



RIVER VALLEY TIMES

41ST YEAR • ISSUE 17

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SEPTEMBER 12, 2025

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Geeky Getups, '80s Music Delight Crowd



Billing themselves as the Ultimate '80s New Wave Show, The Spazmatics live up to their name as they entertain at the Clementia Amphitheater on Aug. 30. Their performance was the last of five summer concerts presented by Entertainment, Theatre & Culture for Rancho Murieta.

Story and photos
by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - With some in the crowd looking just as geeky as the band, The Spazmatics kept the fun going during their Aug. 30 concert at the Clementia Amphitheater.

The show wrapped up the five-concert summer series presented by Entertainment, Theatre & Culture for Rancho Murieta (ETC) and gave the community a lively kickoff to the Labor Day weekend.

ETC Board President JT Turner said the attendance was strong, with about 850 enjoying the concert. He said the band delivered an outstanding performance.

"The brought so much, fun, energy and nostalgia to the stage, he said. "The dance floor filled up right away and stayed that way

all night."
"People didn't want to leave early, which shows how much fun everyone was having," he added.

Pre-Concert Program

Before the music began, Turner emceed a lively pre-concert program that included firing T-shirts from a cannon into the hillside crowd and tossing smaller shirts to youngsters gathered near the stage. He also recognized newlyweds, a birthday and a wedding anniversary, and offered thanks to several sponsors.

Turner welcomed title sponsor Karen Hoberg of Rancho Murieta Homes and Land to the stage.

"I just wanted to say how much I love all of you participating in ETC and supporting our community," Hoberg said. "I want everyone to have a

Continued on page 12

Manhunt Ends with Arrest of Resident



By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - A Rancho Murieta resident was arrested on three felony charges following a manhunt that caused widespread commotion in the community, after deputies responded to a reported burglary in progress just before 8:30 p.m. Aug. 31.

Sacramento County Sheriff's public information officer Sgt. Amar Gandhi released limited details about the incident but confirmed that Randall Stoker, 62, was arrested after deputies responded to his home on Lago Drive. Gandhi stated that Stoker surrendered after about two hours and that deputies did not deploy the K-9 unit dispatched to the scene. Gandhi added that the victim suffered "non-life-threatening injuries" but declined further information.

According to the jail booking information posted on the Sheriff's Office website, Stoker was arrested on a felony charge of corporal injury - spouse or cohabitant, felony burglary, and assault with a deadly weapon or instrument. His bail was set at \$100,000, with a court date scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Sept. 3.

After Stoker posted bail, the booking information was removed from the website, although the jail continued to acknowledge having a record for him.

The manhunt quickly spilled onto social media. It began about 8:30 p.m. Aug. 31 when a resident reported four patrol cars racing through the South Gate as a helicopter hovered overhead. Minutes later, at 8:37 p.m., Sacramento Metropolitan Fire was dispatched to a medical aid on Celebrar Drive.

Residents traded updates online about the circling helicopter and the location of patrol cars, while one post from Citizen.com claimed a "man was breaking into a house and fighting with a person inside."

A Celebrar Drive resident confirmed the incident was across from her home and noted that neighbors in golf carts had gathered nearby to watch.

Residents later reported
Continued on page 3

Rancho Murieta Association Board Appoints Ernst Cowles



Ernst Cowles is filling a vacancy on the Rancho Murieta Association Board after his appointment on Sept. 3.

Story and photos
by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Association board has appointed Ernst (Ernie) Cowles to fill the vacancy created when Director Danny Carrillo resigned last



Candidates Jo Ann Geller and Ernst Cowles answer questions at the board meeting.

month, citing dissatisfaction with the association's governance.

The board held a special meeting on Sept. 3 to interview two candidates before making the appointment. The other applicant was Jo Ann Geller.

Asked to comment after the meeting, Cowles said he was pleased with

the appointment.

"Having nibbled all the way around the perimeter, I guess it's time to jump in," he said.

Geller also commented.

"I thought it was a very good decision, and I was grateful to be considered," she said.

Continued on page 6

Carskaddon Joins CSD as Utilities Supervisor

Story and photos by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Rancho Murieta Community Services District has named Cory J. Carskaddon as its new utilities supervisor, succeeding Ron Green, who retired earlier this year.

Carskaddon, introduced to the CSD board Aug. 20, brings more than 20 years of experience in utilities and construction to the position.

Carskaddon told the board his career began in the building trades, where he constructed homes before moving into utility work. He went on to spend more than a decade with the City of Folsom's water department, advancing to the position of water utility worker II. In that role, he gained extensive field experience in wastewater collection and distribution systems, often leading and assisting crews.

After Folsom, Carskaddon accepted a position as Public Works maintenance supervisor for the City of Benicia. He also served as the city's designated "legally responsible official" for compliance

reporting. Despite his contributions, his time there was cut short when the city eliminated his position due to budget constraints.

Most recently, Carskaddon worked with the Placer County Water Agency before stepping into his new leadership role at Rancho Murieta. Along the way, he has earned a slate of professional certifications, including a D5 water distribution license – the highest level available – a T2 treatment certification, a cross-connection specialist license, a backflow prevention tester certificate, two wastewater collection certificates and a landscape water efficiency certificate.

One of his first visible projects was repairing the Chesbro Lake V ditch, a drainage channel the district had identified as a priority. The board was shown photos documenting the work before and after the repair.

"Chesbro V ditch was one of the new projects that just came on the table as being a problem," Carskaddon said. "This picture I didn't know was being taken; somebody snuck around the bush earlier



Cory Carskaddon, the new utilities supervisor, is introduced at the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board meeting on Aug. 20.



The completed work at the Chesbro Ditch was the first major project overseen by Cory Carskaddon.

today as we were out there finishing up the V ditch."

Board member Bill Gere said he happened upon Carskaddon at the site and was struck by the sight of the new supervisor working side by side with his crew.

Carskaddon said he makes it a priority to be in the field early in the day for drainage work, then shifts with his team to other projects and leak repairs.

"So I'm one that likes working with my team to make sure they know I'm there with them," he said.

The district announced his hiring in the August edition of the Pipeline newsletter.

"Carskaddon has started work with the district. If you see him out in the field, make sure to welcome him to Rancho Murieta," the newsletter said.

