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# AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

VOLUME 20 • ISSUE 13

Serving Fair Oaks, Orangevale & Sacramento County

JULY 11, 2025

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INSIDE**

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Papa shields Freedom and Dragon from afternoon sun. The eagle parents share all duties of parenthood.

**Story and photos  
by Susan Maxwell Skinner**

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Months before the recent 249th anniversary of the United States independence, the American River bald eagles hatched two new eaglets.

Because of their rarity in these parts and because their species is America's most celebrated icon, our local Mama and Papa Bald have a national following. When they built their nest in 2016, it was considered the closest to Sacramento in recorded history. The couple's suburban success has since reflected the recovery of a species from near extinction.

I was photographing "The Balds" even before I saw them stick foundation twigs in a selected pine. Next spring, two eaglets hatched. Local school children named the babies

Peekaboo and Poppy.

Officially, the 2025 babies are recorded as eaglets 20 and 21. Unofficially, and for my own blog, I call them Freedom and Dragon. The names honor Dragon Freedom, the SpaceX capsule that flew to the rescue of stranded NASA astronauts in March.

The eaglets have also achieved magnificent flight. Precocious alpha Freedom beat her projected launch date by days. No fuss, no preamble.

"It's like she woke up, ate breakfast and decided to jump off a branch," said an observer.

More tentative, brother Dragon made a maiden passage more than a week later.

Every day now, river trail hikers see these juveniles in harum-scarum flight. But in contrast to accidental flops, falls and misplaced fledglings

of previous seasons, the 2025 nursery has been almost accident-free, as of press time.

A soap opera drama unfolded when magpies nested in the tree that the Balds claimed nine years ago. As magpie chicks hatched, their aggressive parents dive-bombed the big raptors. Birds that top the food chain can evidently deal with problematic neighbors. One day, there were baby magpies in a nest upstairs. Next day, there were none. Their parents were also evicted.

At nine weeks, Dragon took a tumble into lower nest infrastructure. Encouraged by his sister, he managed to scramble back to safety. The parents did not intervene. Survival lessons begin at home. On one of her first flights, Freedom was pursued by an angry osprey. This time, Mama

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## FORPD Approves 2025-2026 Budget

**Story by Shaunna Boyd**

**FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG)** - Discussion continued during the June 18 Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District (FORPD) Board of Directors meeting about proposed fees for new electric vehicle (EV) charging spaces in the historic Fair Oaks Village.

The board consensus at the last meeting was that a range of 0.25-0.30 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) was a reasonable fee for vehicle charging. However, some board members said the initially proposed idle fee range (\$2 to \$5 per hour, imposed 15 minutes after a full charge is reached) was too low and would not encourage enough turnover of the spaces. Instead, an idle charge of 0.50 cents per minute was proposed, similar to other charging stations in the region.

District Administrator Mike Aho said that parking in the Village is very limited, so the EV charging stations will be beneficial because they encourage EV drivers to come to the Village while leaving more spaces

open to other visitors.

Aho said the intent "is to promote business activity in the Village." The EV drivers would have an incentive to use the charging space while attending a show at the new Performing Arts Center and also visiting restaurants and shops in the Village.

Estimating three and a half hours for dinner and a show, Aho said the staff proposed idle fee of \$2 per hour had a potential customer cost of \$9.50. At 0.50 cents per minute, the customer could pay \$58.50. "Obviously a substantial difference."

If an EV driver has to move their vehicle in the middle of a show to avoid the high charges, Aho said they might have a very hard time finding another available parking space, because the regular spaces will likely be filled during shows and events. So, to avoid that inconvenience, EV drivers might just choose a regular space from the beginning, potentially leaving the EV stations empty.

Speaking as an EV driver, Director

Raymond James Irwin said that high charges like that would be "a rarity," since it takes a long time to reach a full charge.

The district is getting ready to update the fee schedule, and the EV station fees need to be included in that public hearing for final board approval. Aho said that by including a range for the EV stations, the board will have the discretion to change the fees anytime within that range.

Director Ralph Carhart said, "These are community chargers. I'd rather go on the lower end of the scale."

The board consensus was that the charging range should be 0.25-0.30 per kWh, with an idle fee range of 0.50 cents to \$1 per minute.

Aho also updated the board about negotiations with Fair Oaks Village Enhancement Committee (FOVEC) for use of the AT&T parking lot during district events. The goal is to reach an agreement for 30 to 40 parking spaces that park visitors could

*Continued on page 2*

## SUN Bucks Returns for Summer 2025

**Sacramento County  
News Release**

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - Summer break is a season of sunshine and fun but for many Sacramento County families, it also brings a food access challenge.

That's why California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is bringing back SUN Bucks, also called Summer-EBT, this summer. Eligible families receive \$120 per eligible child to help fill the meal gap when schools are closed.

Children who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals through a school meal application or an Alternative Income Form, CalFresh, CalWORKs or Medi-Cal, are automatically enrolled. You don't need to do anything to sign up.

SUN Bucks provides \$40 per month for food in June, July and August (\$120 total).

Children will automatically get SUN Bucks if they are 6 to 18 years old and get CalFresh, CalWORKs or Medi-Cal (below 185% Federal Poverty Level).

Anyone from babies to 22 years old, attending schools that are part of National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast Programs and are approved for free or reduced-price meals, will also automatically receive SUN Bucks.

Check with your child's school to make sure your free or reduced-price meal application or Alternative Income Form is on file.

Children who are attending Head Start, experiencing homelessness, living in foster care or part of a migrant family are also automatically eligible.

If your family is eligible, a SUN Bucks S-EBT card will be mailed to your home. You do not need to fill out an application. You will get one new SUN Bucks card for each eligible child. You can use SUN Bucks just like a debit card to buy food such as fruits, vegetables, meat, whole grains and dairy at grocery stores, farmers' markets and other places that accept CalFresh EBT benefits.

The state is issuing SUN Bucks cards by mail in stages by last name. If your child has not received a SUN Bucks card in the mail or you have questions about how to obtain a card, visit the California Department of Social Services SUN Bucks website at [cdss.ca.gov/sun-bucks](http://cdss.ca.gov/sun-bucks) or call 1-800-560-0976 for more information.

To learn more about SUN Bucks, other food resources and whether your child is eligible, visit the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance website at [ha.saccounty.gov](http://ha.saccounty.gov). ★

# A Look Back at the Start of the Orangevale History Project

By Mary Witcraft and Kay Barnes

**ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG)** - Many of you may have heard the story of how the Orangevale History Project came to be but let's take a moment to revisit and celebrate our journey.

In 2020, a group of community leaders gathered to ask a simple question: "What does Orangevale need?" One idea rose to the top, local history group, something our town had never had. Marilyn Edwards stepped up to take on the challenge.

By mid-2021, Edwards had started spreading the word, publishing articles in the newspaper and launching a monthly newsletter. With support from the Orangevale Chamber of Commerce, monthly meetings featuring historical presentations began, open to all.

By early 2022, the group had officially organized, electing officers and holding regular board meetings. A booth at the OV Thursday Night Farmer's Market helped spread awareness. Soon, residents began donating artifacts and photographs, and the idea of creating a local museum began to take root.

The search for a permanent location led to a partnership with the Orangevale

Recreation and Park District. In April 2023, a lease was signed for a small building on their property. With the help of dedicated volunteers, that building has since been transformed into the Orangevale History Museum, complete with antique display cases and interactive touch screens highlighting the rich past of our area.

Past exhibits have included "Ladies in White," "Sunrise Mall," "Wartime in OV" and "The Boardwalk." Our current exhibit, "School Days in OV," features artifacts that showcase early life in Orangevale.

We are deeply grateful to the community for your continued support, through donations, volunteer hours, and participation. Thanks to you, the museum continues to grow and thrive.

Join us for our second anniversary celebration from noon to 3 p.m. July 12 as we unveil our newest exhibit on the "Orangevale Woman's Club." This free event, sponsored by Sacramento County Supervisor Rosario Rodriguez, is located just north of the Orangevale Community Center, 6920 Hazel Ave.

Enjoy craft-making for kids, a cornhole competition, a visit from the Horseless Carriage Club, music and refreshments. ★

# FORPD Approves 2025-2026 Budget

Continued from page 1

pay to reserve when attending events or renting district facilities.

The Fair Oaks Village Enhancement Committee and the district had not yet come to an agreement on terms and price but Aho said negotiations are ongoing.

Staff presented the fiscal year 2025-2026 preliminary budget for board review. For the district's General Fund, expenditures are estimated at \$4.38 million. Included in the expenditures are salaries and benefits, which are projected to increase by 10% this year due to new positions, increased hours for new programming and cost of living increases.

Other significant expenses include services and supplies, which will see a 41% increase due to the new Arts and Entertainment Department as well as expanded programming in the improved Village facilities opening this summer. The new facilities will also have additional maintenance costs, and there are some deferred repairs necessary on other existing district facilities.

Expected revenues for this fiscal year are \$4.39 million. Much of the revenue comes from property taxes (which is expected to have a 5% increase), assessment district taxes, and charges for services. New revenue from arts and entertainment at the Performing Arts Center is projected at \$650,000.

In total, there is a projected revenue increase of \$897,000 for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Director Carhart said, "We're relying a lot on our programs and rentals when we open up."

Current fund balances across all accounts, including restricted funds, are \$3.9 million. Of that total, the reserve fund has \$516,000 and carry-forward funds (which is funding not expended last year) are \$782,000. The rest is in restricted funds, such as impact fees and assessment districts for landscaping and lighting.

Staff also requested approval to shift the park supervisor position from hourly to exempt. The change would not have a significant impact on the overall salary cost to the

district, but would allow for a more flexible schedule so the employee could work at evening and weekend events without incurring overtime pay.

Chair Delinda Tamagni advised that the board's finance sub-committee, including she and Director Irwin, usually meets twice a year. But with the new facilities opening, both revenues and expenses will be more uncertain, so they will be meet quarterly.

