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Land Park News

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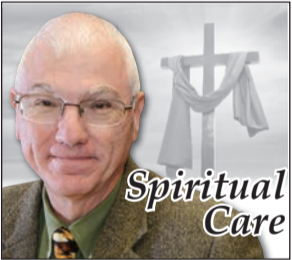
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Four Women of Distinction Honored



Honorees with members of the Greater Sacramento Chapter of APAPA. Photo courtesy of Tia Gemmell Media 2025

**Asian Pacific American
Public Affairs
Association News
Release**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - March was Women's History Month and to celebrate the month, chapter leaders from the Greater Sacramento Chapter of the

Asian Pacific American Public Affairs Association (APAPA-GSC) recognized four women leaders who have made a difference in the lives of Sacramento residents at its "Voices of Impact: Women of Distinction Awards Night." The celebration, which also doubled as a fundraising

event, recently was held at the APAPA headquarters in Sacramento.

Sharing her own story of inspiration, Gov. Gavin Newsom's Appointments Secretary Morgan Carvajal delivered the keynote remarks to elected officials and distinguished guests. Among some of the

presenters included Senator Christopher Cabaldon, the first Filipino-American elected to the State Senate, who introduced honoree Quirina Orozco.

"There are so many excellent women leaders in Sacramento and in Northern California so we
Continued on Page 10

Major Remake Coming to Franklin



Mayor Kevin McCarty gives remarks at the Franklin Boulevard Complete Street Project groundbreaking ceremony. Photo courtesy of City of Sacramento

**City of Sacramento
News Release**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Work will soon begin on the Franklin Boulevard Complete Street Project, marking the beginning of a major transformation aimed at improving safety, accessibility and connectivity along this key corridor.

Construction kicks off at the beginning of April near the intersection of Franklin Boulevard and Sutterville Road and will progress south in phases toward 32nd Avenue. The project is expected to be completed in early 2026.

This project will enhance the corridor by calming traffic, improving pedestrian and bicycle access and increasing safety for all roadway users.

Planned improvements include the reduction of lanes to slow vehicle speeds for safety, the addition of protected bike lanes, new pedestrian lighting, enhanced crosswalks with median refuges, wider sidewalks and increased tree coverage to provide much-needed shade.

"Franklin Boulevard is one of our city's most culturally rich and diverse corridors," said Mayor Kevin McCarty. "This project builds on past investments, going beyond road safety to build environmental sustainability, more housing, and community health, helping address a legacy of
Continued on Page 10

Always Be Creating Curiosity Feeds the Art of Mike and Laurie Blanchard

By J.G. Wirt

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Mike and Laurie Blanchard have grown older and wiser, yet they still think like art kids looking to put on a show.

Their current projects are both in print: hers a healthy-lifestyle magazine and his a vintage skateboarding photo retrospective.

Married 30 years, the Blanchards also take side roads into digital publishing, painting, photography, music, tarot reading, gardening, home improvement, travel, rat rods and old motorcycles. For them, the more interests, the better. And they are blessed to have each other as in-house muses and constructive critics.

During a two-hour visit at their Rosemont home, the couple shared with the newspaper how they indulge their individual and collective interests.

Their collaboration began when each played in Sacramento-area bands in the 1990s. Their acts supported each other in local gigs and road shows. Later, she added a June Carter-meets-Grace Slick kind of harmony to his Americana quintet, Mike Blanchard & The Californios.

Visual art also came later to Laurie Blanchard, just prior to the pandemic.



Laurie and Mike Blanchard, with an image from younger days, pose for a March 15 photo in their Rosemont home. Photo by J.G. Wirt

She said that her husband's ease at creating sketches or watercolors eventually led her to take paint to canvas. "He was always artistic and

I wasn't," she said. "Watching him create, I was always, 'What a beautiful creative outlet' but I didn't think
Continued on Page 4

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Sacramento Zoo’s Baby Giraffe Now Has a Name: Sumi

Sacramento Zoo News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Zoo is excited to announce that its adorable baby Masai giraffe, born on March 1, has been given the name Sumi. The name was selected though an online vote.

The name Sumi was inspired by sumac browse, a favorite snack of Sumi’s mother, Amirah, during her pregnancy.

The name is a playful

nod to the sumac tree and also honors the important role that the local community plays in supporting the zoo’s giraffes through its browse donation program.

The browse donation program allows the zoo to feed many of the animals, including the giraffes, chimps, lemurs and many birds, food that is exactly like what they would consume in the wild. They enjoy nibbling leaves, stripping bark, and chewing on stems to keep their brains busy and bellies full.

Every day the Sacramento Zoo feeds pounds of browse (non-toxic branches and leaves from specific species of trees and shrubs). The browse donation program allows members of the public to donate tree and shrub trimming from specific species of trees and shrubs to feed the zoo inhabitants.

These donations help provide fresh, nutritious browse for the giraffe herd, enriching their diet and environment. For more on



Sacramento Zoo’s adorable baby Masai giraffe, born on March 1, has been named Sumi. The name was selected though an online vote. Photo by Sacramento Zoo

the browse donation program visit, saczoo.org/browse-donation.

