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AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

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Serving Fair Oaks, Orangevale & Sacramento County

JULY 25, 2025

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Heat Turned Up for Salsa Cook Off



Salsa Cook Off contestants pose for a photo at last year's festival. Photo courtesy of Helping Hands OV

Helping Hands Orangevale News Release

ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG) - Helping Hands OV is bringing the flavor and inviting you to the fun with their fourth annual Salsa Cook Off from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Aug. 16 at the Orangevale Grange, 5807 Walnut Ave.

The event promises a lively day of community connection, salsa tastings, music, local vendors, beer and margarita garden, and more, all to support a great cause.

Proceeds from the event will directly benefit Helping Hands



Grupo Folklorico Los Saguaritos dance at last year's Salsa Cook Off. Photo courtesy of Helping Hands OV

OV's newest program, Scholarships for Trade School, as well as

several of the nonprofit organization's long-standing efforts serving

low-income, elderly and disabled residents in the Orangevale-Fair Oaks area.

"This isn't just a cook off; it's a chance to gather with neighbors, celebrate local talent and support the next generation of skilled workers," said Sydnie Anderson, Helping Hands OV president. "We believe there's no better way to lend a helping hand than empowering people to use theirs, especially in high-demand trades that keep our communities running."

In addition to raising funds for scholarships, the event will highlight

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Park Opening Delayed, Ensuring ADA Compliance

By Shaunna Boyd

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - The fiscal year 2025-2026 special district assessments was considered during the July 16 Fair Oak Recreation and Park District (FORPD) Board of Directors meeting.

The Fair Oaks Parks Maintenance and Recreation Improvement District includes all properties served by the park district. The assessment collects \$46.64 per single-family residence for a total annual revenue of approximately \$647,000 for the district.

The Phoenix Field Landscape and Lighting District specifically serves properties in the Phoenix Field area. The assessment of \$154.58 per residence brings in approximately \$56,614 in annual revenue.

The Gum Ranch Lighting and Landscape District serves properties in the Gum Ranch area. The assessment is between \$257.62 - \$432.52 depending on the location of the residence within the boundaries, with a collected annual total of \$115,703.

The board voted unanimously to approve the 2025-2026 assessments, to be collected through the Sacramento County property tax roll.

The board also considered the 2025-2026 Fee Schedule, which is reviewed annually to ensure the fees appropriately cover the cost of services and that all fees comply with applicable laws. The public hearing also gives residents an opportunity to provide input on the fees.

Recreation Manager Nick Davison said the goal is "to keep fees as affordable as possible, all while being fiscally responsible."

While the majority of district fees remain unchanged from the last fiscal year, there were some notable updates, including new specialty camps (\$45-\$65) and youth theater camps (\$100-\$450).

The electric vehicle charging stations have charging fee range of 0.29-0.39 cents per kilowatt hour, and 0.50-\$1.00 per minute for idle fees.

Increases to existing fees included sports registrations, summer camps, Santa Stops and tickets for Breakfast with the Bunny.

Preschool rates will have an allowable increase in the range of 24% to 58%.

The updated fees will help offset the increased operational costs in the district and the board unanimously approved the changes. The approved fees will take effect immediately.

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Teacher Exhibits Nature, Power, Passion

Story and photos
by Susan Maxwell
Skinner

CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG) - A hobby has become a passion for a North Highlands' Community Outreach Academy teacher.

Reading specialist Bridgett Locken, 52, took up animal photography 12 years ago. Last week, she launched a one-woman exhibition at the tail end of the "Animal House" show at the Sacramento Fine Arts Center in Carmichael.

"I've loved animals since I was born," Locken told visitors at the July 12 exhibition opening. "Friends suggested I photograph horse shows. I've enjoyed doing this. I heard about the wild mustangs of Carson Valley (Nevada), and I visited them in their wild habitat. I admired their amazing resilience. They're beautiful and free; they're everything we'd all love to be."

Central to the show she calls 'Nature, Beauty, Power and Passion,'



Bridgett Locken's wild horse photography yields a dramatic vignette for her Sacramento Fine Arts Center exhibition.

Locken's wild mustangs were wildly admired.

"I saw two colts in spring," Locken recalled. "They were sparring right in front of me. I felt the universe gave me a wonderful, magical opportunity."

In minutes, Locken captured hundreds of images.

"You just have to pick the one that speaks to you," Locken said of her exhibited choice. "These young males weren't fighting to the death; they were just practicing to be stallions. Gallery visitors seemed amazed I'd captured such a moment. I'm grateful I was in the right place at the

right time."

Locken has traveled to the West Coast with her camera. Among whales, bobcats, bears, deer and bird portraits, bald eagles are a local presence in her exhibition.

"The canyon they inhabit is just miles from my

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Girl Scouts Experience Civic Engagement at State Capitol

Girl Scouts Heart of Central California News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Girl Scouts Heart of Central California (GSHCC) was proud to welcome Girl Scouts from across the state for a two-day educational experience centered on civic engagement and advocacy.

This immersive event, which took place on June 19 and 20, was open to Girl Scouts in grades four through 12 and designed to inspire the next generation of changemakers by connecting them directly with government and public service.

Participants engaged in hands-on workshops, toured the historic State Capitol, met with legislators and took part in panel discussions, featuring elected officials and leaders in civic life. The experience empowers girls to explore how the government works, understand their role in a democracy and develop their voices as



Girl Scouts pose in the California State Senate during their two-day event on June 19 and 20. Photo courtesy of Girl Scouts Heart of Central California

advocates for the issues they care about.

“This event gives girls a rare opportunity to see government in action and to realize that they, too, can lead and make a difference in their communities,” said Adriana Pedroza,

associate director of girl experience at Girl Scouts Heart of Central California.

Girl Scouts Heart of Central California is dedicated to building girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.

Through various programs and initiatives, the organization empowers girls to take the lead in their lives and communities.

Headquartered in Sacramento, Girl Scouts Heart of Central California serves over 16,000 girl and adult

members across 18 counties, including Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Glenn, Mariposa, Merced, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tuolumne, Yolo and Yuba. ★



Girl Scouts listen to a tour guide outside of the Governor's Office at the State Capitol Building during their two-day event on June 19 and 20. Photo courtesy of Girl Scouts Heart of Central California



Girl Scouts listen attentively while inside the California State Senate during their two-day event on June 19 and 20. Photo courtesy of Girl Scouts Heart of Central California



Above right: The electronic sign in the California State Senate says, “The California State Senate Welcomes Girl Scouts.” Photo courtesy of Girl Scouts Heart of Central California

Right: Girl Scouts listen attentively while inside the California State Senate during their two-day event on June 19 and 20. Photo courtesy of Girl Scouts Heart of Central California

Heat Turned Up for Salsa Cook Off

Continued from page 1

Helping Hands OV's other impactful programs. That includes Valentines for Seniors, which distributed 10,400-plus handmade cards to care homes across the region; Easter Baskets for Kids in Need, where 157 local children received personalized baskets from community donors; and Spring Food Drive, collecting 4,000-plus pounds of food for the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank. It also includes helping elderly and low-income residents with ongoing household help for lawn care, minor repairs and safety tasks.

Celebrity judges ABC 10's Mark S Allen, Mix 96/ Now 100.5 radio host Doug Lazy, Pro MMA Fighter Max “Pain”

Griffin, Fair Oaks Honorary Mayor Katie Yount, Orangevale Live's MaryAnne Povey and Lane Gonick from the office of Josh Hoover will vote for their favorite salsas in categories of Hot, Mild, Blended and Chunky, and all attendees will choose the Community Choice Award- the best in town.

The day will also include live music, performances, youth activities and a wide variety of local makers and food vendors.

Helping Hands OV extends special thanks to its Fiesta Sponsors: Creative Corner Preschool, El Tapatio Citrus Heights and the Rubitsky family, in loving memory of Lisa Rubitsky for bringing the party to this beloved community event. ★

The Hot Jazz Jubilee Releases Festival Line Up



Swing jazz quartet based out of Los Angeles, San Lyon, performs at the Hot Jazz Jubilee in 2024. Photo courtesy of the Hot Jazz Jubilee

Hot Jazz Jubilee News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Hot Jazz Jubilee will once again feature four days of music and entertainment over Labor Day weekend from Aug. 29 to Sept. 1.

Five venues will offer music at the Doubletree by Hilton Sacramento, ranging from the large Grand Ballroom to the more intimate Garden Terrace and RJs. Dancers will want to hang out in the three ballrooms, which offer dance floors.

“We are excited to offer some new music genres and some great bands new to the festival,” said Hot Jazz Jubilee Director Pat Jones. “Plus, some fabulous guest artists. The variety at this festival can't be beat. We have jazz, swing, gypsy jazz, zydeco, blues, old time rock 'n' roll, western swing and R&B. Something for everyone.”

This year's band lineup includes Black Market Trust, Crescent Katz, Swinging

West, Steve Lucky & the Rhumba Bums, Dave Bennett Quartet, Katie Cavera & the Lost Boys, Two Tone Steiny & The Cadillacs, Tom Rigney & Flambeau, Todd Morgan & The Emblems, Stephanie & Paolo, San Lyon, Groovus, The Summer Groove Band (formerly High Street Band) and Yve Evans & Company. Joining them will be Sax Gordon, Adrian Cunningham, Dan Barrett, Jason Wannier, Bill Dendle and jazz vocalist Meloney Collins.

This family-friendly event is in air-conditioned comfort at the newly remodeled DoubleTree by Hilton Sacramento on Point West Way in Sacramento. There is free admission for youth 18 and under. The Sacramento Jazz Education Foundation will sponsor youth clinics where young musicians can perform with the pros.

Food and drinks as well as a jazz vendor fair will also be on site.

For special group rates, inquire at info@hotjazzjubilee.com. ★

San Juan Unified to Receive 3,000-Plus New Chromebooks

San Juan Unified School District News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Each year, San Juan Unified's Technology Services team conducts a districtwide Chromebook inventory to ensure every student has access to the tools they need for learning.

In a time when technology is essential for research, assignments and testing, reliable devices play an important role in supporting student achievement and equity.

Students are introduced to real-world skills through the use of Chromebooks, from collaborating to designing to the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI). These tools and more are preparing students for post-secondary education, career and life.

By tracking, repairing and replacing thousands of devices each summer, the district is able to keep classrooms connected and instruction uninterrupted.

