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Calling All Rowers for Adult Rowing Team



Capital Crew Master's Program member Marco Palilla takes a selfie with fellow rowers on Lake Natoma. Photo courtesy of

By Idaly Valencia

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Did you row on a crew "way back when" in high school or college? Do you still enjoy rowing but do not know how to get back into it? A local rowing team is seeking new members to join them on the waterways and to build community.

Lake Natoma Rowing Association's Capital Crew Masters Program is an inclusive, multilevel competitive and recreational adult rowing team offering coached

Joining the program gives members affiliate access to rowing equipment appropriate for a variety of fitness levels. A skill assessment and swim test will be required on water rowing.

The program is calling out to those who used to row competitively in high school or college and would like to get back into the sport, according to Susan Hooten, a Capital Crew Masters Program rower and board member.

Rowers of all experience levels are welcome to join as well.

"Our members range from ages 27 to 80 years old and chose their level of commitment, from casual to international level. The practice schedule Continued on Page 3

Big Day of Giving **Telethon** to Stream Live



Confetti rains down to celebrate Sacramento's annual Big Day of Giving. Photos courtesy of ACC Senior

By MPG Staff

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - ACC Senior Services, a local 501(c)3 nonprofit, is proud to take part in Sacramento's annual Big Day of Giving with a vibrant four-hour live stream telethon on May 1. The telethon will

be all about celebrat-

ing community, culture and compassion for older

adults.

ACC Senior Services has set a goal of raising \$400,000 to help support and expand their award-winning senior services. Like many nonprofits, ACC is still navigating the lingering effects of the COVID crisis and ongoing economic challenges and needs the public's help.

The telethon, which will stream live on YouTube and Facebook from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., will showcase an array of local talent and engaging segments including musical performances by local favorites such as the Pocket Pickers and Maelev Tom, heartfelt storytelling from the ACC community, fitness and wellness spotlights from ACC instructors and a special cooking demonstration by Chef Toki Sawada of the beloved local Japanese restaurant, Binchoyaki.

Alongside the entertainment, the telethon will spotlight ACC's vital resources and educational programs that support Sacramento's growing senior population.

Viewers will hear directly from staff, volunteers and community members about the impact ACC has made on our community over the past

Continued on Page 5

Sac State Embraces Campus Sustainability



Sacramento State University President Luke Wood, left, and Ryan Todd, Sac State director of Energy and Sustainability, work with honey from a recent campus bee harvest. Photo by Andrea Price, Sacramento State University

By Jennifer K. Morita Sacramento State University

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - When Sacramento State welcomed students and their families back to campus last fall at Nest Fest, they celebrated with Herky (Sac State mascot), cheerleaders, music and of course, good food.

Few realized that kitchen scraps

were the secret to keeping their mac and cheese melty, or that their tossed leftovers would fertilize the University's famously green landscape as well as power future events like April's Carnival on the Quad.

It's all part of the circle of Sustainability at Sac State, where everything from bees in the garden to the biodigester in the Bioconversion

& Agricultural Collaborative (BAC) Yard play a vital role in a closed loop system designed to reduce the university's impact on the environment. In the nearly 10 years since

Environmental Studies alum Ryan Todd was hired to establish the Office of Sustainability, the team has created comprehensive plans to save Continued on Page 2

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Residents Challenge American **River Erosion Control Work**

Commentary by American River Trees

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), in cooperation with the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, is proposing to remove more than 600 trees and acres of riparian vegetation along the Wild and Scenic American River. This includes potentially dozens of heritage oak trees, some older than the country itself, as part of an erosion control effort.

Driving over the H Street bridge in the past few years, one can see how the landscape has changed. The same fate is in store for large stretches of the north side of the American River Parkway from Howe Avenue to Watt Avenue, and on the south side from east Watt Avenue to Larchmont Community Park.

The American River Parkway was established in 1959. It is the only state and federally designated Wild and Scenic River flowing through an urban area. Often referred to as "the jewel" of the Sacramento region, it attracts more than 8 million visits a year and generates over \$365 million for our local economy.

American River Trees (ART) is a grassroot, volunteer advocacy group working to preserve the American River Parkway trees and its wildlife habitat corridor. American River Trees asks the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to "pause, engage the community and develop alternative designs" for a better, more focused, appropriate method of preventing erosion on this beautiful stretch of natural paradise. This is in keeping with the American



American River Tress members ask the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to use different methods to prevent erosion at the American River Parkway. Photo courtesy of American River Trees

River Management Plan and the Lower American River Conservancy program to protect and restore the natural resources of this river.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will issue its final environmental report, including responses to public comments, this spring. Vegetation clearing could begin as early as fall.

The reports and related information are available on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers website at spk. usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/ Sacramento-Levee-Upgrades.

American River Trees encourages all interested parties to contact their elected representatives and let them know how you feel about this project.

More information and sample letters are online at Americanrivertrees.org.

We also invite all to our May 4 riverside protest, Walk for Wildlife, to save the natural plants and animals affected by this construction.

For more information, visit Americanrivertrees.org.

Sac State Embraces Campus Sustainability

Continued from Page 1 water and energy, eliminate waste and make Sac State a carbon neutral campus by 2040.

They've replaced faucets and lights, installed solar panels, become gardeners and beekeepers, begun composting and maintained new stormwater drains to naturally filter toxins from runoff going into local waterways.

Office "The Sustainability continues to lead the way in what it means to be a good steward of the environment," President Luke Wood said. "Sacramento State has ambitious goals to be a zero-waste campus and carbon-neutral by 2040, and the innovative work by our campus community is getting us closer those goals."

Now Sac State is reaping the rewards. Last summer, the California Resource Recovery Association awarded Sac State Sustainability the 2024 Outstanding Waste Prevention Award. The campus also earned its third STARS Gold rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education with its highest-ever score.

Sacramento State also ranked in the top 100 universities in the world by the International Sustainability Green Metric rating system. Out of the 1,477 schools rated, Sac State came in at 81.

Better still, the office has won numerous grants to pay for projects such as energy-efficient lighting, water-saving faucets, native plants, an on-site composter, electric shuttles and an electric vehicle fastcharging station that can also be used by the public.

In addition to \$7 million from the CSU Chancellor's office earmarked for energy reduction projects, Sac State has received more than \$2 million in state money, including two back-to-back California Department of Resources, Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) grants.

"I'm excited that we've been successful with projects that reduce energy and water use and reduce our emissions. That's our core function," said Todd, now the campus's director of Energy and Sustainability. "But the bigger win is being able to be more collaborative with the departments who are working in these areas on a regular basis.

"Now they're all thinking about the impacts of what they do and working with our team to reduce the impacts, which also reduces costs. You cut water usage, and you also cut how much you spend on water. ... I don't even have to say anything anymore. It's created its own momentum."

Over the years, the team's work with other departments has ingrained sustainability goals throughout the campus.

They experimented with different LED lights before finding one the university's electric department liked. All the old lighting is gradually being replaced, and now the top choice has become standard for all new construction.