This story is online at therivervalleytimes.com. ★



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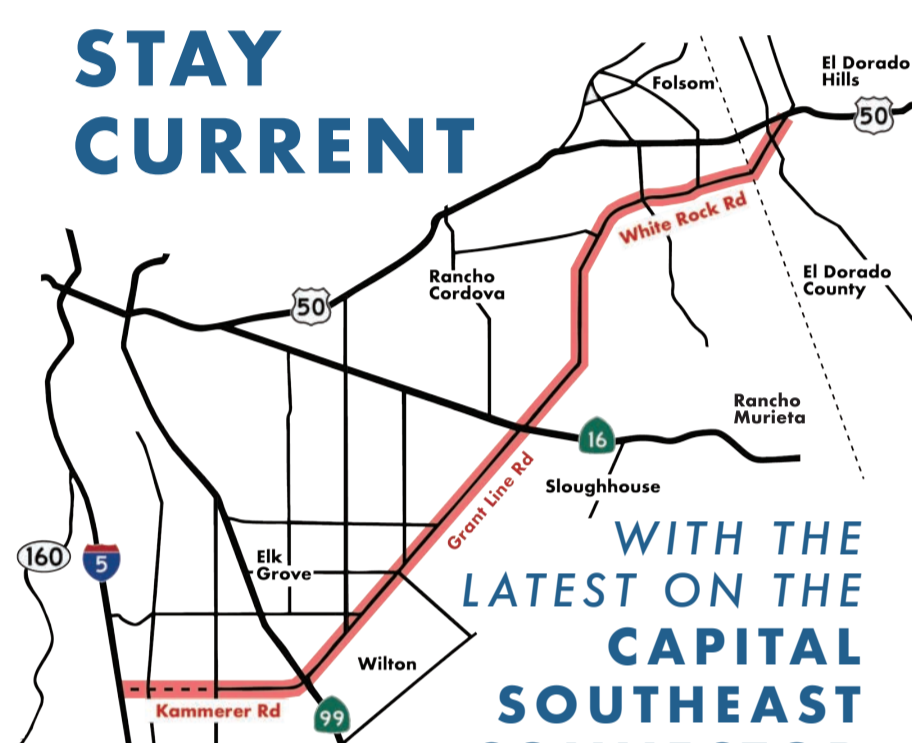
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Team Takes Top Honors at North Ridge

By Nancy Clevenger

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Country Club Women's Golf Club recently walked away with winning honors for the Low Gross River Valley Team Play for 2025. The final event was held last month at North Ridge Country Club in Fair Oaks, a premiere championship golf course.

Captain Patty Jenco said, "It was a tight race, but in the end team RMCC prevailed."

Rancho Murieta's club scored a total of 386 points for the season of gross score play. At the end of the final match, a tie resulted between Rancho Murieta and the women from El Macero Country Club.

According to League rules, when the season finishes with teams sharing equal points, scores from the match held between the two teams will be

used, with the winner of that head-to-head match being declared the winner, thus breaking the tie. The Rancho Murieta women had played the El Macero ladies at Cameron Park Country Club earlier in the season, with Rancho Murieta winning that match by nine points. This resulted in RMCC Women's Golf Club Team Play team being declared the 2025 Team Play champion for the River Valley League.

Central Bay League Championships will be the next competition for the Rancho Murieta ladies as they represent the River Valley Team Play League.

Jenco went on to say, "We are honored to be moving on to the Central Bay League Championship as the representatives of River Valley Team Play



Yao Guo, left, Therese Yannuzzi, Darcy Milligan, Joan Lake, Women's Golf Club Captain Jan Valine, Melody Hayes, Bonnie Shewchuk and Team Play Captain Patty Jenco.

League." This net best-ball competition will be held Monday, Sept. 15 at Haggin-Oaks Golf Complex. The shotgun playoff will begin at noon on the MacKenzie Course and is open to spectators; all are invited to root on our local team. Teams

and players from around Northern California will be represented.

The Rancho Murieta Women's Golf Club is practicing hard in hopes of bringing home the trophy and the prestige of winning. Yolo Flyers Club Team Play women will be



Bonnie Shewchuk, left, Jenni Harmon, Carrie Manriquez, Lucia Choi, Lyniel Takahashi, Darcy Milligan, Joan Lake and Yao Guo. Photos courtesy of Nancy Clevenger



Joan Lake, left, Anne Coeur, Therese Yannuzzi, Jenni Harmon, Carrie Manriquez, Melody Hayes, Patty Jenco and Lucia Choi. Not pictured: Joanna Graf and Angie Friedrich

representing River Valley Team Play in the low net (using handicaps) competition, having earned 345 points during the season of play.

For more information regarding RMCC Women's Golf Club, please contact Team Play Captain Patty Jenco at pjenco@sbc-global.net. ★

Manhunt Ends with Arrest of Resident

Continued from page 1
the helicopter circling over the north side of the community. Posts based on police scanner traffic identified the suspect as living on Lago Drive and included descriptions

of his clothing, as well as two possible vehicles. As the standoff unfolded, several residents said they could hear deputies using a megaphone to order the suspect to surrender, warning that a K-9 unit would

be sent in if he refused. The last manhunt in Rancho Murieta occurred on Oct. 22, 2022, when deputies searched for a teenage robbery suspect accused of brandishing a firearm. A K-9 unit found

him hiding in the bushes at Greens Park about 90 minutes later. The weapon turned out to be a replica.

The most memorable manhunt happened about 18 years ago, when the Sacramento County

Sheriff's Office learned that an escaped parolee was hiding in the community.

"They brought everything out here," recalled Gate Officer Rick Dias.

The search was later scaled back when deputies

believed the parolee had fled. But a Community Services District security officer on patrol spotted the girlfriend's car parked unusually, noticed she was crying, and asked her to open the trunk where the parolee was found curled up inside.

This story is online at therivervalleytimes.com. ★

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Complaint about Non-Resident Dog Walker Discussed at RMA Meeting

Story and photo by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - When the Rancho Murieta Association Board met on Aug. 19, the agenda appeared routine. The only notable discussion concerned a proposed rule governing the use of e-bikes.