With more than 47,000 Chromebooks in circulation across the district, inventory began in March to prepare for the large distribution of new Chromebooks over the summer.

There is an expected distribution of 84 carts, bringing more than 3,000 new Chromebooks to schools across the San Juan Unified District.

"The distribution of carts

depends on the schools' needs," said Esteban Ramirez, a coordinator for the San Juan Unified Technology Services team. "Not every classroom is going to get a cart. It all depends on what the teacher is using them for."

Staff and students are encouraged to keep the devices stored in the cart they originally arrived in to avoid misplacement and ensure that they are fully charged. At a full charge, the laptops can last throughout the school day, providing learners with no disruption during class.

Each Chromebook is configured to have the school site's settings and access to San Juan Unified's WiFi network. With these unique settings, all learners are granted access to any device in their school by logging in with their credentials.

"A student can pick up and log into any Chromebook and have access to all their data," said Ramirez.

Through the use of installed applications, students can work worry-free as all their documents are saved automatically and stored in their drive.

Students are encouraged to follow safety practices when handling technology. When the devices are handled with care, they last longer and are available for learning. Each classroom provides further guidelines to follow along with school and district rules on how to use computers and the internet.



The San Juan Unified School District's Technology Services team began the annual Chromebook inventory in March and will complete it over the summer. Photo courtesy of San Juan Unified School District



Each Chromebook cart is equipped with a class set of Chromebooks and chargers. Photo courtesy of San Juan Unified School District

After older Chromebook models and damaged devices are replaced at schools, they are sorted by damage and later saved for parts, repaired or disposed of as electronic waste (e-waste).

At San Juan Unified, the most common support ticket has been to report damaged equipment. A leading cause of damage is due to vandalism, ranging from cracked screens to burnt laptops.

"It's a tool that they are using every day," said technology support specialist Richard Tonti. "Toward the end of the year,

there is not enough material to swap out immediately. We generally work to get things turned around within a day or two."

While the larger work is completed over the summer, technical support is available throughout the school year.

School sites can request assistance through the San Juan Unified Help Desk. Based on the request, a Technology Services staff member will then visit the school to collect any damaged equipment and replace it with a working product on the spot. ★

Park Opening Delayed, Ensuring ADA Compliance

Continued from page 1

The board then gave direction to staff regarding the size and location of a Board of Directors Dedication Plaque to be displayed at the Fair Oaks Performing Arts Center in the Village.

Arts and Entertainment Manager Jen Schuler said they are planning for a bronze plaque, so it will "last forever, essentially."

Various interior and exterior locations were discussed, with many directors favoring placement outside the venue. They selected a size and requested staff move forward with bids. This item will be brought back to the Board with mock-ups of the plaque for review and a final decision on the location.

The board discussed the possibility of amending the Fair Oaks Recreation Foundation bylaws in order to split it into an entity separate from the Fair Oak Recreation and Park

District Board of Directors, which currently also serves as the board for the foundation.

District Administrator Mike Aho said having a separate foundation board would broaden its role in the community and allow for deeper engagement.

"We need a foundation that is actively engaged in fundraising and operations," with "more of a finger in the pie, if you will," Aho said.

Under the current arrangement, Aho said, the board votes on foundation business, but they are not actively engaged in fundraising since that is outside their role. But with the improved facilities set to open this year and the expanded services the district will be offering, a separate foundation would provide more support.

The proposed changes include the current board appointing community members to the first seats on the foundation board, while still maintaining one or

two seats on the foundation for Board members. Aho said this will ensure the board still has input and oversight of the foundation.

Director Ralph Carhart worried that since the board would only have a minority on the foundation, they could "go rogue" and vote to eliminate the Board seats.

Aho said, "You are turning the reins over" but the bylaws could only be changed by a unanimous vote.

Board Chair Delinda Tamagni said that the independent auditor who reviews the budgets of the board and the foundation has encouraged this change for years, because "running the foundation is not really the function of the park board."

The board consensus was to send the updated foundation bylaws to the attorney for review.

Aho also provided an update about the opening

of the improved facilities in the Village, which he said is unfortunately going to be delayed. The last estimate was for an opening in August but Aho said, "We are not going to be open when we thought we would be able to open."

The current delay is estimated to be up to six weeks, putting the potential opening in mid-September. But Aho said, "It's not guaranteed yet. I want to be clear on that."

Aho said the delay is due to a compliance issue with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was discovered in an early courtesy inspection by the county.

"We've had multiple early inspections and this is the one that caught us. And it's a good thing it caught us," said Aho.

If this issue had only been found at the final inspection, it would have further delayed the opening and been much more

difficult to make the necessary changes.

"It's going to cost us money. There's no question," said Aho. "I don't know how much money." Aho said they are going forward with the design work now, and "we'll start the modifications, and the construction, and the demolition work necessary to complete this."

"The team is doing a great job navigating the change, but everybody is frustrated," said Aho. "There's not a single person on the team who's not frustrated. I'm sure there's not a single community member who's not frustrated. And I know you're frustrated."

"We're doing the best we can to get through this issue," said Aho, "and hopefully we won't see anything like this the rest of the way."

The next Fair Oak Recreation and Park District Board of Directors is scheduled for Aug. 20. ★



FAIR OAKS CONCERTS IN THE PARK

"Reviving Fair Oaks' Cultural Heartbeat"

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

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Saturday Concert:
1:30-3:30p
27 September



27 ON AIR
 Rock featuring Horns

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

Mobile Health Rolls Out New Services

Sacramento County Department of Health Services News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County's mobile clinic is doing more than just rolling into neighborhoods; it's rolling out a whole new level of care.

Wellness Without Walls (W3), the county's mobile health program, has added Behavioral Health Services' Homeless Engagement and Response Team (HEART) to its network, bringing mental health and substance use services directly to people experiencing homelessness or housing instability. This expansion is helping Wellness Without Walls deliver whole-person care in one stop.

HEART staff, which include master's level clinicians and peers with lived experience, now co-deploy with Wellness Without Walls in the field and to local shelters to provide behavioral health screenings, treatment referrals and ongoing case management. They've begun distributing Narcan and fentanyl test strips and have been working side by side with Wellness Without Walls' medical staff to reach individuals where they are.

By blending physical and behavioral health services into one visit, the effort increases access and also reduces the stigma around asking for help.

"HEART is very excited about this collaboration," said Health Program Manager Monica Rocha-Wyatt. "In order to address the health needs of the homeless population, you have to address the whole person, both physical and behavioral health. Including a BHS screening as part of overall health services also removes some of the stigma that still exists regarding mental illness and substance use. Making this full menu of services available makes it more convenient and more likely individuals will take advantage of the services."



Members of Sacramento County's Wellness Without Walls (W3) program celebrate a new collaboration with Behavioral Health's Homeless Engagement and Response Team (HEART), bringing physical and behavioral health services together in one mobile visit. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County Department of Health Services

Wellness Without Walls began as a collaboration between divisions of the Department of Health Services, Public Health and Primary Health, in 2022, with support from the Health Resources and Services Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Public Health leads sexual health efforts, offering HIV and STI testing, education and referrals. Primary Health operates the mobile clinic and delivers services such as wound care, medication and chronic disease management. The idea is simple: if people can't get to a clinic, the clinic should come to them.

Since its launch, Wellness Without Walls has grown into a full-scale outreach effort, thanks

to the support of community partners such as Loaves and Fishes, First Step Communities, Community Health Works and UC Davis' School of Nursing. Local organizations and businesses, from pharmacies to pet wellness services, have also helped expand services and meet the diverse needs of patients in the field.

Bringing HEART into the mix adds a crucial layer to Wellness Without Walls' mission. Many people served by the mobile unit are managing co-occurring conditions such as depression, trauma or substance use but might not know where to turn. With HEART onboard, patients can now receive behavioral health care on the spot, alongside their physical care, making it

easier to begin the recovery and healing process.

The results speak for themselves. Wellness Without Walls has already served hundreds of individuals, reconnecting some with HIV care, helping others begin Hepatitis C treatment and supporting people through housing transitions and benefit navigation. But beyond the medical outcomes, the true measure of success is trust. Patients return. They recognize the staff. They open up. And they take that first step toward stability, often because someone met them exactly where they were.

"Even though the effort only recently launched, the potential is obvious," said Rocha-Wyatt. "Individuals experiencing homelessness are not refusing

services. Traditional services are too hard to access for people without reliable transportation, those afraid to leave their encampment and their belongings or those who have to go to multiple locations for care, etc."

Wellness Without Walls staff say the HEART collaboration has been a natural fit and each division is learning from the others. Everyone shares the same goal: to make care easier, not harder, for people in crisis.

"I hope this new partnership sets an example of what can be done through collaboration," said Rocha-Wyatt. "Long gone are the days of siloed services; the culture has shifted to collaborating and combining efforts for more efficient and easier to access services." ★

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<p>For 14 people \$230.00 + Gratuity</p> <p>3 Hours Karaoke + 2 Pizza + Pitcher Soda + 4 Main Dishes (Choose from 12)</p>	

Dishes To Choose From

FROZEN & FISH DEPT

<p>Tuna Poke Sashimi Quality 1 lb REG. \$12.99/EA \$7.99/ea</p>	<p>Frozen Swai Fillets 2 lbs REG. \$8.99/EA \$6.99/ea</p>
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WEEKLY MEAT SPECIALS

<p>London Broil/ Top Round Roast Boneless \$5.99/lb</p>	<p>Beef Ribeye Roast - Bnls \$8.49/lb</p>	<p>Chicken Leg Quarters 99¢/lb</p>
<p>Pork Loin Chops Bone In \$2.49/lb</p>	<p>Pork Loin Ribs (country style)- Bnls \$2.99/lb</p>	<p>Pork Cushion Meat-Bnls \$2.99/lb</p>

WEEKLY HALAL SPECIALS

<p>Chicken Leg Quarters 99¢/lb</p>	<p>New Zealand Lamb Shoulder Chop Bone In \$5.49/lb</p>	<p>London Broil/ Top Round Roast Boneless \$5.99/lb</p>
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FRESH PRODUCE

<p>Yukon Potato 99¢/lb</p>	<p>Russet Potato \$2.59/bag</p>	<p>Enoki Mushroom 99¢/ea</p>	<p>Hawaiian Purple Yam \$2.59/lb</p>
<p>Orange \$6.99/bag</p>	<p>King Oyster Mushroom \$13.99/box</p>	<p>Aloe Vera 79¢/lb</p>	<p>Spinach Bunch 99¢/ea</p>