The board voted to approve the preliminary budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. The board members also looked at the 2025-2026 preliminary budget for the Bond Fund 341C, which holds the Measure J funding. As the Village improvement project is now in its final stages, this budget includes the last of the Measure J expenses.

The remaining bond funds total almost \$3.5 million but there are still \$4.9 million in expenses for the Village project. Other revenues in the bond budget include several grants that total \$660,914, which will be used to cover expenses.

However, there is a \$761,223 shortfall in funds, due to the loss of a Senate Appropriations grant of \$1.4 million. That funding was awarded to the district under the Biden administration but was rescinded by the Trump administration.

The district has reapplied for the funding, but in the meantime, staff recommend covering the shortfall by using Impact Fees, which can later be reimbursed if the grant award is received.

The board approved the 2025-2026 budget for the bond funds.

Aho thanked the board for their fiscal responsibility, saying "It has helped us stay as healthy as possible through these trying times. And I'm hoping through all the hard work that you're doing and the staff is doing that we continue this progress of being fiscally responsible and fiscally solvent."

The next Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District board meeting is scheduled for July 16. ★

# Annual Fair Oaks Village Benefit BBQ



Local volunteers will be serving up a mouthwatering spread of slow-cooked favorites, all made from secret family recipes passed down through the years. Courtesy photo FOVEC

By MPG Staff

**FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG)** - Get ready for a day filled with delicious food, live music and a whole lot of community spirit. The 7th Annual Benefit BBQ is back from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. July 26 at The Hut, located at 7973 Park Drive in Fair Oaks, and this year, it's set to be bigger, tastier and more fun than ever before.

The highlight of the event is undoubtedly the homemade BBQ. Local volunteers will be serving up a mouthwatering spread of slow-cooked favorites, all made from secret family recipes passed down through the years.

What's a BBQ without a soundtrack? Local bands will keep the good vibes flowing with live music throughout the day. The rhythms of summer will fill the air, making this the perfect setting for friends, families and neighbors to relax,

chat and enjoy the celebration.

If you're feeling lucky, don't miss the event's raffle. Featuring incredible prizes donated by local businesses and community members, it's your chance to walk away with something special.

The best part? Every ticket, every bite and every raffle ticket purchased goes directly toward supporting Fair Oaks community initiatives. All proceeds will help fund important projects aimed at improving the Village for everyone.

Tickets for the event are limited, so don't wait, get yours today and be part of this special community tradition. Prices range from \$30 for children under 12, \$50 for adults, plus ticket fees. This ticket includes one meal and one drink. Children under 5 are free.

Individuals interested in contributing or volunteering at this event can sign up at <https://volunteersignup.org/YYBD8>. ★

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 <b>10 GROOVE THANG</b> Funk & Motown JULY	 <b>17 ISLAND OF BLACK AND WHITE</b> Reggae JULY	 <b>24 JAX HAMMER</b> Classic Rock & Parks Make Life Better Night JULY	 <b>31 THE RICHARD MARCH BAND</b> Americana JULY
 <b>07 TOM RIGNEY AND FLAMBEAU</b> Zydeco AUGUST	 <b>14 STEREO TYPE</b> Pop/Dance & Community Connections Night AUGUST	 <b>21 ROOTY TOOT TOOT</b> Local Band & Grand Opening Hometown Pride & Community Picnic AUGUST	 <b>28 SHAUNA &amp; HIRED GUNS</b> Country AUGUST

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**1:30-3:30p**  
**27 September**

**27 ON AIR**  
SEPTEMBER  
Rock featuring Horns

@FOConcerts  
[forpd.org/concerts](https://forpd.org/concerts)

\* Concerts will be held in Fair Oaks Park until Village Construction is complete. Stay tuned for updates. Dates, location, and bands subject to change.

# Celebrate Fair Oaks' History on Sept. 27



Judy Andrews

By Judy Andrews, Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce

explore their new and updated website, which offers a wealth of information about the community from the late 1800s. Follow the online map and enjoy a self-guided walking tour of the historic Fair Oaks Village, as well as nearby historical homes and sites. For more information about the organization, visit: [fairoakshistory.org](http://fairoakshistory.org).

Summer means fun in Fair Oaks. Here are some ideas to keep you and your family busy:

The Fair Oaks Farmers' Market is open every Tuesday between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. at Fair Oaks Park, 11549 Fair Oaks Blvd. Shop for freshly picked produce and meet local farmers and artisans. Enjoy lunch or a snack from food truck vendors, open rain or shine.

The San Juan Unified School District is sponsoring a Back-to-School Fair on Friday, July 25, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Fair Oaks Park, 11549 Fair Oaks Blvd. Some of the activities include a backpack and school supply giveaway, learning materials and books for summer reading, food box and diaper distribution, a community resource fair, a family swag bag, and a free

hot dog lunch. This event is hosted by the Family and Community Engagement Department. No registration is required. For details, visit: [sanjuan.edu/familyed](http://sanjuan.edu/familyed) or call 916-971-7929.

The Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District is hosting a Summer Fun Run on Saturday, July 26, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Phoenix Park, 9050 Sunset Ave. Kids and families can attempt to conquer a roughly half-mile wacky course full of obstacles designed to keep everyone cool and rolling over with laughter. The event concludes with an ice cream party in the park. Registration is required to participate. Tickets are \$25 per person or \$30 on the day of the event. Sign up at: [forpd.org](http://forpd.org) (Summer events).

Did you know the Fair Oaks Library, 11601 Fair Oaks Blvd., offers special events and summer programs for kids of all ages? Family Storytime, for ages 0-5, meets every Tuesday from 10:30 to 11 a.m. Children aged 18 and under can enjoy a nutritious lunch at the library on Tuesdays through Fridays from noon to 1 p.m. For a complete list of programs, visit: [saclibrary.org/events](http://saclibrary.org/events). ★

See you in Fair Oaks!

# Let Freedom Reign



Raptor rumble. A territorial osprey flies to the attack during one of Freedom's first river crossings.

Continued from page 1

sped to the fray. Feathers flew and the abuser fled.

The siblings grew from hatchlings to adult size and flew by 12 weeks old. Still building muscle, they're now consuming more energy than ever. The parents are run-ragged to feed them. From river shallows, ducks disappear daily. Bluff-dwelling squirrels scamper at their own peril. Snakes, rats and voles ascend in yellow talons. Most juvenile eagle deaths occur from starvation in their first year. To fuel their chances, Bald parents introduce their babies to a vast river smorgasbord.

Last week, when I left the bluff in near-darkness, the white-headed providers were staking out a distant beach for waterfowl.

Yelling food anxiety, the juveniles flew to hurry them. Mama's scold sent them packing. Stealth is impossible with screaming kids. Mewling like kittens, they retreated a half-mile. Through dusk and distance, young eagle eyes monitored the hunters' every move.

In a provisioned utopia, Freedom and Dragon can't yet know their parents will soon urge them from the family pantry



Clad in baby down at three weeks old, the hatchlings grow to adult-size by their 10th week and fly at 12 weeks.



Words of wisdom. Mama and younger baby Dragon go beak-to-beak.

and toward independence. Love deals harsh lessons. The strong survive.

God bless the offspring of our national bird and

God Bless America.

To protect the eagle family, the nest location is not revealed in this story.

★

## LOCAL ARREST RECORDS

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By Patsy McGavock  
JustServe.org

**FAIR OAKS/ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG)** - A year ago, I began this column with a simple hope: to help connect our community—one reader (more specifically five per issue) at a time—by highlighting the people and efforts making a difference. I wanted to show what's possible when we each get involved in what speaks to us and better understand how our community works. I didn't anticipate what I would learn. Again and again, I've found the true story is in the listening. Contentment and growth lie in balance. And good things come from courageous first steps and consistency. I'm not a professional, in any sphere. I'm a full-time mom of four tweens and teens, who volunteer wherever my kids are. Four years ago, while fundraising with my daughter, a sponsor suggested sharing the story in the local newspaper. That became my first article. About the same time, I was asked to help connect my church with the community, through service and interfaith efforts. I began attending Orangevale Community Council meetings (Column 1 – Sept 27, 2024). I wanted others to see what I was seeing, be as inspired as I was and know how to get involved. I occurred to me; I could write about it. It took a year, encouragement and a deep breath

## Listening Deeper: A Year of Community Conversations

of "just do it, right now." I called an editor I knew. Her enthusiasm gave me the confidence to contact another I didn't. Then, intimidated but excited, I began, first with another area newspaper, then the American River and Citrus Heights Messengers. I quickly learned that the real story rarely matches my assumptions. I'd hear about an initiative, a volunteer need or a community board's function—and think I understood it, only to realize I was projecting. I had to speak less and listen more without inserting myself. The true story came through good questions and attentive listening. Such as November's column. When a call went for community volunteers in schools, I expected to hear there're weren't enough parent volunteers. Instead, I learned: "When a school puts out a call for help, the spots fill. The spirit of volunteerism is there." But timing, life circumstances, language differences, and even a school's awareness to ask can create barriers. Unassuming listening applies beyond journalism. It's essential in civic life, neighborly exchanges, and family conversations. February's "civil voice" column (Feb 21, 2025) and each September's honoring 9/11 highlight how curiosity, not presumed certainty, fosters understanding. I've also gained wisdom from those I interviewed. You don't have to do it all, do one thing, do it well, then repeat. You don't have to do it alone. Identify other's skills and invite. Many want to help

but need the invitation to know personally how. You don't have to give everything. Matching how you serve to what energizes you matters. Fill your cup, then serve what overflows to the saucer. And organizational growth often requires knowing when to lead and when to step back. Like pruning in an orchard, cutting back makes room for new, healthy growth. Balance is essential. I have a confession: I don't love writing. In college, I chose not to become a journalist. I love connecting with people and their stories, but crafting something accurate, thoughtful, and worthy of your time intimidates me every time. So does reaching out to department heads when I hold no official title. So why do I do it? Because the result matters. Because I deeply believe that connection builds stronger communities. Every time I step out of my comfort zone, I grow, and I hope that growth ripples outward. If just five readers a month take action, volunteering, forgiving, connecting, that's sixty new threads in our community tapestry each year. The result, and the community conversations, fill my cup. Maybe that's the message: growth begins in discomfort. Strength and beauty follow. What will you grow this year? Patsy McGavock is a volunteer community advocate working to inform, empower and engage readers with the community. Connect with Patsy at PatsyMcGavock.JustServe@gmail.com. ★