Energy-efficient design elements and materials are also included in plans for new buildings. Todda n d his

Sustainability team aren't afraid to try new ideas or With the goal of becom-

ing a zero-waste campus by 2030 looming, they've pushed to eliminate campus refuse from ending up in landfills or local waterways. They used one of the CalRecycle grants to buy the University's first on-site composter.

Every day, roughly 400 pounds of uneaten food scraps from the Dining Commons are fed into the machine and turned into compost to fertilize the



Laura Gonzalez-Ospina loads food scraps into Sac State's food waste digester. Photo by Edward

campus grounds. Leftover compost goes to local schools.

The composter, which went online in March, will divert an estimated 100 tons of food waste from the landfill over 10 years, according to Todd.

Last summer, Sac State inherited a biodigester from Cal Maritime that turns food waste into a natural, nutrient-rich fertilizer that's better for the environment than artificial

It also produces methane gas that is collected and converted into electricity, which in turn is stored in portable batteries. Roughly the size of a desktop computer, these batteries can be used in place of gasoline generators to power campus events such as Nest

"We're the only campus in the CSU system that has one, let alone two, of these types of composting technologies," Todd said. "There's a ton of potential for faculty to do research projects."

... and it's also an opportunity for students who are looking to do research Environmental Studies

Professor Julian Fulton

said the campus operation

is a living laboratory.

"It's this idea that we can use our campus as an incubator of ideas and opportunity for study and research," said Fulton, who has been studying the effectiveness of Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater drains on campus. He and his students periodically collect samples of water runoff and test them for pollutants.

"There's constantly stuff happening on campus, new projects that aren't just static demonstrations. Their work demonstrates the process of sustainability," he said. "It's really cool for students to see."

Back in 2016, sustainability helped an Environmental Studies student doing research for a senior thesis on ways to save water. Their study showed motion-controlled faucets would save a lot of water, and helped Sac State win a \$700,000 grant to replace all the old faucets

"It shows how they sup-

port students to do research and translate that into solutions," Fulton said. Sustainability staff can be found doing everything from checking the

hundreds of recycling and

composting bins through-

out campus to rescuing

swarms of bees.

They not only maintain the CapRadio garden, helping grow fruits and vegetables that are given away to students at the ASI Food Pantry, they're beekeepers, too. Their apiary program produces Hornet Honey, which is sold online.

And any given day, Sustainability staff is taking local school kids on tours of the campus, pointing out the ways Sac State tries to be a steward for the environment.

Lizette Sweiven recently took her high school students from the Buckeye Union School District in El Dorado County on a Sustainability tour, since they're studying the impact humans have on the environment.

"They loved the tour," Sweiven said. "The students were riveted and hanging on every word at every location we went to. ... You can tell the staff has deep convictions about sustainability, and that it's

their life purpose. My students were really curious about their career paths." Sweiven said programs like Sac State

Sustainability put a pos-

itive spin on what may

otherwise seem like a

daunting challenge to students.

"When you talk about the effects of climate change and how detrimental it is right now, all the things that are happening in real time, it's really important to have students think about why it's happening and what's being addressed," she said. What are the solutions

currently being used? "As they become adults and move out into the world, thinking about their careers, they can ask if there's something they can do to add to the solution or think outside of the box to create another solution."

So far, the University is on track to achieve full carbon neutrality by 2040, five years ahead of California's 2045 deadline. The campus recently added 2,886 solar panels on parking garages on top of the 3,979 that were installed in 2021.

In total, the panels generate nearly 4.25 million kilowatt hours of renewable energy every year.

Sustainability and University Transportation & Parking Services also partnered with SMUD on a grant from the California Energy Commission to build Sac State's first Electric Vehicle fastcharging station. Two new electric-pow-

ered Herky Shuttles, paid for by the Volkswagen Mitigation Trust, will power-up at four new fastcharging stations, which will also be open to the public to charge their electric vehicles.

Todd also recently got word that a second CalRecycle grant to install water bottle filling stations throughout campus was approved. "What Sac State has

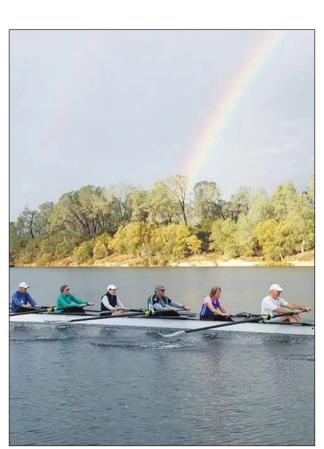
done is really important and something to be proud of," Sweiven said. "It leads the charge and elevates what colleges should be doing, if they aren't already."

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Calling All Rowers for Adult Rowing Team



Capital Crew Masters Program members participate in a morning rowing session in the fog.



The rowing Capital Crew Masters Program members are treated to seeing a rainbow during this session.

Continued from Page 1

is nothing like your college days," said Hooten.

Those interested in participating can select sessions to attend based on experience and comfort level. The team has separate groups that range in difficulty, offering different options for people to pick their preferred pace.

Experienced rowers can train and compete for local and international events. The upcoming competition that the team is currently training for is the Masters Regional Championship in June.

On Sundays, the program hosts a leisure rowing session for members who "just want to socialize and have fun."

Hooten emphasized that

those who rowed before

are encouraged to come

back to row.

The adult rowing team consists of men and women members (ages 27 and up) who row together from 6



Here are participants from the Crew Masters Program February 2024 Learn to Row event.

to 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, and from 7:15 to 9:15 a.m. Saturdays. Members meet at the Sacramento State Aquatic Center, 1901 Hazel Ave, Gold River, located by Lake Natoma. View the full 2025 master's schedule at sacstateaquaticcenter.

com/capital-masters.

Capital Crew Masters
Program members
come from across the
Sacramento region to row
on Lake Natoma. The
adult rowing team includes
residents from nearby
communities such as Gold
River, Carmichael, Rancho



Capital Crew Masters adult rowing team, for ages 27 and above, is a multi-level competitive and recreational adult rowing team offering coached sessions. Photo courtesy of Capital Crew Masters Program

Cordova, Citrus Heights, Fair Oaks, and Orangevale. Others travel from East and South Sacramento, Folsom, Woodland, El Dorado Hills and Placerville.

Curious about joining

the team? Contact coach Jackie Synder, the Capital Crew Masters Program president, at 719-330-1783. For more information, visit.lakenatomarowing. org.

Community members who have never rowed but want to learn can contact the Sacramento State Aquatic Center about rowing classes at 916-278-2842.



PRICES EFFECTIVE APRIL 23 - APRIL 29, 2025.



SacRT Launches Tap2Ride **Contactless Fare Payment Option**

Sacramento Regional **Transit District News** Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) is introducing a new, easier way for riders to pay their fares. On April 1, SacRT launched Tap2Ride, a contactless fare payment system on all buses and SacRT GO paratransit service vehicles.

With Tap2Ride, riders can use their contactless debit or credit cards or mobile wallets to quickly and securely pay their fare when boarding. This eliminates the need for cash or paper tickets, making transit more convenient than ever before. Cash, along with all other current forms of valid fare, will continue to be accepted.