AMERICAN/HISPANIC GROCERY

<p>REG. \$3.99 \$3.49/ea</p>	<p>REG. \$4.99 \$3.99/ea</p>	<p>REG. \$8.99 \$6.99/ea</p>	<p>REG. \$6.99 \$5.99/ea</p>
<p>REG. \$4.99 \$2.99/ea</p>	<p>REG. \$4.99 \$2.99/ea</p>	<p>REG. \$4.99 \$2.99/ea</p>	<p>REG. \$4.99 \$2.99/ea</p>

ASIAN GROCERY

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<p>REG. \$3.99 \$2.99/ea</p>	<p>REG. \$3.99 \$2.99/ea</p>	<p>REG. \$3.99 \$2.99/ea</p>	<p>REG. \$3.99 \$2.99/ea</p>

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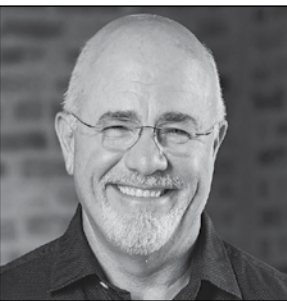
<p>REG. \$5.99 \$3.99/ea</p>	<p>REG. \$13.99 \$9.99/ea</p>	<p>REG. \$12.99 \$9.99/ea</p>	<p>REG. \$6.99 \$4.99/ea</p>
<p>REG. \$2.99 \$1.79/ea</p>	<p>REG. \$2.99 \$1.79/ea</p>	<p>REG. \$2.99 \$1.79/ea</p>	<p>REG. \$2.99 \$1.79/ea</p>

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<h3 style="text-align: center;">FROZEN & FISH DEPT</h3> <p>Deep-Fried Sweet Potato 12 oz REG. \$6.99/EA \$2.99/ea</p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">EUROPEAN DELI</h3> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"> <p>Pan Roasted Turkey Breast REG. \$11.99/EA \$11.99/ea</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"> <p>Cargnona Olives REG. \$7.99/EA \$6.69/ea</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"> <p>German Head Cheese REG. \$11.99/EA \$11.99/ea</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"> <p>Green Cracked Olives REG. \$5.99/EA \$4.59/ea</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Pan Roasted Turkey Breast REG. \$11.99/EA \$11.99/ea</p>	<p>Cargnona Olives REG. \$7.99/EA \$6.69/ea</p>	<p>German Head Cheese REG. \$11.99/EA \$11.99/ea</p>	<p>Green Cracked Olives REG. \$5.99/EA \$4.59/ea</p>
<p>Pan Roasted Turkey Breast REG. \$11.99/EA \$11.99/ea</p>	<p>Cargnona Olives REG. \$7.99/EA \$6.69/ea</p>				
<p>German Head Cheese REG. \$11.99/EA \$11.99/ea</p>	<p>Green Cracked Olives REG. \$5.99/EA \$4.59/ea</p>				

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Dave Ramsey Says She'll Be Just Fine

come from the money. If that's the case, she won't whittle it all down to nothing. So, if she's in good mutual funds—not single stocks—I think she'll be just fine.

Now, let's talk about the mortgage. I would absolutely recommend she go ahead a pay it off. If she can do that at age 76 and still have \$540,000 left, that's the way to go. Let's pay off the house, and then she can start taking her income off a percentage of the remainder. She won't need much with the house payment out of the way, because she won't be sending money to the bank to pay the anymore.

– Dave

The Best Laid Plans...

Dear Dave,

My wife and I have been talking about paying off our mortgage in the next two or three years. Do you think we should make this happen by paying extra toward the house, or invest that money on top of the 15% we're putting into retirement?

– March

Dear March,

If I were in your shoes,

I'd pay extra on the house. On the other hand, you're not really doing a bad thing by putting the extra cash into retirement, either.

But here's the deal. No matter how well you plan, you never know exactly what will happen over the upcoming years of your life—or the life of your investments. You might think you know. You may even believe you've taken every possibility into account. The hard, cold truth, though, is even the best and smartest plans don't always work out the way we think they will—or the way we want them to.

And if something unplanned or unforeseen happens, it sure would be a nice thing to own your home free and clear, wouldn't it? – Dave

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



Roger's Review

By State Senator Roger Niello

The California State Legislature considers thousands of bills every year, and undoubtedly, there are many measures that I don't find supportable.

As your State Senator, it is my responsibility to listen to your opinions and advocate for your interests. Among the legislative actions taken this year, Assembly Bill 84 is one measure that everyone involved agrees is a move in the wrong direction.

Assembly Bill 84 is a direct attack on charter schools and school choice. It would gut funding, strip flexibility, and threaten the educational access of nearly 100,000 students including those with diverse and often challenging educational needs. The California Charter Schools Association estimates it could reduce funding by more than \$1 billion for students who are enrolled in flexible learning programs.

This attempt by powerful state unions to derail school choice leaves students as the victim. Not every child learns at the same pace, and no single educational model works for every student. Parents and guardians need to have the ability to choose the type of educational model that best fits their child's learning style.

School choice is an important issue for me and our community. During my first year in the Senate, I introduced a measure to move the post-pandemic education system forward and clearly recognize the value and benefits of flexible, personalized, and hybrid learning delivery methods for both public schools and public school students.

Flex-based charter schools provide multiple options of educational programs including in-person, blended, and virtual options. This flexibility gives students better chances to thrive in environments tailored to their needs.

There were many parents and families who came to the Capitol to voice their opinion and appeal with the legislature to not take away the very

schools that have helped their children thrive and succeed at learning.

Charter schools in California serve nearly 100,000 students, and their student population is deeply diverse: 58% are socioeconomically disadvantaged, 7% are English learners, and 15% have disabilities.

Flexibility is not just a luxury for these students, it's a lifeline.

The grassroots advocacy from students, parents, and concerned community members has been loud and clear, and I join the overwhelming number of my constituents opposing Assembly Bill 84.

State Sen. Roger Niello represents District 6, which includes Antelope, Arden-Arcade, Carmichael, Citrus Heights, Clay, Fair Oaks, Folsom, Foothill Farms, Franklin, Galt, Gold River, Herald, Mather, Orangevale, Rancho Cordova, Rancho Murieta and Wilton in Sacramento County. The district also includes Auburn, Granite Bay, Lincoln, Loomis, Newcastle, Penryn, Rocklin, Roseville and Sheridan in Placer County. To reach the senator, call 916-772-0571 or email senator.niello@senate.ca.gov. ★

AI Is Already in Classrooms

It's Time for Education Policy to Catch Up

By Paul Keefer, MBA, Ed.D. Trustee, Area 3 Sacramento County Office of Education

Artificial intelligence is moving faster than any education agency can keep up with and that's not necessarily a bad thing.

While the California Department of Education released an Artificial Intelligence Resource Kit earlier this year and the White House issued an executive order urging support for AI in education, neither has offered practical, timely guidance for classrooms.

Meanwhile, teachers, students and families are already using AI every day to learn, teach, and solve problems in real time.

We're not waiting for permission. And we shouldn't.

AI tools like Gemini, ChatGPT, and others aren't some future trend, they're here now, free, fast and capable of transforming how students interact with content.

In 2008, Khan Academy gave us a glimpse of what personalized, asynchronous learning could look like. Today, that vision has evolved. A student no longer must search for the right video. With a single question, AI can generate explanations, examples, and step-by-step help tailored to their exact need.

This has implications for everyone in the education system. Textbook publishers are being challenged by instantly generated study guides and answer keys. Teachers are using AI to differentiate instruction, create assignments, and get instant feedback on student work. Parents are using it to better understand what

their kids are learning and how to help them at home.

Yes, this raises valid questions about academic integrity, student accountability and teacher oversight. But let's be clear, AI isn't the problem. The problem is pretending it's not already part of how students learn. Avoidance isn't a strategy. Thoughtful engagement is.

So where do we start? Here are three simple ways to test drive AI in your daily life.

Ask it a math question. Try a tool like Gemini or ChatGPT. Watch how quickly it provides a solution, a breakdown of steps, and even additional practice problems.

Bring it a real problem. Whether you're a student struggling with a concept, a teacher designing a lesson, or a parent trying to support homework, ask AI for three possible solutions. It won't always be perfect, but it will be useful.

Use it to understand—not just answer. Take one of your child's homework questions and ask AI to explain it. Walk through the solution and suggest follow-up questions. Use it to deepen not shortcut learning.

The more parents, students, and teachers explore these tools now, the better prepared we'll be to shape how AI is used in education, not just react to it.

We can and should be the ones setting expectations, defining boundaries, and identifying what works. Because the truth is, AI isn't going to wait for the next state guidance memo.

It's moving fast. Our schools and our communities need to move with it. ★

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Teacher Exhibits Nature, Power, Passion

Continued from page 1

home," explained the Fair Oaks resident. "I often visit them at sunset. After work, surrounding myself in nature feels wonderful"

Locken's adventures benefit her classes.

"We need visual aids when teaching vocabulary," the mother of two explained. "My students don't get out in nature much. Our school mascot is a bald eagle but most students have never seen one. They're in awe that a bird could be bigger than themselves. Kids are also drawn to baby animals. Foals, fawns, owlets; they love the little critters."

Locken's 47-piece exhibition includes several original paintings.

"Artists often use my photos to work from," she noted. "So painting's another avenue for me to explore."

The second lure of Locken's exhibition opening was gastronomic. A pro-baker, she frequently offered "Homebaked Creations" at Carmichael's

Sunday Farmers Market.

"Cooking's a creative experience," Locken said. "Like art, food fills people with warmth. At my opening, I set out 200 pieces of baked goods, from brownies to banana bread. They were a hit."

The night resulted in several photo sales and 198 consumed cookies. Locken and her husband, Bruce, took home two brownies.

"Leftovers were a sweet end to our day," smiled Locken. "I figured if I could get people into the gallery with baked goods, they'd stay for the art. They did."

Locken's "Nature, Beauty, Power and Passion" show continues until July 31. Gallery hours are from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays. Sacramento Fine Arts Center is at 5330B Gibbons Drive, Carmichael. Photo prices start at \$75.

Learn about Locken's art at www.lockenartstudio.com ★



**Publisher,
Paul V. Scholl**

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Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



Summer league has grown exponentially, and fans are tuned in today like never before.

Sunday night saw our Sacramento Kings vying for their third summer league championship, as they faced off with the Charlotte Hornets in Las Vegas Nevada.

