



**Aerospace Museum
Announces New
Programs**

PAGE 2

**May is Veterans
Poppy Month**

PAGE 4



AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

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**SEE
INSIDE**

**CONRAD DROPS
PLAN TO BUY
ADDITIONAL
ACREAGE**



PAGE 9

**WHY DO BEES
MAKE HONEY?**



PAGE 6

**OUTSTANDING
CITIZEN AWARDS
CEREMONY**



PAGE 11



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Fashion Show Provides Scholarships



The Fashion House crew included, from left, front row, Maria Caballero, Sandy Fisher, Patty Blesso, Becky Freie, Marty Holmes and Shelly Meachum. From left, back row, are Bud Beebe, Ronda Leuty, Pamela Soule, Valerie, Lubinsky, Rosemary Lamb and Mario Parker. Photo by Judy Andrews.

By Judy Andrews

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - The recent Woman's Thursday Club of Fair Oaks annual Scholarship Luncheon and Fashion Show, a festive sold-out gala, has been a beloved tradition in the community for more than 50 years.

The April 17 gala at North Ridge Country Club raised funds for local graduating high school seniors attending college next year. This year, six students from Bella Vista, Casa Roble and Mira Loma High Schools will each receive \$1,500 in scholarship funds. High school seniors were invited to



Volunteers Patty Rock, left, and Diana Cralle enjoy selling raffle tickets. Photo by Judy Andrews

apply for the scholarships in early April and finalists were selected by the event's scholarship committee, led by Carol Buck, just days before the luncheon. Proceeds from ticket and raffle drawing sales will fund next year's scholarships.

A special luncheon for the finalists and their families will be held on May 20 at The Old Spaghetti Factory in Rancho Cordova.

This year's Annual Scholarship Luncheon and Fashion Show theme was "Denim and Diamonds." Many attendees wore their finest bling and cowgirl

Continued on page 3

FORPD Awards Annual Memorial Scholarship

By Shaunna Boyd

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - At the April 16 Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District (FORPD) Board of Directors meeting, the 2024-2025 Rachel Anne Gray Memorial Scholarship winners were announced. The scholarship was established in honor of Rachel Anne Gray, who died in 2012 at age 21.

Recreation Supervisor Mary Stoakley said Gray was "a beloved community member." Serving on the Fair Oaks Youth Advisory Board from 2006 to 2008, Gray was very involved in community and district events, and she had a significant impact on local youth leaders.

This year's \$1,000 award was presented to Sophie Fares, a Mira Loma High School senior who plans to major in political science at University of California at Santa Cruz before pursuing a law degree.

The \$1,500 scholarship was awarded to Edgar Tellez Perez. A Bella Vista High School senior, Perez plans to study biological sciences at University of California at Santa Barbara before attending medical school.

Stoakley said that presenting this year's winners was a "full circle moment," as she was a Rachel Anne Gray Memorial Scholarship recipient in high school. Over the past 11 years, 54 local students have received the scholarship, with a total of more than \$40,000 awarded.

The district's annual Mississippi Bar Trail Run helps fund the Rachel Anne Gray Memorial Scholarship. The run is scheduled for June 7 this year and registration is open on the district website at forpd.org/422/Mississippi-Bar-Trail-Run.

During public comment, several residents living near Bannister Park reiterated their opposition to a possible disc golf course at that location, citing concerns about safety, parking and user conflicts. However, residents said that they would like to see improvements, including a playground and picnic tables, which would bring more visitors to the park.

One resident asked to see all district documents relating to plans for a disc golf course at Bannister Park but Director Darren Mounts clarified that there are no existing plans. He said no community

Continued on page 5

A Journey of Strength

*Meraki High School junior finds support
and purpose through her cancer battle*

**San Juan Unified
School District
News Release**

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - Meraki High School junior Madi Rogers was looking forward to finishing her school year and continuing her routine at work in spring 2024. But what she thought were simple allergy symptoms during spring break turned out to be the early signs of a cancer diagnosis.

"By the Monday after break, I could barely move. My mom called my doctor and we ended up in the emergency room. That was the start of everything. I didn't know it then but I wasn't going home anytime soon," Rogers recalled.

Doctors discovered a large mass in Rogers' chest that was compromising her



Meraki High School junior Madi Rogers was diagnosed with T-cell lymphoblastic lymphoma, a rare and aggressive form of blood cancer. Photo courtesy of San Juan Unified School District

breathing. She was transferred to Sutter Medical Center and later to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at UC Davis. It was

there that Rogers was diagnosed with T-cell lymphoblastic lymphoma, a rare and aggressive form of blood cancer.

"It was terrifying. I had never had an IV (a tube used to give medicine through a vein) or scan before and suddenly, I was going through bone marrow tests, biopsies and chemo. It all happened fast," said Rogers.

Despite the overwhelming experience, Rogers remained grounded, supported by her family, friends and school community. Therapy dogs, visitors and the care teams around her helped make her hospital stays feel a little less isolating.

At school, her teachers and counselor worked closely with her family to make sure she could stay connected academically when possible while prioritizing her health. Rogers' teacher and counselor, Scott Evans, said

Continued on page 3

Aerospace Museum Announces New Programs

Compiled from the Aerospace Museum of California Website

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)
- Summer youth programs at the Aerospace Museum of California, located at McClellan Airport, are now open for registration.

Youth can discover the wonders of aviation and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) with exciting summer programs at the Aerospace Museum of California.

Choose from summer camp, where youth can immerse themselves in a four-day week of hands-on learning with “Sky Explorers” and “Dream It... Build It” camps, exploring flight, engineering and design through interactive experiments and challenges. Sky Explorers Camp starts on July 7. Dream It... Build It Camp starts on July 14.

Prefer a more flexible experience? Summer Discovery Days let youth explore at their own pace with engaging STEM stations, hands-on activities and themed learning adventures.

In “Sky Explorers” camp, the youth will soar into a week of aviation excitement as they learn about the four forces that make it all possible: lift, thrust, drag and gravity. Packed with hands-on activities, engaging experiments and fun challenges, this camp will ignite a love for aviation while sparking curiosity and creativity.

The “Dream It...Build It” camp is a summer camp for youth eager to bring their ideas to life. Campers will explore the exciting world of engineering through hands-on projects, problem-solving challenges and teamwork. From designing structures to building machines, the “Dream It...Build It” camp will spark creativity and inspire the next generation of innovators. Campers will also take a special journey



Aerospace museum summer campers get up close with a Coast Guard plane. Photo courtesy of Aerospace Museum of California

into wind energy with the Makani project, learning how wind can be harnessed for sustainable power. If you can dream it, you can build it and make it soar.

The age range for summer camp participants is fourth- to sixth-grade students. Camp is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Camp costs \$385, which includes daily camp activities, snacks, lunch and a camp T-shirt.

Discovery Days at the aerospace museum are another way for youth to experience the museum and science. Join the museum staff for a day of learning and exploration during Discovery Days. Dive into the forces of flight, uncover the stories behind historic aircraft and engage in hands-on activities designed to spark curiosity and imagination. Whether you are exploring aircraft up close or



Summer camp participants are photographed in front of the Aerospace Museum of California exhibits. Photo courtesy of Aerospace Museum of California

experimenting with STEM concepts, there is something for everyone to discover. Let your curiosity take flight.

One-day discovery programs

are available, starting June 26, and run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Aerospace Museum of California is at 3200 Freedom Park Drive, McClellan.

For more information on the Aerospace Museum of California Summer programs, visit online at aerospaceca.org/summer-programming or call 916-643-3192. ★

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A Journey of Strength

Fashion Show Provides Scholarships



Now continuing follow-up care and back at school on a modified schedule, Madi Rogers is adjusting to a new rhythm of life. Photo courtesy of San Juan Unified School District

Continued from page 1

they shifted their focus from academics to making sure she felt supported through the district’s Home and Hospital Instruction program, which provides temporary instruction at home or in a medical setting for students who are unable to attend school due to serious health conditions.

“It quickly became clear that treatment had to come first, so we focused on supporting her however we could. Home and Hospital Instruction helped give her flexibility and time,” said Evans.