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Metro Chamber CEO
Joins Committee of 100



Robert Heidt is president and CEO of the Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce



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Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Metro Chamber announced that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has named Robert Heidt, president and CEO of the Sacramento Metro Chamber, as one of 16 new executives to its distinguished Chamber of Commerce Committee of 100 (CCC100). “On behalf of the Sacramento Metro Chamber, I proudly congratulate our president and CEO, Robert Heidt, on his appointment to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Committee of 100,” said Keri Thomas, vice president of Sutter Health External Affairs and chair of the Sacramento Metro Chamber Board of Directors. “This

prestigious honor reflects his leadership and commitment to strengthening our region’s business community; and his voice at the national level will elevate our region ensuring our businesses are well represented in key economic discussions.” With two decades of proven leadership and experience in the chamber industry, Heidt joined the Sacramento Metro Chamber in January 2024. This important new role will help to elevate the voice of the Sacramento Metro Chamber on a national level. Heidt will collaborate with other experienced leaders to network, build partnerships, discuss current issues, share expertise, advise the U.S. Chamber’s board of directors, enhance lobbying and coalition work, recommend programming and strengthen outreach to

the business and chamber communities. “It is truly an honor to join the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Committee of 100, a group that brings together some of the most experienced and dedicated chamber leaders in the country,” Heidt said. “The conversations within CCC100 have the power to shape policies and initiatives that not only impact our region but also communities across the nation and around the world. Just recently, we were engaged in discussions on international relations at the ambassador’s home in Washington, D.C., a testament to the global reach and significance of the work. I look forward to contributing to these critical conversations and ensuring the voice of our Capital Region’s business community is heard at the highest levels.” ★



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Always Be Creating

Continued from Page 1
I could do it. And I had this huge block on visual art and I had to work through that in order to get to the point where I could even try.”

“Once I could get past that self-judgment, I began to recognize that I had my own unique way, and he definitely supported that and encouraged that,” Laurie Blanchard said. “Generally, he stays in his lane unless I ask his opinion.”

“Her interests are different than mine and her inner psychology is different than mine, so what she’s going to paint is a lot different than what I do,” Mike Blanchard said.

He has studied and practiced photography, painting and general design since junior college in Santa Barbara; he also earned a journalism degree from California State University, Sacramento.

Mike Blanchard was a traveling photographer for Thrasher magazine and covered the 1980s skateboard scene with a keen eye and a fast lens. His earlier band, the alt-country/punk Tattooed Love Dogs, started in the 1980s, is in the Sacramento Area Music Awards (SAMMIES) Hall of Fame.

Later, while the couple were bringing up three sons, Mike Blanchard’s day job was as the hands-on manager of a repair shop. It fed his passion for vintage import cars and unusual two-wheeled vehicles. Today, his love for vintage film cameras feeds his day job as the e-commerce manager for a camera shop.



Mike and Laurie Blanchard are blessed to have each other as constructive critics. Photo courtesy of Laurie Blanchard



Mike Blanchard painted a series of images of vintage spark plugs. Photo courtesy of Mike Blanchard



Mood and color meld in one of Laurie Blanchard’s custom-painted aspen pieces. Photo by J.G. Wirt

“Her interests are different than mine and her inner psychology is different than mine, so what she’s going to paint is a lot different than what I do.”

—Mike Blanchard

Laurie Blanchard worked in sales and marketing during the family-raising days. Previously, she was a Nashville songwriter and musician, both solo and in a group called Her Six Daughters.

Her eventual dive into visual art landed in a distinctive mode of finger-painting. Commissions for original art to decorate clients’ homes keep Laurie Blanchard busy at a Midtown Sacramento studio and she does tarot readings for individuals and at area events. Recently, she added other spiritual studies and credits to her role as a seeker and teacher.

The Blanchards keep it together by exploring apart. She has gone overseas on charity missions and often treks out of the area for spiritual retreats and workshops.

He has been known to take working tours to the East Coast, ride a vintage motorcycle to Monterey or pilot his homemade hot rod

solo to the Bonneville Salt Flats.

All this is to say that the Blanchards are not your joined-at-the-hip artsy couple. They both say that their approach to art couldn’t have happened with another partner. And they also say others should tune into their own partners’ creative and spiritual sides.

During the newspaper visit, Laurie Blanchard was

more meditative and cerebral while Mike Blanchard was more declarative, although he also noted that turning an idea into art requires creative immersion.

They agree that art comes from curiosity. And they advocate turning off the TV to open channels to creativity. Other modern screens and social influences also detract from the creative potential, they say.

“When you spend time creating, you’re unplugging from the machine,” Laurie Blanchard said of the marketing and political message streams. “There is something almost subversive in creating art.”

In their unfussy yet put-together great room are some of their recent paintings. Hers include florals, aspens and faces. His latest are still-life renderings of vintage spark plugs. Laurie Blanchard said the florals and trees have large appeal to women. But Laurie Blanchard said her own muse goes wild for

her face portraits, which she paints for herself.

“Those are the easiest,” Laurie Blanchard said, “when I’m just doing it for me. I’m in flow state. I’m just doing. And sometimes, it goes horribly awry and goes in the dumpster. But sometimes, there’s a breakthrough and you find some new thing.”

Mike Blanchard has shown and sold his art and photography at local shows and to individual clients. He described doing extensive research into vintage Vespa motor scooters to paint a piece for a collector of Vespas and art.

“What the client got was something that is individual, meaningful to them in the commission,” he said.

The Blanchards’ one-time print magazine, Rust, profiled other artists, motor-heads, tattooists and models. After going out of print, it later became a digital showcase for features by Mike Blanchard and others on niche interests ranging from weird bicycles to vintage motorcycles, to craftspeople, racing legends and rarely seen cars.

Both Blanchards have extensive collaborative and promotional networks due

to their decades in the local culture, and they use social media and word of mouth to sell their work.

“She has a better clientele than I have,” Mike Blanchard joked. “She sells way more paintings than I do.”

Laurie Blanchard replied to her husband, “You have so many projects going on. I just hustle a little bit more. It doesn’t always work but I get it into cafes. I do a lot of florals and I try to keep it reasonably priced.”

She also posts images of new paintings on social media and her website and hangs her work at shows.


Laurie Blanchard has completed a solo album, which the couple is planning to self-release and promote.

And her Spirited Soul quarterly has potential for community-building and digital reach, she said

But for now, show and tell is over. The Blanchards, elders of the Sacramento creative scene, are heading out to pick up the grandkids for the day.

Get the latest from Laurie Blanchard at SpiritedSoulMagazine.com. See Mike Blanchard’s work at Rustmag.com. ★

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Ferreros Named Big Sky Player of the Week



Sacramento State senior Maddy Ferreros was named women's tennis Big Sky Player of the Week on April 2. Photo courtesy of Sacramento State University

Sacramento State University News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - For the second straight week and the fifth time overall this season a Sacramento State women’s tennis player has taken home weekly honors from the Big Sky Conference with senior Maddy Ferreros doing the most recent honors for the Hornets on April 2.