With identical 5-0 records the Kings got a dose of what their first and second round draft choices were capable of, so it remained to be seen how they would perform when the lights were brightest.

After an auspicious summer league audition, Nique Clifford struggled finding his shooting stroke, and had just 4 points entering the fourth quarter. The Kings would never give up on this game. After being down by 18 points, the young squad fought back to a single point deficit with less than 2 minutes remaining.

A pass from Isaac Jones to Clifford well beyond the arc, and Nique did not disappoint draining a deep three. Clifford followed up with an acrobatic jump shot in the corner for another three, and the Kings looked like winners.

Charlotte would not go quietly as sharpshooter Kon Knueppel pulled up for a backbreaking three. Moving the ball quickly into the frontcourt Isaac Jones sized up his first 3-point shot of the night and when Isaac converted the three the Kings were knocking on the door once again.

Kings fans can be proud of how the team fought for a win that ultimately would escape them, as a much needed rebound careened off the foot of Isaac Jones, and the Kings would go on to lose 83-78.

Neither the loss of the game nor the championship is the real story. The Sacramento Kings got more than just a glimpse of what their first and second round draft choices are capable of.

Talented, for sure and yes, they are raw.

Nique Clifford put together a string of games that stated loudly, I've arrived and ready to make a difference!

Although I don't like using that word, Maxime Raynaud is more of a project. Raynaud, like every rookie, is going to need extended playing time, and time to play through his mistakes.

What the Kings really wanted to know, is can this 7'1" big man make an impact and play alongside Domantas Sabonis. I believe

he can, but confidence building is what will determine how quickly Maxime Raynaud will arrive.

Not to be left behind was the electric play of second year man Isaac Jones, who coming off a stellar 36-point performance, led all scores again with a 24-point performance. Jones made his lone 3-point attempt and added 11 big boards while chipping in with 2 assists.

Isaac Jones summer league performance came as no surprise to me. What's sad is the lack of playing time he received in his rookie year. It's my hope, as Isaac is receiving accolades from other coaches and pundits, that the staff pay close attention to what is possible.

Jones 6'9" frame and 7'3" wingspan make him a difficult guard for any team. He has a definite knack around the rim. He's active, and if he finds himself in a rotation that gives him 20 minutes plus per game, look for both Isaac and the Kings to take a step forward.

There is much to shout about as the Kings close out their summer league schedule. The confident presence that Nique Clifford brought every night is one of many things to be happy about.

Nique lived up to his billing as he played hard at both ends of the court, and like Isaac Jones, Clifford will need to find his place on the team that gets him minutes every game.

Doug Christie has his work cut out for him with a crowded guard rotation, including second year man Devin Carter, who acquitted himself admirably and played dominantly. Devin needs to continue working on his shot, but the upside for Carter is huge. No need for the Kings to question their decision to draft a player that could only contribute half a season due to injury. Carter is winning fans with every game he plays. I look for Devin to be more than just a contributor in the upcoming season.

Yes, Kings fans, you got what you were hoping for, and without a doubt this summer league squad has got the city of Sacramento excited.

Scott Perry isn't done just yet, so stay tuned Kings fans!

All the best!

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

Social Security Matters

What is the Formula for Deciding When to Claim?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I am curious about the "formula" to decide when to take Social Security while still working. I am past the Full Retirement Age. How do you best address such? Should we schedule a call?

Signed: Wondering When

Dear Wondering: Well, you can always contact us by phone on 1.888.750.2622 to speak to one of our certified Social Security Advisors, or you can send your questions to us via email at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. You don't need to pre-schedule a meeting, as we have multiple advisors answering the phone on most normal business days. If they all happen to be busy when you call, simply leave a voicemail and an Advisor will return your call promptly.

For starters, since you have reached your full retirement age, know that your work earnings will no longer negatively affect your Social Security benefits. You can earn as much as possible, and your monthly SS amount will be the same, based on your average lifetime monthly earnings (for your highest 35 years), and based on your age when you claim.

Since you have not yet claimed SS, you are already earning Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) which increase your monthly SS amount by .667% for each month you continue to delay. That's 8% for each full year you delay past your full retirement age (FRA). You should not, however, wait longer than age 70 to claim because that is when you will get your maximum SS benefit amount. For you, that means that your age 70 amount will be 28% more than the amount you would have received at your FRA of 66 years and 6 months (in Oct. 2023), and about 15% more than if you were to claim now.

Note too, that if your more recent income is among the highest of your lifetime, Social Security will automatically increase your monthly SS retirement amount to account for that event. They will check your work earnings each year to see if you are entitled to a larger SS amount because of your recent earnings.

Since (according to your AMAC member record) you are married, you may also wish to consider whether your wife will get a spousal benefit from you when you claim. If your wife's personal SS retirement amount at her FRA is less than the amount you were entitled to at your FRA, then she will get a spousal boost when you claim. With her spousal boost (if claimed at her FRA), her total SS benefit should be about 50% of your FRA benefit amount (not half of the higher amount you will get because you waited longer to claim).

But your wife cannot get a spousal boost until you are collecting your SS.

And here is something else to think about: received SS benefits will become part of your overall income taxed by the IRS when you submit your income tax return. If you file your income tax as "married/jointly" and your combined income from all sources is more than \$32,000 then some of your SS benefits will become taxable income. If your combined income is between \$32,001 and \$44,000, then half of the SS benefits you received during the tax year becomes part of your taxable income. Or, if your combined income from all sources exceeds \$44,000, then about 85% of your received SS benefits will become part of your income taxed by the IRS. Just something to keep in mind, especially since you are still working.

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



It's Time to Cut Off Public Broadcasting

In the past, whenever Republicans have tried to cut federal funding for public broadcasting, the 8-foot-2-inch-tall yellow bird has been trotted out as an exemplar of all that is good and necessary about public broadcasting, and the federal dollars have been preserved.

Perhaps our Jim Henson-created feathered friend will continue his undefeated streak, but a Trump-backed recessions bill represents the best chance to defund public broadcasting in decades, if not ever.

The bill, clawing back previously appropriated funding, has already passed the House and is now being considered in the Senate, where the filibuster doesn't apply. The measure targets \$9.4 billion in federal spending, including funds for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The CPB gets about \$500 million a year from the federal government, and parcels it out to NPR, PBS and local public radio and TV stations.

NPR maintains that it only gets about 2% of its funding from the federal government, with more coming indirectly via member stations. PBS gets about 15% of its funding from the feds.

If NPR and PBS programming is as compelling and vital as its defenders say, it shouldn't be a heavy

lift to get foundations, philanthropists and devoted listeners and viewers to fill any funding gap. The organization's already given out a lot of tote bags during fundraising drives. Surely, they can give out some more.

Decades ago, with the rise of cable TV and a proliferation of sources of news and entertainment, it seemed absurd for the government to have to prop up a few select media sources. How much more ridiculous it is now, in the age of YouTube, social media, satellite radio, Substack, streaming services and podcast platforms.

Lyndon Baines Johnson signed the Public Broadcasting Act, creating the CPB in 1967, and like many other Great Society programs, public broadcasting is an anachronism that won't go away. Big Bird himself is approaching the age when he'll soon begin to be eligible for senior-citizen discounts.

Supporters of public broadcasting extol the virtues of "All Things Considered," the "PBS NewsHour" and "Frontline," and yes (political bias aside), journalists do some good work for these programs. They also (again, political bias aside) do some good work at The New York Times and CBS News, yet neither of these outlets depend on federal tax dollars.

Oh, defenders also ask, How can we possibly do without the wonder of educational programming like "Sesame Street" and "Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood"? "Sesame Street" is, indeed, an American institution. Even if PBS collapsed tomorrow, the show would certainly go on. For about a decade now, new epi-

sodes have been featured on HBO or Netflix, demonstrating how a venerable 50-year-old project can adapt to the times.

It's simply not true, by the way, that we depend on PBS for good shows for kids. There's been educational programming developed by Nickelodeon ("Blue's Clues & You!"), Scholastic Entertainment ("The Magic School Bus") and Netflix ("Ask the StoryBots" and "Ada Twist, Scientist"). And somehow, such iconic children's programming as "Dora the Explorer," "Peppa Pig" and "Bluey" were created without the involvement of PBS.

Then there's the argument that a cut-off of federal funding will be devastating to local public radio stations in rural communities. It's true that small stations could go out of business, but as anyone who has been paying attention has noticed, we live in an era of great media churn. Private media entities are going out of business -- and being created -- all the time. The government shouldn't extend its favor to a few select outlets. Especially when these outlets are so blatantly and pervasively biased. NPR and PBS provide left-of-center content for left-of-center audiences under the guise of objectivity. As many legacy media organizations have long demonstrated, there is a business model there, but it's not one that deserves or needs taxpayer support.

Big Bird should, finally, make his own way in the world.

Rich Lowry is editor of the *National Review*.

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New California Budget Ignores Day of Reckoning



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

When Gov. Gavin Newsom and legislative leaders were drafting a more-or-less final 2025-26 state budget last month, they were closing what they described as a \$12 billion deficit, a number that the state's media repeatedly cited.

It was the wrong number; it minimizes the state's chronic gap between income and outgo, as the state's official budget summary released this week confirms.

The budget projects that the state will receive \$208.6 billion in general fund revenues during the fiscal year that began on July 1, but it will spend \$228.4 billion, a gap just shy of \$20 billion.

The \$12 billion figure stems from counting a \$7.1 billion diversion from one of the state's reserve accounts as revenue — an assumption that violates common sense as well as any legitimate accounting scenario.

The more accurate figure of \$20 billion is important because it squares with projections by Newsom's Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office that California has what's called a "structural deficit" in the range of

\$10 billion to \$20 billion a year.

In other words financing all of the programs and services now in state law will indefinitely cost that much more each year than the state is likely to receive in revenues.

The budget closes about a third of the \$20 billion gap with an aforementioned \$7.1 billion shift from the emergency reserve — money that's supposed to be used to cushion the impact of an economic downturn or calamities such as the wildfires that devastated Los Angeles, earthquakes or destructive storms.

The deficit isn't a genuine emergency because it resulted from irresponsible political decisions, particularly Newsom's declaration in 2022 that the state had a \$97.5 billion budget surplus and thus could afford a sharp increase in spending.

The surplus was a mirage, based on assumptions of a \$40 billion annual increase in revenues that never happened. Last year, the Department of Finance acknowledged that revenues over four years would fall short of expectations by \$165 billion.

