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# RIVER VALLEY TIMES

41ST YEAR • ISSUE 5

*Serving Rancho Murieta, Sloughouse, Wilton*

MARCH 7, 2025

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INSIDE**

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DIES IN GOLF  
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## Fathers, Daughters Trip the Night Fantastic



Addison and Jason Berglund pose for a selfie in front of an Eiffel Tower backdrop during the “Daughters & Dates Dinner & Dance,” hosted by the Consumnes River Elementary School PTA on Feb. 22. Photo by Gail Bullen

**By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times Reporter**

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - A night in Paris, complete with the Eiffel Tower and an outdoor Parisian café, unfolded at Cosumnes River Elementary School when the PTA presented the “Daughters & Dates Dinner & Dance” on Feb. 22.

The event attracted more than 200 attendees, with daughters elegantly dressed and many fathers sporting blazers, a couple even donning berets.

The event, formerly known as the Father-Daughter Dance, has been a

longstanding tradition at the school. This year, the name was changed to include other father figures.

The ticket included dinner, dessert, a corsage, a professional photograph, a video and a dance.

According to Lizzeth Delgadillo, the PTA’s event coordinator, the event was all about creating special memories.

“That may be all that is left after they grow up and move on,” she noted.

Delgadillo said the theme for this year’s event came from fourth grader Callie Coon, the daughter of close family friends when they were

chatting last summer.

“She said: ‘What about a night in Paris?’ and I said: ‘You have read my mind.’”

Delgadillo proposed the Parisian theme to the board, which promptly approved it and allocated a budget. Since 2022, she has dedicated significant thought and effort to infusing PTA events with meticulously coordinated décor and special touches.

To craft an authentic Parisian ambiance for this year’s dance, she began with a backdrop depicting the Eiffel Tower and the River Seine at night. She installed lights behind the

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## ETC Names Acts for 2025 Concert Season



**By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times Reporter**

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - Entertainment, Theatre & Culture for Rancho Murieta (ETC) has announced its 23rd concert season lineup at the Lake Clementia Amphitheater.

ETC Board Member Sherrie Ozee Evpak encourages residents to begin planning for an unforgettable summer of music.

“The Board of Directors at ETC has been hard at work,” she said. “We are delighted to announce that this year’s talent lineup promises to be one of our greatest yet, featuring beloved bands alongside fresh new acts making their debut in Rancho Murieta.”

Sunday, May 18: ETC Kick-off Event – 3 to 5 p.m. at the Rancho Murieta Country Club. All residents are welcome to attend this free event to celebrate and get a sneak peek of what is to come.

Saturday, June 14: Def Leppard & Journey Revisited will be a tribute to both bands.

Saturday, July 5: The Cripple Creek Band will play country, Americana, bluegrass and Southern rock music.

Saturday, July 26, Mustache Harbor – Yacht Rock Forever. This will be the group’s second appearance at ETC.

Saturday, Aug. 16: Super Diamond – The Neal Diamond Tribute.

Saturday, Aug. 30, The Spazmatics – The Ultimate 80s New Wave Show.

The tickets cost \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members. A \$5 surcharge will be added if tickets are purchased at the gate before each concert. Children 6 years and under get in free.

For more information, visit etc-rm.org or email asketcinfo@gmail.com. ★

## Easing Tensions with Developers Evident at CSD Board Meeting



Developing a plan to use Clementia Reservoir as a backup emergency water supply is becoming more urgent, according to discussions at the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board meeting on Feb. 19. Photo by Gail Bullen

**By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times Reporter**

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - The next steps for the draft Integrated Water Master Plan were discussed at the Rancho Murieta Community Services

District (CSD) Board meeting on Feb. 19, but with an unexpected twist.

During the discussion on the draft, Director John Merchant stated that two of the three subdivision developers acknowledged there isn’t enough water for future development.

While representatives from the Residences and Rancho North subdivisions did not dispute his claim at the meeting, their primary spokespersons later provided clarification when contacted by the River Valley Times.

Merchant’s comments

also signaled a further easing of tensions between developers and Save Our Lakes & Open Spaces (SOLOS) over water issues. Merchant also serves as vice president of SOLOS, a community action group formed

*Continued on page 5*



The Cripple Creek Band is slated to perform for the third time at an ETC concert on July 5. Photo by Gail Bullen



# Fire Danger, Increased Fines are RMA Board Topics

**By Gail Bullen**  
**River Valley Times**  
**Reporter**

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)**

- Fire safety concerns and increased fines for intimidating employees were key topics at the Rancho Murieta Association Board meeting on Feb. 18.

General Manager Ron Hart and two audience members discussed fire concerns that included recent fuel reduction efforts to lower wildfire risk, inadequate fire coverage due to water tank and hydrant shortfalls, and the need to automate Escuela Gate for evacuation.

The board’s primary discussion was about a rule prohibiting residents, guests, and vendors from interfering with Rancho Murieta Association and Rancho Murieta Community Services employees. While they did not increase the fine for verbal abuse, they approved a significant increase in fines for assaulting or intimidating employees.

The directors also considered many other issues, including pest control at Laguna Joaquin – geese and midge flies.

**Fuel Reduction Work**

Hart devoted his general manager’s report to thanking everyone responsible for the recent ladder fuel reduction work funded by a \$4.4 million California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) grant.

Hart said that a fuel buildup in the community’s common areas and on some ranch land behind Rancho Murieta “posed a really, large threat regarding a fire heading our way.” He praised the Rancho Murieta Fire Safe Council for securing the grant, Sacramento Regional Parks for administering it, and Cal Fire for funding it.

Hart also acknowledged Rancho Murieta resident Phyllis Banducci, the licensed forester managing the work. “She was boots on the group throughout this entire process,” he said.

Hart praised the “absolutely amazing” fuel reduction work at Greens Park, noting that while Rancho Murieta Association crews would have taken “years and years” to clear the overgrowth, a large, well-equipped contracting crew completed the job in just

over two weeks. “It is important to publicly recognize all of the people were involved,” Hart said

**Fire Coverage Shortfalls**

Longtime community activist Janis Eckard spoke during public comments to express her concerns about fire coverage shortfalls. She began by thanking the association for securing a FireWise designation for the community, then reiterated the worries from her Feb. 2 email, which none of the directors had received. She sent the email to alert the board about potential fire dangers they might not be aware of.

Eckard said when she reviewed the draft Integrated Water Master Plan submitted to the Rancho Murieta Community Services District last fall, she identified five items that “I think are really, really important.”

The first is the insufficient storage capacity of the community’s two water tanks. “This was found out when a car hit one of the fire hydrants, and the Rio Oso tank emptied in five hours,” she said.

Another concern is the fire hydrant system. She said the community is missing 13 hydrants, and many existing ones lack sufficient water pressure.

Eckard said the Integrated Water Master Plan consultants also found that the current arrangement between the two water tanks made their storage capacity “vulnerable to catastrophic failure.”

The Van Vleck Tank also does not comply with regulations because it has a connection that serves as an inlet and an outlet.

Eckard said her research shows that the community would not have sufficient water during a severe drought. “Now that we have these fire shortfalls, I think that Rancho Murieta could very easily become another Lahaina, Paradise, or LA,” she said. “I am hoping that the RMA Board will pressure the CSD Board to rectify these shortfalls before something catastrophic happens.”