# California State Fair

## July 11-27

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- For 14 people \$230.00** - Gratuity  
3 Hours Karaoke + 2 Pizza + Pitcher Soda + 5 Main Dishes (14 inch)
- For 18 people \$295.00** - Gratuity  
3 Hours Karaoke + 3 Pizza + Pitcher Soda + 7 Main Dishes (14 inch)
- For 28 people \$385.00** - Gratuity  
3 Hours Karaoke + 3 Pizza + Pitcher Soda + 8 Main Dishes (14 inch)

Sun-Thu Come before 6pm (Valid Time)  
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- Unagi Kabayaki 7 oz REG. \$9.99/EA **\$4.99/ea**
- Frozen Sardines 5 lbs REG. \$15.99/EA **\$10.99/ea**

### WEEKLY MEAT SPECIALS

- Beef Cross Rib/Shoulder Roast-Bnls **\$5.99/lb**
- Beef New York Roast - Bnls **\$7.99/lb**
- Boneless & Skinless Chicken Thigh Meat **\$2.99/lb**
- Pork Tenderloin **\$2.99/lb**
- Pork Butts Boneless **\$2.99/lb**
- Pork Baby Back Ribs **\$4.99/lb**

### WEEKLY HALAL SPECIALS

- Boneless & Skinless Chicken Thigh Meat **\$2.99/lb**
- New Zealand Lamb Shoulder Chops Bone-In **\$4.99/lb**
- Beef Cross Rib Shoulder Roast-Bnls **\$5.99/lb**

### FRESH PRODUCE

- Russet Potato 10 lb Bag **\$2.59/bag**
- Celery **89¢/ea**
- Cilantro Premium **2/\$1.00**
- White Potato 10 lb Bag **\$4.99/bag**
- White Whole Mushroom 8 oz **\$1.99/ea**
- Enoki Mushroom 150 g **99¢/ea**
- Kabocha **79¢/lb**
- Shanghai Bokchoy **99¢/lb**

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- Capri Sun Fruit Drinks 10 x 6 fl.oz **\$2.99/ea**

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- Aroy-D Coconut Milk 13.5 fl.oz **\$1.49/ea**
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- Jans Crunchy & Tasty Snacks 5.29 oz **\$2.99/ea**
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### EUROPEAN GROCERY

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- LOV Roasted & Salted Sunflower Seeds 200 gr **\$3.29/ea**
- Nutella B-Ready 132 gr **\$3.99/ea**
- Franzletta Sushka 3 Flavors 500 gr **\$2.99/ea**

### EUROPEAN DELI

- Columbus Black Forest Ham **\$8.99/lb**
- Hickory Smoked turkey Breast **\$11.79/lb**
- Hot Pitted Green Olives **\$6.09/lb**
- Zesty Garlic Olives **\$5.99/lb**

### FROZEN & FISH DEPT

- Dried Cod Fish 500 g **\$12.99/ea**

### HOUSEWARE

- Electric Rice Cooker (6.5 cups) **\$54.99**
- Electric Rice Cooker (10 cups) **\$59.99**
- Electric BBQ Grill **\$39.99/ea**

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Advertised items good at KP International Market - Rancho Cordova location ONLY. We reserve the right to LIMIT QUANTITIES. Not responsible for TYPOGRAPHICAL OR PICTORIAL ERRORS. All advertised items are SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. Sorry NO RAINCHECKS. PRICES EFFECTIVE JULY 09 - JULY 15, 2025.

# Senate Bill 54 the So Called Values Act



By John McGinness

Much attention has been directed at immigration enforcement in California this year. Donald Trump made several campaign promises in his 2024 presidential campaign. Chief among those were commitments to improve the economy (reduce inflation) and enforce the existing immigration laws. He even went so far as to suggest the possibility of mass deportations. The result of his clearly expressed promises was a decisive win on November 5, 2024. In fact, to the surprise of many, Donald Trump not only prevailed in the electoral college, he won the popular vote and became the forty-seventh president of the United States. Among the first actions of the new president was the appointment of a no-nonsense border czar, Tom Homan who has been unequivocal in his commitment to relentlessly enforce immigration laws in this country. The United States of America is often referred to as a democracy, when in fact, it is a constitutional republic. However, the method through which we elect candidates for office is through a democratic process. In the case of President Donald Trump, the

voters spoke clearly through the democratic process and chose the candidate who committed to strict immigration enforcement. That development put the state of California, and other blue states at odds with the new administration and the will of most Americans, as evidenced by the 2024 election outcome.

To develop a better understanding of how California got where it is today, we revisit history. In 2017 the California Legislature passed Senate Bill 54, the so-called Values Act which prohibited the practice of state and local law enforcement officers from interacting with personnel from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This action by the legislature was taken without voter approval and against vocal opposition from law enforcement executives and rank and file law enforcement practitioners. It was signed into law by Governor Edmond G Brown, Jr and became law on January 1, 2018. Prior to that time, ICE personnel regularly visited, and in many cases were stationed in, major jails throughout the state of California for the purpose of monitoring the immigration status of criminal suspects booked into the facilities. That practice allowed for the peaceful transfer of jurisdiction from California peace officers - to immigration enforcement personnel. Additionally, when ICE had identified a person that was wanted and subject to arrest under their jurisdiction, they would routinely contact local law enforcement agencies for the purpose of ensuring local police were aware of the presence of armed plain clothes personnel engaged in dynamic law enforcement operations. That course of action ensured effective communication

in the spirit of maximum public and officer safety.

Senate Bill 54 outlawed each of those practices, foreseeably increasing the risk to the public, law enforcement personnel and even the suspects themselves. It is impossible to imagine a safer environment in which to effectuate the arrest of a criminal suspect than simply transferring that person from the jurisdiction of one law enforcement agency to another within the confines of a secure jail, a setting in which no one is armed, and escape is virtually impossible. Similarly, the capture of a fugitive with the presence of uniformed law enforcement personnel present in marked patrol cars, with ready communication capabilities with their federal colleagues, facilitated optimum elements for a safe outcome.

Nonetheless, the California legislature and governors, past and present, embraced this extraordinarily ill-conceived law and in so doing, hampered the safety of legitimate, statutorily, and constitutionally sanctioned law enforcement operations.

Effective January 1, 2018, ICE personnel were removed from the jails forthwith. No communication between and among state and local law enforcement personnel could take place. This eliminated the potential of an illegal immigrant with an egregiously violent criminal history, freshly arrested for a violation of state law to be properly referred to ICE.

For those of us who closely watch the actions of the California legislature, there was specific frustration with this course of conduct. Because the US Constitution (Article 1, Section 8, Clause 4) clearly delegates immigration enforcement power to the

Federal Government, preventing individual states from having their own processes for naturalization. Additionally, the US Supreme Court decided in Arizona v United States (2012), that immigration enforcement and naturalization is the sole province of the federal government.

In addition to the Constitutionally enumerated duty of the federal government to enforce immigration law, the U.S. Congress has codified specific laws in statute, i.e.: 8 U.S.C.1325 which makes it a crime for an alien to enter or even attempt to enter the U.S. at a time or place not designated by immigration officials, or to elude inspection. It is a misdemeanor for the first offense, but it can become a felony if the person has been previously deported and re-enters without authorization, or if that person commits other violations of law. Congress has also funded ICE, and the Executive Branch has given clear direction to personnel in ICE to enforce the law. The foregoing represents the law of the land in the United States of America in 2025. A person with a modicum of sixth-grade civics knowledge should understand that if there is dissatisfaction with the law, there are means by which laws can be changed. However, the notion of duly elected members of the legislative and executive branch of any state government simply and overtly defying the law is unconscionable.

The common refrain from Governor Newsom includes an assertion that the actions of the federal government in immigration law enforcement is a denial of democracy. Every Californian should know that federal immigration personnel enforcing the laws created and funded by a duly

elected Congress, and directed by the Executive Branch of the government, in a manner consistent with the language expressed in the U.S. Constitution, is the essence of democracy. Citizens who oppose the law have a right and arguably a duty to endeavor to change the law. Defiance of the law is not the answer.

Apropos of nothing above, but consistent with Governor Newsom's lack of understanding or willful defiance of the fundamentals of democracy is evidenced by another development of last November's election, Proposition 36. Nearly seventy percent of the California electorate passed Proposition 36; it passed in each of the very diverse fifty-eight counties in California. A significant portion of that proposition was the demand for treatment of chronic drug offenders. The people spoke clearly through that democratic act. Yet, Governor Newsom refuses to ensure funding for that critical treatment. It appears Governor Newsom is resistant democracy when he does not like the decisions of the voters.

To be clear, there is room for improvement on both sides of the divide. Constitutional officers should never waiver from their oath to the Constitution, and dignified communication facilitates the optimal outcomes.

Perhaps we heed President Abraham Lincoln and invoke our *Better Angels*.

California and the nation deserve better.