However, much of the phantom money was already spent, thereby creating the structural deficit that Newsom and the Legislature basically ignored in putting together the current budget.

The \$12 billion gap left after the reserve fund shift was mostly papered over with on- and off-budget loans from special funds, shifting some spending into future years and using

accounting gimmicks, such as shifting some current year spending, the June 2026 state payroll for instance, into the next fiscal year.

One could liken the state budget to a family that takes out loans on its credit cards to finance a lavish lifestyle, or a city that provides pension benefits it cannot afford.

Sooner or later, the debts pile so high that they can no longer be ignored and the day of reckoning arrives. That's one reason why more than 30,000 Californians file for bankruptcy each year and why several California cities have gone bankrupt in recent years.

States cannot file for bankruptcy, no matter how distorted their finances. If they could, California would not qualify because of its almost unlimited ability to borrow money from special funds.

However, there will be a day of judgment if California's spending continues to outpace its revenues, particularly if the state's economy continues its sluggish performance.

Newsom and legislators implicitly assume that at some point revenues will increase enough to cover their spending and pay off their debts — just as a debt-ridden family buys lottery tickets in hopes of avoiding bankruptcy.

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. ★

WE SUPPORT FIRST RESPONDERS

Hear that Train Whistle Blow

Historic Steam Locomotive Set to Ride the Rails Again

California State Railroad Museum Foundation News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Visitors to the Old Sacramento Waterfront will soon regularly hear that steam whistle blow as Granite Rock 10 returns to operating service, riding the rails of the Sacramento Southern Railroad.

The California State Railroad Museum & Foundation are thrilled to announce the historic steam locomotive is set to officially begin pulling weekend excursion trains on August 9.*

Moving forward, Granite Rock 10 will likely pull excursion trains on two weekends per month, rotating with historic diesel locomotives.

In the meantime, the community and rail fans might see Granite Rock 10 on the excursion train as the train crew gets fully up to speed operating the steam locomotive for the first time in six years.

Since October 2019, Granite Rock 10 has been out of service for needed maintenance that took place in the historic Railyard Shops. Most of the meticulous work done on the locomotive involved a cylinder-rebuilding project followed by precision adjustments to the valves and valve-timing mechanisms.



The California State Railroad Museum Foundation mission is to generate revenue and awareness on behalf of its destinations, while supporting the preservation, interpretation and promotion of our railroad heritage. The foundation provides funding for ongoing support of numerous programs, both at the museum's Old Sacramento location and at the historic park in Jamestown. Photo by Kelly B. Huston, courtesy of the California State Railroad Museum Foundation

The precision-focused maintenance was led by Chief Mechanical Officer Al DiPaolo who was supported by a dedicated crew of mechanics that specialize in historic rail equipment.

"Still operating steam locomotives such as our prized Granite Rock 10 are true survivors and always have a fascinating story to tell," said Dr. Ty Smith, Director of the California State Railroad Museum. "We invite our local, regional, and world rail

community to take a ride back in history to experience the sights, sounds, and smells of a historic train ride reminiscent of an earlier time when steam ruled the rails and connected the nation in majestic ways."

As background, Granite Rock 10 was built in 1942 for the U.S. Army Transportation Corps, sold as surplus to Granite Rock Co. of Logan in 1947 before retiring from service in 1960. The historic steam locomotive was later donated to the California State Railroad

Museum in 1995 and returned to service in 1997, pulling weekend excursion trains and delighting fans of all ages.

With roots dating back to World War II, Granite Rock 10 tells a tale of ingenuity and using every available technological resource available at the time. "Today, Granite Rock 10 allows the Museum to preserve and teach the now nearly forgotten knowledge associated with the maintenance and operation of steam-driven machinery," said Tim Schroepfer, President

& CEO of the California State Railroad Museum Foundation.

In addition to periodic evening and/or special train ride experiences, memorable six-mile, 45-minute excursion train rides are available Fridays through Sundays, with three trains departing on Fridays (11:30 a.m., 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.) and five on Saturdays and Sundays (10 a.m., 11:15 a.m., 1 p.m., 2:15 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.).

Advance reservations for excursion train rides are available here. Tickets purchased online may be picked up in the ticket office of the Central Pacific Passenger Station on Front Street between I and J streets at the Old Sacramento Waterfront. If still available, same-day tickets are available at the ticket office as well.

For updates on when Granite Rock 10 will be operating on the Sacramento Southern Railroad, the team will give as much advance notice as possible via social media channels. For more information about the California State Railroad Museum or Foundation, please visit www.californiarailroadmuseum.com.

*Steam is not guaranteed and motive power is subject to change on any given day without advance notice. ★

Law Enforcement Partnership Yields 24 Narcotics Arrests



Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho speaks at a podium in Sacramento during a July 16 press conference about a joint narcotics operation between Sacramento Police Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office. Photo courtesy of the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

Sacramento County District Attorney's Office News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Police Department, along with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office announced the results of a recent operation focused on maintaining safety and quality of life in the central city.

Over a five-week period from April 23 to May 30, a temporary team known as the Central Narcotics Enforcement Team (CNET) worked to identify and stop street-level drug activity.

The operation was part of the Sacramento Police Department's ongoing efforts to ensure our streets remain a safe and welcoming place for residents, workers and visitors.

"This operation addressed street-level drug activity helping to keep our neighborhoods safe," said Sacramento Police Chief Kathy Lester. "We're committed to using focused strategies and strong partnerships to protect our community and preserve the

vibrant atmosphere of our city."

The operation led to approximately 24 arrests, with additional arrests anticipated and resulted in the seizure of large quantities of drugs, firearms and cash.

More than 2,700 grams of cocaine, 6,000 fentanyl pills, 311 grams of heroin and 260 grams of ketamine were seized, along with more than 200 grams of ecstasy, 17 ounces of Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) and nearly two pounds of psilocybin mushrooms.

Also seized in the operation were 20 Adderall pills, more than four pounds of methamphetamine, more than \$31,500 in cash believed to be proceeds from drug sales, three rifles and one handgun.

While Central Narcotics Enforcement Team was a temporary team, the Sacramento Police Department remains focused on using resources effectively, listening to community concerns and working with partners to keep neighborhoods safe.

The link to the July 16 CNET News Conference news conference is <https://www.youtube.com/live/yGTVb6YZ-DAs?si=s9mVyuvdmVyXTD3C>. ★

Governor Newsom Announces Appointments



Gov. Gavin Newsom

Office of Governor Gavin Newsom News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Governor Gavin Newsom announced the appointment of several positions on July 16.

Jennifer Osborn, of Orangevale, has been appointed Director at the California Department of Industrial Relations. Osborn has been Chief Deputy Director at the California Department of General Services since 2021.

She was Director of the Division of Administrative Services at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation from 2018 to 2020. Osborn was Deputy Secretary of Fiscal Policy and Administration at the California Government Operations Agency from 2013 to 2018. She was Deputy Secretary of Fiscal Operations at the California State and Consumer Services Agency from 2012 to 2013.

Osborn was Principal Program Budget Analyst at the California Department of Finance from 1998 to 2011. She earned a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Nevada, Reno and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism and Political Science from California State University, Chico. This position requires Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$236,052. Osborn is a Democrat.

Gentian Droboniku, of Sacramento, has been appointed Chief Deputy Director of the California

Department of Tax and Fee Administration. Droboniku has been a Research Data Manager at the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration since 2019 and an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Southern California, Price School of Public Policy since 2017.

Droboniku was a Research Data Specialist at the California Public Employees Retirement System from 2014 to 2018. He was a Debt and Investment Researcher at the California Debt and Investment Advisory Commission from 2012 to 2014. Droboniku was Performance Evaluator at the California State Auditor from 2010 to 2012. He was a Graduate Student Policy Assistant at California's State Controller's Office from 2008 to 2010.

Droboniku earned a Master of Public Policy degree from the University of Southern California and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt. This position does not require Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$214,968. Droboniku is a Democrat.

Sean Connelly, of Sacramento, has been appointed the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Public and Employee Communications at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Connelly has been Chief of Staff in the Office of Assemblymember Jessica Caloza in the California State Assembly since 2024.

He held multiple positions in the Office of Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez in the California State Assembly from 2016 to 2024, including Chief of Staff and Capitol and Communications Director. Connelly held multiple positions at the University of California Student

Association from 2013 to 2016, including Interim Executive Director and the Director of Government Relations.

He was a Legislative Assistant and Consultant for Office of Senator Ellen Corbett in the California State Senate from 2012 to 2013. Connelly was an Executive Fellow in the Capital Fellowship Program at the California National Guard for Adjutant General David Baldwin from 2011 to 2012. He earned a Bachelor of the Arts degree in Global Studies and Maritime Affairs from California State Polytechnic University, Maritime Academy.

This position does not require Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$172,008. Connelly is a Democrat.

Melissa Bacon, of Sacramento, has been appointed Deputy Director at the Office of Legislative and Governmental Affairs at the California Department of Health Care Services. Bacon has been Assistant Deputy Director at the Office of Legislative and Governmental Affairs at the California Department of Health Care Services since 2016, and was Staff Services Manager from 2013 to 2016.

She was an Associate Governmental Program Analyst at the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs from 2008 to 2013. Bacon was an Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Prevention Coordinator at University of California, Davis, Health, Education and Promotion Department from 2006 to 2008.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of California, Davis. This position does not require Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$164,400. Bacon is registered with no party preference. ★

Unsecured Property Taxes Due Sept. 2

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Annual bills for Sacramento County unsecured personal property taxes for fiscal year 2025-2026 will be mailed on July 18 and are due no later than Sept. 2 to avoid penalties for delinquency.

If you owned unsecured property in Sacramento County, such as a boat or aircraft or if you leased or owned fixtures and equipment related to a business on Jan. 1 and do not receive a tax bill by Aug. 8, contact the Sacramento County Tax Collector's Unsecured Property Tax Unit at 916-874-7833 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, excluding holidays.

Failure to receive a tax bill does not excuse delinquency or allow the tax collector to cancel penalties or collection costs.

Payments can be made by mail or in person

at the County Tax Collector's Office, 700 H St., Room 1710, Sacramento, CA 95814, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, excluding holidays.

Property taxes can also be paid online by e-check or credit card with the Sacramento County Property Tax Bill Information System website.

Tax bills become delinquent if not paid in the Tax Collector's Office by 5 p.m. Sept. 2 or received by mail bearing a postmark of Sept. 2.