As per standard practice for public comments, none of the board directors responded.

However, when Eckard reprised the same email at the CSD Board meeting the following night, President Steve Booth responded. He informed her that the Improvements Committee

would address her concerns about the water tanks at the March 11 meeting. He also directed Operations Manager Eric Houston to evaluate the fire hydrants and provide a report at the same meeting.

**Escuela Gate Automation**

Audience member Marcel Horowitz spoke about automating the Escuela Gate for use in an emergency evacuation. As a community health advisor for the University of California, she regularly evaluates public health, safety, risk, and liability issues. She expressed her concerns about the liabilities the association is facing.

Horowitz said her PG&E employee brother-in-law began installing new lines after the Paradise Fire. “He had to drive by a row of burned-out cars every day where people had died.”

She said his experience was seared into her memory as she listened to estimates of how long it would take to evacuate through the front gate in the event of a fire. She also recalled a fire that ignited at Lake Clementia last summer, which had to be extinguished.

Horowitz said she weighs two liability issues related to the automation of Escuela. “If you open that gate and there’s a car accident, are you liable because you didn’t have someone there controlling traffic? But then I weigh it against the fact that there is a line of cars trying to get out of the gates and the people who burn up in their cars and die, the liability on us is so much greater.”

Horowitz said she believes it should be an easy decision and doesn’t understand the association’s hesitation. Board President Patrick O’Hern said Hart would be happy to meet with her to discuss the issue.

The board, represented by O’Hern and Hart, has been in a longstanding dispute with the Rancho Murieta Regional Fire Safe Council over gate automation. The council’s outspoken president is retired firefighter Greg Pryor.

The council believes Escuela should be automated to open alongside the two main gates during an emergency evacuation. Under the council’s proposal, the incident commander or their designee would use a cell phone to unlock the gates with



Recent ladder fuel reduction work at Greens Park is recognized at the Rancho Murieta Association Board meeting on Feb. 18. A \$4.5 million Cal Fire grant funded the work. Photos by Gail Bullen



Community activist Janis Eckard urges Rancho Murieta Association to pressure the Rancho Murieta Community Services District to fix shortfalls with the community’s two water tanks and numerous fire hydrants.



Audience member Marcel Horowitz warns about Rancho Murieta Association’s liability if it doesn’t automate Escuela Gate for emergency evacuation.

a code stored at the inter-agency fire dispatch center.

O’Hern and Hart believe Escuela Gate should remain closed until a fire responder is on-site to direct traffic. They warn that opening emergency gates prematurely could cause chaos, especially if a resident crashes while exiting onto the roadway.

Automating the gate was briefly discussed at the January board meeting after 14 residents sent emails or letters in support, while two others were opposed. Although none of the residents attended the meeting, O’Hern announced that he would refer the gate automation issue to the Perimeter Security Ad Hoc Committee for re-evaluation before bringing it back to the board.

Director Chris Childs, co-chair of the ad hoc committee, is currently exploring ways to reinforce gate security to prevent unauthorized access. When asked at the February meeting whether the committee had considered the gate automation issue, Childs said they had not yet addressed it.

The Fire Safe Council is now trying to collaborate with CSD to secure the automation of the Bent Grass Court gates for emergency evacuation on the south side. The issue is scheduled for discussion at the March 19 board meeting.

**Rule Changes**

Director Scott Adams, who chairs the Governing Documents Committee, updated the board about three rules related to interference, park hours and real estate signs.

Adams explained that

the committee revised the interference rule due to increasingly aggressive interactions with compliance officers. The new rule splits the existing fine structure, creating substantial fines for physical threats to Rancho Murieta Association or CSD employees, agents, or volunteers. Specifically, the fines would be \$1000 for the first offense, \$1500 for the second, and \$2000 for subsequent offenses. Verbal abuse or foul language would maintain the existing lower fine levels of \$100-\$300. The board voted 5:0 to send the interference rule for a 30-day community review.

Adams explained that the park hours rule, which previously went through a community review, was developed after the association installed lights at the pickleball courts at Stonehouse Park. The revised rule clarifies park hours for both Stonehouse and Riverview Parks. For unlighted areas, the hours are from dawn to dusk. For lighted areas, Stonehouse Park hours are until 10 p.m., and Riverview Park hours are until 9 p.m. He also cleaned up some minor typos in the rule. The board approved this rule, which will be added to the non-ARC rules.

Adams also reported that the committee updated the real estate sign rule to align with new regulations from the state Department of Real Estate. The board approved sending this rule out for a 30-day community review.

**In Other Business**

Director Danny Carrillo opposed approving the unaudited financial statements in the consent

calendar, citing a lack of transparency. He motioned for discussion, but it failed without a second. The board then approved the statements, with Carrillo as the sole dissenter.

O’Hern reported that the MTI Association requested insurance-related landscape changes. The board voted to notify MTI that it won’t handle repairs suggested by insurers but will continue biennial trimming as usual.

Maintenance Manager Troy Shaffner reported that staff will add two extra midge fly treatments at Laguna Joaquin this season. He noted increasing issues with Canadian geese at Laguna Joaquin and dispatched a street cleaner weekly to sweep the path. He is also testing geese deterrents at Lake Clementia, focusing on the swimming beach and amphitheater.

Childs reported that the Perimeter Security Ad Hoc Committee has assessed the north and south gates and plans to survey Stonehouse Road and Jackson Highway to address access points.

After O’Hern appointed Director John Haviland as chair of the Recreation Committee, he received board approval to appoint Renee Bechthold to his committee. Bechthold, recently resigned from the board but wants to stay involved, Haviland noted. He also announced a Bingo night on March 28 and a rattlesnake training for dogs on April 4.

The board will hold its next meeting at 6:30 p.m. on March 18.

*This story is also available online at [www.rivervalleytimes.com](http://www.rivervalleytimes.com). ★*



Rancho Murieta, a 3,500-acre country-club community, is an oasis of emerald fairways and manicured greens, built along the scenic banks of the Cosumnes River. It encompasses five lakes, greenbelts, rolling hills and stately oaks.

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# Revolutionizing Landscaping with Quality and Care



The crew at Total Turf brings more than four decades of combined experience to every project. Photos courtesy of Total Turf

By Ornella Rossi

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - In the competitive world of landscaping, Total Turf stands out as a leader, offering homeowners a combination of cutting-edge artificial turf, personalized service, and a commitment to sustainability. With 45 years of combined experience and a focus on customer care, Total Turf is redefining the way people think about their outdoor spaces.

The company’s turf products are a key differentiator, with the owner, Tom Roche emphasizing that their artificial turf is both safe and durable.

“Our turf is made in the USA, free of PFA, lead, and other toxins,” the Roche explained. “It’s safe for children and pets, and we offer a 15-year manufacturer warranty.”

But it’s not just about the product. Total Turf

also prides itself on the quality of its team. With a C-27 landscape license and more than four decades of combined experience, the company’s crew is equipped to handle everything from turf installation to concrete work and pavers.

“Our crews bring together a wealth of knowledge, and we believe that’s one of the things that sets us apart,” Roche said. “We’re specialists, not generalists; we have the expertise to tackle every job with precision.”

From the initial consultation to the final installation, Total Turf works closely with each client to ensure their vision becomes a reality. The process starts with a free estimate and consultation. Homeowners can describe their vision, and Total Turf uses Google Earth to assess the property remotely, measuring it from an aerial view.