"SacRT is committed to making transit easier and more accessible for everyone," said Henry Li, SacRT General Manager/CEO. "Tap2Ride is a major step forward in modernizing our fare payment system, giving riders the speed and convenience they expect while improving efficiency across our network."

Since April 1, riders can tap their contactless Visa or Mastercard credit/ debit card or mobile wallet (smartphone or watch) on Tap2Ride devices installed on all SacRT vehicles. Phase 1 of the Tap2Ride

program offers riders the benefits of daily fare capping and 90- minute free transfers between bus routes similar to Connect Card. Riders simply tap their contactless payment option to the device upon boarding the bus and the Tap2Ride system will select the best fare (single ride or daily pass) based on their travel for the day. Riders can also continue to use contactless payment at light rail station vending machines. During this phase, fare transfer benefits between bus and light rail will not be available when using Tap2Ride.

In late 2025, SacRT

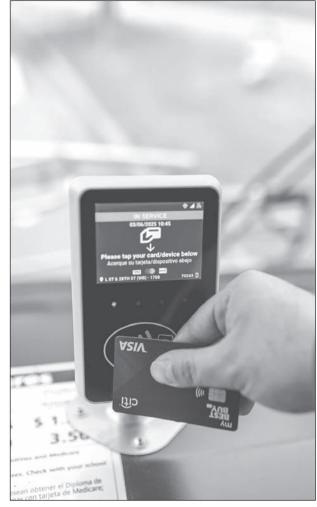
will launch Phase 2 of Tap2Ride, allowing riders to transfer seamlessly between buses and light rail using the same contactless payment method, with transfer benefits applied automatically.

"Cal-ITP is proud to partner with SacRT in making transit fare payments more convenient and accessible," said Gillian Gillett, Chief of Caltrans' Data and Digital Services Division and Program Manager of California Integrated Mobility. "This system enhances mobility by offering a secure, seamless way for riders to pay while ensuring those who qualify for discounts receive them automatically."

Eligible riders can receive a 50% discount on basic fares through Tap2Ride. Discounts are securely linked to a rider's contactless payment card through the California **Integrated Travel Project** (Cal ITP) web tool, allowing for automatic fare reductions without the need for in-person verification. Riders can apply for their discount online at benefits.calitp.org.

"Digital ID is an important component of smarter and better-connected public services," said State Chief Information Officer and Director of the California Department of Technology Liana Bailey Crimmins. "California's Digital ID Framework is making it easier for riders to access the benefits they're entitled to, no paperwork and no hassle, just a giant step toward a future where digital services make life easier for everyone."

Tap2Ride offers a fast and easy way to pay for fares, riders simply tap their card or mobile wallet to board, eliminating the need for cash or paper tickets. The program also provides secure discount verification, allowing eligible riders to link their payment card to their discount through Cal-ITP.



This new Tap2Ride contactless fare payment device is now on all SacRT buses. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Regional Transit

For added flexibility, riders can continue to use the Connect Card or ZipPass app if they prefer.

All of SacRT's current payment methods are still

available, and Tap2Ride serves as an additional option for fare payment.

For more information, please visit sacrt.com/ tap2ride.

ABOUT TOWN

Cinco de Mayo Party May 3 at Elks 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 servicewomen, 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. Interactive experiences and digital displays showcase the iconic Mustang image 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

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

City Crews Wrap Up Rain Patrols



City of Sacramento crews, known as "rain patrol," prepare all year long for the rainy season. Photo courtesy of City of Sacramento

City of Sacramento News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Although City of

Sacramento crews prepare all year long for the rainy season, that work intensifies when storms do arrive, typically from October to April.

Those efforts, known within the city as "rain patrol," involve dozens of workers in the Department of Utilities' stormwater and wastewater division. Crews monitor weather

conditions, water levels and infrastructure conditions, such as levees, ditches, creeks and canals, as well as respond to clogged storm drains, keeping pumps operating during power outages and other damage caused by

storms.

As temperatures warm up and the threat of storms diminishes, staff are celebrating the end of rain patrol after a successfully managed season of rainfall.

"We had minimal impacts from storms this year and that success is due to the work and dedication of our staff," said Charley Cunningham, manager of the stormwater and wastewater division. "They always deserve a big 'thank you' because these crews work hard in all kinds of hazardous conditions."

During the 2024/25 rain patrol season, crews responded to nearly 1,500 work orders and ser-

vice requests, which helped prevent flooding in Sacramento. Although Sacramento is

protected by levees, all rain

that falls in the city must be pumped out. Staff must operate and

maintain all stormwater infrastructure, which is critical to keeping residents and businesses safe, according to Cunningham. "It's important to know

that without the hard work of our staff, Sacramento would be much more prone to flooding," he said. With another rainy sea-

son behind them, city crews are shifting their focus to annual maintenance and preparation for next year's storms. "These efforts don't

just happen in the stormy months. During the dry season, we're out their making sure all of our facilities are in good order so they work when rain does fall again."

Cunningham said.

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Big Day of Giving Returns

Sacramento Region Community Foundation News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION. CA (MPG) - On Thursday, May 1, hundreds of nonprofits across the capital region will unite once again for the highly-anticipated Big Day of Giving, an annual movement intended to strengthen the local nonprofit sector brought to you by the Sacramento Region Community Foundation.

Since 2013, Big Day of Giving has raised more than \$100 million, driving transformative change across the region. What makes this truly transformative is the broad



participation. More than half of donations are \$50 or less, proving that small contributions, combined, create a powerful collective impact.

This year, more than 850 nonprofit organizations serving Sacramento, Yolo, El Dorado and Placer counties are participating. Each nonprofit organization has a profile at bigdayofgiving.org, where donors can easily explore organizations by cause area, location, demographics served, leadership makeup and more.

This year, Big Day of Giving will offer expanded payment options. Donors can now contribute directly though the website using PayPal, Apple Pay, Google Pay, Venmo and other secure, mobile-friendly platforms, making it easier than ever for community members and organizations to support the causes that matter most to them.

"Big Day of Giving is a powerful reminder of the profound impact generosity can have when we unite as a community,"

said foundation Chief Executive Office Kerry Wood. "It's more than just making a donation; it's about standing together for the causes that move us and empowering the nonprofits that strengthen our region. When we all show up, we fuel the change we want to see and help our region thrive."

As part of Big Day of

Giving, the Sacramento Region Community Foundation will highlight nonprofits participating in its Cultivate program, a year-round initiative dedicated to strengthening Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)-led and -serving organizations. Through Cultivate, these nonprofits gain access to funding, mentorship and leadership training, ensuring their long-term sustainability

and growth.

Nearly 85% of Cultivate participants manage operational budgets under \$500,000, underscoring the program's focus on small, grassroots organizations. This program highlights the foundation's ongoing commitment to equity and its role in fortifying the capital region's nonprofit sector, both through Big Day of Giving and throughout the year.