If the tax bill is not paid by the delinquency date, a 10% penalty and collection cost will be added. DMV registration could be withheld on watercraft if unsecured property taxes are reported delinquent.

If a tax bill remains unpaid after Oct. 31, additional collection costs and monthly penalties at the rate of 1.5% will be added to the base tax. ★

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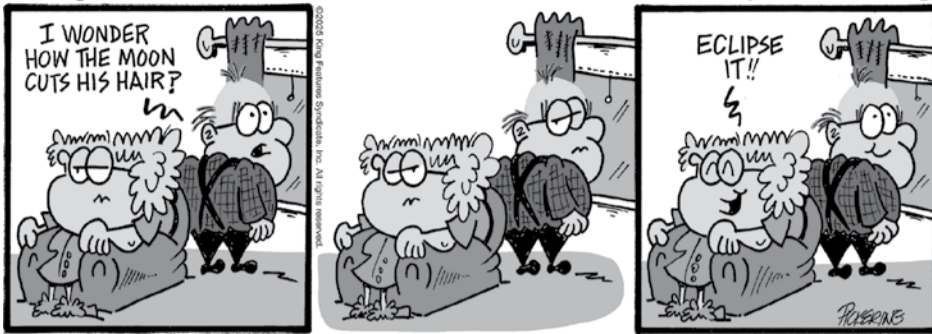
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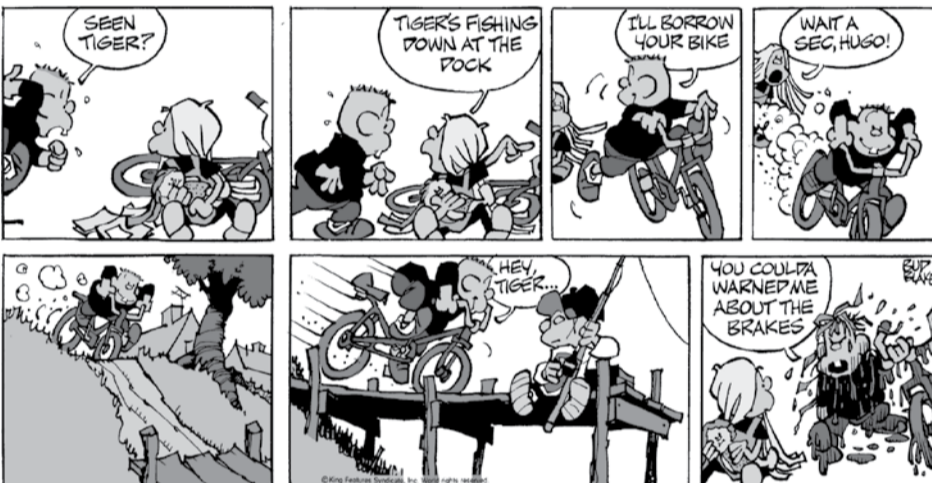
Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Cover is missing from waiter's tray. 2. Snow is missing. 3. Exit sign is lower. 4. Back of chair is different. 5. Apron is missing. 6. Stripe is added to sleeve.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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by Dave T. Phipps



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STATEPOINT CROSSWORD • IN THE KITCHEN

- CLUES**
- ACROSS**
- Basilica feature
 - Cameron, to friends
 - ___ and flow
 - One of the Bridges
 - Have the blues
 - Op-ed piece
 - Blondie's hit "___ Me"
 - Certain something
 - "Granny Smith"
 - "Broth-making container"
 - Big name in map-making
 - Inexperienced
 - "Group of dishes or pots"
 - Deprived of ovaries
 - Medusae
 - Got an Oscar, e.g.
 - Kind of license
 - Crescent
 - Description for twins
 - "___ the season!"
 - Orthodox Judaism adherent
 - Class roster item
 - Between lights and action
 - Source of pork
 - "Shredding devices"
 - Bear-like
 - Florida key
 - French farewell
 - Physicist Niels ___
 - "Kitchen hand protector (2 words)"
 - Holey confection
 - Track event
 - ___ of the trade, sing.
 - 1st letter of Hebrew alphabet
 - Charlie Parker's nickname
 - Shrek or Fiona, e.g.
 - Word of conplacence
 - Actor Stallone
 - "Spice ___ or pot ___"
- DOWN**
- Beginning of the alphabet
 - *Often go with carrots
 - *NaCl
 - Speech at a funeral
 - *Flute alternative
 - *Cook's garb
 - *Veal or venison, e.g.
 - Sport spectator's TV acronym
 - Like white-headed eagle
 - "Farewell" to Birdie
 - Manage (2 words)
 - Like cornstalks
 - "Flat-edged utensil"
 - *Flapjack alternative
 - Blink of an eye, abbr.
 - Swing, ___ swabb
 - Like Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station location
 - Carl Jung's inner self
 - *___ en place
 - *Seaweed-wrapped dish
 - Opposite of cation
 - Swamp plant
 - Estimated arrival times, acr.
 - Timothy, to friends
 - *Popular condiment
 - Sheik's bevy
 - Alan Paton's novel "___ The Beloved Country"
 - Broken, e.g.

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

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Not Showing Us the Money

New Poll Finds Vast Majority of Californians Believe Special Interest Money Has Too Much Influence in Sacramento

By Evan Symon,
California Globe

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According to a new UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) poll released Thursday, the vast majority of Californians believe that special interest money has too much influence in Sacramento politics and decision making, with only 2% of Californians disagreeing in any capacity.

The poll specifically found that 55% of Californians strongly agreed with the question ‘Do you agree or disagree: Special interest money has too much influence in Sacramento politics and decision making?’, with another 20% somewhat agreeing. With 1% somewhat disagreeing and 1% strongly disagreeing, the rest of the 23% were either in the middle and not agreeing or disagreeing, or simply chose not to respond.

When broken down by party, a grand total of 73% of all Democrats agreed with the question, albeit with only 49% strongly agreeing and 24% somewhat agreeing. Only 3% disagreed. Republicans brought a much stronger response, with 81% agreeing, including 69% strongly agreeing, while only 2% disagreed. No party preference voters stood at 75% agreeing.

The question of special interest money having too much influence in the state capitol also showed significant racial fluctuations, although like the party



The vast majority of Californians believe that that kind of spending has far too much influence in the state. Image MPG file photo

registration section, disagreeing with the question only saw a maximum of 3%. White voters proved far more skeptical, with 82% agreeing (64% strongly and 18% somewhat). Meanwhile, Latino voters were the least skeptical, with only 66% in total agreeing (44% strongly, 22% somewhat).

Finally, voter age showed the largest divisions on the question, albeit once again with only a maximum of 3% disagreeing with the question per age group. As it turned out, the younger the voter, the less skeptical of the question they turned out to be. Heading down from age groups, 85% of those aged 65 and older agreed with the question,

followed by 81% of 50 to 64 year olds, 77% of 40 to 49 year olds, 70% of 30 to 39 year olds, and 59% of 18 to 29 year olds.

If measured by only strongly agreeing, all age demos showed 50% or more agreeing, except for the young 18 to 29 year olds section. There, only 38% strongly agreed.

The IGS team pointed out even more demographic fluctuations, while likewise hammering home the fact that the vast majority of Californians all agree on special interest money having too much of an influence on lawmakers in Sacramento.

“Strikingly, this was a question on which there was little partisan split, with 73% of Democrats,

81% of Republicans, and 75% of No Party Preference voters agreeing. At least 59% of each regional, gender, age, education, income, and racial group also agreed with the statement,” said the IGS in their poll findings. “Strong agreement was highest among white (64%), male (63%), and 65 years and older (66%) voters. It was lowest among young voters (38%) and low-income voters (37%). Californians who vote regularly are the most fed up with the money in California’s political system: 87% of them agree strongly or somewhat, compared to 67% of respondents who are not regular voters.”

“The numbers don’t lie.

Californians overwhelmingly recognize that big money wields far too much power over our elected officials,” added California Common Cause Deputy Director Russia Chavis Cardenas. “People from every political party, every race, and every walk of life are united behind one urgent demand. They want Sacramento to break the grip of big money on our democracy.”

The California Globe has continuously shown the high amount of special interest money flowing through Sacramento, as well highlighting the groups giving the most. This includes pointing out the hundreds of millions being spent by public sector unions each year on lawmakers and groups in Sacramento, and thus, having a huge amount of influence as a result.

In 2024 alone, lobbying groups spent \$540 million to influence the state government, jumping up 10% from 2023. The largest individual private sector group, the Western States Petroleum Association, spent a total of \$17.3 million in an attempt to influence lawmakers, while the largest sector, public sector unions spent, as mentioned earlier, into the hundreds of millions.

As of early July, 2025 mid-year figures are unavailable for special interest funding. However, as the poll showed, the vast majority of Californians believe that that kind of spending has far too much influence in the state. ★

Bombshell Declassified ICA Report on 2016 Plot to Overthrow Elected President



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

The new CIA Director John Radcliffe just released ICA’s Tradecraft Review of the 2016 Intelligence Community Assessment (ICA) revealing the CIA, FBI and DNI’s unsuccessful attempt to nullify Trump’s 2016 election victory over Hillary Clinton because of alleged Russian collusion in the election. In this, outgoing President Barack Obama and then CIA director John Brennan played major and intentional roles in both. The Russian Hoax and its coverup, is now the biggest political scandal in American history. The Report, showed that “then-CIA Director John Brennan, FBI Director James Comey and Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, who were “excessively involved” in its drafting, and rushed its completion in a “chaotic,” “atypical” and “markedly unconventional” process

that raised questions of a “potential political motive” (“Obama’s Trump-Russia collusion report was corrupt from start: CIA review,” by Miranda Devine, New York Post, July 2, 2025). The obvious intent, though not cited, was to leave Trump, the 2016 election victor, unseated, against the will of the people who elected him.

A glaring curiosity was the timing, “on December 6, 2016, six weeks before his presidency ended,” and a month after the election, “Barack Obama ordered the assessment, which concluded that Russian President Vladimir Putin ‘aspired’ to help Trump win the election”—thus Russian collusion (Ibid.). Brennan had an obvious obsession to include in the report the unverified, even discredited Steele dossier, “despite objections of the authors and senior CIA Russia experts, so as to push a false narrative that Russia secured Trump’s 2016 victory.” Still another unexplained anomaly for a guy leaving the presidency within weeks, is Obama’s wire tapping of Hillary’s political opponent. Trump responded, “Just found out that Obama had my ‘wires taped’ in Trump Tower just before the victory. Nothing found. This is McCarthyism!” (X22 Report, Ep. 3679b, July 3, 2025, 47:19, X). “Never

has a president left office to collude with others to impede the next sitting president of the United States of America until Obama! (Ibid. 52:23).