“We want to make the process as easy as possible,” said the owner. “We use the same turf for all our project eliminating any decision fatigue that can be difficult as a homeowner when they are trying to beautify their landscape

Once the project is underway, the crew follows a 10-step installation process to ensure the turf is laid to perfection. This includes removing sod and soil, capping sprinklers, laying landscape fabric, and carefully installing the turf with the right infill.

“We’re committed to doing it right. We pride ourselves on our attention to detail,” Roche said. “We care for our customers as if they were our family and take pride in not only beautifying their homes but also in the neighborhoods as well.”

As the benefits of artificial turf continue to grow in popularity, many

homeowners are looking for ways to reduce their water bills and maintenance costs.

“Artificial turf is the easiest way to keep your yard looking pristine year-round,” Roche said. “It increases property value, lowers water bills, and eliminates the need for constant upkeep.”

For pet owners and sports enthusiasts Total Turf can customize turf to fit various needs. Whether it's a pet-friendly backyard, a glamorous putting green, or a sports field, Total Turf has the expertise to tailor the turf to specific purposes.

“No job is too big or small for us,” Roche said. “We can handle all types of residential and commercial projects, and each one is treated with the same level of care and attention.”

Despite the many advantages of artificial turf, the company still



The crew follows a 10-step installation process to ensure the turf is laid to perfection.

faces challenges on every project.

“Every job is unique, and it’s important to work with a contractor who understands the nuances of turf installation,” Roche said. “Proper grading and drainage are crucial to ensuring the turf looks great and lasts for years. We pride ourselves on the attention to detail we bring to each project.”

For those concerned about the maintenance of artificial turf, Total Turf offers an annual cleaning and maintenance package. While it’s not a requirement, the service includes re brushing the turf to keep it looking fresh and upright, as well as replenishing the infill, ensuring the blades stay in perfect shape.

Looking back, the owner’s passion for the industry stems from his experience in the homeowner space.

“Before starting Total Turf, I worked in the accessory dwelling unit (ADU) business and renovated properties in the Bay Area,” Roche said. “I saw firsthand the challenges homeowners face when hiring contractors. That experience motivated me to start a company that values customer service and quality work.”

Total Turf, based in the greater Sacramento area, has completed more than 1,000 successful jobs and earned numerous five-star reviews online.

As a locally owned, licensed, bonded, and insured business, Total Turf continues to exceed customer expectations while making a positive impact on both homes and neighborhoods.

For a free consultation, homeowners can reach Total Turf at 916-671-0070 or visit its website at [total-turf.com](http://total-turf.com). ★

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# RM Woman Dies in Golf Cart Accident

**By Gail Bullen**  
**River Valley Times**  
**Reporter**

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)**  
- A 79-year-old Rancho Murieta woman died following a golf cart accident

on Alameda Drive, south of Murieta Parkway, at approximately 2:42 p.m. March 4, according to Officer Trent Senter, the California Highway Patrol’s East Sacramento office spokesperson.

Senter said that the victim was traveling north-bound on Alameda Drive when, "for unknown reasons, the driver allowed the golf cart to collide with the concrete curb and dirt/rock median. At this time, it is

unclear whether the driver suffered a medical episode that led to the accident or if she sustained injuries as a result of the crash."

An ambulance transported the driver to Mercy Hospital of Folsom, where

she was pronounced dead. A 78-year-old female passenger in the golf cart was uninjured, Senter said.

According to the CHP report, the accident occurred at 7000 Alameda Drive, which is the Rancho

Murieta Country Club’s location. The report noted that firefighters initiated CPR upon arrival.

Residents identified the victim as Ruth Dragas. River Valley Times archives indicate that Dragash was an avid golfer and a Rancho Murieta Women's Golf Club member. ★

# Easing Tensions with Developers Evident at CSD Board Meeting

*Continued from page 1*  
in 2015 to protect open spaces behind the reservoirs from development. In recent years, the group has shifted its primary focus to advocating for a sustainable and reliable water supply for the community. The first public signs of a thaw emerged earlier this year after Merchant met with the Rancho North developers on Jan. 9. They informed him that they had abandoned plans to develop 136 lots behind the reservoirs.

“I believe this action spells compromise,” Merchant wrote in a social media post the following day. “I hope we have opened up a line of communication to the developers that will expand as we work through the process.”

In other discussion, at the February board meeting, three directors rejected Director Randy Jenco’s request to finalize the Integrated Water Master Plan. The three emphasized the need to hear from a consulting group scheduled to present at the March 11 Improvements Committee meeting. Merchant and Jenco are the two board members who serve on that committee.

Board President Steve Booth also directed Board Secretary Amelia Wilder to compile a list of questions about the Integrated Water Master Plan raised by residents at three town hall meetings or sent directly to the district to ascertain if they were adequately answered. The item will be on the agenda at the March 19 board meeting.

The board discussed additional issues at the board meeting, including the rejection of a government claim by General Manager Mimi Morris, currently on paid leave, and security concerns. See the separate story in this issue.

### Developer Relations

Merchant’s upbeat remarks about developers at the February board meeting contrasted with his previous warnings about the threats development posed to the community’s water supply.

When Merchant resigned from the board in October of 2022, he was significantly at odds with the late John Sullivan, who represented Rancho Murieta Properties. Merchant told the board he was resigning to pursue water issues. He has been vice president of Save Our Lakes & Open Spaces since its formation in 2015.

In July, Merchant spearheaded a petition drive demanding that the board impose a moratorium on future development. The petition garnered 2,025 signatures.

At the October board meeting, Greg Dyer, CEO of Rancho Murieta Properties, spoke against the petition advocating

for a development moratorium. He asserted that the district is contractually obligated to provide water to the Rancho North subdivision, as Rancho Murieta Properties had invested over \$5.7 million in upgrading the community’s water treatment plants under a 2014 Financing and Services Agreement. He cautioned that imposing a moratorium could lead to legal action.

On Nov. 21, Save Our Lakes & Open Spaces hosted a public town hall to discuss the draft Integrated Water Master Plan. Their analysis concluded that eliminating the demand from future development would be the easiest and most cost-effective method of conserving water.

In December, Merchant returned to the CSD board after running unopposed for a vacancy. SOLOS President Cheryl McElhany presented the moratorium petition at the board’s January meeting, which took it under advisement.

On Jan. 10, Merchant shared an ebullient social media post detailing a meeting with the Rancho North developers a day earlier. During this meeting, Rancho Murieta Properties discussed amendments to their Sacramento County application, including removing 39 acres adjacent to the Rancho Murieta Community Services District building and excluding 136 lots behind the reservoirs. Merchant highlighted that these changes ensure “much of our treasured open space walking and biking trails will be here to enjoy.”

For more details, see the story entitled “Development Behind Reservoirs Ruled Out” online at, [www.therivervalleytimes.com](http://www.therivervalleytimes.com)

During the Feb. 19 board discussion about the Integrated Water Master Plan, Merchant referred to his earlier meeting with developers. He said he initially learned about the Rancho North’s lot reduction in a meeting with Bob Keil, the developer of the 198-lot Residences subdivision. Keil then facilitated a meeting between Merchant and Dyer on Jan. 9.