Rogers said that the support she received from her teachers and friends meant the world to her.

“Even when I couldn’t come to school, they checked in, played board games with me and just helped me not feel so alone,” Rogers shared.

Returning to school was not easy. Between neuropathy, chemotherapy side effects and brain fog, Rogers had to ease her way back into a routine.

She shared that Meraki High School has been the perfect place for that.

“They really listen to what I need. I’m on a modified schedule and I know I can ask for help whenever I need it,” Rogers said.

Now continuing follow-up care and back at school on a modified schedule, Rogers is adjusting to a new rhythm of life. The experience changed her in many ways but what stands out is she wants to help others.

“I want to be a motivational speaker. If I can make one person feel less alone, then it’s worth it,” Rogers said.

Rogers hopes her story shows other students that even in the darkest times, there is a way forward.

“You can do it. Even when it feels impossible, just keep going,” Rogers said.

With the hardest part behind her, Rogers is focused on what comes next. Her cancer is in complete remission and Rogers is determined to use her experience to raise awareness and support others. ★



From left, Terrie O'Donnell, Gina Fields and Marty Holmes enjoy some social time while waiting for their entrees. Photo by Judy Andrews

Continued from page 1

boots to complement the theme. Clothing stores Chico’s and White House Black Market, located at the Palladio in Folsom, provided the models with three different outfits to wear during the fashion show segment.

The models were all volunteers and members of the Woman’s Thursday Club of Fair Oaks. They included Patty Blesso, Sandy Fisher, Becky Freie, Ronda Leuty, Valerie Lubinsky and Pam Soule. Bud Beebe and Mario Parker escorted.

More than 100 raffle gifts and door prizes were distributed during the event. Thanks to Trude Vasquez at Ships and Trips Travel, one lucky winner took home a \$500 gift certificate for a Southwest Airlines ticket.

Vasquez chaired the luncheon and fashion show, alongside co-chair Judy Faught. The two women have led the event for 11 consecutive years.



Model Patty Blesso, dressed in sportswear, waits for her turn to walk the runway with escort Bud Beebe. Photo by Judy Andrews.

Other committee members included Marty Holmes and Rosemary Lamb, Fashion House and Model Coordinators; Phyllis Williams and Sue Estes, Raffle Prize Coordinators; Patricia Speere, Raffle Ticket Sales Coordinator; Sheba Jackson, Tickets and Reservation Coordinator; and Carol Buck, Scholarship Chair.

The Women’s Thursday Club of Fair Oaks has existed since 1902, supporting charities and events that benefit the community and beyond. The club’s annual Scholarship Luncheon and Fashion Show is its largest fundraiser of the year. For more information about the club, contact Terrie O’Donnell at terywen@sbcglobal.net. ★



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May is Veterans Poppy Month

By Sheila LaPolla,
American Legion
Auxiliary Unit 383

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - For the American Legion Auxiliary May is known as Veterans Poppy month, with this year's National Poppy Day falling on May 23.

Poppy Day is celebrated in countries around the world. The American Legion Family brought National Poppy Day to the United States by asking Congress to designate the Friday before Memorial Day, as National Poppy Day.

The red poppy is a nationally recognized symbol of sacrifice worn by Americans since World War I to honor those who served and died for our country in all wars. It reminds Americans of the sacrifices made by our veterans while protecting our freedoms.

During World War I, the poppy flourished on the battlefields of Flanders Field among the shelled buildings and bomb-scarred landscape. Like the blood that was shed there, its brilliant red bloom became a sign of hope and renewal. For those who would never leave, those who had given their lives, it is a perpetual memorial to their bravery.

American Legion Auxiliary (ALA), Unit 383, in Fair Oaks thanks veterans for their valor and sacrifices by distributing red poppies to wear as a symbol to honor the fallen and to support our nation's men and women in uniform who protect us.

Our veterans shed blood and tears protecting our democracy. They suffer wounds visible and invisible, and their families suffer along with them.

We thank our veterans for their sacrifices, patriotism



The red poppy is a nationally recognized symbol of sacrifice worn by Americans since World War I to honor those who served and died for our country in all wars. Photo courtesy Pixabay

and love of country.

American Legion Auxiliary booths have been set up all month in front of participating local businesses across our community for the distribution of red poppies.

The American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters states wearing a poppy is in honor of the fallen and support the lives who have worn our nation's uniform.

The red crepe paper poppies are given out free to the public, however, donations are accepted and are devoted to helping our veterans. The donations go directly to assist disabled and hospitalized veterans in our country.

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 383 will have a Poppy booth distributing poppies at these following dates and locations:

May 10 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Grocery Outlet located at 6059 Greenback Lane in Citrus Heights.

May 17 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Ace Hardware, 9500 Greenback Lane Suite 10 in Folsom.

May 24 from 10 a.m. to close at the Fair Oak Cemetery District 27th annual Memorial Day Ceremony, 7780 Olive St. in Fair Oaks. ★

To this day, the red poppy is a perpetual memorial to the sacrifices made by our fallen veterans for our freedom. We must never forget those who have given their all.

For more information, call Poppy Chairperson Janet Payne at 916-532-2736.

The blood and tears shed by our fallen heroes is symbolized in the red poppies immortalized in the wartime poem, "In Flanders Fields" by Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae, Canadian Army World War I, while serving on the frontlines:

"In Flanders Fields the poppies blow/ Between the crosses row on row/ That mark our place: and in the sky/ The larks, still bravely singing, fly/ Scarce heard amid the guns below/ We are the Dead. Short days ago/ We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, / Loved and were loved, and now we lie/ In Flanders fields. / Take up our quarrel with the foe: / To you from failing hands we throw/ The torch; be yours to hold it high/ If ye break faith with us who die/ We shall not sleep, though/ Poppies grow/ In Flanders Fields," (In Flanders Fields, Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae, M.D.). ★



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Asado Deschusado
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**Chicken Leg Quarters**
Piermas y Muslo de Pollo
99c /lb

**Pork Butts Boneless**
Cotillas de Cerdo sin Hueso
\$2.99 /lb

**Pork Tenderloin-Brls**
Lomo de Cerdo sin Hueso
\$3.49 /lb

**Pork St. Louis Ribs (single pack)**
Costillas de San Luis
\$3.99 /lb

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FORPD Awards Annual Memorial Scholarship

Continued from page 1
outreach has been conducted yet and they are only in the discussion phase.

Parks and Facilities Manager Sean Ventura said that a consultant has visited Bannister Park to conduct a feasibility study and that report should be submitted to the board for the next meeting.

The board considered a \$654,046 change order for paving the roadways around the district facilities in the Village, as one of the final phases of the improvement project.

The district is responsible for paving half of each of the following roads: Fair Oaks Boulevard California Avenue, Temescal Street, Main Street and Park Avenue. The district will pave the lanes adjacent to district property, while the other half will be paved by Sacramento County at a later date.

The plans originally approved by the county were for a simple grinded overlay to the roads, with all work being done concurrently. However, the county’s recent determination is “that the road base and pavement thickness were insufficient in several areas, which forced us to move to a segmented paving approach,” said District Administrator Mike Aho. “This shift has not only increased costs but also extended the project timeline.”

The county won’t allow the roads to be fully closed during the paving process and is requiring the implementation of 24/7 traffic control, so a flagger will have to be employed at all times, even overnight. Aho said the cost for that portion of the job alone is significant, currently estimated at \$250,000.

Since the county is requiring each road be completed before work on the next can begin, “the mobilization and the time involved increases substantially,” said Aho. The paving project was also bid in 2022, so labor and material costs have increased since then, adding another element to the overall cost increase.

To fund the increase, Aho asked the board to approve the use of funding from the recent sale of the district’s cell tower leases. Unfortunately, a \$1.4-million federal funding award granted to the district for 2025 through Senator Alex Padillia and the Senate Appropriations process from the Community Development Fund for Economic Development Initiatives was recently rescinded through an executive order by President Donald Trump. Aho said the district will reapply for 2026, and if re-awarded, the funding from the cell tower lease sale can be reimbursed.