The release of the classified “Tradecraft Review of the 2016 Intelligence Community Assessment [ICA] on Russian Election Interference” was conducted by career professionals at the CIA’s Directorate of Analysis and was commissioned by CIA Director John Ratcliffe last May. It concluded that in 2016, then CIA director Brennan and others rushed the Russia Election Interference Intelligence Assessment. In it “Brennan is shown to have dismissed high-level warnings that the Clinton campaign opposition research, the ‘Steel Dossier,’ was not credible. The intelligence community CIA, FBI, DNI, etc. intentionally fabricated intelligence information to create an entirely fictitious storyline” and weaponized the fake narrative against Donald Trump to prevent him from taking office after being elected by the people (Ibid., 48:19).

If the Coup d’état. was unsuccessful then why does this matter now in 2025—nine years later? Because those unpunished then remained in place enabling them to cheat even more so in every two year election cycle thereafter, potentially to infinity if

not exposed, punished and stopped.

Rasmussen Reports labeled the CIA Directors’ recent release as “An Enormous Scandal, Dwarfing Watergate and the Pentagon Papers,” much much bigger than Watergate (Ibid., 48:52). To which Lee Smith, an investigative reporter replied, “Useful detail but misses crucial fact. I’ve reported in three books: Obama ordered ICA and knew by August 2016 [that the] only intel tying Trump to Russia was [the] dossier. That’s the scandal, not bad tradecraft or stove piping intel etc: Obama framed Trump” (Ibid. 49:25). Let us repeat, “Obama framed Trump.”

General Mike Flynn, who was himself victimized by the Deep State, said, “The newly declassified ICA proves without a shadow of a doubt that the entire operation was a rigged partisan hack job. It wasn’t intelligence. It was propaganda meant to undermine the incoming POTUS. And who orchestrated this disgrace – John Brennan, a man who wore the title of CIA Director but acted like a political assassin in service to the Obama/Clinton machine. He didn’t just fail in his duties. He betrayed it. He weaponized the CIA to push a lie, boxed out the rest of the intelligence community and engineered a fraudulent narrative that tore our nation apart. He

knew the Intel was a lie yet he led a small handpicked Cabal to hide the truth and manufactured a story that served their agenda Everything they accuse Trump, myself, and others of doing they were doing behind the scenes. That is what Marxists do. And while they pushed their fiction, real Americans paid the price. I exposed all of it in my new book ‘Pardon of Innocence.’” General Flynn’s suggestion now is that “John Brennan needs to be put under investigation immediately.” (Ibid., 49:47). Kash Patel in his book “Government Gangster’s” verifies in detail how this was done—this whole attempted Coup d’état.

There are good reasons why Trump could not go after those who went after him and Flynn when he was president before Joe Biden. Then, few knew of the Deep State. Even fewer would have believed him and had he sought justice who would have investigated and who would have prosecuted—a rogue FBI and Department of Justice? And with the corrupt judicial justices that are only now being exposed, who would have convicted? Even now that the vast majority of the people are awakened to these coup conspirators we are probably not ready to give long prison sentences to them—perhaps executions? If justice is not

restored they will be back in power.

Fortunately, “there exists no statute of limitations for conspiring to defraud the US government,” none also for criminal Rico activities, more especially, if criminal activities are ongoing or there exist any attempt to cover them up. This includes cheating in elections in 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022, 2024—much of which has been documented. This is why Trump allowed them to continue to do this. It removes the statute of limitations.” (Ibid., 52:08). But we must win decisively both houses 2026.

Ratcliffe in an exclusive interview summarized the rational for the released Intelligence Community Assessment (ICA). “This was Obama, Comey, Clapper and Brennan deciding ‘We’re going to screw Trump.’” And they did. Others called it treason then and now.

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

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Softball Western "B" National Championship Tournament Features 500 Players



Above: Teams are comprised of all-star players or are select teams, where girls try out for squads and practice and play together for several months.

Middle: Almost 40 teams, including about a dozen from the Sacramento region, swing into action with opening ceremonies at 9 a.m. July 22 at Maidu Regional Park, 1550 Maidu Drive, Roseville for USA Softball's Western "B" National Championship.

Right: About 500 players between the ages of 9 and 11 will compete in the World Series-like tournament that draws teams throughout California and the western states. Photos courtesy of Lisa Zeng



By Ron Trujillo

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

- Clutch hits, defensive gems and must-win games will highlight USA Softball's Western "B" National Championship 10-under girls'tournament that runs from July 22 through July 27 in Roseville, bringing about 2,500 athletes, coaches and fans and generating more than \$1 million for Placer Valley.

Almost 40 teams, including about a dozen from the Sacramento region, swing into action with opening ceremonies at 9 a.m. July 22, after press time, at Maidu Regional Park, 1550 Maidu Drive, Roseville.

The first games start at 9 a.m. July 23 at Maidu Regional Park and Mahany Park, 1545 Pleasant Grove Blvd. in Roseville and continue into the evening. The championship games are on July 27 at Maidu Regional Park.

About 500 players between the ages of 9 and 11 will compete in the World Series-like tournament that draws teams throughout California and the western states.

Fans can enjoy the games for free. Drinks and snacks

are available for purchase at the parks.

"You're going to see some very good softball," said Pocket Aces 10-under team manager Corey Chatman.

The Pocket Aces 10-under team, from southwest Sacramento, has practiced since December and has compiled a record of 27-17 this season.

"The teams that are seeded at Nationals are very sound," Chatman said. "It's top tier."

Teams are comprised of all-star players or are select teams, where girls try out for squads and practice and play together for several months.

"They've worked so hard for this," said Woodland Elite manager Fabi Michel.

The 13-player Woodland Elite team has practiced since January and started playing games in February.

"They've learned to communicate with each other on the field and have grown as a team," Michel said. "They go on the field and play their hearts out."

Placer Valley Tourism has hosted the Western Softball "B" Nationals Championship for

various age groups more than a dozen times since 2010, according to organizers.

"It's a long-standing relationship that helps make the tournament go very smooth," said USA Softball of Sacramento tournament director Karla Burket. "Roseville has great fields and all of the leagues in our association have such amazing volunteers."

Placer Valley Tourism, which competes with other communities for the high-profile Western National tournaments, has made significant improvements to local softball fields in the past few years.

"The Western Nationals is always a big hit with the community, from the athletes and their families to area businesses that enjoy the boost in revenue," said Kim Summers, CEO of Placer Valley Tourism and @the Grounds, home of the Roebbelen Center. "Placer Valley's good quality fields combined with the area's amenities make it a great destination for the athletes and their families."

More than 25 teams will be traveling and staying in hotels during the tournament. Area

teams appreciate the ability to stay close to home, saving time and money, while playing against some of the best teams in the West.

"It's a luxury to be so close to home," said Chatman, whose team will come home every night. The close-to-home tournament "is an easy sell to parents."

Winning a championship is the goal but building camaraderie and meeting new girls, especially during the opening ceremonies, are also a huge part of the six-day tournament. Players will exchange pins and wear costumes (the outfits are a surprise until the event) as part of a long-standing opening ceremonies tradition.

"They are super excited about Nationals," Michel said. "Winning is obviously great but having more time to bond and playing together is special. They are so proud to represent Woodland."

Softball has been generating more interest among girls and fans in recent years.

Almost 30,000 girls played for their high school softball teams last year in California, an 11.4% increase compared to

five years earlier, according to the California Interscholastic Federation. Several thousand girls play the sport in the Sacramento region.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association Women's College World Series had a record 1.3-million viewers on average per game for the 15 games this spring on ESPN, including a record 2.4-million viewers for the third and deciding game between the eventual national champion University of Texas Longhorns and Texas Tech Red Raiders.

In June, the Major League Baseball-sponsored Athletes Unlimited Softball League (AUSL) started with four teams that will play a 24-game season this summer. The league has already announced plans to expand to six teams in 2026.

So some of the girls competing in the tournament could continue playing the sport in high school, college or even in a pro league.

"It could be a groundbreaking moment, where they fall in love with the sport," Chatman said. "Western Nationals is going to be something they will remember forever." ★

Baker Claims Championship at Women's Amateur

Sacramento Golf Council News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Taylor Baker of Sacramento emerged victorious at the 2025 Sacramento Valley Women's Amateur Championship, capturing the Championship Flight title at the Alister MacKenzie Golf Course at Haggin Oaks on July 13.

Baker led wire to wire, firing a superb opening round 66 and closing with an even-par 72 for a two-day total of 138 (-6).

Hot on her heels was Rancho Murieta's Hannah Camara, who surged with a final-round 70 (-2) to finish just one stroke back at 139 (-5).

Defending Champion, Rocklin's Kaylyn Noh rounded out the podium at 140 (-4), carding rounds of 68-72.

When asked about the 10-foot birdie putt on hole #18 to win, Baker replied "I was really shaking but I decided to commit to my routine. Ellis (Baker's caddy) and I really liked our line and I just decided to make my best stroke."

The leaderboard was packed with impressive performances, including Erica Villegas (Suisun, -2) in fourth and a tie for fifth at -1 between Darla May Dela Torre (Fairfield) and Tavia Burgess (Mather), who posted low rounds of 70 and 69, respectively.

Notably, Ellie Bushnell of Granite Bay recorded a blazing 68 (-4) on Sunday to vault into a tie for eighth at +1, demonstrating the depth of talent in this year's field.

Karen Garcia of Cool emerged as the Senior Championship Division winner. Garcia posted rounds of 72 and 74 to finish at +2 (146 total), claiming a decisive four-shot victory.



Taylor Baker of Sacramento holds her championship trophy from the 2025 Sacramento Valley Women's Amateur Championship at the Alister MacKenzie Golf Course at Haggin Oaks on July 13. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Golf Council



Karen Garcia of Cool emerged as the Senior Championship Division winner, posting rounds of 72 and 74 to finish at +2 (146 total), claiming a decisive four-shot victory. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Golf Council

It was another victory for Garcia before she heads to the United States Women's Senior Open at San Diego Country Club in August.