Merchant told the board he welcomed the news about the development’s reduced size. “I have worked on it longer than anyone in the community,” he said. “To me, it was a wonderful first step in solving the problem.”

Merchant said they also discussed the future water supply.

During his initial meeting with Keil, Merchant asked, “Do you agree with me that we don’t have enough water to support this development at this point in time?”

According to Merchant, Keil responded affirmatively. Merchant then inquired about Dyer’s



**Director John Merchant serves dual roles as the vice-president for the CSD Board and as the vice-president of Save Our Lakes and Open Space.** File photo



**Greg Dyer, the CEO of Rancho Murieta Properties, warns the district could be sued if it doesn’t supply water to the Rancho North subdivision. He was speaking at the October board meeting.** File photo

likely stance on the issue, to which Keil suggested Dyer would agree. Skeptical, Merchant posed the same question to Dyer, who also concurred.

Merchant expressed relief at the February meeting about the consensus, stating “It saved us a year or more of fighting with each other over what the numbers (in the Integrated Water Master Plan) really said.”

When the River Valley Times contacted Keil after the February board meeting, Keil said that both he and Dyer concurred that “the water study demonstrates we would need additional water to provide for the full buildout of Rancho Murieta.”

Keil further emphasized, “To put a finer point on it, we (he and Dyer) also agreed that CSD is contractually obligated to provide that water through the Financing and Services Agreement.”

When asked if this consensus about the draft Integrated Water Master Plan signified a truce in the ongoing water disputes, Keil characterized it as putting everyone on the same page about the need to augment the community’s water supply.

When the River Valley Times contacted Dyer, he recalled a brief discussion about water during the Jan. 9 meeting but said they ran out of time. He didn’t remember Merchant’s water supply questions. “If asked the question, I would have responded that the answer depends on the required water supply assessment that is part of the county development approval process,” Dyer said.

The River Valley Times attempted to contact Merchant for additional comment but did not receive a response.

### Integrated Water Master Plan Discussion

At the Jan. 15 board meeting, Operations Manager Eric Houston recommended against finalizing the draft Integrated Water Management Plan, citing its lack of a clear path forward. He proposed that the district instead develop an Urban Water Management Plan, which the state mandates for urban water suppliers serving over 3,000 connections. As of February 2025, the district had 2,917 water connections, approaching the threshold and subjecting it to new regulatory requirements.

Houston asked Water Systems Consulting, which developed the urban water plan and a Vision Report for the City of Folsom, to propose a similar strategy for the district. The consulting firm is scheduled to present its scope of work at the March 11 Improvements Committee meeting.

During the February board meeting, Director Jenco initiated a discussion about finalizing the draft Integrated Water Master Plan during Operations Manager Eric Houston’s report. While the board couldn’t take formal action, Jenco suggested providing direction to staff.

That led to a 30-minute debate. Here are some of the highlights.

Jenco said the proposed urban plan was another way of saying the Integrated Water Master Plan should be abandoned. His key point was that the board should use the current information to immediately begin solving the water supply problem today instead of waiting another 18 months for a new report to confirm the



**Developer Bob Keil recommends that the draft Integrated Water Master Plan be amended.** Photo by Gail Bullen

known challenges. Jenco identified potential solutions such as drilling new wells and recharging groundwater.

Merchant excoriated the draft water plan developed by Maddaus Engineering of California and Adkins Engineering of Oregon, which was presented to the district in October. “I’ll be damned if I’m going to give anybody the satisfaction of approving a report that doesn’t say anything,” he said.

Despite his strong criticism, Merchant acknowledged that he had ceased disputing the study’s data despite some discrepancies. He believed the existing data sufficiently demonstrated that the community lacks adequate water to support future development.

Merchant said the priority should be developing a plan to support and use Clementia Reservoir as an emergency water supply in extreme drought, although it couldn’t meet the entire demand from the existing homes and the already entitled lots on the Riverview and Residences subdivisions. He also noted that a California law will require an emergency supply in 2027.

Merchant emphasized that the primary focus should be developing a plan to utilize Clementia Reservoir as an emergency water supply during extreme drought conditions, even though it couldn’t fully meet the demands of existing homes and already entitled lots in the Riverview and Residences subdivisions. Merchant also said California law requires water suppliers to have one backup water source by 2027.

Director Linda Butler said the district should take the time to get the plan right. Director Tim Maybee didn’t comment.

President Steve Booth said he could see an alternative to starting over, although the plan should be modified to reflect less future development. He suggested accepting the Integrated Water Master Plan for its calculations about available water and projected needs. “We would recognize its shortcomings and say, ‘They didn’t give us a plan, but let’s move forward and develop with WCI or another consultant or a group of stakeholders in the community,’” he said.

Booth suggested that the Improvements Committee consider his alternative at

the next meeting.

Keil said that Booth had stolen his thunder. “I think we should take the report we have right now, amend the buildout numbers, and remove the conclusion,” he said. “Then hire someone else to come up with the conclusions, and we are on our way.”

Audience member Tom Shewchuk again advanced his idea for forming an advisory committee to develop a water plan. The committee would include representatives from CSD, the Rancho Murieta Country Club, the Rancho Murieta Association, community members, and developers.

President Steve Booth acknowledged the importance of engaging all stakeholders in future public forums. However, he expressed concern about adding responsibilities to the operations manager, who already has a significant workload. “That’s why I support having a consultant to work on that piece,” Booth said.

Audience member Jim Farrell supported Booth’s approach to addressing the study. Although Farrell doesn’t believe the Integrated Water Master Plan should be finalized, he acknowledged its value: “Having done a lot of strategic planning, I’m telling you that the data is worth a lot.”

Farrell emphasized that before finalizing any plans, the board should honor its commitment to address community questions about the Integrated Water Master Plan. He specifically emphasized responding to issues raised by Merchant and longtime community activist Janis Eckard.

Booth took Farrell’s comment about the community’s questions to heart and asked the district secretary to compile a list of questions, along with how they were answered or not, for consideration at the next board meeting.

Farrell supported Shewchuk’s proposal to form an ad hoc committee but questioned its timing, noting that the board currently lacks focus. “I think you should have one voice coming out of the CSD, and you are not there yet.”

Farrell emphasized the importance of the board achieving internal consensus before engaging in broader collaborative efforts.

*This story is also available online at [www.therivervalleytimes.com](http://www.therivervalleytimes.com). ★*



# Tickets Now on Sale for California Capital Airshow with Blue Angels

## California Capital Airshow News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The 2025 California Capital Airshow, presented by Sacramento County in partnership with the City of Rancho Cordova, returns to Mather Airport on March 22 and 23.

A limited quantity of tickets are now on sale for this highly-anticipated event, which is headlined by the world-renowned U.S. Navy Blue Angels flight demonstration squadron.

Gates to the Airshow will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 22 and Sunday, March 23. Each day will feature four hours of non-stop flying performances from noon to 4 p.m. Performers include the U.S. Navy Blue Angels, U.S. Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II, U.S. Air Force F-16 Viper and C-17 Globemaster III demonstration teams, Tucker’s Air Patrol, vintage World War II

aircraft and more. The event also offers miles of exhibits, aircraft displays and entertainment on the ground. “With the Blue Angels headlining for the first time since 2019, this year’s Airshow promises to be an unforgettable experience for aviation fans of all ages,” said Darcy Brewer, executive director of the California Capital Airshow. “Our team has worked tirelessly to create an event that showcases the awe-inspiring power of flight, and we can’t wait to welcome everyone for a weekend with amazing performances and family fun.”