It is the fourth career weekly honor from the league office for Ferreros, whose last award came on April 5, 2023. She joins teammates Emilija Pranyte (twice), Lou Baudouin and Reese Walker as Sacramento State winners this spring.

Ferreros finished last week with a 3-0 record, winning both of her singles contests in three sets and taking home a doubles victory alongside teammate Irene Riva. The tandem was also leading their other doubles match before the Hornets clinched the point early,

ending the bid for a perfect 4-0 weekend.

The duo opened with a 6-4 win over Weber State's Jessica Hill and Sydney Schnell before switching to singles where Ferreros defeated Schnell for a second time on the day with a 6-7 (5), 6-0, 1-0 (10-8), victory at the No. 1 spot in the lineup, helping Sacramento State to a 7-0 shutout of the Wildcats.

Two days later, Ferreros rallied for another singles victory at the top spot in the lineup, outlasting Idaho State's Asem Shoybek, 3-6, 6-2, 6-2, en route to a 5-2 team victory over the Bengals.

Ferreros’ two singles triumphs extended her winning streak to six straight matches and improved her to 10-4 overall at the top spot in the lineup this year, the most wins in the Big Sky at that position.

As a team, the Hornets have a 15-2 overall record and a 5-0 mark in Big Sky play, having won their last eight straight matches. ★

2025 Aggie Football Schedule Announced



The University of California Davis football team will be opening the 2025 season on Aug. 23 in the Football Championship Series Kickoff Classic in Montgomery, Alabama. Photo courtesy of UC Davis

UC Davis News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - With a nationally broadcast game to open the season and five home games, including the Causeway Classic, University of California (UC) Davis football is set for an exciting 2025 with 12 games and eyes on a Big Sky Championship following a historic 2024 season.

The Aggies will host Southern Utah (Sept. 20), Weber State (Sept. 27), Northern Arizona (Oct. 11), Idaho State (Nov. 1) and

Sacramento State (Nov. 22) at UC Davis Health Stadium.

On the road UC Davis will head to Utah Tech (Aug. 30), Washington (Sept. 6), Cal Poly (Oct. 4), Northern Colorado (Oct. 25), Idaho (Nov. 8) and Montana State (Nov. 15).

It's the second-straight season that the Aggies will play 12 games, with their season opener being the Football Championship Series Kickoff Classic in Montgomery, Alabama. The Aggies will face fellow National

Collegiate Athletic Association Football Championship Series Playoff qualifier Mercer on Aug. 23 in the Week 0 event set to be broadcast on ESPN’s linear networks.

“We’re excited about the opportunity to play on national television to start the year against a great opponent in Mercer,” said head coach Tim Plough. “Every year in the Big Sky is a tremendous challenge and we look forward to the opportunity to grow as a program in 2025.”

“We will work hard as a team to create a group that the Davis community and university is proud of. Hopefully that leads to some great crowds in Shredville next fall where we all can find joy every Saturday,” Plough said.

The game in Seattle, Washington against the Big Ten’s Huskies will be the first time that the two sides have met on the grid-iron and the lone Football Bowl Subdivision squad the Aggies will see in 2025. UC Davis will also make its first trip to St. George,

Utah and the game in Montgomery will be the first time the Aggies play south of the Mason-Dixon Line since 2008 when they visited Central Arkansas.

In conference, the Aggies will visit Northern Colorado and Montana State for the first time since 2022 and host Northern Arizona and Idaho State for the first time since that same season. UC Davis will host Sacramento State to end the season, looking to win its third-straight Causeway Classic. ★

Athletics Option LHP Harris to Las Vegas

Athletics News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - On March 31, The Athletics optioned left-handed pitcher Hogan Harris to Triple-A Las Vegas. The move clears a roster spot for left-handed pitcher Angel Perdomo, who was claimed off waivers from the Los Angeles Angels on March 30.

Harris pitched in one game in the season-opening four-game series at Seattle, allowing one hit and one walk while striking out one in 0.1 innings.

Harris had no decisions, a 0.71 ERA and .485 opponents OPS in nine games, including one start, this spring. Harris held the opposition to a .105 batting average but walked a team-leading 12 batters, which was second most in the Cactus League.

Perdomo began the spring with the Atlanta Braves, was traded to the Angels for cash considerations on March 17 and was designated for assignment on March 25. He combined for a 1.80 ERA and .624 opponents OPS in 10 spring training appearances. The 30-year-old left-hander held the opposition to a .200 batting average but walked six batters in 10.0 innings.

Perdomo spent the entire 2024 season on the Braves injured list as he continued his recovery from Oct. 6, 2023 “Tommy John” surgery. He last pitched in the majors in 2023 with Pittsburgh when he was 3-2 with 3.72 ERA in 30 relief appearances.

Perdomo is 4-2 with a 5.55 ERA in 52 relief appearances in the three seasons in the majors with the Brewers (2020-21) and Pirates (2022). ★

CRC Hawk Selected Player of the Week

Cosumnes River College News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Cosumnes River College (CRC) sophomore Kalani Hernandez earned California Community College Fastpitch Coaches Association (CCCFCA) Player of the Week honors on March 31.

Hernandez was a force at the plate for the week beginning March 24, hitting safely in eight of her 11 at-bats. The sophomore catcher drove in six runs while scoring six after

reaching base nearly 82% of the time.

Hernandez helped the Hawks to key wins over Butte College on March 26, and No. 14 San Joaquin Delta College on March 29.

Hernandez is pacing the Cosumnes River offense with a .398 batting average. To date, Hernandez has seven doubles on the season. ★

Cosumnes River College sophomore Kalani Hernandez earned Player of the Week honors on March 31. Photo courtesy of Cosumnes River College



Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



For the Sacramento Kings, life is like a box of chocolates, you never know you’re going to get.