On May 1, donations made through the Big Day of Giving website are eligible for bonus funds, thanks to a pool of \$100,000 in prizes from Western Health Advantage and match funds secured by participating nonprofit organizations. Additionally, gifts made using Golden 1 Credit Union debit or credit cards will be matched

proportionally by Golden 1 Credit Union from a \$100,000 matching pool.

Big Day of Giving is made possible through the generous support of lead sponsor Western Health Advantage. In addition to hosting the giving day, the Sacramento Region Community Foundation provides ongoing resources and services that help donors create lasting philanthropic impact across the

Learn more or find out how to give early at www. bigdayofgiving.org.

As the center of philanthropy in the region, the Sacramento Region Community Foundation leads, serves and inspires enduring philanthropy for a just and vibrant Sacramento region. Learn more at sacregcf.org.

Big Day of Giving Telethon to Stream Live

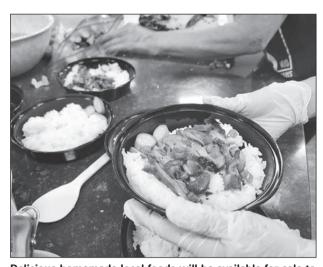
Continued from Page 1 50 years, and how your donations can help expand that mission.

It is a great opportunity to learn more about the array of services ACC offers the community.

"We're excited to celebrate this day of generosity with music, food, and meaningful stories,' said Scott Okamoto, ACC Senior Services Marketing and Fund Development Director.

"It's not just about giving; it's about coming together to uplift and support our elders."

Adding to the festivities, ACC is hosting a food and bake sale, featuring an assortment of homemade and local treats. Pre-sales are open now at www. accsv.org/bdog2025.



Delicious homemade local foods will be available for sale to support the Big Day of Giving on May 1.

Donations to the nonprofit can be made online anytime at www.accsv.org/ bdog2025.

On May 1, the Big Day of Giving, donations can be made through the website bigdayofgiving.org/ accseniorservices.

Donations can also be dropped off in person at ACC Senior Services, 7334 Park City Drive, Sacramento.

Whether you give early or join the movement on



The ACC Senior Services Big Day of Giving telethon on May 1 will feature musical performances by local talent. Photos courtesy of ACC Senior Services

tion helps ACC continue to empower seniors to live supportive environment.

May 1, every contribu- independently, stay active, and feel connected in a

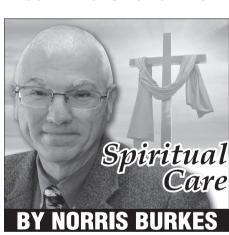
Join ACC in making this Big Day of Giving one to





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Learn To Share the Road on Life's Highway



Some years back, I was driving Interstate 99 south of Sacramento, Calif when a man began aggressively tailgat-

Known as the most dangerous freeway in California, there is little room for traffic weavers like him. He was close enough that I could see his face redden in my rearview mirror. And of course, he could read the smirk on my face as I gloated over my strategic position ahead

When traffic finally allowed me to move into the right lane, I displayed an upturned palm that invited His Excellency to proceed. But appearement was too little, too late.

He initiated aggressive movements, dropping back and speeding past and changing lanes. I answered his vulgar hand signals with moronic smiles and have-a-nice-day waves until he flashed a doubled fist, suggesting a roadside fight.

With evasive maneuvers exhausted, I finally led our rage parade onto the highway's shoulder hoping to sucker him into exiting his pickup. With him afoot, my plan was to floor my Hyundai to escape velocity.

I knew this was a bad plan when I noticed he was searching for something behind his seat.

Being a smart aleck to a dangerous stranger is wrong, but my problem really began with the assumption that most of us make when we become randomly tar-

I assumed this man's anger really was about me.

You've probably made the same assumption. It happens when the guy flips you off on the road or the woman screams at you for taking her parking

While it's natural for you to go into a

defensive mode claiming your righteous innocence, it's best to remember that their rage isn't really about you. In fact, it's even a little self-centered to think it

is about you. The reality of these rages is that we are collateral damage for folks like these.

For instance, I occasionally receive a caustic e-mail, something Anne Lamott aptly calls, "Orwellian memos detailing my thought crimes."

Most of the time I know that, like the freeway driver, their anger isn't about me; they are fighting battles I'm not privileged to see.

Recently, I got an e-mail from such an angry reader. When I replied from a defensive mode, he escalated our discussion by calling me every synonym of idiot. Recalling the road-rage incident, my second reply took a reconciling approach.

The reader sent a confessional apology adding details of his wife's terminal illness and children who weren't talking to him. Just like the interstate guy, this reader's rage wasn't about me.

It never ceases to amaze me that when I remember to squelch my defensiveness and respond in a caring manner, I will often get a sincere response. My smug attitude toward the driver only stirred his rage, but my soft answer to the reader turned away his wrath and made a friend.

Short of a soft answer on the freeway, I sped back into traffic, spitting gravel on the man's truck. After another 10 minutes of cat-and-mouse, I took the freeway exit labeled, "Galt Police Station." Amazingly, the man followed me into town but finally broke off his chase when I entered the station's

At the end of the day, the best answer to road rage on life's highway may be contained in the sacred proverb that suggests, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh answer stirs up anger.'

After all, we are all on a journey, so maybe it's time to share the road.

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.

6 • East Sacramento News APRIL 25, **2025**

John F. Kennedy Assassination Files Revealed 'A State Within a State'



Harold Pease Ph. D.

By Harold Pease Ph. D., LibertyUnderFire.org

The vast importance of the John F. Kennedy (JFK) Assassination Files, hidden from the public for 62 years through multiple congressional hearings over the years, just released by President Donald Trump under enormous opposition to its release, was not who killed John F. Kennedy, but that the entity who did still exists.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has always been the prime suspect. I was a boy of 16 and heard this at the time. This notion that it was more than just Oswald was quickly smothered by the then Deep State media who preferred and promoted the lone-wolf narrative, but it never felt right nor was it ever fully accepted by most Americans. The Federal Bureau of Investigation "suddenly uncovered" 2,000 John F. Kennedy related files, these reveal the Central Intelligence Agency as a "state within a state" and most responsible for the assassination.

These files prove the existence

of the Deep State in 1963 powerful enough by then, over years of development and secrecy, to kill the president of the United States and keep that fact from being revealed until all responsible for the death were unpunished and safely dead. There is no organization that is more Deep State than the Central Intelligence

This is the importance of the John F. Kennedy Assassination Files. Second to this in importance is, since it was never fully revealed, removed and punished then, it is still in place 62 years later in our day. These files show it is not unreasonable to believe that they also want Donald Trump dead as he too, like Kennedy, seeks to reveal them.

Every president from both political parties had access to these files and chose not to have them declassified. Two presidents in particular knew the intimate details up close and personal. Lyndon Baines Johnson, who benefited most by Kennedy's death by replacing him as president, and Jerald Ford who was a member of the Johnson appointed Warren Commission to hide our own governments involvement in the assassination of our own.

LibertyUnderFire has published much on the assassination over the many years and as new things came out. Mostly the new documents reveal what those who have followed this story already knew but it is good for the new generation.