The real action, however, came during public comments. There, a months-long rift between former Director Danny Carrillo and current board members resurfaced after Carrillo addressed the board. The meeting also took an unexpected turn when a resident submitted a petition urging the Rancho Murieta Association to act against a non-resident dog walker she accused of repeatedly violating community rules and creating “an atmosphere of fear and discomfort.”

Three other residents spoke during public comments. Resident Tom Shewchuk, who had been working with a group of members to purchase the Rancho Murieta Country Club, announced that the deal is no longer being pursued.

Resident Brian Rosebrock also spoke about the rule prohibiting motorcycles on the North.

A Veterans of Foreign Wars Rancho Murieta Post member inquired about placing a memorial bench on Rancho Murieta Association property.

Non-Resident Dog Walker

Speaking during public comments, resident Setareh Benasso expressed concerns about safety in the community and the lack of enforcement of community rules allegedly related to a non-resident dog walker.

Benasso charged that Allison Cox was repeatedly breaking the rules by speeding in the community, walking multiple dogs without a resident present, and continuing to frequent areas from which she had reportedly been banned, such as the dog parks and around the back lakes.

“She’s driving 60 miles an hour,” Benasso said. “She is verbally attacking older people in the dog park and her dogs are attacking other dogs.”

Benasso told the board that she has repeatedly taken her complaints to General Manager Rod Hart and the compliance staff without receiving any results. Benasso added that the board did not respond to an email she sent on Aug. 7.



Resident Setareh Benasso voices concerns about a non-resident dog walker during the Aug. 19 Rancho Murieta Association meeting.

At the close of her emotional remarks, Benasso submitted a letter signed by 20 residents urging the board to resolve the issue.

“For many years, we have dealt with the presence and behavior of a non-resident dog walker who continues to violate community rules and creates an atmosphere of fear and discomfort,” the letter states. “We respectfully ask the Board to take urgent and decisive action.”

“Specifically, we request a thorough investigation, strict enforcement of guest access, and clear communication to residents regarding how these types of violations will be addressed moving forward,” the letter states.

The River Valley Times reached out to Cox for comment. Cox said she lives in the community and noted that her car is equipped with a tracker, which she has shown to the Rancho Murieta Association, to dispute allegations of speeding.

“This is pure harassment,” Cox said. “She has zero evidence to support any of her accusations.”

When The River Valley Times asked General Manager Rod Hart if the Rancho Murieta Association had banned Cox from common areas and dog parks, he replied “Yes and no.”

Hart said the restrictions depend on whether Cox is listed as a guest or as a registered resident. The Rancho Murieta Association has taken action when she was present as a guest without an escort, Hart said, but not when records show she is a resident, which is currently the case.

“We always check,” Hart said.

Hart also said that five residents have contacted him and the compliance staff to support Cox, saying they believe Cox is



Setareh Benasso holds up 20 signed letters urging the board to take action on a dog walker.

being harassed.

E-Bike Rule

During the committee reports, Director Scott Adams outlined the complexities of creating and enforcing rules for e-bikes within the community. While some residents want e-bikes banned, Adams said, he does not support making e-bikes illegal because many people use them responsibly. Adams highlighted the challenges in enforcement, such as the variety of e-bike types and the difficulty in identifying riders and their speeds.

Adams proposed sending a letter to residents outlining the issues and seeking feedback before drafting any rules.

“Then I go back to the governing documents and talk to them about what we hear and then come to the board with a rule,” Adams said.

The other board members voiced support for Adams’ approach.

Motorcycle Rule

Resident Rosebrock, who has long opposed the rule banning motorcycles on the North, told the board that he was ending his fight.



Brian Rosebrock

and can “run it any time I want.”

“I want to observe a moment of silence for the motorcycle rule,” Rosebrock said. “I’m going to let it go.”

Now working across the highway, Rosebrock has access to a

Rosebrock said he was encouraged earlier in the summer by a new resident who also rides motorcycles and “got a little bit fired up” to push again for a rule change. Since then, Rosebrock has concluded that “it would be a waste of time and resources” for the board and the community to pursue it.

“We have bigger fish to fry,” Rosebrock said.

VFW Request

Veterans of Foreign Wars Rancho Murieta Post member Dave Walters previously attended a board meeting to report that his group will place several memorial benches and tables throughout the community, mostly on property owned by the Rancho Murieta Association.

At the August meeting, Walters asked about placing a memorial table on Rancho Murieta Association property overlooking Lake Chesbro, noting that the Veterans of Foreign Wars group would cover the costs. General Manager Hart said he reviewed the request with Architectural Manager Mark Parsons and found no concerns.

“You can go ahead and place the table there,” Hart told Walters.

Other Business

The board approved a bid for workers’ compensation insurance and contracts to replace the Stonehouse restroom roof and 135 community street signs.

Committee chairs also reported on recent activities, including ideas to enhance next year’s July 4 celebration and a possible bus trip to Apple Hill.

This story is online at therivervalleytimes.com. ★

What if You Knew How You Were Going to Die?



BY NORRIS BURKES

If you knew what you were going to die from, would that change the way you live?

That’s the question I faced in my next assignment in 1999 at Patrick Air Force Base. That’s the year my Air Force doctor, a graying 50-something flight surgeon brought me in for my pre-deployment physical.

I had mixed emotions about the physical. After all, if he pronounced me healthy, I’d leave my family to go to Saudi Arabia for four months. If he declared me unhealthy, I might face a medical evaluation board and soon find myself unemployed.

During my 15-minute office visit, he hammered on my boney knees, peered into my uncertain brown eyes and shined his flashlight into the airfoils I call ears. He’d put a tongue depressor in my upper orifice and a gloved finger in its southern cousin.

Just as I was refastening my shiny belt buckle, his assistant knocked on the door.

“Enter,” the doctor barked.

A balding young airman appeared, handed the doctor a manila folder and was quickly dismissed with a perfunctory, “Thank you.”

“Ahh. Your test results,” he said.

The doc put on the eyeglasses dangling from his neck and flipped through pages of blood tests, pee

tests and vision tests. All the while he was nodding, spouting numbers and mumbling approving words like “good” or “OK.”

He closed the file with a smile, so I ventured a guess.

“Am I good to go to Saudi?”