*John McGinness, MS is the retired sheriff of Sacramento County, an adjunct professor of criminal justice and host of the John McGinness Show on KFBK. He can be reached at 916-924-3901 or at john.jpm.solutions@gmailcom.* ★

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## Sacramento's Education Power Grab Will Hurt Families Like Mine

*Commentary by Tab Berg*

As the father of two daughters, I fought every day for more than 15 years to ensure they received a good education that would empower them to build a life even after I am no longer there to fight for them. One daughter has special needs, and like many families in Sacramento and across California, we struggled to find a school environment where she could thrive. We finally found it in a public charter school. In this school, she was no longer unheard, overlooked or left behind. She was supported. She was seen. And for the first time, she began to learn, to dream, and to succeed. That kind of personalized learning environment changed her life—and it's done the same for thousands of other California students who need a different kind of support. Now, all of that hope and all of that progress is being threatened by Sacramento politicians. Assembly Bill 84, introduced by Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi, would create an entirely new state bureaucracy to oversee public charter schools—adding layers of red tape and taking power away from parents, local educators and innovative therapists. But this bill doesn't just create inefficiencies; it could directly harm students like my daughter by cutting funding to the very schools that are helping them thrive. Let me be clear: AB 84 isn't about better oversight, it's about control. Under the bill, Sacramento would take the reins from local communities and school boards, drain funding from classrooms, and impose a rigid one-size-fits-all model on schools that exist precisely to serve students who don't fit that mold. Worse still, AB 84 sets up a system that would reduce funding for special education students who attend public charter schools. That's not reform. That's regression. And it is cruel. At a time when parents are crying out for more choices, more flexibility, and more support, AB 84 sends the message: "We know better, but you're on your own." It tells families like mine that because we found success outside the traditional system, our kids deserve less. Let's be honest about the politics at play. Muratsuchi is eyeing a run for State Superintendent of Public Instruction. He needs political and financial muscle to fuel that campaign. AB 84 would consolidate power in Sacramento and create a bureaucratic structure that weakens local voices and strengthens his political allies—at the cost of our most vulnerable students. This is a power grab, not a path to equity. Sacramento families want solutions for our kids, not more bureaucracy. We want funding to follow the student—not be tied to a political agenda or bureaucrat jobs for adults. And we want our elected officials to put kids first, not their careers. Polling shows 76% of California voters would be less likely to support a candidate for state superintendent who backed cuts to special needs students. Legislators should take that seriously. Education isn't a campaign strategy. For families like mine, it's a lifeline. AB 84 puts bureaucracy before students, politics before parents, and ambition before fairness. I urge our lawmakers—and our community—to reject this harmful proposal and stand up for the families and students who depend on these schools to succeed. *About the Author: Tab Berg is the President of California Parents for Public Virtual Education. He lives in Fair Oaks with his wife and two daughters.* ★

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## WE SUPPORT FIRST RESPONDERS

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# Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



The Milwaukee Bucks won their first NBA title in 1971, and it took 50 years for the Bucks to win a title again. A fellow by the name of Giannis Antetokounmpo helped them accomplish this task, but players of his caliber are in short supply.

The Sacramento Kings have been in Sacramento for 40 years without reaching the finals or winning a championship. But make no mistake, fans in Kingstown still believe an NBA title will eventually come to Sacramento.

Sadly, during the offseason, fans are hearing far too much about mid-level exceptions, aprons first and second, collective bargaining and salary caps. Frankly, the NBA has one of the most complicated systems regarding player compensation, and it takes someone with an advanced degree in economics to comprehend it.

What we know, is that in the aftermath of seeing mega popular DeAaron Fox trot his talents to the San Antonio Spurs midway through the 2025/2026 season, the Kings have navigated the point guard position much like a rudderless ship.

Freshman GM Scott Perry, tasked with replacing De'Aaron Fox, last week signed journeyman Dennis Schröder, a former #1 draft choice by the Atlanta Hawks in 2013. Schröder was chosen #17 overall and for the past 12 seasons has seen playing time with Oklahoma City Thunder, Los Angeles Lakers, Boston Celtics, Houston Rockets, Toronto Raptors, Brooklyn Nets, Golden State Warriors and finally the Detroit Pistons.

Originally from Germany, where he played professionally and for the German national team in the Olympics, one could say Schröder has seen America from coast to coast.

Dennis Schröder's career stats are not gaudy, but 13.9 points per game being as traveled as he's been, shows he can contribute when needed. Five assists per game and 3 rebounds aren't eye popping, but it's important to remember why the Kings went out to get him.

Sacramento has a plethora of scoring power in the starting lineup and coming off the bench. What has been lacking since the departure of Fox, is a capable distributor of the basketball.

At 2.2 turnovers per game Schröder has a better control average than DeAaron Fox, so at least in one regard the Kings have made

an upgrade.

Not many players would clammer to be the replacement for a point guard as popular as Fox, but Sacramento fans are a generous crowd, and I expect to see fans give Dennis Schröder an ample opportunity to display his talents.

Do I think Schröder can be a capable replacement? Absolutely! He won't score 24 points per game or go coast to coast with the type of speed that DeAaron does, but neither does anyone else.

Scott Perry was given a thankless job, and if Schröder can come in and give the Kings 14 points per game, and take care of the basketball, there's a good chance that the playoffs of two seasons ago won't be the exception to the rule.

Coming off the bench is last year's first round draft choice Devin Carter, and Sacramento has a rookie guard in Nique Clifford that is going to need playing time, so don't expect to see Schröder get much more than 20-25 minutes per game.

Perry is likely to have more moves coming, so keep your eyes on summer league Kings fans, and don't forget that Sacramento also drafted a 7-footer in Maxime Raynaud. It will be interesting to see how coach Christie uses his new big man.

Sadly, popular Jonas Valanciunas won't be suiting up for the Kings this season, as he was traded last week to the Denver Nuggets for Dario Saric. Saric will be a role player, and spell Sabonis off the bench. At 6' 10" and 225 lbs. this 31-year-old will undoubtedly see playing time.

Players like Isaac Jones and Devin Carter are still trying to open eyes, so this year's summer league will be an opportunity to showcase their talents and allow Doug Christie to see their growth over the season.

NBA pundits have praised the Kings' draft this year, and I concur with their accolades. There's real optimism as this team is deep in talent. It remains to be seen how that talent will come together, and whether the Kings can take the young talent they have to the next level.

Stay tuned Kings fans, because this roster isn't cast in stone just yet!

All the best!

Your thoughts are always welcome at [vgarriskingsfan@gmail.com](mailto:vgarriskingsfan@gmail.com). ★

# Social Security Matters

## Can I Switch to a Taxi Driver Job Without Hurting my Social Security?



By Russell Gloor,  
AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

**Dear Rusty:** I opted to draw my Social Security retirement benefit early and work part time. The company I work for has decided to pull me from field work due to my age and health. Although they are great keeping me at 20 hours per week running for parts and doing office work, I'm not sure how much longer it will last. I'm thinking of taking a taxi driving job to keep my income enough to live on. The way it would work, I would lease the cab for some amount of dollars per day, set my own hours to work and collect anywhere from \$1.40 to \$4.00 per mile, depending on what type of fare. My question is: how does Social Security look at that type of employment? Would I be held to the 15 - 45 hours a month standard? I could never come close to making the \$1,200 to \$1,300 a month I need by working so little. Any advice is greatly appreciated. **Signed: Seeking Advice**

**Dear Seeking:** If you go ahead with your plan to lease a taxicab instead of continuing your current employment, you would, in effect, be considered "self-employed" and would submit your income tax return to the IRS accordingly. Social Security would get your earnings information as reported to

the IRS, and it would be your net earnings from self-employment (after deducting all your business expenses) that is reported to SSA by IRS. There is, however, a special rule which would apply to you in your first calendar year of self-employment while collecting early Social Security benefits.

Since, in your first year, some of your earnings would be as a part-time employee paying SS FICA payroll taxes, Social Security would first look at your earnings as an employee to see if you exceeded the annual earnings limit (\$23,400 for 2025). Then, upon starting your self-employment, Social Security would look at the hours you spent performing "substantial gainful activity" (e.g., driving your taxi) each month and, if you spent more than 45 hours per month in that capacity, you would not be considered "retired," and thus, not eligible for Social Security in any month you exceeded that amount of hours. If you earned less than the annual limit in total (both as an employee and while self-employed), you would get benefits for all months of the year. But if you earn more than the annual limit, you will get no benefits for any month you exceeded 45 hours as a self-employed person. Again, this only applies during the first calendar year of self-employment - in the following year only your net earnings from self-employment would count toward the annual earnings limit.

In effect, SSA would use the hours-worked standard to see if you are truly retired or actually working. If the latter, they would withhold

SS monthly benefits for any month you exceed 45 hours working while self-employed (up to and including December of your first calendar year of self-employment), and only if your total income (as an employee and while self-employed) exceeds the annual limit.

So, if your goal is to net \$1,200 - \$1,300 per month as a self-employed taxi driver, that would be well within the limits of the annual earnings test (\$23,400 for 2025 but changes yearly). But there may, or may not, be a reduction in your Social Security benefits during your first year of self-employment, depending on when you start as self-employed. Note that SSA will ask about your work plans when you apply, and if you expect to stay under the annual limit (working part time in both capacities), you should get full SS benefits. Just be careful to stay under the annual earnings limit for those collecting early Social Security benefits. FYI, earnings from before your SS benefits started don't count toward the earning limit.

Note, too, that your monthly Social Security benefit will be actuarially reduced according to how far in advance of your full retirement age you claim SS. Whenever SS benefits are claimed prior to one's full retirement age, those benefits are permanently reduced.

*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).* ★

# California Lawmakers Finally Achieve 'Holy Grail' Reform



By Dan Walters,  
CALMatters.org

Jerry Brown once described reform of the California Environmental Quality Act as "the lord's work" but he, like other recent governors, was not willing to invest enough political capital to change it.

Simply put, significantly altering CEQA, which then-Gov. Ronald Reagan signed more than a half-century ago, would require confronting two powerful interest groups: environmental organizations and labor unions, which have weaponized the law to achieve their goals.

Brown made one stab at compelling the Legislature to alter CEQA in 2016, but otherwise left it to his successor, Gavin Newsom.

For six years, Newsom echoed the attitudes of his predecessors, critical of CEQA's misuse to block housing and other much-needed projects, or compel developers to hire unionized labor or jump through other hoops, but unwilling to confront it head-on.

Instead, he and the Legislature nibbled at the edges of the law and gave specific projects, such as sports arenas, exemptions.

Finally, however, the social and economic costs of leaving CEQA intact became too high. The state's critical shortage of housing continued despite innumerable policy

declarations aimed at spurring investment. It became downright embarrassing that a politically dominant Democratic Party pledged to socioeconomic equity was unable to deliver on promises to make housing more abundant and affordable.