Director Ralph Carhart suggested

the district should reach out to County Supervisor Rich Desmond to share their concerns about this “draconian traffic control requirement.”

If approved, the paving will start in June with an estimated completion date of Aug. 8. While the work on the buildings and parks will be completed before that, Aho said, they cannot get occupancy of the site until all work, including paving, is completed.

The change order was approved 3-0, with Chair Delinda Tamagni and Director Raymond James Irwin absent.

The board then considered a \$300,000 increase to Bobo Construction’s contract allowance for the Village improvement project.

“We’re approaching the final stages of this renovation and Bobo has done an excellent job of navigating the weather issues, the cost increases and unforeseen site conditions,” said Aho.

The original allowance was \$1.8 million, instead of the recommended \$2.2 million, said Aho. This additional \$300,000 will cover contingencies, reduce the risk of an overrun in the case of more unforeseen complications and prevent costly delays.

Aho proposed that some of the funding for this increase be re-allocated from the Amphitheatre seating project, which is in its final stages and under budget. Currently, there is \$138,000 available in the seating budget and, Aho said, \$100,000 could be moved to the contract allowance. The other \$200,000 would need to come from the cell tower lease sale funding.

The contract allowance increase for Bobo Construction was approved 3-0.

A proposal was presented for a new on-call theater tech position, which would serve as a backup for the full-time tech position already approved. Aho said the full-time position has been filled but the new employee has not started yet, due to the delay in opening the new Amphitheatre.

The proposed on-call position would cover times when the full-time employee was unavailable or when more than one event was scheduled for the same day. The position would be minimum wage and funded by event costs.

The board consensus was that the pay should be higher than minimum wage and, Aho said, they can include a pay range.

The board approved the on-call tech position, 3-0.

The next Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for May 21. ★



Dreams Can Come True

Have you ever had hopes of being a writer or an illustrator? Would you believe there is a way to take that journey? I recently attended an incredible gala in Hollywood called The Writers and Illustrators of the Future, honoring the winners of a contest conducted by Galaxy Press that has been held for forty-one years featuring science fiction and fantasy. It helps promote new, never published before authors and illustrators to begin their journey to professional recognition. Judged by some of the best professional writers they choose three writers and illustrators each quarter. Then, at the end of the year, the best of the best top twelve are chosen. For the week before the gala, some of the judges advise them and teach them skills and business acumen for their future.

The entries come all over the world. I met entry winners from Hungary, Australia, China, the U.K. and of course the U.S. The top 12 writers and illustrators are chosen and included in a volume that comes out each year featuring their stories and illustrations. This year L.Ron Hubbard Presents Writers of the Future



I went for the whole look online...medieval gothic gown and all that went with the period from wig to red slippers. Courtesy photo

Volume 41 was launched at the gala by President of Galaxy Press, John Goodwin, who has been on POPPTALK Radio Show many times.

I would be remiss if I didn’t tell you about the gala. It was held at the Taglyan Center (It’s rumored Oscar events have been held there) so you can imagine...WOW! It was a red carpet, black-tie affair by invitation, and they came dressed to the nines. The show was incredible featuring comedian/magician Naahan Phan who kept the show fun, and you can imagine what the dinner was like. So, I had to choose how Mary Jane Popp from Sacramento would show up to this sophisticated

affair. Since the theme was science fiction/ fantasy, I decided against a regular ball gown, and decided to go fantasy. I went for the whole look online...medieval gothic gown and all that went with the period from wig to red slippers. No, I didn’t have to click my heels to make the evening come true. It was a blast! Had to include a pic of my look. You can imagine how I had to maneuver the tables at the dinner. I can tell you with those hoops, I got to go first every time. Met so many wonderful people from all over the world which validated that we are all alike in so many ways...just hoping to fulfill our dreams.

Now, how about you? Want to give your dream a chance? You can enter the contest as many times as you like, and who knows, you might be on that stage receiving the accolades that so many have, and gone on to become famous writers and illustrators. You can check it all out...the event as well as how to enter the contest and perhaps, make your dreams come true. Just go to www.writer-softhefuture.com for all the information. Oh, and **GOOD LUCK!** ★



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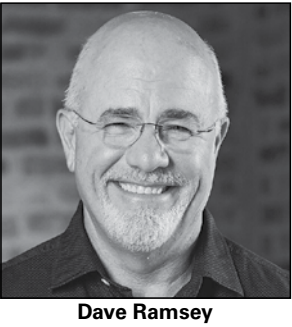
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Dave Ramsey

Dear Dave,

I recently experienced a medical emergency and unexpected hospital stay. I'm about halfway through Baby Step 2, and I'm paying off my debts using the debt snowball system. I have good insurance, but should I put Baby Step 2 on hold for now due to all the hospital bills?

— Gerard

Dear Gerard,

That's *exactly* what you should do. I'm sorry to hear about your health issues, but at the same time, I hope you'll make sure you're only pressing the pause button on Baby Step 2. I'm talking about temporarily stopping the debt snowball and making only minimum payments on all non-mortgage debt for now. Can you manage that?

Things like this can be expensive, but they're part of life. At the same time, taking care of these kinds of issues doesn't have to mean giving up on gaining control of your finances. Emergency issues, especially medical emergencies, come first. Then, go back and

Dave Ramsey Says Medical Emergencies Come First

pick up where you left off when things are better, and finish knocking out your other debt by re-starting your debt snowball. After that, I've got a feeling you'll have the motivation to fully fund your emergency fund in Baby Step 3 all the way up to three to six months of expenses.

God bless you, friend. Keep your head up, and take good care of yourself while you're recovering. You can do this!

— Dave

Pay it Off, Young Lady

Dear Dave,

I'm 28, and I make around \$75,000 a year. My only debt right now is a car payment. I still owe \$15,000 on the vehicle, and currently I have \$30,000 in savings and a 401(k) through my employer. I love my job, but my income can fluctuate from month to month. Do you think I should pay off the car, or hang on to all my savings?

— Erin

Dear Erin,

Debt is a bad thing to

have in your life, even with a good income. It's an especially bad thing when your income can vary from paycheck to paycheck. It's sounds like you're in pretty good shape financially, except for that car note. It's like an anchor weighing your finances down.

If you paid off the car, you'd still have \$15,000 sitting in your savings account. And with your income, plus the money you'd free up by no longer having a car payment, you could rebuild your savings in a flash.

You know where I'm going with this, don't you? Pay off that car, young lady!

— Dave

Dave Ramsey is an eight-time national best-selling author, personal finance expert and host of The Ramsey Show. He has appeared on Good Morning America, CBS This Morning, Today, Fox News, CNN, Fox Business and many more. Since 1992, Dave has helped people take control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for Ramsey Solutions. ★

Pony Express Rides from Sacramento to St. Joseph



The first rider will depart Old Sacramento at 2 p.m. (Pacific Time Zone) on June 11, and the last rider is scheduled to arrive at the Patee House in St. Joseph, Missouri, at 7:30 p.m. (Central Daylight Time) on June 21.

National Pony Express Association News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Annual Re-Ride of the historic Pony Express mail service will be conducted from June 11 through June 21 by the National Pony Express Association (NPEA).

The event, celebrating the 165th year anniversary of "the Pony", will start in Sacramento and end in the city of St. Joseph in Missouri, traveling west to east this year.

Personal and commemorative letters will be carried in a mochila (a leather square that is placed over the saddle with four locked cantinas to hold the mail) by horse and rider relays from the Sacramento River to the Missouri River.

The first rider will depart Old Sacramento at 2 p.m. (Pacific Time Zone) on June 11, and the last rider is scheduled to arrive at the Patee House in St. Joseph, Missouri, at 7:30 p.m. (Central Daylight Time) on June 21.

The route will follow the Pony Express National Historic Trail, a component of the National Trails System. The mail will travel 1966 miles across California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming,

Colorado, Nebraska, and Kansas to Missouri.