“Yes, but there’s been a recent increase in your blood pressure, so I’m prescribing some medications.”

My face flushed with obvious concern, so he took a more optimistic tack.

“Look at it this way,” he said. “At least you know how you’re going to die.”

“Excuse me?” I begged.

“Most likely a doctor will one day write ‘hypertension’ on your death certificate,” he declared.

I rubbed my eyes, in hopes of dismissing the grim reaper I saw draped in a white lab coat.

However, not to be dissuaded by my shaking head, Doc assured me that any thoughts I was having of an early demise were “greatly exaggerated.”

With some enthusiasm, he added that my problem would be defined as “service-related. That means that one day your wife, Becky, will get a nice death benefit – all because of your hypertension.”

“Bless your heart!” I said. (Southerners know what this means.)

He was predicting a silver lining in my death, but I didn’t want to hear it. After all, I was planning to live a long life in a beachside home with my officer’s retirement.

My thinking was much like the greedy farmer Jesus mentioned in the parable found in Luke

12:16–21.

The farmer was so successful that he built new barns to store his abundant crops. With his retirement set, the farmer told himself, “Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”

The story concludes with God prematurely calling the farmer to the pearly gates, leaving all his crops to spoil in the cavernous barns.

Then Jesus added his punch line: “That’s what happens when you fill your barn with Self and not with God.”

These days, nearly every time I strap on a blood pressure cuff, I think about the survival odds quoted by that doctor. That cuff reminds me that although my earthly life is finite, God’s love is infinite, and God always gives better odds.

However, knowing how I might die has changed the way I live. I exercise regularly, eat better and take my medications. But most importantly, Becky no longer has to see me as a potential dollar sign from a VA pension.

CORRECTION: Last week, I misspelled the Amazon website where you can donate supplies to Chispa Project. Our Amazon Wishlist for the back-to-school season is <https://go.chispaproject.org/supplies> (Do not use “WWW.”)

Email me with questions or comment at comment@thechaplain.net. Sign up to receive this column by email at thechaplain.net/columns/ Contact Chaplain Norris at comment@thechaplain.net or 10566 Combie Rd. Suite 6643 Auburn, CA 95602 or voicemail (843) 608-9715. ★

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Carrillo-Board Rift Resurfaces at Rancho Murieta Association Meeting

Story and photos by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The ongoing rift between former Director Danny Carrillo and the other Rancho Murieta Association directors surfaced again at the board meeting on Aug. 19.

The dispute reignited when Carrillo, who resigned on Aug. 8, addressed the board during public comments. He offered to serve as an ombudsman for residents with concerns about the RMA Board and staff, saying his role would help ensure accountability. Carrillo also urged the board to place General Manager Rod Hart on leave, citing what he described as Hart's lack of responsiveness to another resident who spoke at the meeting.

At the close of public comments, Director John Haviland and Board President Patrick O'Hern read statements responding to remarks Carrillo made at earlier meetings and in a full-page advertisement published in the Aug. 8 issue of the River Valley Times. Carrillo is proposing new leadership training for the board.

Background

The rift involving Carrillo and other directors first became public during a contentious board meeting on April 15.

Speaking during public comments, Carrillo said his fellow board members had quietly formed a committee to discuss matters requiring a closed session and excluded him from its meetings. He said he had been accused of disclosing confidential information, a charge he categorically denied.

Director Scott Adams defended the board's actions, confirming that the executive session committee excluding Carrillo was formed with the advice of legal counsel.

Carrillo also proposed forming a Leadership & Community Improvement Committee to help the association recommit to transparency and open dialogue, though he did not request that it be placed on a future agenda.

Carrillo didn't attend the May board meeting. However, speaking during public comments at the June 17 Board meeting, he stated that his efforts to get his committee proposal on the board agenda had been in vain.

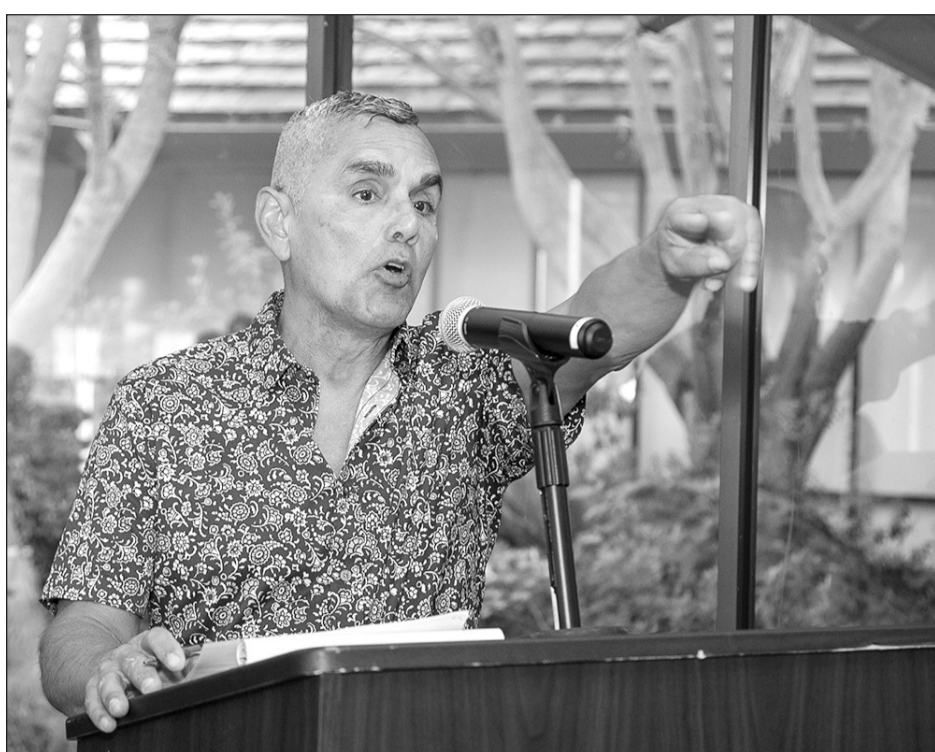
Carrillo didn't attend the July board meeting and submitted his resignation on Aug. 8.

Carrillo also announced his resignation in a full-page advertisement that was published on Page 7 of the River Valley Times on Aug. 8.