After a blowout loss to the Orlando Magic, the Kings sustained back-to-back close losses to the Indiana Pacers and the lowly Washington Wizards. For many Kings fans, it was their darkest hour.

Radio talk shows lambasted the Kings, and many even suggested the team was playing to opt out of the play-in, in favor of securing a first-round draft pick.

I would never accuse the Kings of tanking, because I don’t believe it’s in their DNA. There is far too much pride in these gladiators for any of them to take a night off.

True, at times they look like they’ve never seen a basketball before, but I see effort on the court every night, and I believe in this eccentric group that has captured the hearts of so many fans.

With negativity abounding the Kings drubbed the Charlotte Hornets 125-102 in a game that was never in question, but looming ahead was the indomitable Cleveland Cavaliers.

No one gave the Kings a chance and considering that the Sactown boys had just handed the Cavaliers a shocking loss in Sacramento just three weeks earlier, the Cav’s were just waiting for payback.

In a game that was thoroughly entertaining, the Kings played like a team on a mission, and outplayed the Cavaliers for 48 minutes, handing the Eastern Conference leader only their 16th loss of the season.

Domantas Sabonis came to play and made a statement early, scoring 15 of his 27 points in the first quarter. Zach Lavine showed off his offensive prowess by adding 37 huge points in a 120-113 win over the Cavaliers and making the potential for postseason basketball a very real possibility for the Sacramento Kings.

But this win doesn’t just portend post-season basketball, it sends a message to every negative pundit, and every Kings fan, that on any given night this newly assembled group of ballers, can beat the best that the NBA has to offer.

Hope is a fleeting emotion, but on this night in Cleveland, the Kings gave every fan a reason to play on. No more nonsense about playing for draft picks. Instead watch the movie “Hoosiers” again, and while you’re at it why not plug in “Miracle on Ice”.

I remember the 1976 Warriors that with only one star, went on a run that saw them winning four straight games over the Washington Bullets and shocking the basketball world.

These things happen, and they’re the very reason we watch basketball.

We as fans are blessed with an eclectic group that have come together under difficult circumstances, and with a rookie coach, are trying to do what every supposed expert believes they can’t do.

Well call me Pollyanna, because I decide what I believe, and I’ll be rooting until they turn the lights out.

For many fans, your favorite player isn’t even a member of the starting five, and that is what drives you. Bench rotations are ever so critical, and whether it’s Malik Monk, Isaac Jones, or even Doug McDermott, fans live and die with every shot.

I was astounded to hear that Vegas has the Detroit Pistons as 6 ½ favorites over the Sacramento Kings Monday night, and every player on the Kings should take that as an insult. Put a chip on your shoulder and show the Pistons how they just defeated perhaps the best team in the Eastern Confernce the night before.

Look for anything that brings motivation and let’s end this season on a high note.

Will the Kings finish 500 or better? I don’t know, but I’ll be watching, and I know anything is possible.

The offseason and its moves will take care of itself. It’s time to put the hammer down and play basketball the way every fan knows this team is capable of.

Stay tuned Kings fans because the playoffs are more than just a pipe dream!

All the best!

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

In California’s Capitol, Some Political Fights Span Decades



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

Were we able to transport ourselves back in time 50 years and into California’s Capitol, we would find a governor seeking and enjoying massive attention by national political media as he eyes some greater office. We’d also find a Legislature dealing with conflicts among influential interests with heavy financial impacts.

In other words, the Capitol’s dynamics in 1975 were pretty much what they are today.

The resemblance even extends to specific issues. For instance, then-Gov. Jerry Brown was touting a “peripheral canal” in 1975 to carry water around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Gavin Newsom was seven years old then, but now as governor is waging the same campaign for a tunnel to do the same thing and is facing the same opposition.

Other conflicts that confronted Brown and legislators a half-century ago can be found again among the hundreds of bills introduced so far in the 2025 legislative session.

On Tuesday, for instance, the Senate Judiciary Committee took up Senate Bill 29, a measure that would extend indefinitely the ability of survivors of people who died as a result of medical malpractice to sue for “pain,

suffering, or disfigurement.” During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Legislature provided a temporary window for such suits because the court system was in pandemic-induced turmoil.

Insurers and other opponents of the measure contend that it violates a 2022 compromise on the limits of malpractice damages, a deal that seemingly ended a 47-year-long political battle that began when Brown signed the Medical Injury Compensation Reform Act in 1975.

A half-century ago, doctors and other health care providers were also skirmishing over “scope of practice,” the body of state law that defines in great detail which medical professionals can perform which procedures on which parts of the human body.

The hardest-fought battle pitted orthopedic surgeons against podiatrists over the legal right to perform ankle surgery, and it raged for years until the latter prevailed. Ever since, there have been similar conflicts too numerous to list, such as psychologists vs. psychiatrists over the right to prescribe drugs, optometrists vs. opticians over eye treatment — and even veterinarians vs. dog groomers over who could legally brush a dog’s teeth.

The current version of this perennial turf battle is Assembly Bill 876, which would allow nurse anesthetists to provide their services more independently — the latest in a years-long string of legislative efforts by nurses to bolster the scope of their practices.

Soon after becoming governor, Brown pledged to reform workers’ compensation, the system that

provides income and medical care to those with work-related illnesses and injuries. That effort failed, but as one of the last acts of his first governorship, Brown signed a bill to increase payments to such workers by about \$3 billion a year, angering employers who must provide coverage.

That touched off a predictable cycle in which a majority of the workers’ compensation interest groups would work out some sort of systemic overhaul once each decade and get it enacted over objections of groups left out of the negotiations.

The last such instance occurred in 2012 when Brown, once again governor, negotiated and signed legislation to raise benefits again, but impose new rules on eligibility and medical care to save enough money to pay for the benefits.

The Capitol is overdue for another workers’ compensation deal and a newly introduced measure, Senate Bill 555, could be the vehicle. It would increase benefits to workers with partial but permanent disabilities, which have been capped at \$1,256 a month for the last decade.

The bill would provide automatic cost of living increases and is certain to draw fire from employers — another chapter in what has been one of the Capitol’s longest running high-dollar conflicts.