California started in a New York Times video that chastised blue states for failing to live up to their stated principles and in a recent book, "Abundance," about the nation's chronic inability to deliver much-needed projects due to regulatory overkill, such as CEQA.

This year, with Newsom nearing the end of his governorship and appearing to cast his eyes toward a presidential campaign, the governor decided to confront the CEQA issue squarely. He endorsed two bills that would impose limits on the law's reach and, in the end, threatening to block the entire state budget if they weren't placed on his desk.

On Monday (June 30), the last day of the fiscal year, the Legislature passed Assembly Bill 130 and Senate Bill 131 with last-minute changes to dampen opposition from construction unions. Newsom quickly signed them.

"We needed to go bold and big on this holy grail reform," Newsom said at a hastily staged signing ceremony.

Essentially, the legislation exempts virtually all infill housing projects from CEQA's provisions, making it more difficult for opponents of high-density housing projects, known as NIMBYs, to block approval.

Such projects, particularly those aimed at low- and moderate-income families, have been the most difficult to gain approval, due largely to opposition in upscale communities

dominated by single-family homeowners.

"When you are building housing in an existing community, that is environmentally beneficial, it is climate friendly, that is not something that should be subjected to potentially endless CEQA challenges and lawsuits," Sen. Scott Wiener, a San Francisco Democrat who authored SB 131, told senators before they passed the measure.

Wiener and Assemblywoman Buffy Wicks, an Oakland Democrat who carried AB 130, have been the Capitol's two most aggressive advocates of pro-housing legislation.

The remaining question, of course, is whether the two new laws, which go into effect immediately, will have a discernible impact on the state's housing shortage. CEQA is just one factor of many determining whether proposed projects proceed or die. Those who oppose high-density housing in their neighborhoods will not just roll over.

Ironically, as the Legislature was passing the two new laws on Monday, The Atlantic was publishing a lengthy article entitled "The Whole Country Is Starting to Look Like California," that describes how red tape and local opposition are adversely affecting housing development in red states such as Texas and Florida, which had been viewed as developer paradises.

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



## Blow up Washington, D.C.'s Brutalist Buildings, and the Sooner, the Better

There's a reason God created dynamite. The brutalist federal buildings that have blighted Washington, D.C., for decades deserve the same fate as Carthage after the Third Punic War, and the nation's capital is finally beginning to move on from these concrete monstrosities.

The Department of Housing and Urban and Development just announced that it is leaving its god-awful headquarters in Washington for a less hideous space in Northern Virginia. HUD Secretary Scott Turner has described the structure as "the ugliest building in D.C.," which is a dubious claim only because there are so many other buildings in Washington that compete for that distinction. He's not the first HUD secretary to hate the building. Jack Kemp called it "10 floors of basement."

Meanwhile, the FBI is also departing its HQ, designated by the U.K. building materials retailer Buildworld as the ugliest building in the United States and the second ugliest in the world.

The moves are in keeping with the spirit of President Trump's executive order stipulating that federal buildings should "respect regional, traditional and classical architectural heritage in order to uplift and beautify public spaces and ennoble the United States and our system of self-government."

That EO should be considered common sense, but has several trigger words for defenders of the architectural status quo, including "traditional," "classical" and, perhaps foremost of all, "beautify." In response, the American Institute of Architects expressed its "strong concerns that mandating architecture styles stifles innovation and harms local communities."

According to The Nation magazine, Trump's initiative is part of an agenda to "make historical architecture on the whole inextricable from Eurocentric white supremacy." In short, it's an unforgivable offense to want a government building to look nice.

Brutalism, with its blocky, minimalist structures made of poured concrete, was a creation of a post-war Europe that wanted to embrace the fresh and new and to economize on rebuilding. Although the name "brutalism" perfectly captures the aesthetic effect, it actually comes from the French for "raw concrete," "beton brut."

To be sure, concrete is extremely important to modern life, but no one has ever said, "Oh, it's so elegant and uplifting." The brutalist buildings in Washington were largely built between the late 1960s and mid-1970s, an era of grievous architectural mistakes, including cookie-cutter multiple-purpose baseball stadiums and modernist Catholic churches. The buildings never had a heyday, but were hated when they were erected and are still hated now.

The seedbed of the trend was a Kennedy administration commission that advocated contemporary

designs and said -- laughably, in retrospect -- that federal architecture should "reflect the dignity, enterprise, vigor and stability of the American national government."

Instead, the brutalist buildings speak of a lumbering bureaucracy with no regard for the sensibilities or priorities of ordinary people. They are about what you'd expect if a DMV were headquartered in a maximum-security prison or in a massive pillbox.

The buildings could easily be used as stage sets for docudramas about East Germany. They are a tribute to soulless monumentality and a gut punch to the human spirit. If they don't eventually get a well-deserved appointment with a wrecking ball, they should be donated to North Korea.

The original justifications of brutalism no longer apply. The buildings aren't new anymore, and aren't cheap. They haven't aged well in any sense, not aesthetically or functionally. The FBI building is literally falling apart, and the expense of maintaining the HUD building has become ruinous.

Defenders of the brutalist buildings say that they are now part of our heritage and should be preserved as such. That's not fair, though, to the people who have to work in them, or who walk or drive by them every day. They are a net subtraction to the D.C. landscape and to human happiness. If one of them has to be kept for historical reasons, it should be made into a Smithsonian museum devoted to idiotic fads that were indulged for much too long.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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# Academic, Career Outcomes Program for Asian American Students

By Cynthia Hubert  
of California State University,  
Sacramento

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento State will soon launch a pilot program designed to serve as a model for improving academic and career outcomes for Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students.

The pilot program follows the University's designation by the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs as the state's first Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI)-Serving Institution.

The commission will provide seed funding for the project, which the University will administer beginning this fall.

The pilot program will add to Sac State's already robust student support system, which includes an Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Student Center. The University is also a federally designated Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution.

"This (program) is a testament to our commitment as an AANHPI institution. It will allow us to expand upon the great work we already are doing and allow Sac State to serve as a model for other institutions," said Chao Vang, the assistant vice president



Sacramento State will launch a pilot program this fall to support Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) students, funded by the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs, following the University's designation as the state's first AANHPI-Serving Institution. Photo courtesy of Chao Vang

for Educational Equity Programs and Student Success.

About 7,000 of Sac State's more than 31,000 students identify as Asian American, said Vang. Roughly half of those students are members of groups that traditionally have been underserved in higher education, including Native Hawaiians, Southeast Asians, and Southwest Asian North Africans (SWANA), Vang said.

Sac State is the first university in California to be awarded a pilot program to specifically serve this diverse group of students, administrators said.

"This partnership demonstrates our commitment to foster an ecosystem of academic excellence in

advancing equity, retention and outcomes for Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian, and North African students," said Aniesha Mitchell, Sac State's vice president for student affairs.

The pilot project will focus on three areas that Sac State has identified as most pressing for those students: career development, mental health and academic tutoring.

"This (program) is a testament to our commitment as an AANHPI institution," said Vang. "It will allow us to expand upon the great work we already are doing and allow Sac State to serve as a model for other institutions."

For the academic portion of the

program, Sac State will identify courses that have high failure or dropout rates among the targeted student groups, then provide culturally appropriate tutoring to those who are struggling, Vang said.

Student tutors will be trained to teach with cultural differences in mind to make learning more relevant to the lives and experiences of participants, he said.

"In some cultures, letting people know that you need help with your mental health is taboo," Vang said. "We want to offer a culturally affirming approach to mental health awareness," including marketing campaigns that feature Asian Americans, as well as peer counselors to help members of the target groups seek services.

For the mental health part of the project, the campus will launch a yearlong campaign encouraging all students, but especially members of the target groups, to seek help if they are feeling depressed, anxious or overwhelmed.

"We hope that students will then go home and have conversations about mental health with family members," Vang said.

The third portion of the new project aims to help students succeed in the professional world by sharpening skills such as building a resume and interviewing for a job.

"We will give them access to working professionals who have shared cultural experiences and can help guide them," said Vang.

The project's overall goal is to ensure that SWANA, ANHPI and Southeast Asian students earn their college degrees and gain a foothold in the workplace.

"Our pilot initiative supports historically underserved students by providing resources to promote academic success, mental health access and career readiness," said Khydeejia Alam, the executive director of the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs. "We are committed to providing tools for AANHPI students to graduate on time and shape California's future as leaders in their communities." ★

## Senator Ashby Unveils Historic District Legislation

Senator Angelique Ashby  
News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - State Senator Angelique Ashby, through Senate Bill 802, has proposed the establishment of a new regional agency to address the persistent challenges of housing and homelessness throughout Sacramento County.

As proposed, the Sacramento Area Housing and Homelessness Agency will centralize services through a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) designed to coordinate, fund and implement all housing and homelessness programs across Sacramento County.

Senate Bill 802 aims to dismantle the fragmented and siloed system currently impeding regional advancement on the issues of homelessness and affordable housing, by replacing the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) with a broader, more inclusive regional effort. The new Joint Powers Authority will be governed by elected representatives from the County and City of Sacramento as well as all cities in the county with a population greater than fifty thousand (Folsom, Elk Grove, Citrus Heights and Rancho Cordova). Smaller cities and unincorporated areas will be represented by the County Board of Supervisors.

"SB 802 creates a first-in-the-state model where one entity becomes the lead provider of homelessness and housing services regionally," said Senator Angelique Ashby. "Providing resources for the unhoused population doesn't stop at city or county lines – and our response shouldn't either. SB 802 gives the Sacramento region a structure to act collectively, share resources, and bring real accountability to the issue."

For decades, Sacramento County's homelessness response has been fractured, managed by a patchwork of nonprofit organizations, municipal departments, and independent planning bodies – each working independently with little to no coordination across jurisdictions.

"Until we regionalize our efforts to address homelessness, nothing will change," said Assemblymember Heath Flora. "As elected officials, it is our duty to the public to reevaluate systems that are not working and try something new. That's exactly what SB 802 seeks to do."

The cities in the region are expected to meet state-driven goals and standards, yet the smaller regions have little to no governing authority when decisions are being made. A different approach is needed to wield the results we all so desperately want. The public has been incredibly clear on this issue, they expect broad collaboration and meaningful partnership. That has not happened effectively on any level over the past 15 plus years.