The event offers several ticket types, with a range of experiences and accommodations. General Admission tickets for the 2025 Airshow includes free parking and event admission for up to six children (ages 15 and under).

New this year is an exclusive event entrance and venue for all attendees with

upgraded tickets. Guests will have access to food trucks and upgraded restrooms dedicated to upgraded ticket holders. The Airshow has several tiers of ticketed experiences, including the Capital Club, Flight Line Club and Mather Club, which offer a range of benefits such as shaded seating, complimentary beverages, buffet lunch and prime views of the aerial performances. Returning this year is The Hangar experience, which includes unlimited craft beer and spirits from the City of Rancho Cordova’s Barrel District and wine from Starfield Vineyards.

For those seeking a more premium experience, First Class, a brand-new offering for 2025, includes exclusive access to VIP amenities, a pilot meet-and-greet, and premium food and drink options.

Tickets are now available for purchase online. With the popularity of the Blue Angels and limited availability for all ticket types, fans are encouraged to buy



The 2025 California Capital Airshow will be headlined by the world-renowned U.S. Navy Blue Angels flight demonstration squadron. Photo courtesy of the California Capital Airshow

early. Tickets will not be sold at the event gates.

Special thanks also to California Capital Airshow sponsors: Modern Aviation, SMUD, Verizon, Keurig Dr. Pepper, Donaghy Sales, Monster Energy, Thunder Valley, UPS, Five Star Bank, Teichert, Atlas Disposal and Golden 1 Credit Union.

For more information about tickets, pricing and packages, visit online [californiacapitalairshow.com](http://californiacapitalairshow.com).

## SECURITY LOGS

Following is a summary of activity for the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Security Department for the following dates. Note: these log entries are condensed. For full security log details, go to the CSD website at [www.rmcsd.com](http://www.rmcsd.com).

### Feb. 19

5:05 a.m., RMA Rule Violation, Callaway Drive: Vehicle overnight parked wrong way on street in front of house. Citation issued.

### Feb. 20

5:14 p.m., Juvenile delinquency, Murieta Drive: Report of juveniles on electric bikes causing a disturbance at a parking lot on Ace Hardware. Patrol unable to locate; gone on arrival.

6:05 p.m., Fire reported, Lake Calero: Report of a group of juveniles set a bonfire around Lake Calero. Patrol observed

five juveniles gathered around a bonfire; they scattered on approach. Patrol extinguished fire with water. Unable to locate juveniles.

### Feb. 21

5:17 a.m., RMA Rule Violation, Abierto: Vehicle overnight parked on street in front of house. Citation issued.

### Feb. 23

12:39 a.m., Lake Clementia: Two trucks at Lake Clementia after hours. Vehicles departed area when approached.

### Feb. 24

7:55 a.m., RMA Rule Violation, Terreno Drive: Vehicle of guest of resident at this address found at Lake Calero unoccupied after hours. Citation issued.

### Feb. 25

5:19 a.m., RMA Rule Violation, Reynosa Drive:

Vehicle parked overnight on street in front of house. Citation issued.

### Feb. 27

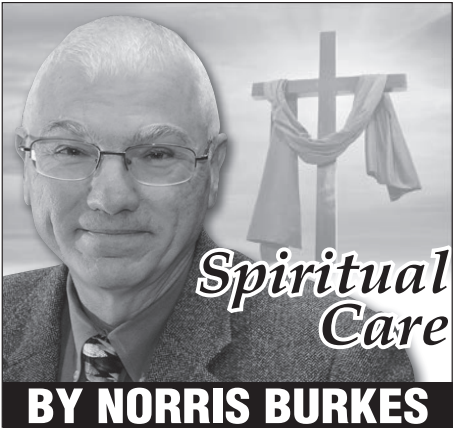
6:25 p.m., Loose cow, Puerto Drive: Report of a cow loose at Lake Calero. Patrol observed a cow close to the other side of the fence. Dispatch made contact with the owner and informed them about it.

### Feb. 28

2:51 a.m., RMA Rule Violation, Chesbro Circle: Vehicle parked overnight in Guest Parking on Chesbro Circle. Citation issued.

4:17 a.m., RMA Rule Violation, Murieta Parkway at Alameda Drive: Vehicle approached intersection, slowed down and without coming to a complete stop proceeded on Murieta Parkway inbound. Citation issued.

# God’s Not Finished With This Chaplain, Yet



When a reader once left a voicemail suggesting that I wasn’t worthy of my chaplain title, I shrugged. That’s OK, I thought, I’ve heard that before.

The worst occasion happened during my USAF deployment to Saudi Arabia in 1999. That’s when my supervisor, Col. Mike Bradshaw, told me I wasn’t being promoted to the rank of Major.

“You’ll be reconsidered next year,” he promised. “But trust me,” he added in his signature truism, “it’s really a ‘one-chance-mistake-Air-Force.’ You won’t remain active duty.”

So, I guess it was appropriate that a few mornings later, I walked into the chapel men’s room to evacuate the constipation of my disappointment. Before entering the stall, I followed military tradition and tucked my hat into the beltline at the small of my back.

Before taking my place on the porcelain throne, I noticed the toilet brand name, “Norris.” I shrugged. It fit the “career” I was having.

I stayed for much longer than I should have. I didn’t want to go to the office. How was I supposed to be a supportive chaplain to the deployed troops when I felt so low?

Finally, however, I stood to do my “paperwork.” As I discarded the paper into the receptacle, I noticed that some careless fool had ditched his hat in my toilet.

First, I wondered, why hadn’t I previously noticed this?

But my second and more sober observation was that this fool’s hat had a Christian cross affixed on it. That fool was me!

I almost cried looking at my hat in the flusher. Was God using a metaphor to tell me that my chaplain career was in the toilet? If so, was the military my only path of ministry? Or were there other ministry venues? I wasn’t sure.

I had no choice but to go to the chapel office and ask our NCOIC (office manager) for a new hat. As I unfolded my story, Master Sgt. Steve Carothers folded his 6-foot-5-inch frame in half, overcome with near stroke-inducing laughter.

He then made a comical demand. “If you want me to give you a new hat, you are going to have to give me just one good reason why I should overlook such a blame fool mistake as that.”

“Well,” I admitted, “there are some foolish officers in this Air Force who seem like they operate with a head full of crap.”

He shook his head with large, agreeable nods.

“But” I said, “don’t you think it takes a really good officer like me to admit that he has a hat full of crap?”

Hearing my logic, he dropped to the floor, hysterically beating the tile with his fist.

“I give up, Chaplain,” he declared. “You got your new hat.”

The Bible says in James 5:16, “Make this your common practice: Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed.”

I confessed my mistake—my sin—and got a new hat. But better than that, I got a new ministry.

For you see, despite my sinking feeling that my career was flushed in the crapper of chaplain careerism, I had a creatively hysterical moment in which I emailed my “hat-full” story to a Florida friend, a newspaper editor named Tom Clifford. Tom thought it was riotously funny but too inappropriate for a newspaper.


Still, he saw through my “crap,” and 10 months later, he invited me to begin this syndicated newspaper column.