Yes, the documents first tried to blame the assassination on Cuba and the Soviets. We, among others debunked this story. There were three reasons Kennedy was assassinated:

He opposed the CIA's Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

He wanted America's withdrawal from the Vietnam War

He opposed the Federal Reserve's Central Bank currency control authorizing the printing of silver certificates in defiance of it (Why the Deep State Assassination of John F. Kennedy? LibertyUnderFire. com, Dec 6, 2023).

Opposition to these three issues could not be tolerated. Kennedy could not be controlled by them so they could not wait another year for a new election to remove him.

The "new" files confirm that Lee Harvey Oswald was in fact a Central Intelligence Agency asset, "recruited by the CIA in JAPAN while he was in the service at the Naval Air Facility Atsugi in the late 1950's." The Naval Air Facility Atsugi (NAFA) was "a known CIA hub for covert operations, including U2 spy plane missions from 1957 to 1958" as per a suppressed document from his commander at the base at the time.

Documents show that "as late as 1996 this story was almost broke by 'a credible UPI reporter' and had to be covered up 30 years after the assassination."

The "CIA was deeply concerned about the story getting traction." They rightly realized it could be viewed "as a smoking gun." They allowed just enough information out "to appear transparent while withholding the most damning evidence that Oswald was recruited, trained, and groomed by the CIA during his time in Japan."

We soon learned of Oswald's defection to the Soviet Union in

1959, his return to the U.S. in 1962, and his eventual role in the assassination in 1963. This was common knowledge soon after the assassination.

President Kennedy was warned of the presence of a "state within a state" or the Deep State as we call it today. Presidential adviser Arthur Schlesinger, in a 15-page Memo to John F. Kennedy called for Kennedy to break up the CIA

"Schlesinger called the CIA a rogue 'state within a state'... his memo told the president 'The contemporary CIA possesses many of the characteristics of 'a state within a state' adding 'there is no doctrine governing our conduct of clandestine operations."

Schlesinger noted that, "A number of governments still in power know that they have been targets of CIA attempts at overthrow, not a state of mind calculated to stimulate friendly feelings" toward the US. He also wrote, "CIA operations have not been held effectively subordinate to US foreign policy," He told the president, "In practice the State Department had become a 'rubber stamp' for CIA clandestine operations. A month after John F.

Kennedy's assassination, former President Harry Truman, "echoed Schlesinger's fears outlined in the 1961 Memo. There is something about the way the CIA has been functioning that is casting a shadow over our historic position."

Truman wrote, that "he set up the CIA to streamline information gathering... but between his presidency, and John F. Kennedy's, Truman witnessed a change in the CIA." He wrote of this, "For some time, I have been disturbed by the way the CIA has been diverted from its original assignment. It has become operational and at times a policymaking arm of the government. I never had any thought that when I set up the CIA that it would be injected into peacetime cloak and dagger operation." Truman "called for the termination of the CIA operation duties, and the restoration of the agency to its original assignment as the intelligence arm of the president" (X22 Report, Ep. 3599b, 03/19/2025, 11:59).

Instead of destroying the Central Intelligence Agency as Kennedy intended the Central Intelligence Agency destroyed him, and worse, came to control the organization Kennedy created, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) responsible for administering civilian foreign aid and development Assistance throughout the world.

The "rogue state within a state" came to fund shadow governments and regime change in the world, even in Ukraine in 2014 and the United States in 2020 and thus far got away with it. Most importantly the "rogue state within a state" was never identified, removed or punished and thus is still very much alive today fighting Trump.

Dr. Harold Pease is an expert on the United States Constitution and a syndicated columnist. He has dedicated his career to studying the writings of the Founding Fathers and applying that knowledge to current events. He taught history and political science from this perspective for over 30 years. Read his weekly columns at LibertyUnderFire.org Column

How Transfer Taxes Steal Your Home Equity



Jon Coupal

By Jon Coupal, **Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association**

As a homeowner, you dutifully pay your property taxes every year, no matter how painful. Notwithstanding Proposition 13's tax limitations, California is not a low property tax state. According to the Tax Foundation, we rank 18th out of 50 states in per capita property tax collections.

But it could be worse. Much worse. Without Prop. 13, most homeowners would see their property taxed at least double or, in some cases, by a factor of five or six. (For those curious about how much they would pay without Prop. 13, try out Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association's calculator at GuessingGame.org.) Prop. 13 works by limiting

the property tax rate to one percent and then limiting the increases in "taxable value" to two percent per year. It is the latter provision that allows homeowners in California to build up equity in their homes, year after year, without being forced to sell because of an annual tax bill based on current market value. But there is another type of

property tax that lies in wait for homeowners when they sell their property, transfer taxes. Technically, transfer taxes are not property taxes in the traditional sense

because they are not imposed

as an incident of property ownership.

Rather, they are imposed on the sale or other transfer of real property.

When Howard Jarvis wrote ron 13 he knew that if he just limited the ad valorem (based on value) property tax, governments would circumvent that limitation by quickly imposing other local taxes. That's why Prop. 13 expressly prohibited taxes on the sale of property. Here's the language: "Cities, Counties and special districts, by a two-thirds vote of the qualified electors of such district, may impose special taxes on such district, except ad valorem taxes on real property or a transaction tax or sales tax on the sale of real property within such City, County or special district." (emphasis added).

To any normal, fair-minded person, this constitutional language is crystal clear in prohibiting transfer taxes. But the judiciary in California is neither normal nor fairminded. Over a strong dissent, the California Supreme Court defined "special taxes" as only those taxes that were for a "special purpose." This created a massive loophole and severely in a way that limited the reach of Prop. 13. At the time of Proposition

13's passage in 1978, state law permitted the collection of a "documentary stamp tax" on transferring of interests in real property. The tax, still imposed in many jurisdictions, is relatively modest, with the standard rate being \$1.10 per \$1,000 of value. But now many cities are

imposing real estate transfer taxes in excess of \$45 per \$1,000 of value based on the Home Rule doctrine that grants charter cities more taxing authority. Moreover, under Home Rule, cities can impose higher rates for more valuable property rather than the flat rate of \$1.10 per

\$1,000.

Even worse, because of the infamous Upland decision, local governments operating behind the front of "citizen groups" can propose "special taxes" by initiative, evading the requirement of a two-thirds vote of the electorate to pass. And while the courts originally said transfer tax revenue must go into a municipality's general fund, special taxes under Upland can be exclusively directed to whatever the local government or special interest group,

The worst abuse of Upland occurred in Los Angeles. Pursuant, to Measure United to House Los Angeles (ULA) which became effective in 2023, high-value properties are now subject to very high transfer taxes. Although the ballot measure was sold to the voters as a "mansion tax," it applies to all properties, both commercial and residential, worth more than \$5 million, including apartments.

As expected, the United to House Los Angeles tax is generating a lot less revenue for homeless programs than the proponents thought. Instead, it has thrown the real estate market in one of America's largest cities into chaos. It has gotten so bad that even Mayor Karen Bass said she thinks the whole issue of Measure United to House Los Angeles should be revisited.

