norris.”

By the end of the summer, I’d already received a lot of grief from my mother who constantly reminded me that she wouldn’t have named me Norris if she had intended for me to go by Ed. I returned to Norris.

Out in Northern New Mexico, the name experiment seemed harmless enough. After all, it was only a summer job. Since I was headed for Baylor University in Texas, I resolved to leave my AKA-Ed life in New Mexico’s high desert.

Not so fast. I wouldn’t be the only staff member from the camp headed for Baylor.

Imagine the surprise on the face of the freshman girl I escorted to the homecoming bonfire when we were greeted by two of my former New Mexico coworkers who called me “Ed.”

In the weeks that followed, my old camp friends continually called me Ed, compounding the confusion among my new Baylor friends. My roommates were further puzzled when they brought in mail addressed to “Ed Burkes.”

During my sophomore year, David Allen Coe’s, “You Never Even Call Me by My Name,” became a favorite song. By my senior year, I’d persuaded all of my friends to call me Norris once again – with only one exception.

That exception was the especially spirited blonde I’d met in that New Mexico camp named Becky. Through four years of college, my roommates teased me at every mail call. “Yoo-hoo, Ed!” they’d croon in a falsetto voice. “She wrote you another letter.”

It took a lot of persuasion to get this girl to call me Norris. She preferred the name Ed and it seemed as though she’d never concede. However, at our wedding in 1980, she finally made a pledge to forever call me Norris.

“Norris,” she said, “I take thee to be my wedded husband. To have and to hold, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part.”

Happy 45th anniversary, sweetheart. You’ve always known who I am, even though I often lack a clue. Your love changes me because it honors the best in me.

It is a love for the person God created me to be, not what I should, could or would have been. And in that love, I find the most cherished reminder of the love of God.

And that is something Ed and Norris will cherish forever. ★

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Schools Begin to Embrace AI for Instruction

Continued from Page 1

and get support in a variety of other ways, including language supports and accessibility features.”

Notably, the district refers to the platforms as “tools,” rather than full-on digital programs.

The thinking is that getting ahead of the issue is better than racing to implement bans on certain programs and websites.

Last year, the Rio Americano High history department assigned students to use ChatGPT to generate a sample outline for their Junior Research Projects, a large historical essay every student completes with the goal of preparing for college-level research.

And a Rio Americano English teacher is testing the use of ChatGPT for writing feedback with students this year.

In San Juan Unified, ChatGPT is now accessible on district-sanctioned student Chromebooks.

Some schools are welcoming AI more than others. According to Rio Americano principal Cliff Kelly, only one or two unnamed classes at the school are participating in the pilot, and results are not yet available.

“Rather than pretending it doesn’t exist, San Juan Unified is working really hard and really intentionally to support staff with how to use it but also to support them in their work,” said Nicole Naditz, a program specialist for instructional technology.

Naditz has been informing families about the district’s ongoing AI efforts and working to train teachers in how to use it.

Teachers Turn to AI

MagicSchool, the San Juan-tested software and main AI platform nationwide, says it can save teachers up to 10 hours of work per week.

One English teacher

showed the backend of MagicSchool to a Sacramento School Beat reporter, although she does not regularly use the program.

The website opens to a dashboard of dozens of features available to teachers, both generative and feedback-oriented. Ranked by most popular: the image generator, presentation generator, text rewriter, lesson plan generator, quiz maker, worksheet generator, report card comments and text leveler.

For its four million teacher users, MagicSchool can also create rubrics, write individualized education plans and 504s, respond to parent emails, give essay feedback and generate classroom management techniques – among a wide-ranging list of capabilities.

The website even warns teachers to “make sure to add your final touch, review for bias and accuracy, and contextualize appropriately” when using it.

Google Classroom has also integrated AI into its teacher platform with lesson plan generation.

Although many teachers did not want to be interviewed about their AI use, it has become clear that educators are turning to AI just as students are.

In several interviews with the Sacramento School Beat, teachers who asked to remain anonymous both decried student AI use and/or admitted to personally using it.

However, one harshly criticized colleagues who are using AI to help with their daily workload.

In an extensive interview, a world language teacher at Rio Americano said she has begun to gradually increase her use of AI.

Her main use for MagicSchool is the parent email feature, which crafts diplomatic responses

to families based on the points you plug into the generator. It’s a helpful feature because “parent emails are not my forte,” she said.

The program also saves her time when writing letters of recommendation and generating slideshows. (A Bay Area English teacher who granted Sacramento School Beat access to MagicSchool said her vice principal has encouraged teachers to use AI for recommendation letters.)

The Rio Americano world language teacher has not yet experimented with using AI to help with grading – warning that “we have to be very careful” with that feature – but said that being asked about it in the interview would inspire her to give it a try.

MagicSchool can provide feedback on essays, which her students write once per unit. There are other platforms that can grade spoken presentations, another main component of her classes.

It’s an “interesting idea,” she said, but she added that she felt more comfortable using non-student-facing features like the email generator.

Some teachers and students have expressed support for AI grading because it has the potential to be more objective.

There is also a significant difference between generative and assistive AI. Generative AI creates content from scratch, like essays or lesson plans; assistive AI is designed only to provide information.

Ultimately, “it saves a lot of time” with tedious tasks like parent emails, the Rio Americano world language teacher said. She was careful to only refer to AI as a “tool,” and condemned student use of AI as “ridiculous.”