Col. Bradshaw had asked me to trust him. Trust is best left to God, not man. Now, almost 25 years after the famous toilet week, I look back over a long and rewarding career as a healthcare chaplain.

Better yet, I managed to finish a career in uniform. In 2002, I transferred to the California Air National Guard and was twice promoted, retiring as a lieutenant colonel in 2014.

So, now I know that if I ever meet up with Col. Bradshaw again, I’d like to tell him one thing: “Trust me, God’s still not finished with me.”

This column was excerpted from my book “Thriving Beyond Surviving.” ★

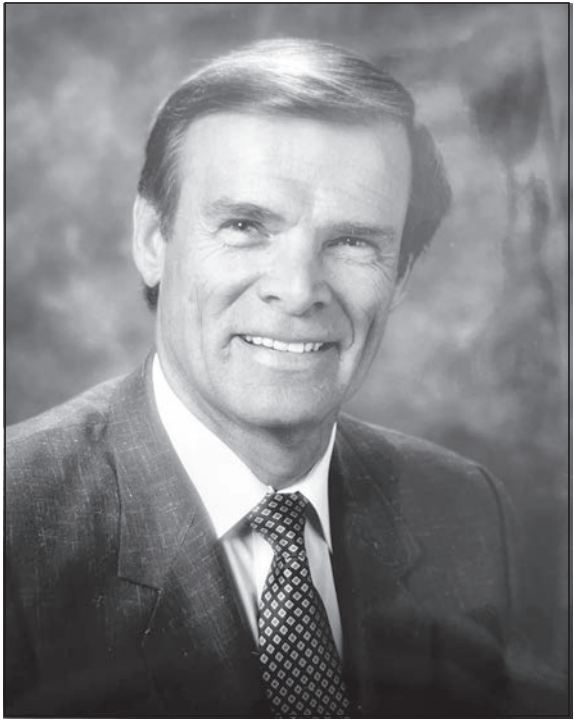


MEMORIAL

JOSEPH LEE GAITHER • 07/28/1939 - 01/13/2025

Joseph Lee Gaither of Rancho Murieta, California, born on July 28, 1939, in Beech Grove, Indiana to Harry and Marie Gaither passed on peacefully January 13, 2025, at the age of 85 after a long-term illness but his larger-than-life personality will live on forever. He is survived by his wife of nearly 39 years, Sharol, and their beloved golden doodle, Duchess. He is also survived by his daughter Kellie (Frank), son Scott (Susie), stepson Brad (Tanya), stepdaughter Sherry (Josh), grandsons Tony, Adam, Alex, Jacob, Sam (Jordan), Finn and one and only “favorite” granddaughter, Lauren. Joe’s family moved from Indiana to California in his freshman year; attended Sacramento High School and later Sacramento State College where he was a member of TKE fraternity.

From snowy Indiana mornings delivering newspapers tossed from a red wagon to owner of his company, Pacific Benefit Consultants, Joe was a stellar example of optimism, determination, and a 100% “all in” approach to life. He approached his favorite activities with equal vigor whether by casting a fishing line, cheering on the 49ers and Notre Dame teams, traversing ski slopes or leading a touch (generating into tackle) football game at family gatherings. His sense of humor and enthusiasm was



infectious, as he enjoyed sharing favorite restaurants, travels, authors and movies. If captured by an author’s style, he “consumed” every publication, but none more than the authors of the bible scriptures he loved, which grew his “faith that moves mountains” and provided courage to endure a ten-year battle of health challenges which he faced and embraced with determination and dignity. Joe, always the optimist, encouraged others through Kiwanis as a young man and later with his church support group, “HOPE”, meeting weekly to support and ignite positive ways to endure illnesses through prayer and comradeships. Especially treasured was his family. Years of gatherings of the many

fun-loving, interesting and talented personalities have resulted in endless stories that will continue to be enjoyed and shared by anyone who will listen. Joe’s appreciation of friends and adventures led to endless tall tales from days of riding bikes and chasing snakes with buddies along riverbanks in Indiana to fly fishing trips in Montana and a glorious Viking Long Boat Cruise with Sharol to celebrate their well-deserved retirement. Retirement became a time to nurture friendships, attend grandchildren’s athletic games and even write two adventure books featuring kids and grandkids within the narrative.

Our Man, Joe...bigger than life...never to be forgotten.



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✧ Press Release ✧



# CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF SUMMERFEST



## SUMMERFEST CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR COMMUNITY

As we embark on the planning for the 25th Summerfest celebration we wanted to take pause and not only thank all of our volunteers and sponsors, but to also share information on how your efforts and generosity positively affect our community.

Every cent raised by Summerfest goes directly towards organizing our annual event and enhancing the quality of life in our community. To date, Summerfest has raised over a million dollars, including donated services, thanks to the generous support of our attendees and sponsors.

Summerfest has raised funds for Consumes Elementary School, providing essential resources and opportunities for students to thrive. We also support the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, helping to foster leadership and community values in young people. The Cosumnes River Little League has also benefited from our contributions, allowing children to participate in healthy and active pursuits.

We are dedicated to recognizing and rewarding those who embody the spirit of volunteerism and service within our community. Scholarships have been awarded to outstanding students who demonstrate a commitment to giving back and making a difference. In addition to these efforts, our funds have supported various other initiatives, including:

- Environmental conservation projects
- Community health and wellness programs
- Local arts and cultural events

We are committed to making our community a better place to live, and we are grateful for the continued support that makes Summerfest a success year after year.



### COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS

- Stonehouse Softball Diamond
- Stonehouse Park Scoreboard
- Stonehouse Park Field Lights
- Dog Park Lighting
- Splashpark at Riverview
- Pickleball Courts
- Lake Calero Dock
- and more...



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Summerfest Main Event  
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And all our Wine Sponsors!!!

**To secure your sponsorship for 2025, please visit our website**  
[www.summerfest-ranchomurieta.org/become-a-sponsor](http://www.summerfest-ranchomurieta.org/become-a-sponsor)



# COMMUNITY BRIEFS

## CSD Establishes Security Hotline Email

Rancho Murieta residents with security issues have a new option for contacting the Rancho Murieta Community Services District to receive a timely response: securityhotline@RMCSO.com.

Residents also can reach security 24 hours a day by calling 916-354-CARE (2263). However, residents experiencing a life-threatening emergency requiring immediate police, fire or ambulance assistance should call 911.

## RMA Sponsors Rattlesnake Training for Dogs

The Rancho Murieta Association Recreation Committee is sponsoring a rattlesnake-avoidance training session for dogs on Friday, April 4 at the RMA Office.

Call or text 775-234-8844 to schedule an appointment. Or email GetRattledNV@gmail.com. The cost is \$125 per dog.

## Women's Club Bingo Luncheon March 26

The Rancho Murieta Women's Club will welcome spring with its March 26 luncheon – Spring Bling Bingo and Beans at the Rancho Murieta Country Club.

The bling will be the Bingo prizes, with winners choosing from new costume jewelry. The beans will be a donation of non-perishable foods and sundries like disposable diapers that will be donated to

the Wellspring Women's Center. The main luncheon entrée will be a plated spinach salad with a choice of chicken or salmon. A vegetarian option is also available.

The reservation deadline is March 14. For more information contact Cindy Shamrock at 916-354-1918 or Barbara Armstrong at 916-541-1884.