Approximately 600 member riders from the National Pony Express Association's eight state divisions will ride relay-style, 24 hours a day, until the mochila is delivered in St. Joseph, Missouri. Each rider will take the Pony Express Oath prior to riding with the mochila, just as the riders did in 1860.

The annual Re-Ride is a 10-day, 24 hours-a-day event honoring the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company. The company carried letters and telegrams from April 1860 to November 1861, between St. Joseph and Sacramento, proving the central route through Salt Lake City was passable year-round. Their intent was to win a federal mail contract, which unfortunately never materialized.

Are you interested in participating in the annual Re-Ride? Get your mount legged up to ride a leg in the annual Re-Ride. Reach out to a state president near you and find out about riding in this year's Re-Ride. Several states have ride sections available; come experience the thrill of being a Pony Express rider! For

more information, visit the state officer directory online at nationalponyexpress.org/about/national-directory/.

Send a letter through the Pony Express! The commemorative letters carried this year will be a vignette of Pony Express history in Nevada. Letters can be purchased by the public for the 1860 price of \$5 each. Personal letters are also available for \$10 each. All letters will be carried on horseback from Sacramento to St. Joseph, Missouri. They will be stamped as having been officially carried by Pony Express and then delivered via the United States Postal Service. The letter application form can be obtained by downloading it from the National Pony Express Association website at nationalponyexpress.org/re-ride/send-a-letter/.

During the Re-Ride, updates and information about the progress across the Pony Express trail can be found at facebook.com/expressrider/. A Global Positioning System (GPS) device will be carried in the mochila that will transmit real-time location of the mail.

The National Pony Express Re-Ride 2025 schedule, with links to detailed state schedules, is available on the National Pony Express Association's website at nationalponyexpress.org/re-ride/current-ride/.

The National Parks Service (NPS) will have an interactive map to follow the transmissions at nationalponyexpress.org/re-ride/follow-the-ride/. Status updates will also be posted on the website, photos and videos on the National Pony Express Association Facebook page. ★



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Conrad Drops Plan to Buy Additional Sunrise Mall Acreage



Here is the front of the former Sears from Sunrise Boulevard.

Story and photo
by Thomas J. Sullivan

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - Sacramento real estate investor Ethan Conrad, CEO of Ethan Conrad Properties, has dropped his plans to buy an additional 50 acres of the Sunrise Mall.

His decision followed a four-and-a-half-hour Citrus Heights City Council meeting on April 23 in which the council voted unanimously against his proposed “Sunrise Tomorrow Evolution” plan to revitalize the property.

The 50 acres which Conrad had planned to buy from the Namdar Realty Group, owners of Sunrise Mall, included the actual mall building, enclosed store spaces and two recently-closed former Macy’s stores.

“I can almost guarantee we’re going to have a vacant property there that belongs to Namdar that doesn’t care like I do. I do care, I live here and I want to make things successful,” Conrad told the council.

Meghan Huber, the city’s Economic Development and Community Engagement director said, “The Namdar Realty Group has not provided any update or submitted proposals regarding potential development projects within the Sunrise Tomorrow Specific Plan area since the closure of Macy’s.”

During his presentation, Conrad said, “It is certainly unfortunate that the current (Citrus Heights Sunrise Tomorrow) Specific Plan, although it may look attractive, is not designed to provide the needed components for it to be a successful project. In particular, with the current specific plan showing all the buildings are demolished and the new buildings are built, it is not only wasteful, it’s cost prohibitive and it’s simply not needed in order for the project to be attractive as well as successful.”

Conrad continues to redevelop the 25 acres he already owns at the southern end of the mall, a piece that includes the closed Sears store building and several acres of parking.

Construction of an electrical vehicle charging station has begun and Sunrise Montessori is planning to occupy an existing vacant building, located adjacent to the former Sears building. The center will provide daycare, preschool, kindergarten and child development classes for students ages 2 to 12, according to city documents.

The Citrus Heights City Council chambers were filled to standing room only as members deliberated the future of Sunrise Mall. Discussion continued past 10:30 p.m. April 23 as Conrad rebutted feedback from council and offered to request only The Home Depot and In N Out Burger as a compromise.

The Home Depot was proposed to be located on the southeast corner of the mall and an In-N-Out Burger along Sunrise Boulevard, near the mall’s southwest corner. Those specific uses are not allowed



The Citrus Heights City Council chambers were filled to standing room as members deliberated the future of Sunrise Mall.



Sacramento real estate investor Ethan Conrad, CEO of Ethan Conrad Properties, has dropped his plans to buy an additional 50 acres of the Sunrise Mall.

under the city’s Sunrise Tomorrow plan as it is currently adopted, according to Community Development director Casey Kempenaar.

Councilmembers and community speakers generally agreed that Conrad’s revised proposal clashed with key elements of the city’s original vision for the site: a walkable, mixed-use community focused on housing, entertainment and a pedestrian-friendly design.

Many community members, including residents who live near the mall, multiple former City Council members, the Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce executive director, and representatives from the Sacramento County Board of Education and Sacramento Area Council of Governments, encouraged the council to “keep the faith” and adhere to the original specific plan’s vision.

“We are not interested in amending the specific plan at this time,” Mayor Jayna Karpinski-Costa said before adjourning the council meeting.

Representatives from The Home Depot and In-N-Out spoke in support of Conrad’s proposal, emphasizing their interest in being part of the project but



Citrus Heights resident Jeannie Bruins was at the Citrus Heights City Council meeting on April 23.

offered few specifics.

“Market demand dictates redevelopment,” said Conrad. “Home Depot is the catalyst. Most other tenants won’t commit without them.”

Sunrise Tomorrow, a city-driven plan which was adopted in 2011, would redevelop Sunrise Mall into a property with a mix of uses, including a central “main street” retail area, more housing, a hotel, coworking

space and open space.

In creating the Sunrise Tomorrow Specific Plan, Kempenaar said, the community strongly supported the inclusion of a central gathering space, a mix of retail, dining and entertainment options, diverse employment opportunities, housing and green space. The plan also included flexible office space options.

Sunrise Mall is located

at the high-traffic intersection of Sunrise Boulevard and Greenback Lane.

The proposal submitted by Conrad Properties, as presented, does not align with that vision, Kempenaar said.

Several council members emphasized the city’s past collaboration with Conrad, including approval of the Sunrise Montessori preschool and an electric vehicle charging station.

Mayor Karpinski-Costa praised the specific plan and encouraged Conrad to review it thoroughly. Karpinski-Costa, along with other councilmembers, noted her support for the proposed businesses but suggested they be located elsewhere.

Conrad said he had no problem with the plan but he didn’t believe a developer would emerge to carry it out before the mall degraded further.

Conrad was further advised by members of the Citrus Heights Council to take in the comments and feedback received from the community at the meeting before moving forward with a formal application at a later date.

“For you, this is another property in your portfolio,” Councilmember Porsche Middleton said to Conrad during the meeting. “This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for us.”

In an email statement sent by the city to the newspaper, Mayor Karpinski-Costa said the council and the community continue to stand behind Sunrise Tomorrow.

“We truly believe this plan represents the best path forward for future generations in Citrus Heights,” Karpinski-Costa said. “As we move ahead, we welcome property owners who share in this vision and are ready to help bring it to life. We encourage any future amendment requests to stay true to the goals and spirit of the plan.”

City officials say they are committed to continue working with all mall property owners on reinvestment that brings Sunrise Mall toward the plan vision.

Toward the meeting’s conclusions, council members told Conrad they were unlikely to support the amendment and that he should look at implementing the existing plan instead, either by himself or with a partner.

“This not working with us is the problem,” said Councilmember Tim Schaefer. “We are the visionaries here.”

Huber said that the city “remains committed to working with all property owners to encourage reinvestment that aligns with the adopted vision for a vibrant, mixed-use destination at the Sunrise Mall site. There has been consistent communication from the city with the Namdar Group focused on site security, property maintenance and resolving code-enforcement matters. Both the council and community members clearly reaffirmed their commitment to the adopted vision of the Sunrise Tomorrow Specific Plan, a walkable, mixed-use regional destination.”