For ordinary homeowners, be aware that transfer taxes are only increasing, both in terms of the amount of the tax and the purposes for which they are being collected. There are very powerful progressive interests which intend to impose transfer taxes at a level to completely "recover" all the taxes that were not owed by homeowners because of Prop. 13.

And that's how they plan to steal the equity in your home. Jon Coupal is president of the Howard Jarvis

Taxpayers Association. ★

Kiley, Tenney Introduce the High-Quality Charter Schools Act



Office of Representative Kevin Kilev News Release

WASHINGTON, (MPG) - On April 11, Representative Kevin Kiley (R-California) joined Representatives Claudia Tenney (R-New York), Nicole Malliotakis (R-New York) and Burgess Owens (R-Utah), in introducing the High-Quality Charter Schools Act to expand school choice by creating a new tax credit for charitable contributions to nonprofit charter school organizations.

The demand for high-quality charter schools continues to outpace supply, in part due to the high start-up costs of opening a new school, which can be up to \$20 million. This legislation would establish a 75% federal tax credit for qualified charitable contributions made to nonprofit charter school organizations with a proven record of success, incentivizing donations to support the development of more high-quality

charter schools. To receive tributions, e a c h eligible organization must establish a separate qualified account to use eligible funds exclusively

for charter school expan-

sion within five years of

receipt, and must also conduct annual independent, certified financial and compliance audits.

"Charter schools have a proven track record success working to ensure every student, regardless of zip code, is given the opportunity to succeed. The High-Quality Charter Schools Act provides a tax credit for charitable donations that will develop and expand the number of charter schools to provide even more students access to affordable school choice options. In fact, this legislation could lead to nearly tripling the number of children who have the option of attending a charter school. Parents know what is best for their children, and by providing parents with options, we can improve educational outcomes across our country," said Representative Tenney.

'As a former high school teacher, I understand the important role education plays in our children's future and the importance of charter school options. The High-Quality Charter Schools Act is a critical measure to expand educational opportunity, uphold rigorous accountability, and foster innovation within our public school system. By supporting this legislation, we are investing in a future where all students can access a high-quality education," said Representative

"School choice is the civil rights issue of our time, and our nation's future will be determined by whether we win the fight to ensure that every child, no matter their zip code, has

access to high-quality

education. The High-Quality Charter Schools Act will help us reach that bright future, with up to \$5 billion a year in taxcredit-driven investment that could help open more than 15,000 new charter schools and unlock life-changing opportunities for millions of students across the country," said Representative Owens.

"Charter schools across the country, especially here in New York, are facing demand that far exceeds their capacity. I'm proud to join Representative Tenney in introducing this legislation to ensure students and families have greater access to the school of their choice, while also ensuring taxpayers see a strong return on investment in public education," said Representative Malliotakis.

'This legislation complements the Education Choice for Children Act, which will provide tax credits for contributions for tuition vouchers and which I strongly support," said Eva Moskowitz, founder and chief executive officer of Success Academy Charter Schools. "Together, these policies will demonstrate universal school choice as a national priority. Americans overwhelmingly support school choice but many elected officials have been intimidated by those who seek to preserve the broken status quo. I commend Representatives Tenney, Malliotakis Owens and Kiley for standing up to the special interests and putting America's parents first. This is what real leadership looks like." ★

SacRT Cameras Identify Bike-Lane Violations

City of Sacramento News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) -

The City of Sacramento and Sacramento Regional Transit (SacRT) are partnering to launch automated bike lane enforcement, making Sacramento the first city in California and in the United States - to enforce bike lanes using technology installed on transit buses.

This initiative expands upon SacRT's automated bus stop enforcement program, which currently equips 100 SacRT buses with camera systems to identify and report vehicles illegally parked along bus stops. Now, that same technology will also target illegal parking in bike lanes, a move by the City of Sacramento to protect

vulnerable road users and improve roadway safety citywide.

Why This Program is Essential

When vehicles park illegally in bike lanes, cyclists are forced into traffic, putting them at greater risk of serious injury or worse. By keeping bike lanes clear, this program enhances safety and predictability

for everyone on the road whether they are walking, biking, driving or riding transit.

How This Program Works

One hundred SacRT buses are equipped with front-facing cameras powered by machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) from Hayden AI. These cameras detect and

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record instances of illegal parking in Sacramento bus stops and bike lanes. When a violation occurs, the system captures a short video and a photo of the vehicle's license plate, and the exact time and location of the incident.

This information is then sent to the City of Sacramento for review and violation processing.

As of Monday, April 14, drivers illegally parked in Sacramento bike lanes will receive warning notices in the mail. Violations with an accompanying fine will be issued starting Friday,

This program is made possible by Assembly Bill 361, which authorizes California cities to use forward-facing cameras for enforcing parking violations in bike lanes and transit zones: a vital legislative step toward making streets safer for everyone.

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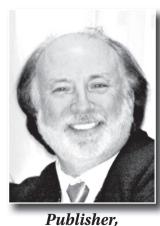
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Senate Debates Adding an Official State Snake

By MPG Staff

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)

- According to the official news release from State Sen. Roger Niello's office, the Governmental Organization Committee passed Senate Bill 765 on April 8. The bill establishes the giant garter snake (Thamnophis gigas) as the official state snake.

Currently, California does not have an official state snake.

According to the California State Library website, California does have a plethora of other official state symbols. For example, the state bird is the California quail, the state fabric is denim, and the state fish is the golden

Many obscure symbols make the State Library list, like folk dance, fossil,



as the official state snake of California. Photo by Brian Hansen, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

lichen and mushroom, but no snake currently makes that list.

Senate Bill 756 proposes to correct the oversight.

The official news release from Senator Niello's office states:

The giant garter snake

was listed as threatened in California in 1971 and federally recognized as threatened in 1993. Its population has declined by more than 90% in the past century. Since then, there have been conservatory efforts in support of the snake in the wetlands and rice fields.

"Found in wetlands across the state, the giant garter snake is an essential part of our natural heritage and helps keep the balance in the environment," said Senator Roger Niello, the

author of Senate Bill 765. "I am proud to be part of the effort to make the giant garter snake the official snake and raise awareness about its important role in our state's environment and agriculture."

Michael Starkey, the Founder and Executive Director of Save The Snakes, said, "Designating the giant garter snake as California's official State Snake is more than a symbolic gesture; it's a crucial step in raising awareness about this vulnerable species and its vital role in our state's ecosystems." He continued, "This designation will amplify conservation efforts, fostering public education and ensuring the protection of this unique and ecologically significant reptile for generations to come. It's a chance to highlight the importance of wetlands and the delicate balance of nature within California."

California Rice Commission President and CEO Tim Johnson expressed the commission's support, "With 95% of California's wetlands now gone, rice fields and the canals that feed them have become valuable habitat for the giant garter snake. Our farmers are working with researchers and water districts to understand how our fields can provide even more habitat to this iconic species."

Senate Bill 765 now moves on to the Senate

Elected in 2022, Senator Niello represents California Senate District 6, which covers portions of Placer and Sacramento counties.