In the advertisement, Carrillo announced he was stepping down due to his growing concern that certain board practices don't align with the fiduciary standards set out in the Davis-Stirling act and the RMA Bylaws. He also urged the formation of the leadership committee to ensure that RMA governance aligns with best practices already adopted by more than 1,500 HOAs. The petition was signed by 46 residents. He also called for action in the November election when three board seats will be vacant.

Danny Carrillo

Carrillo began his public comment at the August meeting by commending the previous speaker, Setareh Benasso. She



Former Director Danny Carrillo comments as an audience member at the Rancho Murieta Association Board meeting on Aug. 19



Director John Haviland responds to past suggestions made by Danny Carrillo.

criticized the RMA for failing to address her concerns about a non-resident dog walker.

Carrillo commended Benasso for putting her concerns in writing to avoid a "he said/she said" situation. He criticized General Manager Rod Hart's handling of her complaints and the board's lack of response to her email, and he recommended that the board consider placing Hart on a leave of absence pending further investigation.

Carrillo concluded by offering to serve as an ombudsman for residents with concerns about board members or staff, encouraging them to contact him for help in preparing written complaints to ensure accountability.

At the end of public comments, Board President Patrick O'Hern asked if any board member wished to make a statement.

John Haviland

Haviland said he was making a statement for Carrillo "because I think he deserves an explanation." He thanked Carrillo for his efforts in researching the formation of a leadership committee.

"I must respectfully disagree with your assessment that this board is not functioning in the best interest of our community,



Board President Patrick O'Hern disputes the statistics Danny Carrillo used in an advertisement in the River Valley Times.

or that the community is in need of someone like your committee to vet vendors to provide training for us," he said.

Haviland defended the board's qualifications: "I'm confident that you realize our board is a professional governing body comprised of conscientious and experienced members fully capable of managing and directing this association effectively."

Haviland criticized the proposed training materials, calling them "a generic one-size-fits-all all, consultant-based training." He added, "While they claim to have rescued other homeowner associations, I'm not convinced that such training would provide a tangible benefit to this organization."

Haviland concluded by rejecting Carrillo's proposal: "Therefore, I see no reason for spending the homeowners' funds on leadership training for board members," he said. "I consider the proposal that you've identified as an unnecessary waste of both time and resources, and I cannot support your proposal at this time."

Dispute

When Carrillo asked to respond, Board President Patrick O'Hern told him he had already used his three minutes.

Carrillo then asked if he could use

another resident's time, as had been done in the past, but O'Hern said he could not.

At that point, Director Scott Adams intervened, noting that Carrillo had previously accused O'Hern of changing the rules on using another person's time five months earlier.

Carrillo responded that a case in point was when John Merchant used someone else's time.

"That's right. That was a CSD town hall meeting at the country club about two and a half years ago," Adams replied. "We operate under the rules for Davis-Sterling. We are not CSD."

As Carrillo continued to object, Adams overrode him, saying that under RMA rules and past practices at board meetings, no one was allowed to use another person's time to make a public comment.

"It's not even reasonable under the Davis-Sterling Act," he said. (The Davis-Stirling Act is the law governing homeowners' associations.)

Patrick O'Hern

O'Hern opened his statement by emphasizing the board's adherence to association rules and California law.

"The board endeavors to protect the lawful rights of its members, its employees and the board itself," he said. "We are very careful adhering to the fiduciary duty, and if we have any concerns, we act after advice of our legal counsel."

O'Hern then addressed the claim in Carrillo's advertisement that 1,500 HOAs had been helped by the leadership education provider he was suggesting.

"If you take these numbers and calculate the percentages, assuming all 1,500 of the contracts were for California HOAs, the following comes to light: only 0.03, or 3% of California homeowners associations have associated themselves with these practices, meaning 97% of California HOAs have not."

O'Hern said a similar calculation applied to HOAs across the United States, showing that only 0.41% had associated themselves with such practices, while 99.59% had not.

"So it is a very small number, and we don't know the type of association: could have been anything from a brochure to a pamphlet," he said.

O'Hern said the board "absolutely supports education" and emphasized that the current directors have an "unprecedented" level of education and experience.

O'Hern concluded by expressing frustration that an individual could accuse the board of transparency while knowing the board adheres to rules and regulations, "and will not divulge the confidential information which could fully clarify and justify everything they are required to do to protect the members and our employees."

After O'Hern asked if anyone else had anything to say, Carrillo said he had a clarification. O'Hern told him "no" and hit his gavel.

"I humbly disagree with O'Hern and Haviland, for the record," Carrillo said.

Later in the meeting, O'Hern allowed Carrillo to ask a couple of questions about an agenda item.

This story is online at therivervalleytimes.com. ★

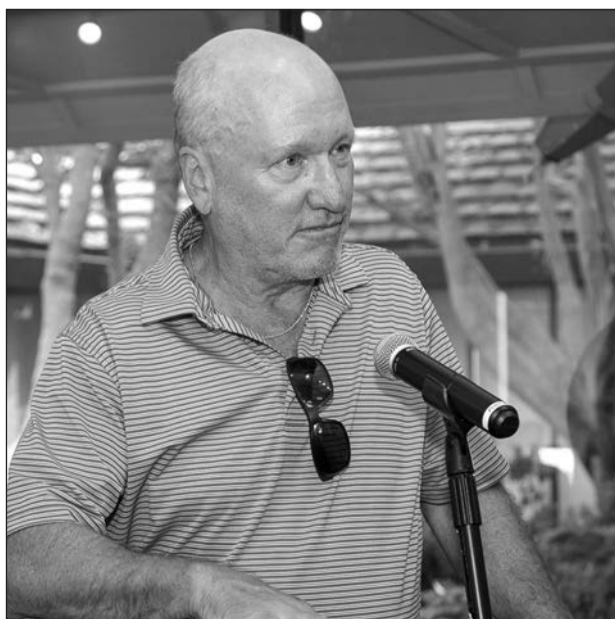
Members Buying Rancho Murieta Country Club Dropped

Story and photo by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - A membership effort to purchase the Rancho Murieta Country Club from Rancho Murieta Properties (RMP) is off the table.

One of the organizers, Tom Shewchuk, announced the change at the Aug. 19 Rancho Murieta Association Board meeting and at the Aug. 20 Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board meeting.