'Golf with Us' to Offer Youth Affordable Rounds

Bank of America News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Bank of America recently announced the launch of Golf with Us, a new initiative designed to grow the next generation of golfers.

Golf with Us offers youth, ages 6 to 18, a free one-year membership to Youth on Course, courtesy of Bank of America. Enrollment in the program is open until May 24 and includes access to thousands of courses in 97 markets for \$5 or less per round. The courses are in the Youth on Course network.

“When kids get involved in sports, they learn first-hand about achieving their goals and develop lifelong skills that help them thrive,” said David Tyrie, president of marketing, digital and specialized consumer client solutions. “By working with Youth on Course to help make golf more accessible, we’re helping grow the sport while also making a positive impact in our communities.”

Through Golf with Us, Bank of America will also bring unique instructional opportunities to youth in select markets throughout the spring, summer and fall by hosting a series of free clinics featuring professional golfers, athletes and celebrities with a



Youth on Course and Bank of America recently announced a multi-year, strategic partnership to expand golf access across the country for young players who are challenged to find an affordable place to play. Photo courtesy of Bank of America

passion for golf.

Program membership also includes a registered handicap index in the United States Golf Association’s Golf Handicap Information Network (GHIN) system, continued development as well as learning opportunities. Interested families can enroll in Youth on Course and learn more about the Golf with Us offer at BofA.com/GolfwithUs.

“Golf has the power to shape young lives in incredible ways - not just through the sport itself, but through the friendships, confidence and opportunities it

creates,” said Youth on Course Chief Executive Officer Adam Heieck. “Through this partnership with Bank of America, we’re making it possible for more kids across the country to step onto the course and discover what’s possible. This partnership is about more than just golf; it’s about opening doors and changing futures.”

Youth on Course and Bank of America recently announced a multi-year, strategic partnership to expand golf access across the country for young players who are challenged to find

an affordable place to play. As part of the agreement, Bank of America is helping fund widespread expansion of municipal course locations participating in the program. To date, more than 2,000 courses are Youth on Course partners nationwide.

The bank will promote Golf with Us through a series of commercials beginning during the Masters Tournament. Bank of America serves as Champion Partner of the Masters Tournament and has partnered with the Augusta National Women’s Amateur since 2019,

hosting annual golf clinics for youth in the Augusta, GA area. In 2025, Bank of America became the presenting partner of the More Than Golf Invitational for female amateur golfers in partnership with the ANNIKA Foundation founded by golfing legend Annika Sorenstam. In addition, Bank of America has partnered since 2002 with the Latin America Amateur Championship and Asia-Pacific Amateur Championships.

Beyond its growing golf partnership portfolio, Bank of America also partners with iconic brands in sports that share a vision for excellence and achievement to deepen client relationships, inspire and showcase teammates, create lasting economic impact in communities, and drive growth, globally and locally, through the power of sport. To learn more, visit about.bankofamerica.com/en/making-an-impact/sports.

Youth on Course, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Monterey, provides youth 18 and under access to life-changing opportunities through golf. Since its inception in 2006, Youth on Course members have played more than 4-million subsidized rounds of golf for \$5 or less at thousands of partner courses throughout the United States, Canada and Australia. ★

Agnew, Fox and Richardson-Pepper Named to Lacrosse All-Big 12 Conference Teams

University of California, Davis Athletics News Release

IRVING, TEXAS (MPG) - On April 30, the Big 12 released its lacrosse all-conference teams, with three Aggies making the cut.

Graduate student Alex Agnew and senior Ally Richardson-Pepper made their way onto the All-Big 12 Team while freshman Jane Fox was tabbed as a unanimous selection on the All-Newcomer Team.

Agnew lands on an all-conference team for the second time in her career, previously earning All-Mountain Pacific Sports Federation (MPSF) honors in the Aggies final season in the conference back in 2021. After missing all last season to an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury, Agnew has been an offensive force for the team, leading the Aggies in both assists (32) and points (58). She also ranks third on the team in goals with 26.

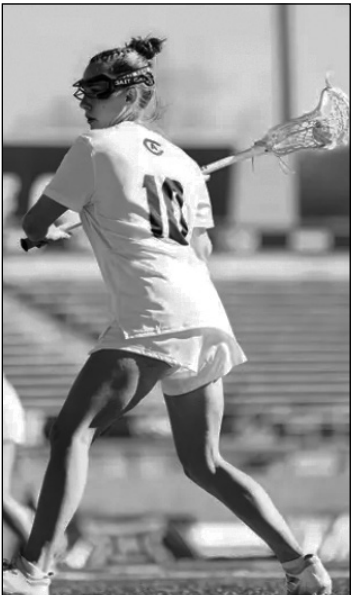
This year has also been a year of many personal milestones for Agnew, including playing alongside her sister, Tory, for the first time and topping the program’s all-time assist list in a matchup against



Alex Agnew lands on an all-conference team for the second time in her career, previously earning All-Mountain Pacific Sports Federation (MPSF) honors in the Aggies final season in the conference back in 2021. Photo courtesy of UC Davis Athletics

Oregon on March 1. Currently, she sits at 125 career assists, 29 ahead of second place.

In a March 22 matchup against San Diego State, Agnew tied a career-high 10 points in a five-goal, five-assist showing against the Aztecs. For her efforts, she was



Jane Fox is joining the Aggies from Baltimore last fall, Fox lands on the Big 12 All-Newcomer Team as a unanimous selection after a 13-goal, five-assist freshman campaign. Photo courtesy of UC Davis Athletics

named the Big 12’s Attack Player of the Week for Week 7.

In the Big 12, Agnew also sits in the top ten of multiple offensive categories, including being ranked fourth in assists per game with 2.12 and sixth in points per game with 3.87.



Ally Richardson-Pepper is emerging as the Aggie’s lacrosse primary starter this season, Richardson-Pepper has been sturdy in net all year. Photo courtesy of UC Davis Athletics

Richardson-Pepper is emerging as the team’s primary starter this season, Richardson-Pepper has been sturdy in net all year, starting and playing every minute for the Aggies while ranking first in the Big 12 in saves per game with 11.20.

Throughout the season, Richardson-Pepper has etched herself into the program’s record book, putting up 20 saves against Colorado and 18 against Florida for the second and third most, respectively, all-time in a single game.

In addition to her goalkeeping responsibilities, Richardson-Pepper has been a key contributor to the defensive unit, picking up 14 ground balls and causing two turnovers throughout the season. These performances have led to a number of personal accolades for Richardson-Pepper, including being named the conference’s Goalkeeper of the Week following week nine and the Defensive Player of the Week in week 11.

Fox joined the Aggies from Baltimore last fall, Fox lands on the Big 12 All-Newcomer Team as a unanimous selection after a 13-goal, five-assist freshman campaign.

In the team’s season-opener against Cal Berkeley on Feb. 8, Fox had a strong debut for the Aggies, scoring the team’s first goal while putting together a three-goal, one-assist hat trick. Currently, Fox is tied for fifth on the team in both goals and total points. ★

Sac State Women’s Tennis Claims Second Straight Big Sky Tournament Crown

Sacramento State Athletics News Release

PHOENIX, ARIZONA (MPG) - For the second consecutive season and the 13th time in school history, the Sacramento State women’s tennis team claimed the Big Sky Conference Tournament championship, shutting out regular season champ and top-seeded Northern Arizona, 4-0, on the morning of April 26 at the Phoenix Tennis Center in Phoenix, Arizona.

The Hornets improved to 21-3 overall on the season, the most wins in a single season since the 2008 squad finished 21-7 overall and seized the league’s automatic berth into the NCAA Tournament with the victory while the 13th tournament championships are the most of any school in the conference. Sacramento State will be making its 15th all-time appearance in the NCAA Tournament field, which will be announced on April 28 at 2 p.m. pacific standard time (PT) on NCAA.com.

With the loss, the Lumberjacks fell to 15-4 overall. Sophomore Reese Walker was named the tournament’s Most Valuable Player (MVP), following in the footsteps of former teammate Marya Gorbunova, who won the first tournament MVP honor following last year’s championship run.