## Time to Order 2025 Senior Banners

It's time to order senior banners to celebrate our 2025 Rancho Murieta graduates.

Email the following to RMseniorflags@gmail.com: the graduate's first and last name, location on the north or south, school names and photo at least 1 mb in size. The cost is \$92.44. Venmo Michelle@michele-Robb.

If you have questions reach out to Michelle Robb at the email address.

## VFW Auxiliary Seeks New Members

The Rancho Murieta Veterans for Foreign Wars (VFW) Auxiliary is looking for new members who are passionate about supporting veterans and military families while benefiting from personal and professional growth opportunities.

Eligibility requires a family relationship to a VFW-eligible veteran such as a spouse, parent or grandchild.

For more information about the local auxiliary, contact President Melissa

Mineni at mel.mineni@gmail.com.

If you are interested in joining the Rancho Murieta VFW Post, reach out to Membership Chairman Tylor Fugate at tylorfugate150@gmail.com. Eligibility for VFW membership requires honorable service in the U.S. Military and participation in a foreign war, expedition or campaign recognized by the VFW.

## Local Crime Records Online at RVT Website

The online edition of the River Valley Times at therivervalleytimes.com includes a section called "Local Crime Arrests," which compiles public arrest records for Rancho Murieta and Wilton residents. This section can be found on the right side of each page.

As of Feb. 16, the map showed the arrests of one Rancho Murieta resident and five Wilton residents. The Rancho Murieta resident was arrested for driving under the influence and had a prior arrest for kidnapping.

One of the Wilton residents was arrested for arson involving a structure or forest land. Both men were arrested by the Amador County Sheriff's Office.

## Rancho Murieta Band to Perform at Ione Casino

A rock band comprising four Rancho Murieta residents, Davey Boy and the Funomenals, will perform from 1 p.m.

to 4 p.m. March 16 at Harrah's Northern California Casino.

The casino is located at 4640 Coal Mine Road in Ione. Admission is free.

## River Valley Times Expands Online Coverage in 2025

Starting in 2025, the River Valley Times began providing more timely updates on local events through its online platforms. Certain events will now be reported within one to two days of their occurrence, ensuring residents stay informed between the bi-monthly distribution of the printed edition.

Online updates will include a mix of brief summaries, in-depth stories, and photos. Readers can access these updates on the newspaper's website at www.therivervalleytimes.com, Or follow the River Valley Times on social media on Twitter at x.com/RVTMPG8 and on Facebook at facebook.com/Therivervalleytimes.

## Wilton Bingo Games Held Monthly

April bingo will be on Saturday, April 5. Doors open at 5 p.m. with food available for sale, and bingo starts at 6 p.m. in the Wilton Community Center (9717 Colony Road, at Dillard Road).

All proceeds go to two non-profits: the local Park Council and the Wilton History Group. Questions? Call Lorraine Robinson at 916-212-8896. ★

# Local Classifieds

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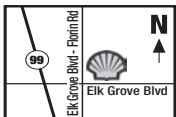
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# Government Claim, Security, Accounting Software are CSD Topics

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter

## RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)

- A government claim by General Manager Mimi Morris, paying for a security shortfall, and high expectations for new accounting software were among the topics discussed when the Rancho Murieta Community Service Board held its monthly meeting on Feb. 19.

The primary topic was what to do next regarding the draft of the Integrated Water Master Plan. See the separate story in this issue for details about that discussion.

## General Manager Status

President Stephen Booth opened the meeting by announcing that the board had unanimously voted to deny a government claim filed by General Manager Mimi Morris. That action enables her to move forward with a lawsuit.

Morris has been on paid leave since Jan. 6, when the board adjourned to a closed session to evaluate her performance. Before the session, she publicly accused Booth of retaliation, discrimination and



General Manager Mimi Morris, who remains on paid leave, can now sue the district. Courtesy Photo

harassment, revealing that she had filed an internal complaint against him after the November board meeting.

Booth responded the following day, stating, “I categorically deny that there has been any discrimination against her for any reason.”

During the Jan. 6 closed session, the board voted 4-0 to place Morris on administrative leave pending an investigation. Two days later, Morris’s attorney filed a government claim against the district, reiterating her allegations against Booth in greater detail.

Under California law, employees must file a government claim before suing a governmental entity, allowing time for resolution before litigation. Now that the board has denied

her government claim, District Counsel Patrick Enright confirmed in a Jan. 23 email to the River Valley Times that Morris has six months to file a lawsuit.

Enright said Golden State Risk Management Authority is handling the government claim and declined further comment. He also confirmed that Kramer Workplace Investigations is still investigating Morris’s internal complaint and that she remains on paid administrative leave.

## Security Shortfall

Director of Finance and Administration Mark Matulich updated the board on security operations, noting that issues with part-time gate officers on weekends and patrol officers parking in handicapped spaces had been addressed. Gate officers have also been issued lanyards for better identification. He announced the creation of a security hotline email, securityhotline@rmcd.com and discussed plans to make it widely accessible.

Security Committee Chair Linda Butler stressed the importance of widely publicizing the security

hotline email, urging residents to report issues directly rather than on social media. Matulich agreed, calling it a more effective channel for security concerns.

(For more information about the barcode issue, see the story “CSD Board tables barcode fee, considers new water plan” at therivervalleytimes.com.)

When Booth invited board comments on the security report, Director Tim Maybee questioned how the district is funding the security shortfall after the board rejected a barcode fee increase to support 24-hour patrol coverage. Matulich responded that the only option was to use property tax revenue.

After Booth clarified that the board had tabled, not rejected, the barcode fee increase until budget discussions, Director Randy Jenco remained unsatisfied. He argued that using county tax funds violated a 2023 Grand Jury recommendation.

Booth asked Jenco if he wanted the issue on the March agenda and suggested the board consider an action item to reduce staff to previous levels or adjust the budget to fund the additional positions for

the rest of the year.

Jenco said he would like to discuss this at the next meeting. “I just think that we are backfilling a hole with taxpayers’ money without really discussing it and being transparent about it, which I think is wrong,” he said.

Booth directed District Counsel Enright to collaborate with District Secretary Amelia Wilder to draft the language for the two agenda items.

## Accounting Software

The board unanimously approved Matulich’s recommendation to contract with Caselle accounting software. The upfront cost is \$39,000, with an ongoing cost of \$2,700. Matulich noted that while the price is similar to the district’s current accounting software, Caselle will enhance accounting processes and transparency.

“This is a full-service accounting software package that does fund accounting, which is the type of accounting the district needs to do,” Matulich said. “It also will create a ton of efficiencies because it would take a number of silo systems that don’t talk to each other and put them all under one roof.”

## In Other Business

Longtime community activist Janis Eckard spoke during public comments about fire protection shortcomings related to the community’s water tanks and fire hydrant system. For more details, see the separate story in this issue covering the Rancho Murieta Association meeting, where she also outlined her concerns.

The board approved Rancho Murieta Association General Manager Rod Hart’s request to support trail maps for the Rancho North subdivision, which now meets association requirements.

Butler provided an update on organizing a strategic planning session for the board, with further discussion scheduled for the March 19 meeting.

Operations Manager Eric Houston introduced an addition to his Water 101 educational piece, which explains the district’s infrastructure and operations. A key highlight was that the district has 301,000 feet of water mains, equivalent to 57 miles of underground piping.