But AI should “not be doing our jobs or their

jobs” in the classroom itself, she said. She pointed out that there are a lot of smaller things it can do, but that there is no reason to generate new lessons with AI because her curriculum has already been developed.

Using AI might be a more appealing option to younger teachers who do not have their lessons already made or who are overwhelmed with the job.

Naditz sees the main benefit of AI for teachers being the reduced workload for tedious or time-consuming tasks.

“Because it can generate ideas (and) lengthy texts way faster than humans can, it saves a lot of time, even though the people using it have to look again, look it over and make sure it’s OK,” she said. “Even if it’s only 80% right, it saves so much time, (because) now the person only has to correct 20% instead of having to have done all of the work to begin with.”

The AI issue is also close to home in higher education. This fall, Sacramento State University opened its new National Institute of Artificial Intelligence in Society, headed by Chief AI Officer and College of Education faculty member Alexander Sidorkin.

The institute is offering a class to high school and college students on how to leverage AI for appropriate uses.

For the final project in the “College and Career with AI” course, students created their own chatbots for various purposes – everything from a physics assistant to a family communication tool.

A balanced introduction to AI in education will include both direct instruction to students on how best to use it and support for teachers on reimagining their teaching methods and materials, Sidorkin said.

“The biggest challenge in implementing AI

is that instructors need to revise their curriculum, revise most assignments and assessments, refocus on higher-order thinking, and de-emphasize procedural midrange skills,” he said. “It is a lot of work, and a large mental shift. So I think it is going to take a while.”

A study by the University of Reading in England found that 94% of college students’ AI-generated writing goes undetected by professors. And the world language teacher at Rio Americano said it was highly likely her students have used AI unnoticed.

Resisting the Revolution

According to Education Week, about 40% of teachers have used AI, but it is unclear the breakdown of uses (for example, to generate student-facing lessons vs. to grade papers).

A Common Sense Media report found student ChatGPT use at 50%. Last month, the New York Times published a report of student and teacher opinions on AI in education, with the main consensus being that AI is here to stay and that schools should learn to embrace it.

But not everyone is on board with the AI revolution in education. One Rio Americano math classroom prominently displays an Albert Einstein quote above the whiteboard: “I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots.”

The teacher in that beginning math class said she was worried that robots and artificial intelligence might be used to mitigate teacher shortages.

A different veteran math teacher at Rio Americano has completely rejected AI use and even taught his students how to seek out math resources that do not

use AI, as artificial intelligence math can sometimes be inaccurate.

Students have also said that teacher AI use is not fair since most teachers prohibit students from using it, and that it has the potential to replace teachers’ work.

“I just feel like a teacher should be qualified enough to not need it,” said Katelyn Caudill, a junior at Rio Americano. “It doesn’t feel like they are doing their jobs,”

Caudill, an art student, has been advocating against the infusion of AI into arts education.

And other districts, like Sacramento City Unified, have taken more hardline approaches to AI. SCUSD has a full ban in place on student AI use.

“All SCUSD students need to prove themselves that they can do successful work as a result of their own efforts,” district spokesperson Alexander Goldberg said. “Students are instructed in research and study skills appropriate to each subject, so that they may feel confident that if they prepare, they can succeed without cheating or plagiarizing their work.”

The district declined to answer questions about teacher AI use.

But it’s clear AI isn’t going anywhere.

“I wish,” another world language teacher even said, “I had AI as a student.”

Adam Abolfazli is a Rio Americano High School student and a Sacramento School Beat reporter. The Student Education Reporter program is funded by the Sacramento County Office of Education. Each student works with a writing coach throughout the year. The program’s goal is to increase media coverage of Sacramento County schools and districts to benefit the students, the parents and educators. ★



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PAYROLL TAXES PAY

ACCRUAL TRACKING

FILING AND REPORTING

PAYROLL APP

HR COMPLIANCE

PINNACLE

EMPLOYEE SERVICES

HR | Payroll | Benefits

916-760-7227



22ND CONCERT SEASON

SACRAMENTO SYMPHONIC WINDS

A PLACE FOR US: A LEONARD BERNSTEIN TRIBUTE

DR. MATTHEW MORSE
MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Program

Candide Suite

Profanation from “Jeremiah, Symphony No. 1”
Three Dance Episodes from On the Town
Symphonic Dances from West Side Story
Slava!

Sunday March 9, 2025 - 2:30 pm
Tickets at the door - \$15 General Admission,
\$10 Students

California State University Sacramento
Capistrano Concert Hall,
6000 J Street Sacramento, CA 95819

Free Covered Parking in Structure 1

ESKATON®

— VILLAGE CARMICHAEL —



You're invited to our *Community Spotlight Event!*

Join us on Wednesday, February 19 at 2 p.m. for drinks, appetizers and a guided tour of our campus.

RSVP by Feb. 15! 916-900-1221 | eskaton.org/evc-tour



Resident-driven Culture

We are incredibly proud of our resident driven culture, with its diverse range of regularly scheduled activities and events and 40+ Resident Clubs and Groups.



Park-like Grounds

Set on 37-acres of walkable, bike and pet-friendly paths, inviting you to enjoy nature and stay active.



Maintenance-free Living

Experience the convenience of restaurant style dining, weekly housekeeping, 24-hour security and more.

Life Plan Community / CCRC, Independent Living, Assisted Living Memory Care, Rehabilitation and Skilled Nursing

3939 Walnut Avenue, Carmichael, CA 95608

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