Walker finished 2-0 in singles and won her doubles match by a 6-0 score alongside Palina Saulevich on April 26, defeated Annabel Davis of Idaho, 6-0, 6-3, in the April 25 semifinal victory and providing the championship-clinching point on April 26 with a 6-3, 6-4, victory over Northern Arizona University’s (NAU) Patrycja Niewiadomska.



For the second consecutive season and the 13th time in school history, the Sacramento State women’s tennis team claimed the Big Sky Conference Tournament championship. Photo courtesy of Sacramento State Athletics

The Hornets, who fell to the Lumberjacks by a 5-2 score in Flagstaff, Arizona., back on April 5 in what turned out to be their only Big Sky loss of the year, opened the championship on a high note, taking the doubles point for a 1-0 lead.

Saulevich and Walker were the first off with their shut-out at No. 3, while the tandem of Maddy Ferreros and Irene Riva clinched the doubles point with a 6-4 win at No. 1.

Sacramento State then rolled to a trio of straight-set victories in singles with sophomore Lou Baudouin defeating Laura Duhl, 6-3, 6-2, at No. 3, followed by sophomore Elena Mercioiu’s 6-3, 6-1, victory over Leotina Stojanovic at No. 6.

That set the stage for Walker, who defeated

Niewiadomska to set off the celebration. It was Walker’s third match-clinching point of the season as the Hornets won their sixth-straight dual, five of those via a shutout.

With her win, Mercioiu won her team-best 17th match of the year, while Walker improved to 16-4 and Baudouin won for the 14th time this season.

NCAA WOMEN’S TENNIS BIG SKY TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONSHIP
#75 Sacramento State 4, Northern Arizona 0
April 26 // Phoenix, Arizona (Phoenix Tennis Center)
DOUBLES

1. Maddy Ferreros / Irene Riva (SAC) def. Daryna Shoshyna / Elen Jantacova (NAU), 6-4
2. Lou Baudouin / Emilija Pranyte (SAC) vs. Laura Duhl / Patrycja Niewiadomska (NAU), 5-4 unfinished
3. Palina Saulevich / Reese Walker (SAC) def. Ruslana Kovalenko / Andrea Noguera (NAU), 6-0

- Order of finish: 3, 1*
- SINGLES**
1. Maddy Ferreros (SAC) vs. Daryna Shoshyna (NAU), 2-6, 4-3 unfinished
 2. Reese Walker (SAC) def. Patrycja Niewiadomska (NAU), 6-3, 6-4
 3. Lou Baudouin (SAC) def. Laura Duhl (NAU), 6-3, 6-2
 4. Emilija Pranyte (SAC) vs. Andrea Noguera (NAU), 2-6, 6-4, 1-0 unfinished
 5. Irene Riva (SAC) vs. Elen Jantacova (NAU), 7-6, 2-3 unfinished
 6. Elena Mercioiu (SAC) def. Leontina Stojanovic (NAU), 6-3, 6-1. ★

Outstanding Citizen Awards Ceremony Honors 13 Citizens

Sacramento County District Attorney's Office Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho presented the Outstanding Citizen Award to 13 victims and witnesses who have shown uncommon courage by participating in the criminal justice process under extraordinarily challenging circumstances.

The awards were given out April 25 at the Board of Supervisors' Chambers on H Street in Sacramento.

A Beacon of Hope Award was also presented to an individual or organization showing compassion and dedication, thus enhancing victim advocacy and public safety.

Citizens Harrell Fischer, John Stubbe and Damaria were recognized and awarded for their assistance in the People versus Mandiko Kwadzo case (case number 20FE011791).

On July 27, 2020, West Sacramento Police officers responded to a report of shots fired inside a residence. Moments later, a witness reported seeing the victim, Carliena Clayton, and the defendant having an argument on the driveway of that residence. The victim was then seen getting into a car with her four small children and the defendant getting into the passenger seat as she pulled out of the driveway. When officers arrived on scene, they found evidence of a shooting inside the residence.

That night, Harrell Fischer was at Cliff's Marina in Sacramento County when he heard a gunshot followed by a car crashing into the Sacramento River. He called a friend, John Stubbe, and the two went to the crash scene to help. They found the victim's car partially submerged in the river, with the defendant standing nearby, not doing anything to help. When they looked into the car, they found the victim unresponsive in the driver's seat and her four children in the backseat. The oldest child, Damaria, 6, had already unbuckled all their seatbelts but the youngest child, 2, was still in her car seat. Fischer and Stubbe got the children out of the car to safety. Responding California Highway Patrol officers found the victim did not have a pulse, with severe bleeding from her head. At that time, officers believed it was a car accident until Damaria told officers that the defendant shot his mother. It was later determined that the victim suffered two gunshot wounds to her head. Damaria, Harrell Fischer and John Stubbe all testified at trial and were instrumental in obtaining guilty verdicts in this case.

The defendant was convicted of first-degree murder with a firearm allegation and felon in possession of a firearm. He was sentenced to 53 years to life in prison.

Citizen Gigi Barrios was recognized for her help in the People versus Dominick Roberson case (case number 22FE019182). On Nov. 18, 2022, Gigi Barrios was working at the Medical Safe Haven. A pregnant patient named Precious came into the clinic for an appointment. Gigi knew Precious well and immediately recognized something was wrong.

Precious avoided eye contact; she was vague and hesitant when Barrios asked her questions and seemed distressed when she received text messages. Precious said that her baby's father was the cause for her agitation. Barrios finally got Precious to reveal that her unborn child's father was in the clinic parking lot and was threatening to kill her. He had a gun and he had been trafficking Precious since she met him months earlier.

Barrios jumped into action, making sure that clinic staff called 911 and personally reached out to Sacramento Police Department human trafficking detectives that Barrios knew from her collaborative work throughout the county. Sacramento officers and detectives quickly arrived to the clinic, detained the defendant and found a gun in his car. Precious was terrified of her trafficker, but with



From left, Harrell Fischer, Damaria (middle) and John Stubbe received Outstanding Citizen Awards by Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho for their courage demonstrated in the People versus Mandiko Kwadzo case from 2020. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County District Attorney's Office



Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho presented to the River City Waterway Alliance a Beacon of Hope Award for their continuous efforts keeping the river waterways clean. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County District Attorney's Office



Joseph Bayless, Brandon Gross, Devonte Rainey, Michael Armendariz, Brian Saldivar and Jose Garcia all received Outstanding Citizen Awards for their help in the People versus Kryn Spear case from 2022. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

Barrios by her side, was able to explain that the defendant groomed her, portraying himself as a boyfriend before taking her to the "blade" to engage in prostitution. He made Precious give him all the money she made.

He regularly beat and threatened Precious, he threatened her family and controlled her life. Precious gave detectives access to her phone, where they found messages that corroborated what Precious told them. The defendant was arrested that day and Sacramento police detectives ensured that Precious got to a safe house, where she stayed through the birth of her child and through the trial.

The defendant was convicted of a variety of human trafficking charges and sentenced to 71 years to life in prison.

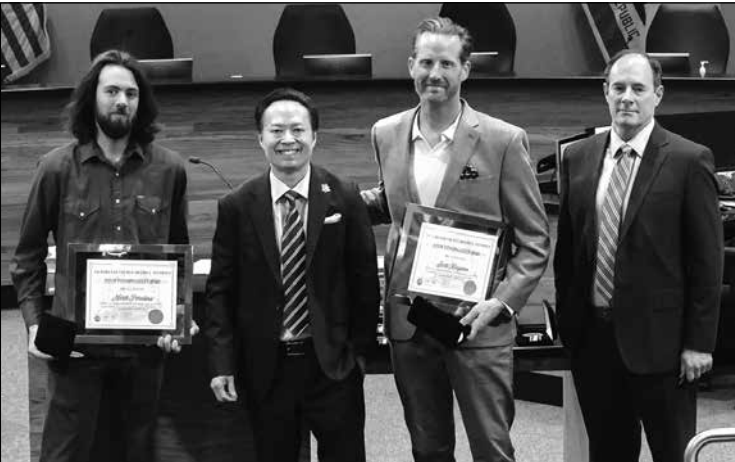
Residents North Peredina and Scott Kingston were recognized for their support in the People versus Tycho Roney case (case number 24FE003928). North Peredina is the general manager of Paco's Bike Shop in Midtown Sacramento. The bike shop was burglarized with a loss of more than \$28,000 in high-end bikes and \$13,000 in property damage. Peredina reviewed their interior surveillance cameras and saw the defendant drop into the business from a breached roof skylight. The profile of the defendant's face was momentarily caught on the surveillance video.