*This story is available online at rivervalleytimes.com.* ★




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# Kings Korner

## By V.G. Harris



Breaking news, the Sacramento Kings can win games against playoff quality teams without all-world center Domantas Sabonis. It happened Saturday night in Houston Texas against a playoff bound Rockets team, as iron man Sabonis grabbed his right hamstring and was forced to leave the game only two minutes into the action.

Not to be esoteric, but intended for every fan and pundit to understand, this team even short-handed can make the playoffs. Yes, I said playoffs, not playin.

Even with the news that Sabonis will be sidelined for 2-3 weeks, every fan should find the positive where it takes you. With Sabonis resting his ailing hamstring, players such as Keon Ellis, Trey Lyles, and hopefully Markelle Fultz, will get much more court action, and Fultz in particular needs more time getting used to his new teammates.

I’m excited to see the athleticism and deft ball handling that Fultz brings to the hardwood, and without question Malik Monk needs time without the ball. Monk is getting exhausted handling the ball every possession, and he is leading the team in turnovers nearly every night. This comes from trying to do too much, and I love the effort Malik brings every game. No one gives more, but he is more comfortable in the role as a 2 guard, and with either Devin Carter or Markelle Fultz on the court, Malik can assume his former role.

Not to be overlooked as the Kings have put together a 3-game winning streak, is the work of big man Jonas Valanciunas. Jonas looks like the NBA starter he’s always been and will fill the void left by Sabonis as he nurses his hamstring over the next half dozen games.

Valanciunas is an excellent rebounder and has a low post game that is second to none. He gets criticism for his defense, but I believe he is a more than capable team defender, and he accepts a challenge well. Without question the acquisition of Jonas Valanciunas was bound to pay dividends, and Sacramento is about to see what this quality NBA center can do.

While pundits criticized the trade that brought Zach Lavine to the Kings from Chicago, all that Zach has done is play better and better with every game. The initial jitters that led to poor 3-point shooting has been replaced by stellar knock-down 3’s, that ignite the home crowd and show naysayers that this former NBA all-star can make a difference every night.

This is exactly the type of team Sacramento fans have been hoping to see for years. A team that can take any team to the wire every night, and as this newly assembled group has found time together, they are looking like a bonified playoff contender.

Just percentage points ahead of the Dallas Mavericks in the Western Conference standings, Monday night’s game looms large.

The Kings occupy the No. 9 spot in the standings but are amazingly only a half-game out of the No. 6 spot. Five quality teams are vying for No. 6, but the Kings are finding their collective stride at just the right moment. Tested they will be as they enter American Airlines arena and face Kyrie Irving and Klay Thompson.

If ever in a frenetic season it is time for optimism, that time is now! It should come from every corner, and regardless of what occurs against the Mavericks and the Nuggets on Wednesday night in Denver, everyone should be looking forward to Friday night’s contest against the visiting San Antonio Spurs.

Much has been said about the back story of DeAaron Fox leaving the Kings, and for one night that needs to take hiatus. When DeAaron is introduced as a member of the opposing team, every fan needs to get on their feet and put their hands together. What Fox did for the Sacramento Kings in nearly eight seasons is legendary, and without question No. 5 will have his jersey retired someday.

Stand up Kings fans, because the best is truly yet to come! It’s a great time to be a Sacramento Kings fan, so remember the glass is half full, and the playoffs are right around the corner!

All the best!

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



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# Magician Dazzles Women’s Club with Comedy and Illusions

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - The Rancho Murieta Women’s Club resorted to magic to celebrate their 33rd anniversary at the Rancho Murieta Country Club on Jan. 29. The sold-out luncheon featured a performance by renowned magician and illusionist Andy Amyx and his wife, Georgia.

Despite some club members trying to avoid the magician’s attention by sitting at a back table, others eagerly participated in his performance, which had the audience laughing uncontrollably for 80 minutes.

Erin Bailey volunteered for the most astonishing routine involving a \$100 bill that ended up inside an orange hidden inside a paper bag several tables away from the stage. Amyx used sleight of hand and clever misdirection to achieve his illusion.

“I tried to trick them with all my choices,” Bailey said. “I know it was magic, but it was real.”

Audience member Diana Frazinetti was astonished when the magician introduced Flight, his 17-year-old white dove, which promptly escaped. “The bird flew all over, and then he went and got it,” she said. “It was a live bird. It wasn’t fake.”

Amyx mentioned that people often ask if his birds are mechanical. “I just tell them I wind them up before the show,” he joked.

Throughout his career, Andy has performed internationally, including at venues such as the Magic



Magician Andy Amyx and wife Georgia demonstrate the Three Card Monte illusion when performing at the Rancho Murieta Women’s Club luncheon on Jan. 29. Photos by Gail Bullen



Andy Amyx introduces “Flight” to Ivy Applebaum.

Castle in Hollywood, Musgi Resorts in Japan, The Tropicana Casino in Atlantic City, Bally’s in Las Vegas, and The Riviera in Las Vegas. He has also entertained notable celebrities like Alanis Morissette, Julia Roberts, Demi Moore, Bruce Willis, Morgan Freeman, Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.

Beside the stage, his poster displayed quotes from Morgan Freeman:

“That was just fantastic. I want to see it again,” and from Hugh Hefner: “Truly one of the best acts I have ever seen.”

Based in Sacramento, Amyx previously performed for the club just before the pandemic.

## Program

A short business program preceded the hilarity. It began with Past President Vickie



Vickie Joyner presents beautifully decorated dream catchers to Cindy Armstrong, on the left, and Barbara Armstrong.



Sheryl Bray, left, and Erin Bailey can’t help feeling bamboozled.

Joyer presenting Cindy Shamrock and Barbara Armstrong with butterfly-adorned catchers in recognition of their dedicated efforts managing the luncheon reservations.

President Bonnie Kirschman reported that the membership stood at 177 and urged another 61 to renew. She explained the need in the group’s newsletter, “The Activity Line.”

“We do have a challenging year ahead of us with increases in food, facility fees, and just about everything you can think of,” she said. “Please try to support all of our luncheons and invite your friends, relatives, and especially new neighbors...The more the merrier.”

Patti Keating, co-chair of the blood drive committee,

reported that the Jan. 27 drive had succeeded even though the blood bank, Vitalant, had some computer system problems.

Erin Bailey, who is chairing the fashion show on May 7, asked committee member Theresa Ilaga to explain this year’s theme—A Royalty Affair. “We are encouraging all of the ladies to wear tea hats and gloves,” she said. Another thing is we really would like you all to come and spill the tea.”

The phrase “spill the tea” has become popular in recent years, especially on social media platforms, and is commonly used to prompt someone to share intriguing or scandalous details about a situation or person.

Vice-President Toni

Anani enthusiastically encouraged members to attend the March 26 luncheon titled “Spring Bling Bingo & Beans.” She explained that “bling” refers to the costume jewelry to be awarded as bingo prizes. “But we are not going to be eating beans. It’s just a reminder to bring an optional food donation,” she clarified.

All nonperishable food items and sundries like diapers and travel-sized toiletries collected at the upcoming luncheon will be donated to the Wellspring Women’s Center, which supports women and children. See the community brief with luncheon details in this issue.

For more photos of Amyx’s performance, visit [thrivervalleytimes.com](http://thrivervalleytimes.com). ★

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