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East Sacramento News • 9 APRIL 25, **2025**

Kings Korner By V.G. Harris



There are the times in the life of an NBA city, when sadness becomes an almost overwhelming reality. For some it is a different emotion because as fans we come in all shapes and sizes. But for those of you that are simply angry, let me say to you that life is too short, and if anything, this franchise needs your positive energy more than your anger.

The person responsible for giving away Davion Mitchell and then trading away the heart of the franchise in DeAaron Fox, has been given his walking papers, and many would say rightfully so.

Yes, the Sacramento Kings have a new general manager, and his name is Scott Perry. Unlike his two predecessors, Perry comes to the Kings with a resume of experience.

Sacramento is not new to Scott Perry, as he spent a short stint as the Kings vice president of basketball operations in 2017. After only three months in the head office, Perry was hired by the New York Knicks as their general manager.

Make no mistake about it, the position of GM with any NBA club is a chess piece of invaluable proportion. Fortunately, Scott Perry comes with not only experience in his role, but NBA respect as well. This bodes well for a franchise in desperate need of a captain that can navigate a ship.

Fans immediately wonder what Perry's first moves will look like, and will Doug Christie remain as the head coach of the Kings moving into the 2025/2026 season? Many believe the answer is yes, as Vivek Radadive apparently holds Christie in high esteem.

Whether it's choosing the coach or draft choices, the Kings owner has shown a penchant for being centrally involved in all moves involving this team. He has been criticized for being too involved and has even been given credit for the decision to draft Marvin Bagley over Luka Doncic in

At the end of the day, virtually every owner has the final decision as it relates to all moves, but the most successful organizations know the value of the basketball minds they hire, and those people need to know they have a level of autonomy when it comes to decision making. In short, let people do the job they've been hired to do, and respect their ability to do it.

Every NBA team has a culture, and as a new general manager walks in the door, that culture is about to change.

What fans want and hope for, is a culture that not only fosters comradery and cogent decision making, but an environment that says loudly, "we know what we're doing and we're good at it."

Poor decision making has robbed the Kings of a first-round draft choice in the upcoming draft, so before Scott Perry sits down at his new desk, he will have to decide if he needs to reconcile a pathway that includes a move that can secure a first-round draft pick. Easier said than done, and there will need to be a player in this draft that makes a move like this necessary.

NBA insiders say this draft is a better than average class, so this is not a good time to be sitting on the sideline.

After making the playoffs just two seasons ago, the Kings finished 40-42 this season, and many might say that it was overachieving considering the upheaval that was the 2024/2025 season.

Without question, the team and the fans are looking for a steady hand that can create not just confidence, but genuine excitement as the 2025/2026 season begins.

I believe this is possible, and I want to give this new GM my utmost support as he steps in at a difficult time and knows without a doubt, he has a big job to do. Very soon Sacramento Kings fans will

discover if players like Keegan Murray and even newcomer Zach Lavine have a future in a Kings uniform. Attempting to reassemble a team in mid-

season while making dramatic changes to the lineup proved too much the Sactown ballers, and this offseason will be one of the most critical in many years.

Take a deep breath Kings fans but don't lose hope. More changes are undoubtedly in the offing, and shortly you will see if the experience that Scott Perry brings to this team will pay the dividends fans are praying for.

All the best!

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

Social Security Matters

When Should My Wife Claim Social Security?



AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: My wife was born in July 1959, and her recent SS benefit estimate is \$3,337 at her full retirement age, or \$4,397 at age 70. She is presently employed fulltime and intends to continue working until she is aged 70. She is wondering when the most financially advantageous time would be to draw her SS retirement. Signed: Planning Ahead

Dear Planning Ahead: Obviously, the best time for your wife to get the highest possible monthly Social Security benefit would be age 70. Provided your wife's life expectancy is at least average (about age 87 for a woman her current age), she will likely receive the most in cumulative lifetime Social Security benefits by waiting until age 70 to claim.

For clarity, if your wife were to choose to claim before her full retirement age (FRA), her monthly amount would be less and she would be subject to Social Security's Annual Earnings Test (AET), which limits how much she can earn before her FRA. If the AET is exceeded, SS will take away \$1 for every \$2 her earnings are over the limit (they take away by

withholding future benefits until the penalty is satisfied). The AET (\$23,400 for 2025 but changes yearly) is in effect until your wife reaches her full retirement age of 66 years and 10 months, after which she can earn as must as she likes without penalty. Since she plans to work full time until age 70, your wife should likely not claim Social Security before her FRA. As mentioned, claiming at age 70 is probably a more prudent financial option.

Since your wife expects to continue working, she should also know that her estimated benefit will likely increase assuming her more recent earnings are among the highest over her lifetime. Social Security will review current year earnings annually to see if her current earnings warrant a benefit increase (SS benefits are always based on the highest 35 years of work earnings, and that includes earnings even after SS benefit are started). Also, the estimates provided by SS do not include Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) which typically occur annually. FYI, the average annual COLA increase over the past two decades has been

about 2.5%. Based on her estimated FRA benefit, it is also evident that your wife will not get additional benefits as your spouse. For that to occur, your benefit at your FRA would need to be more than twice your wife's FRA amount, which it likely is not. Thus, your wife should make her claiming decision based only on her own benefit opportunity, considering her personal financial needs and her life expectancy.

FYI, your wife's "breakeven age" - the age at which she will have collected the same amount of SS money by claiming at age 70 vs. claiming at her full retirement age (FRA), is about 82 years of age. Thus, assuming her life expectancy is more than 82, it would be prudent to wait until age 70 to claim Social Security.

In the end, the "best" time to claim Social Security depends on a few factors - most notably, life expectancy, and financial need. If the SS money isn't urgently needed now, and your wife's life expectancy is at least "average," then it appears from what you've shared that her best choice would be to wait until age 70 to claim Social Security. If life circumstances change over the years, your wife can take comfort knowing that she can also claim her Social Security at any time before age 70 and she will get benefits right up to the month she claims. Note that by waiting until after her FRA to claim, she will earn **Delayed Retirement Credits** (DRCs) of .667% more benefit for each month of delay (about 8% more for each

year of delay). 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).



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Salmon Fishing Shutdown Marks a Grim Milestone

By Charlton H. Bonham

This week, a public federal process determined there will be no commercial salmon fishing off California's coast for the third year in a row. It's a grim milestone for our state.

While we will see some recreational ocean fishing, we're at the low-water mark. With so few fish available, we know this won't be enough to meet the demand of our state. That's hard news in hard times.

Thirty years ago, the idea we would be implementing, yet alone discussing, these restrictions would have been unthinkable. Back then, millions of salmon swam through the rivers of California every year. It was a bountiful, thriving species.

But last year, the number of adult salmon in the Sacramento Index, a critical measure of the Sacramento River salmon population and an indicator of the overall health of California's salmon, shrank to roughly 100,000 fish. It's a tiny fraction of salmon's former might.

The reasons for the decline are numerous and complicated. Decades of severe drought, climate disruption, water management challenges and habitat loss threaten the future of salmon in California. The loss of salmon would wound California deeply.