In 2023, the Sacramento Grand Jury issued a report on addressing homelessness in Sacramento County, focusing on the five government funded agencies currently

tasked with varying, and sometimes competing, responsibilities relative to homeless services.

The report outlined: "taking all the organizations together, their sheer number, and the diversity of their make-up, interests and actions in supporting the homeless population - represent significant coordination, management, and oversight challenges. In the absence of a working organizational structure it becomes virtually impossible to make the most effective use of the valuable resources they offer."

The Sacramento Area Housing and Homelessness Agency will serve as the region's premier housing entity, with the legal authority and governance structure to plan and deliver services in a coordinated and efficient manner.

"Senator Ashby's bold move is common sense," said former Mayor of Sacramento and former Senate President pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg. "The cities and County of Sacramento should not only work together on homelessness but they should also govern together. Governing together will lead to better results for everyone in Sacramento County."

Under Senate Bill 802, the new agency will be empowered to apply for and administer state and federal housing funds, align programs, streamlining service delivery to better meet the needs of unsheltered and housing-insecure residents across all jurisdictions.

The bill responds to the growing consensus voiced by area residents that the region's current approach to homelessness, where multiple agencies, cities and the county often compete with one another for funding sources and work at odds through overlapping or disconnected strategies, has failed to produce meaningful progress while utilizing taxpayer dollars.

In the last five years, the State of California has provided more than \$400 million to address homelessness in Sacramento through the City, County and Continuum of Care. Without a true regional approach, those dollars have failed to make a meaningful and lasting impact.

"Homelessness is the most urgent issue facing our community, and people deserve to see us working together," said Sacramento City Councilmember Caity Maple. "SB 802 gives us the chance to finally build a system that's coordinated, compassionate, and focused on real results. I truly believe that if we work together, we can turn the tide."

Senator Ashby and regional partners will continue working with stakeholders, the Legislature and the Administration to move Senate Bill 802 forward. ★

## Sterile Male Mosquito Pilot Program to Launch

Technique Aims to Reduce Invasive Mosquitoes Posing Health Threat

Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District  
News Release

**SACRAMENTO AREA, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District announced June 26 that it will officially launch the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) Pilot Program in South Natomas in July.

This innovative, science-based program using sterile male mosquitoes aims to reduce populations of *Aedes aegypti*, the invasive mosquito species. *Aedes aegypti* has been rapidly spreading in our region and poses a public health threat for diseases such as dengue, Zika and chikungunya.

Beginning July 8, Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District staff will conduct weekly releases of non-biting male mosquitoes that carry Wolbachia, a naturally occurring bacteria. When these sterile males mate with wild female mosquitoes, the resulting eggs do not hatch. Over time, this reduces the local mosquito population.



An *Aedes aegypti* adult male mosquito rests on human skin. Photo courtesy of the Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District

"We're proud to lead this effort and bring new, effective mosquito control strategies to our community," said Gary Goodman, district manager for Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control. "By targeting *Aedes aegypti* at the source, this program helps us reduce the threat of mosquito transmitted diseases and protect residents."

The project will continue through November in a designated 100-acre zone of South Natomas.

Residents in the pilot area might notice an increase in mosquito activity during the release period but no action is required on their part and they can go about their day as usual. District staff will be present in the neighborhood each week to release the sterile males and set

mosquito traps to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Residents are encouraged to continue protecting themselves by using insect repellent when spending time outdoors and eliminating any standing water around their homes to prevent mosquito breeding.

The sterile insect technique method is being used by other mosquito control districts across California and is gaining attention nationwide as a promising tool to address the growing spread of invasive mosquitoes. Travel-related cases of dengue are detected in our region every year and the presence of *Aedes aegypti* increases the risk for locally acquired infections.

Last year, 18 dengue cases were reported in Southern California. This emphasizes the importance of using innovative approaches such as Sterile Insect Technique to reduce mosquito populations and help prevent the spread of disease.

For more information about the Sterile Insect Technique Pilot Program in South Natomas or to request a free home service inspection, visit [www.fightthebite.net](http://www.fightthebite.net) or call 800-429-1022. ★

## The 'New' K-Zap Turns 10

By J.G. Wirt

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - July 8 will mark 10 years since the rebirth of K-ZAP as a low-power broadcaster and internet radio station.

In that time, former listeners have tuned back in and have helped spread the word about the "50 Years of Rock, Blues & More" station.

There's no big first-decade celebration planned, according to K-ZAP's program manager and weekday morning announcer Dennis Newhall.

Rather, K-ZAP's current big effort aims to secure a second low-power signal that would help its radio broadcasts at KZHP 93.3 FM cover an area from Rocklin to Mather and McClellan to El Dorado Hills.

A waiver from the Federal Communications Commission, with help from the area's U.S. representatives, just might make it happen, Newhall said. The petition is at [k-zap.org/zapthegap](http://k-zap.org/zapthegap).

Meanwhile, the all-volunteer crew continues to raise the K-ZAP profile by supporting events and selling T-shirts and hats featuring the smiling K-ZAP cat and shows such as

"Mick Martin's Blues Party" and "Psychedelic Sunday."

The on-air team continues to add context to the K-ZAP music mix in three-hour shifts. And it's all about the music: new songs by old artists and just the right mix of the new stuff. Plus, K-ZAP airs deep tracks and B-sides, along with artists who don't get airplay on the major stations.

"It's a craft. Like you're building something," Newhall said of curating the playlist from the vast K-ZAP music library. "Sometimes, a great artist has something new but it doesn't fit our format."

The on-air volunteers do three-hour shifts, all remote, and support the station because it's convenient, according to Newhall. There's no commute.

"And it's fun. It's a sandbox," Newhall said. "For the most part, they're radio veterans. No one's hiring 60-year-old deejays."

Newhall, who also helps to curate the Sacramento Rock and Radio Museum, said he and the other veteran announcers do this work for mental stimulation and camaraderie.

"And like any hobby, you try to get better at it," Newhall said. ★

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# COMICS & PUZZLES

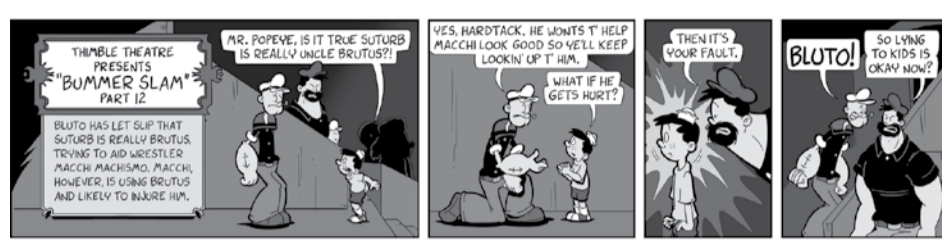
## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



## Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Foot is moved. 2. Tree is moved. 3. Rock is moved. 4. Mountain is different. 5. Ear is larger. 6. Fingers are different.

## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



## GRIN AND BEAR IT

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



A	F	A	R			N	B	A				H	A	T					
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**CLUES**

**ACROSS**

- A long way off
- Basketball org.
- \*Dr. Seuss' cat headgear
- Elbow-wrist connection
- Showing signs of use
- Legal excuse
- "The \_\_\_ Show" (1976-1980)
- Black and white cookie
- Pall \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ of America
- \*Halle Berry's 2004 role
- Small island
- In advance
- Santa \_\_\_ winds
- \*Bouncy, trouncy, flouncy, pouncy one
- Orbital extremes
- Half and half
- Casual top
- Clerk's call
- Fortune teller's props
- Pub offering
- \*Berlioz, Toulouse and \_\_\_ of "Aristocats"
- \_\_\_ perspirant
- Silo contents
- Philosophical system
- More zestful
- Army's offensives
- Blast maker, acr.
- "\_\_\_ Line Is It Anyway?"
- Long, long time
- \*Lewis Carroll's smiley \_\_\_ Cat
- Star Wars attacker
- First rate (2 words)
- Foolish
- Jaws of Life manufacturer
- \*Cereal-praising tiger
- Lake north of Cleveland
- Comedian Schumer
- Health resort
- Communists, slangily

**DOWN**

- Summer mo.
- Flocculant, for short
- Actress Kendrick
- Riffraff
- \_\_\_ Jean Baker
- Certain pudding ingredient
- Happening soon, old fashioned
- Ant construction
- Competent
- \_\_\_ the season!
- Suitors
- Type of acid
- \*Garfield's favorite food
- Sharpens
- Bldg unit
- November birthstone
- Lacking sense
- Hanukkah coins
- Atlas stat
- Chilling
- Be
- Champagne flute part, pl.
- Whisker
- Not well
- \*What three little kittens lost
- Decent person, in Yiddish
- Between game and

**match**

- "\_\_\_ Goosey Gander"
- Magazine's special feature
- Kidnapper
- What pertussis patients do
- Temporary tattoo ink
- Class reunion attendee
- With bloodshed
- \*A. L. Webber musical
- One in a million
- Children's author Blyton
- Repeated Cuban dance step
- An affirmative

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## FBI Says Elder Fraud has Many Forms



The FBI investigates financial scams targeting seniors, including investment scams, technical/customer support schemes, money mules and romance scams. Image by Filmbetrachter from Pixabay

### Federal Bureau of Investigation, Sacramento Field Office News Release

#### SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) -

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Sacramento Field Office is reminding elderly Americans and their loved ones about elder fraud.

This type of fraud takes many forms as criminals seek to take advantage of this vulnerable and growing population.

The FBI is committed to educating the public about these scams and investigating financial fraud schemes against seniors. Not only are there devastating financial consequences but these victims and their loved ones can suffer great emotional and mental effects because of these scams.

The FBI investigates financial scams targeting seniors, including investment scams, technical/customer support schemes, money mules and romance scams.