After reporting the crime, Peredina set out to find the stolen bikes. When he saw a man with one of the bikes, Peredina immediately reported it to the Sacramento Police Department. Detectives responded to the area and spotted a similar-looking bike outside a tent. After confirming it was one of the stolen bikes, they found the defendant inside the tent along with the clothes from the burglary, a loaded .9-millimeter semi-automatic handgun and methamphetamine. Peredina positively identified the defendant as the person in the surveillance video and with the stolen bike.

Scott Kingston is in commercial real estate. Kingston rallied attention to this case, including writing passionate pleas to city leadership for the need to



Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho presented Gigi Barrios with an Outstanding Citizen Award on April 15 for her assistance in the People versus Dominick Roberson case from 2022. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County District Attorney's Office



North Peredina and Scott Kingston were both recognized with an Outstanding Citizen Award for their help in the People versus Tycho Roney case. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County District Attorney's Office



From left, victim advocates Lisa Corral and Colette Brown are with Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho who recognized them both with a Beacon of Hope Award for their contributions in the Domestic Violence Unit. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

address retail crime and public safety in the city. As a business leader, Kingston encouraged city leaders to address these issues or businesses would leave. Peredina's proactive response to the burglary and Kingston's challenging of the conditions that were leading to

rampant crime helped lead to the arrest and conviction of the defendant. In a broader sense, their actions helped restore faith in public safety and the criminal justice system for a business community plagued with repeat thefts.

The defendant was convicted

and sentenced to six years in prison.

Citizens Joseph Bayless, Brandon Gross, Devonte Rainey, Michael Armendariz, Brian Saldivar and Jose Garcia were awarded for their help in the People versus Kryn Spear case (case number 22FE008691).

On May 26, 2022, Veronica Vargas was driving through the intersection of Power Inn Road and Elsie Avenue with her 4-year-old daughter, Samantha, in the back seat. At that same time and intersection, the defendant ran a red light at 89 miles per hour and broadsided them with his dually truck. The collision's force flipped the victim's car onto its roof.

Brian Casado was the first person who stopped at the scene after the crash occurred. He rushed over to the victim's vehicle and saw and heard the little girl in the back seat. He tried to help other bystanders get the victims out of their car. Joseph Bayless and Brandon Gross also stopped at the scene and tried to help Veronica and Samantha. The three men stayed with Samantha, reassuring her she would be OK until the first responders arrived.

After the crash, the defendant got out of his truck and began walking away from the crash scene. Devonte Rainey stopped at the scene to help the victims and followed the defendant as he recorded and took pictures of him. Michael Armendariz saw the crash scene and came across Rainey, who told him that the driver who caused the crash was trying to get away. Armendariz stopped his car and went hands-on with the defendant to detain him.

Brian Saldivar and Jose Garcia also saw the crash scene and helped Armendariz detain the defendant until California Highway Patrol arrived. The defendant had a blood alcohol content of 0.251% and was on probation for a prior Driving Under the Influence conviction at the time of this crash.

The defendant was convicted of gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated and a number of additional felonies driving under the influence-related charges, hit-and-run causing death and or permanent injury and a great bodily injury allegation. He was sentenced to 13 years and eight months in prison.

Beacon of Hope Award Recipients

Victim advocate Lisa Corral works tirelessly in the Domestic Violence Unit, where she has helped thousands of domestic violence victims and supports the unit attorneys. The Domestic Violence Unit is unlike any other unit in that the victim advocate is involved immediately at the beginning of the case, at filing and sometimes when a case is not filed. The Domestic Violence Unit is also a unique assignment because not all victims want our help and can be resistant to us. Corral is patient and works through these challenges, with the mission to keep the victims of domestic violence safe.

The River City Waterway Alliance is made up of a volunteer team of 30 to 40 experienced waterway stewards who work tirelessly to keep the river waterways clean and safe for people and endangered salmon species. The alliance reported volunteers pulled 2.8 million pounds of trash or 1,400 tons of trash, to date.

It's not just litter and trash. They recover large hazardous waste items, including propane tanks, household appliances, electronics, clothes and other personal items. Unhoused encampments all along the river levees are the primary source of the items found in the waterways. The amount and type of waste being tossed into our waters are a significant environmental and wildlife hazard. Alliance volunteers are continually cleaning these waters even as more garbage, junk and hazardous items are thrown right back into those same waters. It is a never-ending struggle for them; however, they remain devoted to keeping the waters and the environment clean and safe for people and wildlife. ★

“The State within a State” Lost the Vietnam War 50 Years Ago



Harold Pease Ph. D.
By Harold Pease Ph. D.,
LibertyUnderFire.org

Saigon fell 50 years ago this week on April 30, 1975, when U.S. Army Huey helicopters lifted off the roof of the American embassy the last remnants of our presence in South Vietnam ending a 14-year humiliating defeat. North Vietnam, a 3rd world nation, had defeated the greatest power on earth and rubbed this humiliation in America’s face by renaming Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City after the brutal communist victor. This, in a war that respected Senator Strom Thurmond, Armed Services Committee member, insisted, “We could have been in and out of Vietnam in 4-6 months” (Cong. Record, June 6, 1975, p. S 9905). Thirty million people were lost to communism. Why?

Millions of Vietnamese and 58,281 Americans had died in the futile war to save them from the communist invasion and captivity. More millions died after

we left. Subsequent investigations document our having left behind up to 1,205 prisoners of war. We soothed our conscience with movies like Rambo depicting what we should have done but did not.

Those who could not flee the following retribution were sent to reeducations camps for indoctrination. “As many as two million people fled Vietnam on boats. Anywhere from 200,000 to 400,000 died” as they set sail on leaky boats for any country that would pluck them out of the water (“Vietnam 50 Years Later, Americans Are Still Paying for Vietnam War,” New American, April 28, 2025, pp. 6-11). They were called the boat people.

It was not our soldier’s fault. The JFK files, recently released, revealed the CIA as a ‘State within a state’ and most responsible for the Kennedy assassination (John F. Kennedy, Assassination Files Reveals ‘A State Within a State’ (LibertyUnderFire.org March 26, 2025). President Kennedy learned quickly that there existed another force to reconcile with besides just the legislative and judicial branches—a real shadow government known today as the Deep State, but then as the CIA and/or the Eastern Establishment.

Kennedy opposed the CIA’s Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba and wanted America’s withdrawal from the Vietnam War. He had argued “If the American people do not want to use American troops to remove a Communist regime 90 miles away from our coast, how can

I ask them to use troops to remove a Communist regime 9,000 miles away?” In 1963 Kennedy signed the National Security Action Memorandum 263 to begin the phaseout in Vietnam which implemented plans to withdraw 1,000 US military personnel by the end of 1963. Other withdrawals would come after the 1964 election and follow. Forty-two days after Kennedy signed this document initiating a withdrawal, he was assassinated” (“Why the Deep State Assassination of John F. Kennedy?” Dec. 6, 2023, LibertyUnderFire.org . He had also promised, “I will splinter the CIA into a thousand pieces and scatter it into the wind,” but they got to him before he got to them.

If the CIA controlled foreign policy before the assassination, they controlled it after as well under Lyndon Baines Johnson and throughout the Vietnam War. A lot of money and power is gained during war, the longer the more—especially by the military industrial complex—as President Eisenhower forewarned. Instead of withdrawal, recruitment was amplified from Kennedy’s 16,000 to Johnson’s 184,000 troops.