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

Social Security Matters

When is the Best Time for Me to Claim Social Security?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I will be 66 ½ in June and would like to discuss when would be the best time for me to start taking my social security benefits. I am still employed full time and don’t want to be penalized because of that. Please let me know what I need to do to set up an appointment with you. I got your information from the AMAC website, and I look forward to hearing from you. **Signed: Ready to Claim**


Dear Ready: You can certainly call us on 1.888.750.2622 during normal EST business hours for a personal conversation. But to facilitate that conversation, be aware that deciding when to claim your Social Security benefit normally depends on just a few factors, including your financial need, your health and expected longevity, and your marital status. A few things to be aware of:

- Born in 1958, your “full retirement age” is age 66 years and 8 months. If you were born in October 1958, you will reach your FRA in June 2025, and that is the point you can get 100% of the SS benefit you’ve earned from a lifetime of working.

- Once you reach your FRA in June, Social Security’s “annual earnings test” no longer applies. Thus, you can continue working after you start your SS benefits and your earnings will not negatively affect your monthly benefit amount. If you claim any earlier than your FRA, you will get a smaller benefit and also be subject to Social Security’s annual earnings test (which for you this year - your FRA year - is \$62,160, or \$5,180/month after you start your SS benefits). If you decide to claim before your FRA, your benefit will be reduced by .556% for each month early (a permanent reduction).
- You can also wait beyond your FRA to claim and earn Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) at the rate of .667% per month (8% per year of delay), in order to get an even higher benefit later. If financially feasible, you can delay up to the age of 70 when your monthly benefit will reach maximum - about 27% more than it will be in June of this year.
- If you are single and will not be eligible for a spousal benefit, then you should make your claiming decision based only on your own needs. If, however, you are married and your spouse’s FRA benefit is more than twice your FRA amount, you may be entitled to a “spousal boost” (a supplemental amount added to your own SS benefit).
- Your life expectancy should be considered when deciding when to claim your SS retirement benefits. If you expect to enjoy at least “average” longevity (about 87 for a woman your current age), then you might also consider delaying your claim (if financially feasible) and that is often a prudent choice. If you don’t expect to achieve a long life, or if you need the money sooner, or if you are entitled to spousal benefits, then claiming at your FRA of 66 years and 8 months is likely your best option.

In the end, only you can decide when you should claim your Social Security, but we’re always here to answer any additional questions you may have. You can feel free to call us at any time (1.888.750.2622) during normal EST business hours to discuss your options directly with one of our certified Social Security advisors. Or you can also ask any additional questions via email, which we will be most happy to respond to promptly.

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




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Fraudulent Invoices Hit County’s Planning Customers

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County officials have been made aware of a fraudulent email scheme targeting both current and former planning customers.

The scam involves sending fake invoices using the names of county officials and the official Sacramento County logo, instructing recipients to wire money. The current reports of this scam utilize an

email address of “planning-applications.saccounty.gov@usa.com.”

Customers are urged to be cautious and not respond to these emails or send any payments. Anyone who receives a suspicious email of this nature should forward it to sacplan@saccounty.gov for review.

“Sacramento County takes this matter very seriously and we are actively working to educate our customers so that they don’t fall victim to this scam,” said Sacramento County Planning Director Todd Smith.

“We urge our customers to remain vigilant and verify any financial requests directly with the county before taking action. If you’re unsure whether an invoice is official, contact us to verify.”

The Sacramento County Department of Technology is investigating the incident and will collaborate with law enforcement if necessary.

The Sacramento County Department of Finance issues planning customer invoices through the U.S. mail and does not instruct

customers to wire funds as a method of payment. Payments are only accepted by mail to P.O. Box 1587, Sacramento, CA 95812, in person at county locations, and certain payments are accepted online.

If you have received an invoice from Sacramento County Planning and Environmental Review and would like to verify its authenticity, email sacplan@saccounty.gov or call Planning and Environmental Review at 916-874-6141.

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Rep. Bera Responds to General Mail Theft Report

By U.S. Representative Ami Bera, M.D. News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - On March 27, U.S. Representative Ami Bera, M.D. (CA-06) responded to a newly released U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) audit report on mail theft, a report he formally requested following widespread complaints from Sacramento County residents about ongoing theft and vandalism of their mail.

The audit uncovered serious deficiencies in how local postal facilities track, secure and inspect mailboxes, particularly highlighting severe gaps in oversight of arrow key

usage.

“Despite extensive collaborative efforts from my office with USPS and USPSIS to address the persistent concerns raised by constituents, the findings of this audit are completely unacceptable,” said Representative Bera. “The audit identified serious systemic issues including missing and unaccounted-for arrow keys, inadequate oversight and a troubling lack of mandatory inspections. The Postal Service must immediately implement the Inspector General's recommendations to restore public trust and ensure that Sacramento County residents have the secure and reliable mail services they deserve.”

The Office of Inspector General audit focused on three postal facilities in Sacramento County: Sacramento Main Post Office (Royal Oaks Drive), Fort Sutter Station (Alhambra Boulevard) and Rancho Cordova Post Office (Progress Court).

Key findings include: “The Sacramento Main Post Office, Fort Sutter Station and Rancho Cordova Main Post Office did not properly track their arrow key inventories.”

“There is no tracking mechanism in place that distinguishes whether a Cluster Box Unit (CBU) is postal-owned or privately owned.”

“Local management at the Sacramento Main Post Office, Fort Sutter Station



An audit by the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General uncovered serious deficiencies in how local postal facilities track, secure and inspect mailboxes. Photo by Arti Kh/Pexels

and Rancho Cordova Main Post Office did not perform the annual safety inspections for the condition of blue collection boxes, CBUs, and green relay boxes.”

The report outlines why these failures occurred, their impact on the community and specific steps

for corrective action. The Office of Inspector General has also issued implementation deadlines and will require proof of compliance.