"As you guys know, we have been working with RMP to try to work out a deal to purchase the country club from them," Shewchuk said at the Community Services District meeting. "We had a meeting last Thursday and they are no longer interested in selling it to us.



Tom Shewchuk announces that the members' effort to purchase the Rancho Murieta Country Club is no longer being pursued. Shewchuk reported the development at the Rancho Murieta Association Board meeting on Aug. 19 and the Community Services District Board meeting on Aug. 20.

"I think that means they have another investor in mind. But our offer and our progress to close by the end of the year is off the table," Shewchuk added.

The River Valley Times

contacted Shewchuk after the two board meetings to ask him about the Aug. 14 meeting with Rancho Murieta Properties. Shewchuk said that he and Chase Armer met with

Carol Anderson Ward; her husband, Dave Harp; Tom deRegt, another investor; and Tony Valez, the chief financial officer, for a status update.

"We told them we couldn't hold to the deadline to close by the end of the year if they weren't on board. Clearly, they weren't on board," Shewchuk said.

According to Shewchuk, Ward and deRegt explained that because of the water situation with the Community Services District, "They can't sell the country club separately from all of those Villages A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H, because they own all of them and so they want to keep them all tied together."

Shewchuk added that his group is only interested in buying the club, not the development around the back lakes.

The River Valley Times

contacted Ward to ask about other potential investors, specifically whether she is negotiating with AKT Development. In June, Ward sold most of the Anderson Ranch to her niece, Bri Tsakopoulos. She is married to Kyriakos Tsakopoulos, CEO and president of AKT Development, and son of real estate magnate Angelo Tsakopoulos.

Ward responded by email on Aug. 29, saying that wasn't the case.

"No, not in discussions with AKT on other RM properties. Yes, interest in other parts being looked at by other parties but nothing worth reporting yet. I will follow up if anything moves forward," Ward wrote.

Shewchuk was asked how far along his group was, given its plan to close by the end of the year.

He said the organizing committee was still at the

grassroots stage.

"We've talked to 280 families. But we haven't collected any money yet because we haven't formed the company," Shewchuk said.

When asked how many families had pledged money, Shewchuk declined to answer.

"I'm not going to divulge that information but 85% of the families were supportive of making improvements to the course and the club," Shewchuk said.

Speaking at the Community Services District meeting, Shewchuk said his group would wait in the wings in case Rancho Murieta Properties' talks with other potential investors fall through.

"I'm not taking our bids off the table, so to speak," Shewchuk said.

This story is online at therivervalleytimes.com. ★

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Women's Club Hosting Oktoberfest in September

The Rancho Murieta Women's Club will welcome fall with an Oktoberfest luncheon on Tuesday, Sept. 24. A five-piece German band from the Sacramento area, with roots in Germany, will perform, followed by a buffet of German dishes.

Tickets are \$35 for members and \$40 for non-members/guests, and the reservation deadline is 5 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 12. Make checks payable to Rancho Murieta Women's Club or RMWC and drop them in the basket at 14963 Reynosa Drive or mail to P.O. Box 527, Rancho Murieta, CA 95683. For more information, contact

Barbara Armstrong at 916-541-1884.

Attendees are asked not to wear torn or shredded clothing. Mark your calendars for the Holiday Home Tour on Dec. 13.

Kiwanis Club Sets Deadline for Farm to Fork Tickets

The deadline to purchase tickets for the Kiwanis Farm to Fork Dinner is Sept. 19. Tickets are \$80 each plus a \$2.75 processing fee.

They can be purchased by credit card online at rmkiwanis.org or by contacting Carol Prinzo at rprinzo1962@gmail.com or 916-354-9688 to pay by check or cash.

The event will be held

Sept. 27 at the Rancho Murieta Country Club.

Music Mike to Entertain Sept. 21

The Kiwanis Club will sponsor the annual Music Mike Concert at 5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 21 at the Lake Clementia Amphitheater. Families can enjoy childhood favorites as Music Mike entertains children with songs and movement activities.

The free event is open to Rancho Murieta families and their guests.

Corvette Club Slates Poker Run

The Rancho Murieta Corvette Club will host a Poker Run on Saturday, Oct. 12 to raise funds for its annual Thanksgiving

Dinner project, benefiting families in the River Valley area of South Sacramento County.

Over the years, the club's effort has grown from donating turkeys to the Sacramento Food Bank to providing complete holiday dinners to families in need within the local community. This year's Poker Run is dedicated to Jerry McDonald, a past president and longtime member of the club, who passed away in 2024.

A Poker Run is a driving event in which participants follow a predetermined scenic route, stopping at five designated locations to collect playing cards.

The goal is to assemble the best poker hand and win prizes. This year's

route winds through foothill and lower Sierra roads and concludes at Moonraker Millhouse Brewery in Cameron Park for lunch and prize distribution. Written directions will be provided to help participants stay on course. The drive takes approximately 90 minutes.

The event is open to all vehicles, not just Corvettes: Sports cars, sport sedans, SUVs, and trucks are all welcome. The entry fee is \$30, which includes two poker hands: one for the driver and one for the navigator. Entries are due by Oct. 3.

To participate, download the entry form at [ranchomurieta.com/corvettes.com](http://ranchomurieta.com/corvettes). Complete the form and mail it with a check made

out to Rancho Murieta Corvettes to the address provided.

Summerfest 2025 Tickets Available Online

The 25th annual Summerfest carnival will take place at Stonehouse Park on Friday, Oct. 3 and Saturday, Oct. 4.

Advance tickets are available online for \$35 per day, with a \$20 discount when purchasing four tickets. At the gate, tickets will be \$40. Children 4 and younger will be admitted free.

The event is only open to community residents and their guests. Tickets can be purchased at summerfest-ranchomurieta.org/ tickets. ★

Rancho Murieta Association Board Appoints Ernst Cowles

Continued from page 1

Ernst Cowles

Cowles and his wife moved to Rancho Murieta more than 11 years ago. He is perhaps best known locally as a founding member of the Rancho Murieta Pickleball Club and its second president.

His educational background includes a Ph.D. in criminology with post-doctoral work in management development. His career experience spans roles as a parole and probation officer, deputy director of the State Department of Corrections, university faculty member at four institutions, and director of three research institutes.