According to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) data, there was a total of \$4.885 billion in losses from 147,127 complaints in 2024. This is a 46% increase in complaints from 2023, as well as a 43% increase in losses. In California, total losses were \$832,710,048 in 2024. The FBI continues to work with its local and federal partners to tackle elder fraud and stop those who attempt to harm the elderly.

"I urge every senior and their families to have open conversations about these scams and to scrutinize unsolicited mail, calls, emails and text messages. Criminals are actively and aggressively targeting seniors, preying upon their trust to drain their life savings," said FBI Sacramento Special Agent in charge Sid Patel. "If you or someone you care about is a victim, report the crime to law enforcement. There is no shame in seeking help when you have been harmed and your information may prevent someone else from becoming a victim."

Seniors are frequently targeted by criminal actors, as they are often perceived to be more polite and trusting. These actors might also assume that seniors are more financially stable, own real estate, spend a great deal of time alone and are less likely

to report fraud if they feel ashamed or are unfamiliar with reporting channels such as the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3.gov).

Fraud can happen to anyone, and small steps can be taken to protect yourself and your information.

Search online for the contact information (name, phone number, email, addresses) of any unknown source which reaches out to you, as well as the proposed offer. Verify the legitimacy of businesses on websites such as Better Business Bureau. Other individuals have likely posted information online about businesses and individuals attempting to run scams.

Resist the pressure to act quickly. Scammers create a sense of urgency to lure victims into immediate action, typically by instilling trust and inducing empathy, fear, the promise of monetary gains, companionship or employment opportunities.

Be cautious of unsolicited phone calls, mailings and door-to-door service offers.

Never give or send to unverified people or businesses any personally identifiable information, money, checks, gift cards or wire information.

Take precautionary measures to protect your identity in case a criminal gains access to your device or account.

Immediately contact your financial institutions to place protections on your accounts and monitor for suspicious activity.

If you believe you are a victim of fraud or know a senior who might be, regardless of financial loss, immediately report the incident to a local FBI field office or other law enforcement agency.

Crimes can also be reported by calling 1-800-CALL FBI, online at <https://tips.fbi.gov> or at the Internet Crime Complaint Center at [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov).

Some resources available to the public are the IC3 2024 Report and Elder Fraud Report, the FBI: Elder Fraud Resource Page and the Department of Justice: Neighborhood Resources.

The FBI Sacramento Field Office proudly serves the 34 California counties that comprise the Eastern District of California. ★

## \$6.5 Million in Stolen Goods Seized, Leads Organized Crime Crackdown



Governor Newsom announced that the state recovered 113,245 stolen items worth nearly \$6.5 million this year. Photo courtesy of Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

### Office of Governor Gavin Newsom New Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) -** Governor Gavin Newsom on June 17 announced that from January to May, the state's Organized Retail Crime Task Force conducted 331 investigations, 629 arrests and recovered 113,245 stolen items valued at nearly \$6.5 million.

Spearheaded by the California Highway Patrol, the Organized Retail Crime Task Force, through coordination with local law enforcement agencies and other partners, has been involved in more than 3,800 investigations, resulting in the arrest of more than 4,400 suspects and the recovery of nearly 1.4-million stolen goods, valued at more than \$58 million since 2019.

"In California, we value our public safety and back our business community. Organized retail crimes have no place in our society and I'm proud of the work our CHP officers do up and down the state to protect our families and communities," Newsom said.

Using arresting tools made available in part because of the governor's organized retail crime package he passed last year and ongoing commitment to public safety, compared to April, organized retail crime enforcement has gone up in all areas in May, including 120 investigations, up 131%; 246 arrests, up 130%; 72,454 stolen assets recovered, up 66%; and \$2,046,084 in assets recovered, up 49%.

As part of the coordinated national organized retail crime blitz from May 26 to May 30, the CHP conducted high-visibility enforcement operations throughout the state, arresting 90 individuals, recovering nearly \$153,000 worth of stolen merchandise and identifying multiple suspects linked to organized crime rings operating in and beyond California.

The CHP joined more than 100 law enforcement agencies and major retailers for this multi-day effort to investigate and intercept criminal activity in shopping centers, malls and high-traffic retail areas throughout California.

"Retail theft doesn't stop at state lines and neither do we," said CHP Commissioner Sean Duryee. "By working together with our law enforcement partners and retailers nationwide, we are sending a clear message: if you come to California to steal, we will be here to stop you."

The blitz, coordinated out of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, coordinated an effort across 28 states to seize stolen vehicles, narcotics, weapons and

other goods.

These efforts reinforced the importance of intelligence sharing, real-time coordination and proactive enforcement in deterring retail theft.

According to an analysis of Real Time Crime Index data by the Public Policy Institute of California, violent crime dropped by 4.6% and property crime dropped by 8.5% in 2024, compared to 2023. Overall, the decreases in violent and property crimes in California were similar to those seen by law enforcement agencies in other states, with property crime down by 8.5% in California and 8.4% elsewhere.

California has invested \$1.1 billion since 2019 to fight crime, help local governments hire more police and improve public safety. In 2023, as part of California's Public Safety Plan, the governor announced the largest-ever investment to combat organized retail crime in state history, an annual 310% increase in proactive operations targeting organized retail crime, and special operations across the state to fight crime, improving public safety.

Last August, Governor Newsom signed into law the most significant bipartisan legislation to crack down on property crime in modern California history. Building on the state's robust laws and record public safety funding, these bipartisan bills offer new tools to bolster ongoing efforts to hold criminals accountable for smash-and-grab robberies, property crime, retail theft and auto burglaries. While California's crime rate remains at near historic lows, these laws help California adapt to evolving criminal tactics to ensure perpetrators are effectively held accountable.

As part of the state's largest-ever investment to combat organized retail crime, Governor Newsom announced last year that the state distributed \$267 million to 55 communities to help local communities combat organized retail crime. These funds have enabled cities and counties to hire more police, make more arrests and secure more felony charges against suspects.

Working collaboratively to heighten public safety, the governor tasked the CHP to work with local law enforcement areas in key areas to saturate high-crime areas, aiming to reduce roadway violence and criminal activity in the area, specifically vehicle theft and organized retail crime. Since the inception of this regional initiative, there have been more than 7,300 arrests, more than 5,000 stolen vehicles recovered and more than 350 firearms confiscated across Bakersfield, San Bernardino and Oakland. ★

## Peer-to-Peer Payment is the New Cash



Joe Thompson owns Crisp Catering and the Gold Rush Grille located at the Secretary of State's office. Thompson is also a member of the National Federation of Independent Business' Leadership Council. Courtesy photo

By Joe Thompson

As a small business, we must make it as easy as possible for our customers to pay us. In today's economy, that means embracing the digital tools our customers already use, especially peer-to-peer (P2P) payment platforms like Venmo, Cash App, and Zelle. These apps aren't just a convenience; for many small businesses, they're a lifeline.

In Sacramento County, peer-to-peer payments are transforming how small businesses get paid. At the Elk Grove farmers market, produce vendors can complete sales on the spot with a quick scan of a QR code. In Rancho Cordova, a mobile dog groomer doesn't have to wait on a check. Her customers can pay instantly before she packs up. And during Citrus Heights' annual craft fair,

cashless payments help local artisans make more sales and avoid the hassle of hauling around a card reader or dealing with bills and coins.

These platforms have become as essential to small business operations as cash registers were a generation ago.

Why? Because consumers value convenience and so do we. Peer-to-peer payments are trusted, easy to use and fast. Many customers, especially younger ones, no longer carry cash or even use credit cards regularly. For them, peer-to-peer apps are the new wallet. If we can't accept the way they want to pay, we risk losing their business.

Platforms report that small businesses received about \$465 per transaction in 2024 using peer-to-peer networks, often without paying fees.

For small businesses in places like Galt, where family-run operations run on razor-thin margins, that difference can mean the ability to pay rent, order inventory or hire help. And because many platforms transfer funds in near real time, business owners don't have to wait days for bank processing. That speed means a food truck owner in Fair Oaks can refill supplies between lunch and dinner service or a mobile hairdresser in Arden-Arcade can keep rolling to the next client.

Still, some are calling for heavy-handed new regulations on peer-to-peer platforms in the name of stopping fraud. Let's be clear: fraud is a real issue and we need strong solutions, but punishing the tools small businesses depend on won't stop criminals, it'll just hurt local economies.

Instead of targeting the platforms that are helping us grow, we should be cracking down on the bad actors behind the scams. That means funding law enforcement efforts, improving coordination across agencies and supporting smart industry practices. In fact, some peer-to-peer platforms already go above and beyond, using advanced fraud detection tools and offering reimbursements when users are tricked by imposters. Our public policy should build on that, not undercut it.

At a time when small businesses across Sacramento County are still recovering from inflation and pandemic-era disruptions, policymakers must recognize that peer-to-peer platforms aren't the problem, they're part of the solution. Let's keep it simple for customers to pay us and keep growing our local economy in the process.

Peer-to-peer is here to stay and for small businesses like mine, that's a very good thing. ★

## Rep. Kiley Calls on CIF to Comply with Department of Education's Title IX Conditions

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

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (MPG) -** The U.S. Department of Education has found that the California Interscholastic Federation's (CIF) policy of allowing biological males to participate in sports with girls is in "clear violation" of Title IX.

This comes after Rep. Kevin Kiley (CA-3) wrote a letter to CIF calling for an immediate reversal of the policy allowing biological males in girls' sports.

Rep. Kiley is sending a follow-up letter to the CIF calling for the state to

immediately comply with the Department's conditions to avoid a loss of federal funding.

Those conditions include preventing male athletes from participating with females, restoring awards, records and titles to female athletes that were misappropriated by male athletes and issuing a formal apology to those female athletes.

"As I have repeatedly warned Governor Newsom, California's policy is absurd and illegal," Rep. Kiley said. "The state must immediately reverse the policy, and pursuant to the Department's conditions, restore honors to

female athletes unjustly deprived of them."

The U.S. Department of Education is giving the agencies the option to accept a resolution that would prevent male athletes from participating with females and restore awards, records and titles to female athletes that were misappropriated by male athletes.