Representative Bera’s office will closely monitor the U.S. Postal Service’s progress in addressing these critical issues and

will continue advocating on behalf of Sacramento County residents to ensure their mail is delivered securely and on time.

The full Postal Service audit report, “Mail Theft Mitigation and Response: Sacramento, CA,” can be viewed at usps.oig.gov/ reports. ★

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ABOUT TOWN

Fairytale Town Spring Eggstravaganza April 19-20
Families are invited to hop into Spring at Fairytale Town’s Spring Eggstravaganza on Saturday and Sunday, April 19-20, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (weather permitting). Spring Eggstravaganza activities include all-day egg hunts on the Mother Goose Lawn, egg-finding games, creative crafts, engaging scavenger hunts, fairy visits and exciting prizes.

Advance tickets for Spring Eggstravaganza are \$12 for Fairytale Town members and \$15 for non-members. Fairytale Town is 3901 Land Park Drive, Sacramento 95822.
Buy tickets at fairytaletown.org.
Fairytale Town is home to more than 25 three-dimensional play sets based on favorite fairytales and nursery rhymes, a family of 22 rare and miniature breed animals, three interactive learning gardens, and two performing arts stages.

Pocket Community Day Train Ride April 26
The Pocket community can reconnect with friends and neighbors while traveling through the scenic Yolo countryside aboard the River Fox Train at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, April 26.
Enjoy open seating in indoor cars, equipped with climate control and restrooms, or in outdoor patio cars, which feature flaps and heaters during cooler months.

Adult tickets are \$59.95, excluding fees. Two children under 13 are free with one Adult paid admission. Pets are welcome at an additional fee.
Get tickets and information at riverfox-train.com/pocket.

Holy Spirit’s Tri-Tip-to-Go April 27
Holy Spirit’s Knights of Columbus council is holding its annual Tri-Tip-to-Go dinner on Sunday, April 27. Pre-orders are required and can be made at hs-knights.org.

Proceeds benefit Horses for Healing, a nonprofit that provides therapy for children and adults to help facilitate growth, learning and healing.
Don’t miss out on this excellent, affordable meal.

Cinco de Mayo Party May 3 at Elks Lodge 6
Mariachi music, salsa dancers, and

dining and dancing are on the menu for Elks Lodge No. 6’s Cinco de Mayo celebration from 5 to 11 p.m. Saturday, May 3 at the lodge, 6446 Riverside Blvd.
Mariachi Nuevo Continental and Yemaya Dance Group will entertain, and Los Elegantes will provide the dance music.
Tickets are \$40 per person. Call 916-422-6666 for tickets.

Area Museums Offer Plenty of Experiences
A sampling of must-see and must-do experiences and special activations offered by local museums include the following:
California Museum – Our War Too: Women in Service is a groundbreaking special exhibit honoring the nearly 350,000 American women who answered the call to serve their country during World War II.
Made up of unique and colorful artifacts from The National WWII Museum’s collection, the exhibit explores the efforts, struggles, and accomplishments of these service-women, the impacts of which extend into the present day.
Through May 4. Details at californiamuseum.org.
California Automobile Museum – Sixty Years of Mustang. A comprehensive history of the Mustang, from when it first hit the roads in 1965 to the current era of Mustangs.
Highlighting stories from prolific names in Mustang history like Saleen, Shelby and Iacocca. In addition, interactive experiences and digital displays showcase the iconic image of the Mustang over the decades.

Elks Lodge 6 Calendar of Events
Elks Lodge 6 Sunday Breakfast, 8:30 am-11 am every Sunday; \$15 tax included. Good time and place to connect with friends and family.
Yoga, Monday 12 p.m., Wednesday 3:30 p.m. Lodge members free.
Martial Arts, Monday 5 p.m.
Pickleball, Monday, Wednesday, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.; Thursday, 4:30-7:30 p.m.; Sunday, 4-7 p.m.
Karaoke Nights, Thursdays and Saturdays, 7 p.m.
Wednesday Night Dinner, 5:30 to 7 p.m. See elks6.net for weekly menu. ★

SMUD to Hold Public Proposed Rate Action Workshops

SMUD News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The SMUD Board of Directors is holding two public workshops and a public hearing to discuss proposed rate changes.

The Chief Executive Officer & General Manager’s Reports and Recommendation on Rates and Services, released by SMUD CEO & General Manager Paul Lau, outlines a proposed rate increase of 3 percent on Jan. 1, 2026, and another 3 percent increase on Jan. 1, 2027. The proposed changes also include an optional Time-of-Day (low use) Rate, updates to transmission rates and other miscellaneous changes.

While SMUD works hard to control costs and operate efficiently, the need for a modest rate increase is attributed to several factors including wildfire prevention and mitigation, new generation projects, higher commodity costs for California clean energy compliance, infrastructure investment to maintain a reliable grid, the Folsom Administrative Operations Building and increased operating costs due to inflation, according to SMUD officials.

SMUD officials say that SMUD is committed to keeping rate increases within inflation, and if the proposed changes are approved, SMUD’s rates would remain among the lowest rates in the state,



currently on average more than 50- percent lower than neighboring PG&E’s rates.

Detailed information on the proposed rate action and a complete copy of the Chief Executive Officer and General Manager’s Report and Recommendation on Rates and Services can be found on smud.org/RateInfo.

SMUD will work closely with customers and other stakeholders, including community groups, service organizations, business groups, elected officials and more, to discuss these changes.

In addition, two public workshops and a public hearing will be held for customers to learn more about the process and comment on the proposed changes.

Meetings will be held in-person at SMUD’s Headquarters building and virtually via Zoom.

A public workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, April 30 at 5:30 p.m., followed by another public workshop on Tuesday, May 13 at 10 a.m. Additionally, a public hearing will be held on Wednesday, June 4 at 6 p.m.

Accommodations are

available for disabled individuals. If you need a hearing assistance device or other aid, or have questions about the proposal, visit smud.org/RateInfo or call SMUD at 855-736-7655.

Written comments can be emailed to ContactUs@smud.org or mailed to SMUD, P.O. Box 15830, B256, Sacramento, CA 95852-0830.