Most recently, he was the director of the Institute for Social Research at Sacramento State University and is now an emeritus professor.

Cowles' appointments and honors are equally extensive. His community involvements include volunteering in various capacities in Rancho Murieta and beyond. For instance, he serves on a board of an organization that helps incarcerated women stay connected with their children. Locally, he is a member of Save Our Lakes & Open Spaces (SOLOS).

Jo Ann Geller

Geller said she has maintained a "kind of undercover" profile while participating in community activities since moving to Rancho Murieta 10 years ago.

She has worked as a real estate broker and bankruptcy consultant and liquidator for more than 40 years. In the 1970s, she managed two community

associations – a 275-unit condominium community in Huntington Beach and a 2,200-unit planned development in Irvine – and was involved in the acquisition, development and construction of more than 200 homes.

She also taught junior high math in the 1970s and created a federally funded Title IV student financial aid project.

Board Comments

Three RMA board members expressed appreciation for the fact that such highly qualified residents had applied for the position.

Director Chris Child spoke first.

"I'm just thrilled for this community that we have this kind of decision to make," he said.

Director Scott Adams said he wished both candidates could join the board.

"But one has got to lose. I hope that person thinks about next year's election because this year is already closed off," he said.

He was referring to the fact that the only candidates who applied for two vacancies by the deadline for the November ballot were the incumbents: Board President Patrick O'Hern and Director Child.

O'Hern also addressed the difficulty of the decision after he announced the vote tally.

"Literally, when I was casting my vote I was going from one name to the other," he said.

The five directors present voted by secret ballot. O'Hern said it had been a split decision but did not provide the breakdown. Director John Haviland was unable to attend the meeting.



Elections Supervisor Jim Moore, left, shakes hands with Ernst Cowles after administering the oath of office.

Interview Questions

Of the three questions posed to the candidates, the most difficult likely came from Director Scott Adams, who asked how the community could be improved or changed.

Geller said a community should have fair rules that are enforced impartially and predictably.

"I don't think we have gotten there yet," she said. "I think there is some room for improvement in the area of enforcement."

She also suggested finding more recreational opportunities for pre-teens.

"I found that when we planned things that encouraged younger people, they turned out to be community members rather than disrupters."

Cowles noted that there are two types of changes: planned changes, which are deliberate and directed, and unplanned changes, which usually involve outside factors such as Amazon drivers or wildland fire threats. He suggested that the community needs to revise the covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) to address new challenges, prepare for external

changes and enhance technology. Cowles also agreed with Geller on the need to provide more recreational opportunities for young people.

The candidates were also asked which RMA standing committee they would

like to chair if appointed to the board. Geller said she was interested in the Communications Committee, explaining that the board has been doing a "remarkable" job and is made up of "quality board members."

"I'm not saying this because I care about the job. I say it because I have observed it," she said.

Geller believes the board needs a better way to tell its story to the community.

"I think the things you do don't make it to the ground level, and it might be helpful to get some other vehicle to do that."

Cowles said he would be interested in serving on the Compliance Committee, describing his two years as a member as "interesting,

thankless and even sometime fun. It obviously fits with my background," he said.

Cowles also mentioned the Finance Committee, noting that he has extensive experience with budgeting, and expressed interest in the Recreation Committee.

"I think just addressing the issues surrounding this for young folks to do is a major issue," he said.

The candidates were also asked if they had any special skills that would be beneficial in the position and what they liked about the community. Both gave opening and closing statements as part of the interview.

This story is online at therivervalleytimes.com. ★

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Services District Names Min Director of Finance and Administration

Story and photo by Gail Bullen River Valley Times Reporter



Certified Public Accountant Cecilia Min brings more than 20 years of professional experience to her new permanent position.

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Community Services District announced at its Aug. 20 board meeting that Cecilia Min has been hired as the permanent director of Finance and Administration.

Min first came to the district in May through the Robert Half employment agency to serve on an interim basis. During that time, she worked on the district's overdue audits and began the process of updating its financial

systems.

Board President John Merchant said he has been impressed with Min's work and welcomed her appointment.

"I have to just preface this by the fact that we've

been working together fairly closely for, I don't know, the last three or four weeks and I'm really excited, number one, that she's agreed to come on board with us, and number two, that we get to do some more work together, because it has really been a great experience," Merchant said. "And this is a very, very talented person. ... And I am really happy that she's here. So thank you and welcome."

Min's appointment makes permanent a role that draws on more than two decades of professional experience. Over the past 20 years, Min has cultivated a career in external

audit, consulting and strategic leadership. Her work has spanned a variety of industries, including government, healthcare, nonprofits, real estate, private equity-owned companies, education, and even restaurants and supermarkets. She said this range of experience has given her a perspective that helps her understand the financial needs of organizations at many different stages.

Min holds a master's degree in accounting information systems from Florida International University and is a certified public accountant. In recent years, she has stepped into leadership

roles that focus on streamlining financial operations, creating board-level reporting and developing performance measures that have helped organizations meet their goals.

"Over time, I have found that my drive lies in being able to transform organizations and their finances, turning financial data into strong strategic insight," Min said. "As a result, organizations that I have worked with financially have been able to resolve accounting material weaknesses and improve compliance, gaining the financial clarity to make confident strategic decisions."

Min said she felt welcomed from her first day at Rancho Murieta and was encouraged by the district's commitment to strengthening its accounting practices.

"From day one, the RMCS District team and board members have fostered an environment where I've felt genuinely accepted and valued," she said. "The unwavering commitment to transforming the accounting function has been both inspiring and engaging. I'm eager to contribute and proud to be part of this transformative journey."

This story is online at therivervalleytimes.com. ★

CSD Board Discusses Report on Water Master Plan

Story and photos by Gail Bullen River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - A four-member working group appointed to review Rancho Murieta's draft Integrated Water Master Plan (IWMP) presented its findings to the full Community Services District board on Aug. 20. The presentation came a week after the group delivered the same report to the board's Improvements Committee.

The working group was established on April 16 when Board President John Merchant secured approval to form the panel and appointed himself as chair. He named Operations Director Eric Houston and community members Janis Eckard and Jim Farrell to serve with him.