Salmon are the basis of a multibillion-dollar fishing economy that creates jobs across the state. They support thriving forests, rivers and floodplains and serve as one of the most popular seafood choices across the country. Salmon provide vital subsistence to numerous California tribes. Recreational salmon fishing trips form the basis of family legend and lore.

For the salmon lovers among us, these are dark times. But I see glimmers of hope.

Two weeks ago, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife revealed the progress on California's "Salmon Strategy for a Hotter, Drier Future." It was an update on the strategy Gov. Gavin Newsom released last year, which outlined dozens of key action items the state must take to better support healthy salmon

In the last year alone, state fish and

wildlife and its partner agencies have made critical headway on nearly 70% of the action items set by Governor Gavin Newsom. Another 26% are already done.

California finished removing the

outdated and obsolete Klamath River dams, allowing for a free-flowing river and access to cold-water habitats blocked for

more than a century. California's initiative to fast-track approvals for salmon restoration projects led to the streamlining of more than 60 important projects to support salmon pop-

ulations over the past year. Fish and wildlife has also worked with the State Water Resources Control Board to develop flow recommendations in drought-prone watersheds like the Scott and Shasta rivers and Mill and Deer creeks. This ensures salmon populations have enough cold water to survive during

Investments to expand and modernize the state's fish hatcheries, ensuring California is supporting the production of a resilient salmon population, have increased fall run production from state-operated hatcheries in the Central Valley by over 9.7 million fish.

dry periods.

The state's salmon strategy was designed for long-term salmon support. But we're already seeing early benefits, some that even surprised fish and wildlife officials. Ten days after the final Klamath dam came down, state scientists spotted salmon swimming north of the dam sites into Oregon.

Experts originally estimated that would take 10 years.

Data shows that, while salmon numbers from 2024 are down, California saw the highest number of jacks (2-year-old fish) returning to the Central Valley since 2019. Jacks are an important predictor of the number of adult salmon that will return to spawn the following year.

In Lagunitas Creek, there's been a 60% increase in spawning of endangered Coho salmon. In Mendocino County, adult coho salmon returns have almost quadrupled their 15-year average.

To be clear, these wins are just the beginning. The road to reviving California salmon will be long. But these successes give me hope and the drive to keep fighting for salmon.

This commentary appeared on CalMatters.org on April 18, written by Charlton H. Bonham, director of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

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Walking Together to Fight Lung Cancer



courtesy of the Niznik family

Story by Kristina Rogers

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) -When Barbara Niznik went to the doctor complaining about a possible cracked rib and found out it was Stage 4 lung cancer, her family's world shifted.

Due to the late-stage diagnosis, Barbara Niznik passed away a few months later in January 2014.

To manage her grief, Niznik's daughter, Laura Niznik-Williams, got busy.

"I wanted to do something to help other families" she said. She attended San Francisco's GO2 for Lung Cancer race/ walk and spoke to the organizers about bringing it to Sacramento.

On April 5, Niznik-Williams and others celebrated 10 years of the GO2 for Lung Cancer race/walk in William Land Regional Park.

Participants arrived in good spirits on the sunny spring morning in group t-shirts. Teams had names such as Stephens Striders, Team Moni and Hanry the Great. They all came to support lung cancer survivors, those who passed and those in the fight right now.

Colleen Brinkman was surrounded by her kids and grandkids in shirts emblazoned with "Barneys Cream Puff Warriors." It was a bittersweet day for them as Barney Brinkman's cancer had come back. Brinkman's wife, Colleen, explained, "He is at the hospital getting an MRI today, and we are here for him."

Before the race/walk began, participants milled about various informational tables. The White Ribbon Project was there to highlight Lung Cancer Awareness Month (November) and fight the stigma by reminding people that anyone with lungs can get lung cancer.

Laura Niznik-Williams said, "The most common question I get asked is, did my mother smoke? She stopped smoking over 40 years before. I found out lung cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer deaths in the U.S., yet it doesn't receive a lot of research funding." Part of that may be due to misconceptions.

Niznik says, "Smoking isn't always the reason for lung cancer. And it's still not clear what the causes are. Anyone can receive a diagnosis; young people or old, different ethnicities, men and women, smokers and non-smokers."

In fact, when Niznik-Williams learned genetics was a possible factor, she called her father.

"I asked him, 'Hey, Dad, why don't you get a low-dose CT scan?" Robert Niznik listened to his daughter. In 2018, he was diagnosed with Stage 1B lung cancer. Luckily, it was caught early, and a successful surgery has helped Robert remain cancer-free.

Early screening is a game-changer. The Niznik team wore shirts proclaiming themselves as Barbs Amazing Racers. Niznik-Williams explained, "My mom used to love watching The Amazing Race. We chose this team name in her memory."

Cheers and whoops filled the crowd as lung cancer survivors were brought up to be celebrated and show that the disease can be beaten. For those dealing with difficult times, it was an inspiring moment.

Niznik-Williams offers advice for others struggling with a cancer diagnosis: Build a network of people who can help.



Barb's Amazing Racers in front: Laura Niznik-Williams, Vickie Canales (holding sign) and Ginger Tyler surrounded by family and



Walk/Race participants and survivors walking for lung cancer **research.** Photo provided by GO2 for Lung Cancer



GO2 2025 Cancer Survivors receiving cheers and providing inspiration. Photo by Kristina Rogers



Colleen Brinkman in her wheelchair with her grandsons and family. They were there for her husband Barney Brinkman who was

The task of caring for a loved one with cancer can be physically and emotionally draining. Robert Niznik was Barbara's primary caregiver. Niznik-Williams and her sister juggled schedules to help. They booked doctors' appointments and took notes during medical visits. It eased the burden and made a difference. Caregivers can become overwhelmed and miss important details during discussions with medical professionals.

Niznik-Williams said, "After a visit, we realized Mom and Dad would forget something during the appointment. We reviewed our notes and followed up

with questions later." The GO2 organization provides various supportive resources, such as monthly live-streamed "living room events" where advocates, families and experts talk. Gathering HOPE is a monthly virtual group to help those who have been diagnosed and their caregivers. People share stories and build valuable soul-lifting connections.

The advocacy arm of GO2 educates people how to contact their state and federal officials to request more funding for lung cancer research. And GO2 for Lung Cancer hosts events throughout the United States to build awareness, raise money for funding, and network.

Every effort makes a difference. During the event, Niznik-Williams surmised, "I think since we started GO2 in Land Park, we've raised over half a million dollars for lung cancer research." She continues to find ways to participate. She recently signed up for a genetic lung cancer study with a friend. The gifts from her advocacy keep coming. A friend who's walked at previous GO2 events with Niznik-Williams found her own mother recently received a lung cancer diagnosis. The positive news was her friend immediately knew where to turn

for assistance. "This is a reality," Niznik-Williams explains, "many people think it won't impact them, but it does." When someone needs support after a lung cancer diagnosis, Laura Niznik-Williams and her GO2 family will be there to walk with them.

For more about the GO2 for Lung Cancer organization, visit go2.org.