As the nation’s sixth-largest, community-owned, not-for-profit electric service provider, SMUD has been providing low-cost, reliable electricity to Sacramento County for more than 75 years. SMUD is a recognized industry leader and award winner for its innovative energy efficiency programs, renewable power technologies and for its sustainable solutions for a healthier environment. In 2023, SMUD’s power supply was, on average, 78 percent carbon free, and SMUD has a goal to reach zero carbon in its electricity production by 2030.

For more information on SMUD’s Zero Carbon Plan and its customer programs, visit smud.org. ★

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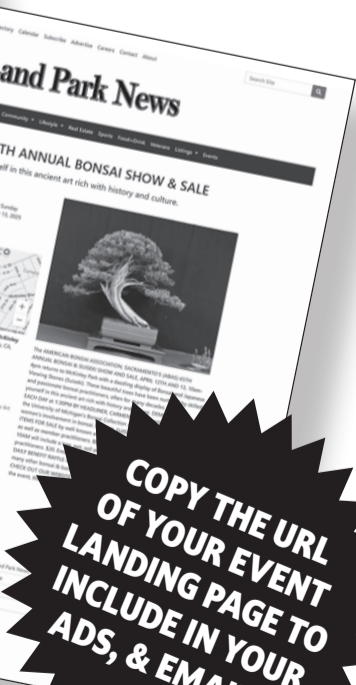
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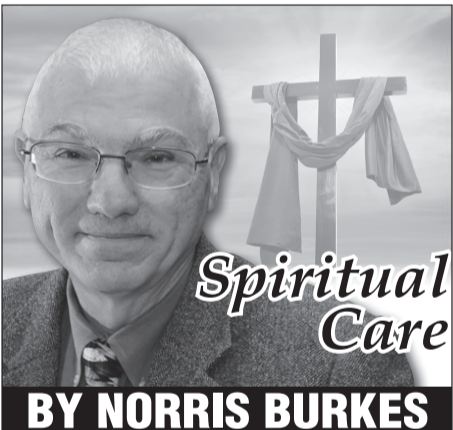
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Is it Ever Too Late to Talk to God?



During my career as a healthcare chaplain, I would often feel like I was pastoring a parade. That’s because, by definition, my chaplain relationship with patients was a temporary one.
I suppose that’s why I am relieved when a patient asks if they can call me “Pastor” instead of “Chaplain.” I hear their request as an invitation to assume the more personal role of their family pastor.

However, that’s not quite how it started with a patient I first knew as “Mr. Penny.” I call him “mister” because that’s how he introduced himself when I entered his hospital room at Houston Northwest Medical Center in 1992.

I reciprocated his formality by introducing myself as “Chaplain Burkes.”
At first, I thought he was using titles in recognition of our age difference. But eventually it seemed like it was more about him wanting to distance himself from the three-piece-suited chaplain who matched his stereotypical idea of the “preacher.”

Doctors told Penny he had inoperable brain cancer, but he didn’t want to talk about that. The balding, bony man just wanted to chat.

During his next several hospitalizations we talked sports – either the Houston Oilers or my lunchtime basketball games with local clergy.

For Penny, the greater the emotional distance we could maintain from reality, the better.
Finally, though, on his last hospitalization, his nurse summoned me from lunch to tell me Penny had a favor to ask.

Thinking this sounded like the call to a deathbed confession, I made a quick exit from the cafeteria toward the ICU.

I walked into his room to find his wife stroking his fevered head.

“Oh good,” she said. “I’m glad you’re here today and not playing basketball.”

“Knee problems,” I said.
“He wants to ask you something.”

I looked at the figure on the bed, twisted and ghostly. His raspy breathing suggested he wouldn’t have much strength for this

conversation, so I leaned over the bed and called to him as if announcing my presence through a dense fog.

“Mr. Penny, it’s Chaplain Burkes,” I said. “Is there something you want to ask me?”

He nodded. “Teach me...” he said, his voice trailing.

He took a fuller breath and added, “Teach me to pray.”

Confused by his sudden approach to an intimate moment, I searched his wife’s face for context.

She was chewing on her thumbnail. “He’s embarrassed.”

“Embarrassed?” I asked.

“He’s afraid he’s being hypocritical to wait until his death to talk to God,” she added.

I nodded. It’s a common reasoning I hear from patients.

Jesus summarily dismissed this poor logic in his conversation with two insurgents occupying crosses on either side of his.

The first man spent his last hours mocking Jesus and goading him to use his power to save everyone.

But the other guy was quite the opposite. He felt shame for his past life, so he asked Jesus, “Remember me when you enter your kingdom.”

Jesus swiftly responded. “Today you will be with me in paradise.”

Instead of disqualifying the dying man for being hypocritically tardy, Jesus assured him that he would be rewarded in the promptest fashion.

“Mr. Penny,” I said. “I think you’ll find that God cares very little about your past.

He mostly cares about what you’ll do with the next minute of your life.”

Penny nodded.

“Prayer is just talking to God,” I added. “It’s not theologically complicated. Just talk from your heart.”

Penny closed his eyes and began moving his lips. I couldn’t hear what he was saying, but when he opened his eyes his expression told me that he’d heard God’s voice.

I know this because the “mister” who had been so dependent on titles to gain distance from spiritual matters shifted his heart to say one last thing to me.

“Thank you, Pastor. Thank you.”

Sign up to receive this weekly column in your email box at <https://thechaplain.net/newsletter/> or send me your email address to comment@thechaplain.net.

All of Norris’s books can be ordered on Amazon. Autographed copies can be obtained on his website www.thechaplain.net or by sending a check for \$20 for each book to 10566 Combie Rd. Suite 6643 Auburn, CA 95602. ★

Concerts in the Park Returns in May

Downtown Sacramento Partnership News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On April 4, Downtown Sacramento Partnership announced the much-anticipated “Concerts in the Park” series lineup, bringing live music back to downtown Sacramento on Fridays at 6 p.m. starting May 2, 2025.