Tied for second at +6 (150) were Deborah Robertson of Martinez and Tina Barker of Fairfield. Both players battled in the final round, with Robertson carding a 79 and Barker a 77.

Rounding out the top five were Deanna Payne of Lakehead in fourth at +11 (155) and Melissa Spencer of Santa Cruz in fifth at +13 (157).

The Low Net Champion was Michele Ross of San Leandro with a net score of 137.

The Alister MacKenzie Golf Course at Haggin Oaks is among California's most historic public courses.

Opened in 1932, it was designed by Dr. Alister MacKenzie, the legendary Scottish architect famed for Augusta National and Cypress Point. Known for its masterful routing, undulating greens and deceptive bunkering, the MacKenzie Course has long been a test for amateurs and professionals alike.

Haggin Oaks has hosted numerous USGA championships and local events, cementing its place as the "people's championship course" in Northern California.

The course's blend of tradition and challenge made it an ideal venue for this year's Sacramento Valley Women's Amateur, continuing a proud legacy of women's competitive golf in the region. ★

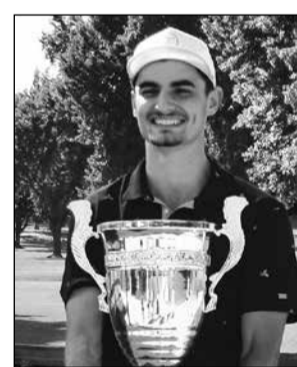
Zack Mate Wins Men's Amateur Championship

Sacramento Golf Council News Release

CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG) - The 2025 Sacramento County Men's Amateur Championship was held on July 12 to July 13 at Ancil Hoffman Golf Course in Carmichael.

Zack Mate of Elk Grove captured the title with an impressive final round 66, paired with an opening 71, for a two-day total of 137.

Finishing just one stroke back in second place was Taylor Knoll of Rancho Cordova, who carded rounds of 70-68 for a total of 138.



Zack Mate of Elk Grove wins the 2025 Sacramento County Men's Amateur Championship, held at Ancil Hoffman Golf Course in Carmichael on July 12 and 13. Photo courtesy of the Sacramento Golf Council

Rounding out the top three was Sacramento's Keith

Okazaki, who posted consistent rounds of 70-70 for a total score of 140.

The prestigious 36-hole stroke-play event was open to all male amateur golfers with a GHIN (Golf Handicap & Information Network) index of 3.0 or less.

The tournament was conducted by the Sacramento Golf Council, which oversees all city and county amateur golf championships.

Chuck Honeycutt served as tournament chair, with assistance from Scott Bland.

For more information about upcoming events, visit sacgolfcouncil.org. ★

Republic FC Signs 2024 Breakout Striker Khorri Bennett



Sacramento Republic FC's newest forward, Khorri Bennett. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Republic FC

Sacramento Republic FC News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Republic FC announced on July 17 that the club has signed forward Khorri Bennett. He will be added to the team's roster, pending league and federation approval. Per club policy, the terms of the contract were not disclosed.

"Khorri is an important addition for us at this stage in the season to bolster our front line," said Republic FC President and General Manager Todd Dunivant. "He brings strength, physicality and tenacity in front of goal

and we are looking forward to quickly integrating him into our group."

The 27-year-old was a breakout star in 2024. He led the Western Conference with 15 goals to help Las Vegas Lights make their first post-season appearance in club history. Bennett helped the team with six goals and an assist in June 2024, culminating in his selection as Player of the Month. He earned a second Player of the Month nomination in August with a four-game scoring streak. In the playoffs, Bennett netted the game-winning goal in Las Vegas' upset over first-place New Mexico United to punch its ticket to the Western Conference Final.

Bennett's play was recognized beyond the league and in November, earned his first call up to the Jamaican National Team for the Concacaf Nations League Quarterfinals. Earlier this year, Las Vegas announced that he had been transferred to Kuwait Premier League club Al-Nasr SC for

a record fee, where he added one goal and two assists in eight appearances.

Bennett made his professional debut in 2022 for USL League One club Charlotte Independence and across two seasons scored 18 goals and added three assists in 64 appearances. Bennett recorded his first career hat trick on July 28, 2022 and was later named USL League One Player of the Month. The Jacks reached the postseason in both years Bennett was there and in 2023 made its first appearance in the USL League One Final.

Originally from Saint Andrew, Jamaica, Bennett first came to the U.S. to play collegiately at Northeastern University and in three years made 44 total appearances with five goals and three assists. For his senior year, Bennett transferred to Radford University where he started in 15 of 16 games and added three goals and one assist to reach the Big South Conference Semifinals. ★

Where All the Stars Talk

Mary Jane Popp Brings Back the Stars

By Omella Rossi

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)

- For decades, Mary Jane Popp has built a legacy as one of the most revered voices in radio and television. From working with radio and TV stations across the country to hosting some of the most iconic interviews in media history, Popp's passion for connecting with people is undeniable.

Now, with the launch of her new podcast, "Popp Star Talk," Popp is offering listeners a fresh look at the stars they thought they knew.

Popp's career, which spans multiple decades and a variety of media, has been anything but typical. She didn't initially set out to be an interviewer but instead was a singer and actress working toward a Ph.D. at Indiana University when a dare changed her trajectory.

"I wasn't going to interview people. People were going to interview me," Popp said. "But then I was dared to audition for a TV show and I went, 'OK, why not? I got nothing to lose.'"

In 1974, Popp landed a gig on WTTV in Indianapolis, where she produced and hosted "Studio Four," a live television talk show. It was a role that required everything from guest booking to producing, an education that would become the foundation of her expansive career. Popp also hosted "Starlight Backstage" at the same studio which launched her celebrity interviews.

Fast forward to today and Popp is in the midst of her latest project, "Popp Star Talk."

"I got a call from a dear friend, Kenneth Segura Knoll, who suggested we should do a podcast with all the interviews I had made. I had around 170 interviews," said Popp.

Launched on April 2, the episodes utilize the vast collection of interviews she has conducted over the years. Throughout each episode listeners can expect to hear updates on the current whereabouts and endeavors of the people Popp has interviewed, giving fans a chance to reconnect with familiar voices, along with the full original interviews.

The podcast brings a unique perspective to celebrity interviews. While many shows focus solely on an entertainer's latest project or achievement, Popp takes a more personal route, delving into the questions that many others overlook.

"I'm not interested in just promoting someone's latest book or movie," Popp said. "I want to know who they are, what drives them, what makes them happy, sad or even what they'd change about their lives. That's what people really want to know."

In "Popp Star Talk," Popp interviews a wide range of celebrities, from actors including "The Birds" star Tippi Hedren to impressionist Rich Little, and from models such as Cheryl Tiegs to "Happy Days" icons Anson Williams and Marion Ross. What sets her interviews apart from the typical soundbites is the depth of the conversation. Popp encourages guests to drop the PR facades and speak candidly about their lives.

"I always tell them I'll mention your latest project but the real conversation will go beyond that," Popp

said. "I want to know what makes you tick. I ask them, 'Who are you in 25 words or less?' and that question always catches them off guard."

What started as an idea to share interviews from her past has now grown into an international success. With Popp's show available on platforms such as YouTube, Spotify and Apple Podcasts, "Popp Star Talk" is now heard in 17 countries, attracting listeners curious about the untold stories behind the stars.

But it's not just about the interviews themselves. Popp works tirelessly behind the scenes, researching each guest, ensuring that her listeners are not only entertained but also educated on the people they're hearing from. It's a method that pays off; whether it's a fun anecdote or a deeply personal reflection from an iconic figure, Popp's audience gets to hear it all.

It's not always easy. As with any new project, there are challenges, technical issues, scheduling conflicts and finding the balance between entertaining and informing. But for Popp, it's all part of the process.

"The research is the hardest part. I don't want to just throw an interview up and call it a day," Popp said. "I want to add depth. I want to give people more than just what's on the surface."

As for her own career, Popp's love for what she does has only grown over the years. She firmly believes that if you're doing something you love, it's never really work.

"People always ask me when I'm going to retire and I tell them, 'When I drop dead,'" Popp said with a smile. "If you love what you're doing, you'll never work a day in your life. There will be frustrations but that's all part of the game."

Popp has always been known for her down-to-earth nature and her genuine curiosity, qualities that have undoubtedly contributed to her success. She is driven by a desire to connect with her guests in a way that is honest and authentic.

"I don't need to be the star of the show. The guest is the star," Popp said. "If you truly care about someone, they'll open up to you. That's the magic of it."

As for her listeners, Popp has one main goal: to entertain and to reveal the true, multidimensional lives of the people they admire.

"I want people to remember these stars for who they really are, not just what they see on TV or in the movies," Popp said. "Everyone has a story to tell. My job is to help share it."

With her wealth of experience and genuine care for the people Popp interviews, "Popp Star Talk" promises to continue offering listeners an intimate, behind-the-scenes look at the stars who have shaped our culture. Whether you're tuning in for the first time or catching up with the archives, Popp's engaging, heartfelt conversations are sure to leave a lasting impression.

To listen to "Popp Star Talk," visit <https://redcircle.com/shows/popstartalk> or find it on your favorite podcast platform.

Each new episode airs every Friday, with archived interviews available for those wanting to explore the wealth of content. ★



Mary Jane Popp, as a picklelittle lady, is with John Davidson in "Music Man." Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Popp



Movie star Claude Akins embraces Mary Jane Popp in a hug. Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Popp



Mary Jane Popp stands alongside Carol Channing, movie and Broadway star. Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Popp



From left, Helen Reddy singer famous for "I AM Woman" and Mary Jane Popp. Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Popp



Melissa Gilbert from television show "Little house on the Prairie" smiles alongside Mary Jane Popp. Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Popp



Mary Jane Popp smiles alongside Cathy Rigby, Olympic champion and Broadway star, during her performance in "Peter Pan." Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Popp



Lou Ferrigno, actor and former bodybuilder, was in the movie and TV show, "The Hulk." Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Popp



From left are Mary Jane Popp and Molly Ringwald from Sacramento, an actress in multiple movies. Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Popp



From left are Richard Thomas from "The Waltons", Mary Jane Popp and George Wendt from "Cheers." Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Popp



Robert England from the "Nightmare on Elm Street" movie series holds a prop alongside Mary Jane Popp. Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Popp



Here are actor and former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and Mary Jane Popp in 2006. Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Popp



Tim Russ was Tuvok on the TV series, "Voyager in the Star Trek" follow up. Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Popp