It is ludicrous that a government would create restrictions on its military that would virtually leave them fighting with one hand tied behind their back. And yet that is exactly what our CIA shadow government did. According to U.S. News and World Report, June 30, 1975, citing the then just

released formally top secret, “Rules of Engagement for the Vietnam War” our men had to fight under horrendous conditions not imposed from the enemy but from our own State Department (Cong. Record June 6, 1975, pp. S9897-S9904. View in full “Vietnam’s Rules of Engagement,” Freeman Report, Sept. 15, 1975).

What follows are some of those rules. On-ground assaults in urban areas “known to shelter enemy forces generally had to be preceded by loud-speaker warnings and leaflet drops.” Our troops could return fire “only when the enemy was positively identified and in close contact. Sniper and mortar fire were not counted as ‘contact’ unless ‘such fire interferes with the scheme of maneuver or is inflicting casualties or damage to equipment.’” Only flat-trajectory weapons (rifles, machine guns, grenades and recoilless rifles) could be used in civilian-populated areas, which largely exposed our men, and “then only if there was a specific, identifiable target.” Obviously on the ground, U. S superiority in firepower was deliberately not exploited.

Nor was it in the air. Pilots were not allowed to fire where they thought the enemy was hidden—even when fired upon—until they were “sure the strike would be positively oriented against the source.” And in many areas there was the nightmare of getting approval at higher levels even if you spotted the enemy or you were taking ground fire. The chain of command often went through the

“province chief, district chief, sector commander and a battalion or higher command” which by the time this was completed, the enemy had disappeared. Enemy airfields were off limits if a “plane with a third nation’s markings was present.” Dams, locks, dikes and targets within 11 1/2 miles of the enemy’s major cities were “banned without prior approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff” (Ibid.). Good luck on that one.

Perhaps the most detrimental rule imposed on our men dealt with where the blame would lie for mistakes. “The final decision on engagement will be at the discretion of the senior tactical commander present.” Present meant in the field and made commanders there very cautious because it “removed responsibility from the top leadership if anything went wrong...” These rules actually aided the enemy, and it is because of them that this 14-year-long-war lasted so long—from our first sending ‘advisors’ under President John F. Kennedy to the evacuation of Saigon ending the war under President Gerald Ford.

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. Newspapers have permission to publish this column. Read his weekly columns, at www.LibertyUnderFire.org. Column #818 ★

California Has the 3rd Worst Roads in the U.S.

A new study on behalf of Construction Coverage has identified the U.S. states with the best and worst roads

Construction Coverage News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Roadways are a vital component of infrastructure in the United States. The vast majority of goods are transported by truck, highlighting the economy’s need for reliable roadways to connect supply chains and move goods and services efficiently across borders. Most commuters use roads daily to get to work, and individuals also rely on roadways for crucial access to resources including employment, social, health, and education services.

However, many highways, major roads, and bridges need repair. Hazardous road conditions can negatively impact the economy, contribute to traffic congestion, and impact the safety of Americans. The passing of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Package) highlights the importance of reliable roads in the U.S., and the commitment to improving America’s infrastructure. The 2021 bill signed by President Joe Biden dedicated \$110 billion in funding to repair and update roads and bridges, in addition to supporting major transformational roadway projects across the U.S.

Highway and Street Construction Spending Over Time

Investment in America's roadways skyrocketed in recent years.

The passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act came at a critical time. After adjusting for inflation, highway and street construction spending had largely

stagnated for much of the previous decade. From 2010 to 2020, real spending hovered around \$120 billion annually with little sustained growth, despite persistent infrastructure needs across the country.

The new federal investment helped reverse that trend. In constant 2025 dollars, monthly spending surged from about \$120 billion in mid-2022 to nearly \$150 billion in early 2025, providing renewed capacity to address long-standing maintenance backlogs and advance long-term transportation projects.

Trends in America's Road Conditions

The share of roads in good condition has increased steadily.

Despite increased investment, many U.S. roads remain in poor shape. From 2000 to 2023, the share of major roadways in poor condition rose slightly—from 11.8% to 13.0%. At the same time, there has been clear progress: the share of roads in good condition increased by nearly 10 percentage points, reaching 55.2% in 2023, with noticeable improvements in the years following the 2021 infrastructure law.

The most significant shift occurred in the middle category. Roads classified as being in fair condition declined from 42.6% in 2000 to 31.8% in 2023. This suggests that many roads have either improved or worsened enough to move into a different category—reflecting a gradual but measurable change in overall road quality.

Percentage of Roads in Poor Condition by State

The Northeast and California have the

most roads in poor condition.

While public investment in roads is growing, many states continue to face significant maintenance challenges—particularly in the Northeast and along the West Coast. Rhode Island leads the nation, with 37.2% of its major roadways rated in poor condition—a slight improvement from years past. Other Northeastern states, including Massachusetts (27.0%), New York (23.7%), Maryland (21.2%) and Connecticut (20.4%) also rank among the worst. These states feature dense urban centers and high public transit use, yet still rely heavily on aging and heavily trafficked roadways.

Outside the Northeast, California reports 26.6% of its roads are in poor condition, reflecting wear from its large, car-dependent population. Hawaii follows closely at 26.5%, despite its small population and geographic footprint.

In contrast, many Midwestern and Southern states report far lower shares of deteriorating roads. Kansas (2.9%), Wyoming (2.9%), and Indiana (2.7%) are among the best-performing states, highlighting a stark regional divide in infrastructure quality. Lower traffic volumes and a higher share of rural roads make maintaining highway infrastructure easier in many of these states.

For California, the share of major roadways in poor condition is 26.6%, share of major roadways in fair condition is 35.5%, share of major roadways in good condition is 37.9% and daily vehicle-miles traveled

per capita is 22.3%.

For the entire United States, the share of major roadways in poor condition is 13%; share of major roadways in fair condition is 31.8%, share of major roadways in good condition is 55.2% and daily vehicle-miles traveled per capita is 26.6%.

Methodology

The data used in this analysis is from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration’s 2023 Highway Statistics Series. To determine the states with the worst roads, researchers at Construction Coverage calculated the percentage of major roadways in poor condition using the latest data available.

In the event of a tie, the state with the lower share of major roadways in good condition was ranked higher. Major roadways are defined to include interstates, other freeways and expressways, other principal arterials and minor arterials.

The International Roughness Index (IRI) was used to classify poor, fair and good conditions of roadways by the following criteria. Poor conditions have an International Roughness Index greater than 170 inches/mile. Fair conditions have an International Roughness Index between 95 and 170 inches/mile. Good conditions have an International Roughness Index less than 95 inches/mile.

Construction Coverage is a leading online publisher of construction industry research reports. Its work has been featured on CBS, Fox, USA Today, Bloomberg, Nasdaq and more. ★

Kiley Asks RFK Jr. to Investigate California Privacy Violations



Kevin Kiley
U.S. Rep. Kevin Kiley
News Release

WASHINGTON (MPG) - Rep. Kevin Kiley (CA-3) has

called on Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to investigate reports that the personal information of tens of thousands of Californians was compromised.

A forensic investigation into Covered California, a California state government entity that operates the state’s Affordable Care Act (ACA) exchange, was found to have tracked users’ personal health information

and transmitted it to LinkedIn as part of a “marketing campaign.”

The tracked information included pregnancy, prescription drug use, gender identity and being a victim of domestic violence.

“This is incredibly disturbing,” Rep. Kiley said. “It appears that the privacy rights of Californians were recklessly violated.”

Rep. Kiley is asking the Department of Health and Human Services

to investigate the matter to find out several questions.

Those questions include whether Covered California violated HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) or any other laws, who authorized the use of these trackers, and what controls exist to protect data privacy in California’s ACA (Affordable Care Act) exchange.

Rep. Kiley is also

asking how Covered California evaded these controls, how many people have been impacted and whether they all were notified, and how much/ what type if any restitution has been offered.

The other questions Kiley is asking the Department of Health and Human Services are why Covered California used the trackers contrary to LinkedIn’s explicit guidance and how something like this can be prevented in the future. ★



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