Booking major national touring artists, this string of concerts are a staple to the growing music scene in Sacramento.

Following the footsteps of other festivals and state fairs, this year “Concerts in the Park” is changing dates and times of the concert series. Beginning this season, gates will open at 6 p.m. and music will finish at 9:30 p.m.

While previous years have been 12 weeks of music, this year it will be nine, finishing the season at the end of June before the intense heat hits in July. The concert venue remains the same, Cesar Chavez Plaza.

“We’ve been very focused the last three years on adjusting ‘Concerts in the Park’ to be more reflective of Sacramento,” said Madelyn Bussola, Director of Communications and Outreach for Downtown Sacramento Partnership. “We started by adjusting the lineup to include more genres with their own specific nights, bringing in different partners and food and beverage options to make it more community-oriented. It’s only natural that as summers get warmer and downtown evolves that we also change the dates and times, not only to make it more comfortable, but also make it more safe. That’s always been our No. 1 priority.”

The one thing that the Partnership won’t change: the event will always be free. A purposeful choice in an increasingly expensive field.

“Concerts in the Park” has always been for the community, and in order for that to remain authentic, it has to be reflective of the changes happening within it,” said Michael Ault, Executive Director of Downtown Sacramento Partnership.

“Thirty-two years ago, these were a vehicle to keep office workers downtown for an hour or two longer after they clocked out at 5 p.m. Even with return-to-office orders, we want downtown to be a destination of choice,



Downtown Sacramento’s “Concerts in the Park” is returning to César Chávez Plaza on May 2. Photos courtesy of Downtown Sacramento Partnership



“Concerts in the Park” attendees enjoy the music and atmosphere.

not obligation, so it’s our responsibility to provide an experience that people want to come to, in-office or not.”

The dynamic and high-energy 32nd annual “Concerts in the Park” line-up contains local and national artists including XZIBIT (hip-hop), Phantogram (indie rock), Winona Fighter (emo), Jackie Greene (Americana) and Discrete (EDM), along with popular DJs including DJ Oasis, EDDY, and Joseph ONE.

A detailed lineup along with more information about “Concerts in the Park” is available at downtownsac.org/downtown-sac-experiences/concerts-in-the-park.

A production of Downtown Sacramento Partnership, “Concerts in the Park” is proudly sponsored by Dignity Health,

Donaghy Sales, Jack Daniels, Bonney Electrical, Heating & Air, Republic Services, Audacy, Citizen Hotel, Xfinity & Comcast

Business, and Visit Sacramento. César Chávez Plaza is located at 910 I St. in Sacramento. ★



The 2025 “Concerts in the Park” lineup was announced by Downtown Sacramento Partnership on April 4.



The 2025 “Concerts in the Park” series will occur on Fridays, starting on May 2 and concluding on June 27.

Major Remake Coming to Franklin Four Women of Distinction Honored

Continued from Page 1

redlining, inequity, and inaccessibility.”

“Franklin Boulevard is the heart of our community, home to small businesses, cultural pride, and generations of families,” said District 5 Councilmember Caity Maple.

“This project is about more than safer streets; it’s about honoring the people who live and work here by investing in a corridor that reflects their vibrancy and resilience. I’m proud to see this long-awaited vision become a reality.”

“By transforming this high-speed roadway into a main street that’s easy for families to walk and ride bikes, we are creating a more welcoming and connected neighborhood,” said Senior Engineer

Megan Johnson. “From upgraded sidewalks and bike lanes to improved intersections and drainage systems, every element is designed to enhance mobility, safety and long-term sustainability.”

During construction, traffic lanes on Franklin Boulevard will be reduced to one lane in each direction.

The city urges travelers to follow posted detour signs and plan for potential delays when moving through the construction area. Access to businesses and residences will be maintained throughout the project.

The construction contract was approved by the City Council last November and awarded to George Reed, Inc. It

is funded through several federal grants including \$9.3 million through the state’s Active Transportation Program, \$8.3 million through the Sacramento Area Council of Governments’ transportation funding programs; and \$750K of local funds through the Sacramento Transportation Authority.

The project website will be updated frequently throughout construction and can be accessed at cityofsacramento.gov/public-works/engineering/projects/franklin-boulevard-complete-street-project.

For questions during construction, residents can call the project hotline at (916) 226-1585 or email franklin@cityofsacramento.org. ★

Continued from Page 1

had to narrow down our list to women who made significant impact in our community,” said Jacqui Nguyen, Solano Community College Trustee and Co-chair of the Voices of Impact event. “From a well-known leader to a former Sacramento mayoral candidate, our honorees are individuals who are making a positive impact in our Sacramento communities. Congrats to all the amazing honorees!”

The honorees who were recognized included:

Karina Talamantes is the current vice mayor for the City of Sacramento and received the Innovative Leadership Award.

Quirina Orozco was re-elected to the City of West Sacramento in 2024. As a breast cancer survivor, Orozco has dedicated her career in fighting crime as a deputy district attorney for Sacramento County. Orozco was awarded the Impactful Leadership Award.

Linda Lui is the outgoing president of the Sacramento Chinese of IndoChina Friendship Association. For the past decade, Lui held the position of

president and provided free vegetarian meals to thousands of families in South Sacramento. During COVID, Lui and her board of directors provided free masks to the community. Lui received the Excellence in Community Outreach Award.

Dr. Flo Cofer was a mayoral candidate in 2024 when she ran for Sacramento mayor. Dr. Cofer was also the chair of Sacramento Measure U, a sales tax with funds promised to go to underserved communities. Dr. Cofer has received the Rising Star Award.

“Congratulations to our honorees as they have selflessly given back to the community through their dedication and hard work,” said Romer Cristobal, Newsom’s gubernatorial appointee and co-chair of the Voices of Impact event. “These women leaders are mothers, sisters, aunts and pioneers. We celebrate them and their positive contributions to our community. Hats off to them!”

Members of the Greater Sacramento Chapter raised nearly \$9,000, which will go toward leadership development and student internship programs. ★