For more information from the U.S. Department of Education visit [ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-finds-california-department-of-education-and-california-interscholastic-federation-violation-of-title-ix](http://ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-finds-california-department-of-education-and-california-interscholastic-federation-violation-of-title-ix). ★

# Sac State's Slater Named Student-Athlete of the Year

## Sacramento State Athletics News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Football's Jackson Slater has been named California State University, Sacramento's Male Student-Athlete of the Year.

Slater is a Football Championship Subdivision Consensus All-American following the 2024 season after being recognized by the Associated Press, Stats Perform and the American Football Coaches Association.

Selected by the Tennessee Titans in the fifth round (167th overall) of the 2025 NFL Draft, Slater did not allow a sack during the season, started 44 games during his career and helped the Hornets to a pair of Big Sky titles and three National Collegiate Athletic Association Football Championship Subdivision Playoff appearances.

Slater competed at the Senior Bowl where he garnered national attention for his play against the country's top players. He later attended the NFL Combine and produced some of the top athletic rankings among offensive linemen.

Other nominees included Luke Dugger (golf), named all-Big West Conference, competed in all 11 tournaments and led the team with an average of 71.64 strokes per round, which ranks



Sacramento State's Jackson Slater did not allow a sack during the 2024 season, started 44 games during his career and helped the Hornets to a pair of Big Sky titles and three National Collegiate Athletic Association Football Championship Subdivision Playoff appearances. Photo courtesy of Sacramento State Athletics

third in school single-season history. Dugger had a relative scoring average of +0.21 strokes per round and had 19 rounds of par or better, which ranks second in school single-season history. He set the school single-season record with 10 rounds in the 60s, shot 66 in the opening round of the Palouse Collegiate and Ram Masters for his season low. Dugger's 54-hole total of 66-71-67-204 at the Ram Masters is the third lowest in school history.

Evan Gibbons (baseball) was named the Western Athletic

Conference Pitcher of the Year, was the first Hornet to win the honor, a first team all-Western Athletic Conference selection for the first time in his career. He led the Western Athletic Conference in victories at the end of the regular season with a 10-2 overall record, ranking ninth in the nation. Gibbons had the most wins by a Hornet pitcher since Austin Root finished 11-3 in 2018. Gibbons struck out 63 batters in 88.0 innings and ranks tied for seventh on the Hornet career wins list with 21.

Miles Grant (track and field) became the school's first Division I All-American in the men's high jump. He tied for first place at the National Collegiate Athletic Association West First Round after clearing a career-best 7-01.50. That height is tied for third in school history, trailing only marks from 1979 and 1980, repeated as the Big Sky Outdoor Champion, cleared at least 6-11 in five outdoor meets. Grant won the Big Sky indoor title for the second consecutive season and opened the year by setting his indoor personal

record with 7-02.50 to rank second in school history.

Henry Lamchinniah (tennis) was unanimously selected first team all-Big Sky Conference (singles) in his first season with the Hornets after transferring from Southern Mississippi. He played at No. 1 in the Hornets' singles lineup all year, owned a 14-5 dual singles record (6-2 in the Big Sky) and won eight of his final 10 matches. Lamchinniah had a six-match singles winning streak from March 5-20 and nine of his 14 singles wins came in straight sets. Fourteen victories were second most among all No. 1 players in the Big Sky.

Donovan Sessoms (soccer), a first team all-Big West Conference selection, was only the sixth Hornet to earn first team honors in the Big West in program history and the first since 2022. As two-time Big West Offensive Player of the Week, Sessoms finished the year with 10 goals (seven in conference play) and 20 points overall, tying him for ninth on the school's single-season goals list and 10th on the single-season points chart. Sessoms had the most goals by a Hornet since 2010 and the most points by a Hornet since 2009. Five of Sessoms' 10 goals were game winners and he was drafted by the expansion San Diego FC in the third round of the 2024 MLS SuperDraft. ★

## TY Johnson Signs with Lakers



University of California, Davis men's basketball alumnus TY Johnson is in the Los Angeles Lakers' summer league. Johnson was previously named to the Lou Henson Award Mid-Season Watch List recognizing the nation's top mid-major players. Photo courtesy of University of California, Davis Athletics

### University of California, Davis Athletics News Release

**DAVIS, CA (MPG)** - University of California, Davis men's basketball alumnus TY Johnson has signed a summer league contract with the Los Angeles Lakers, following the 2025 NBA Draft.

Johnson, the Big West Conference's most dynamic two-way player this season, earned All-Big West First Team honors after finishing as the nation's sixth-leading scorer at 21.1 points per game. He topped the conference scoring charts while averaging 3.0 assists and 4.1 rebounds per contest.

Defensively, Johnson ranked second in the Big West and 18th nationally with 2.3 steals per game. He set the University of California, Davis Division I single-season record with 72 steals and recorded three or more steals in 12 games, including a six-steal performance against Cal Poly. Johnson finished his career ranked second in the program's history for steals.

Johnson became University of California, Davis' all-time leader in career free throws made (470). Johnson's 178 free throws made this season rank 15th in the National Collegiate Athletic Association and he set a program single-game record with 18 made free throws.

He scored double figures in 30 of 32 games, exploding for 20 or more points 21

times, including five 30-point performances. Johnson's 35-point games against Washington and University of California, Santa Barbara were tied for the fourth most by an Aggie since 2005.

Johnson finished his senior season tied for third on University of California, Davis' all-time scoring list with 1,694 points, one of just 26 Aggies to reach 1,000 career points. Johnson led the Aggies in scoring 26 times and in assists 15 times. He was the only Big West player to rank in the Top Five in both scoring and steals.

Johnson earned Oscar Robertson National Player of the Week honors on Nov. 12 after opening the season with consecutive 30-point games and was a two-time Big West Player of the Week.

He was named to the Lou Henson Award Mid-Season Watch List recognizing the nation's top mid-major players.

Johnson's senior season efficiency placed him in rare company nationally; he was the first qualified player since Vanderbilt's Scotty Pippen Jr. in 2021-22 to rank in the 99th percentile in points per 40 minutes while also ranking in the 95th percentile or higher in steals per 40 minutes.

Johnson and the Lakers were set to begin summer league play on July 5, after press time, at the California Classic, hosted by the Golden State Warriors at the Chase Center in San Francisco. ★

## High Quality Development at Republic FC Academy



In Las Vegas on June 16, the Sacramento Republic FC Academy's U13 team wins the international Copa Rayados tournament without conceding a goal. Photo courtesy of the Sacramento Republic FC Academy

By Seth Henderson

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento Republic FC Academy's U13 team won the international Copa Rayados tournament in Las Vegas on June 16 without conceding a goal, ranking first in the Northwest Division for quality of play, rated at 86.2.

Quality of play is a recently-developed ranking metric for Major League Soccer NEXT age groups U13 and U14 as of April 2, according to a Major League Soccer news release. The program was piloted for the first time in contrast to a traditional win-draw-loss standing. The quality of play metrics is calculated using artificial intelligence, run by the platform Taka, providing coaches and players with hyper-focused data.

Sacramento Republic FC Academy Director Eder

Quintanilla said that the U13 team is a special group, taking home the championship silverware in 2024 and now this year. The U13 team recruited more defensive players, Quintanilla said, which helps reduce the chances of getting scored on and the new quality of play metrics are a great new tool for development.

"Everybody is still learning what they consider quality of play and which metrics you can measure but I think it's a pretty good initiative, looking at how we can pay attention more to how we're playing, how we're developing our players," Quintanilla said. "More than just winning."

Coaches are still asking the league questions to clarify what constitutes as a good or high-quality play and comparing metrics but he said its difficulty in the style of play will be better for player development in the long run,

Quintanilla said.

According to Taka's website at taka.io, its platform uses raw game footage and analyzes the game play by identifying jersey numbers and corresponding value to their actions depicted in the footage. Highlight reels and statistics are automatically populated for coaches and players to analyze their performance, applying the results to their next practice or match.

"The 'win or lose' is like a tool for development," Quintanilla said. "We obviously use the competition to get better because you need to evaluate yourself, you need to evaluate your opponents, you need to come up with the strategies to win the game, to score goals, to create census but that's only a tool."

Quintanilla said the wins might help attract some recruits but their process is to scout the best players in all

age groups every year.

"We're trying to bring the most talented players in the area and that's not going to change, winning or losing," Quintanilla said.

Competition is sparked not only within the league but also within the academy teams, Quintanilla said, determining team leaders, minutes and starters.

Major League Soccer NEXT Technical Director Luis Robles said in a news release that individual development is prioritized over competition for the younger age groups.

After the winning season, Quintanilla said, many get-togethers take place in the off-season, discussing new ideas and improvements to make the team better.

"We celebrate but we quickly put our head down again and work for next season," Quintanilla said. ★

## A's Jacob Wilson Elected Starter

### Athletics News Release

**WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Jacob Wilson from the Athletics has been elected by the fans as starting shortstop for the American League in the 2025 All-Star Game at Atlanta on July 15.

Wilson ranks second in the Major Leagues with 108 hits and a .339 batting average, and his 26 strikeouts are the fewest in the American League and third fewest in the majors among qualifiers.

He received 52% of the vote in

Phase two of fan voting, beating out Royals shortstop Bobby Witt, Jr.

Wilson is the first rookie shortstop to be elected by the fans and will become the second rookie shortstop to start an All-Star Game, along with the Orioles Ron Hansen, who started both All-Star Games in 1960. He will be the first Athletic to start an All-Star Game since Josh Donaldson at third base in 2014 and the first shortstop since Bert Campaneris made three straight starts from 1973 to 1975.

Wilson is the early favorite for American League Rookie of the Year

as he leads all Major League rookies in batting, on-base percentage (.380), slugging percentage (.473), OPS (.853), runs (42), hits and RBI (40). He is on pace to break Socks Seybold's Athletics record for batting average by a rookie (.334 in 1901) and Hall of Famer Al Simmons' record for most hits by a rookie (183 in 1924).

The 23-year-old Wilson will be the first A's rookie to start an All-Star Game and will be the youngest A's starter in the All-Star Game since Vida Blue in 1971. ★



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