Their 12-page report highlighted problems with the 2024 draft water study, the most significant of which involved assumptions used to estimate water supplies for current residents and future development.

Although one director disagreed with the report's findings, board members have agreed the community urgently needs a secondary water source: a need that, for now, could only be met through groundwater. The district has already hired Water System Consultants (WSC) to conduct a groundwater analysis, including a well-siting study.

The board covered a wide range of issues during the four-hour meeting. See separate stories for coverage of the district's audit, two new staff hires and a round-up of other topics.

The 12-page document – "Work Group Report: IWMP Questions, Issues and Findings and Recommended Next Steps & Guiding Principles to Advance Water Planning" – is available on the district's website in the Aug. 20 board meeting packet. An audio recording of the meeting is also posted online.

Background

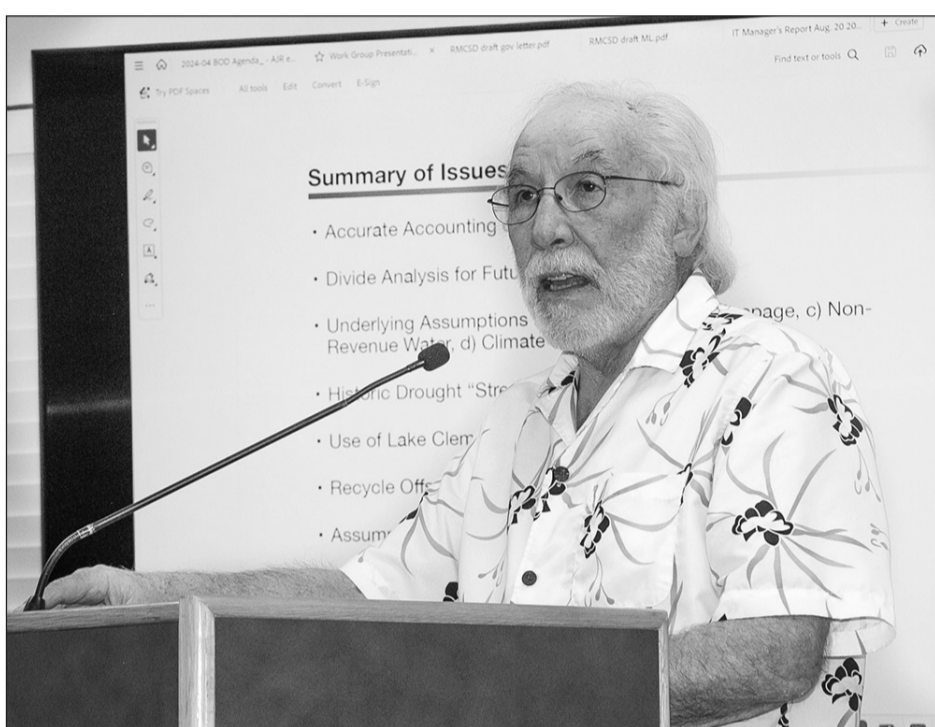
Updating the IWMP became a focus in late 2022 when Rancho North updated its application for 697 lots with the county. (The number is now down to 561.) The district's request for proposals drew only one bid – a joint submission from Maddaus Water Management and Adkins Engineering – which the board approved in December 2022.

Based on certain assumptions and mitigation measures, principal consultant Lisa Maddaus concluded the community could meet both current and future water demands, with the exception of an extreme drought like the one in 1976 and 1977. Her analysis assumed the use of Lake Clementia as a drinking water source, expanded reliance on recycled water to reduce potable demand, irrigation of the golf courses with river water, increased reservoir storage through flashboards, and the development of multiple wells.

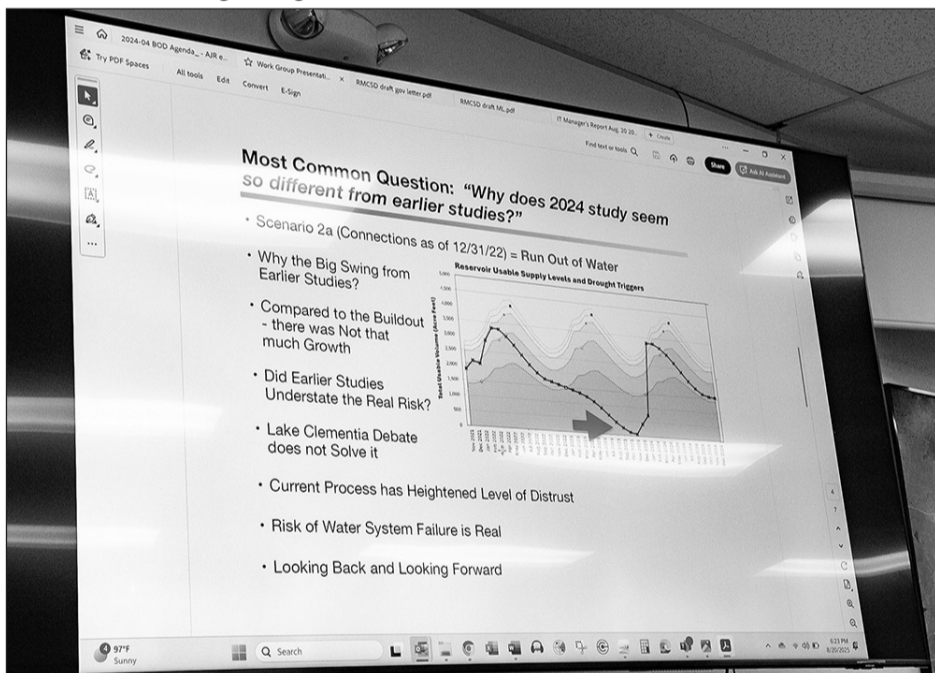
Save Our Lakes & Open Spaces, a community action group, along with Eckard, challenged those assumptions from the outset. While the board acknowledged the concerns, it took no major action until October 2024, when the 317-page draft report was completed. At that point, the board opened a 45-day review period and requested an outside technical review.

Progress stalled until January, when Houston advised against finalizing the IWMP, citing the plan's lack of a clear path forward. He recommended that the district instead prepare an Urban Water Supply Plan, which will be required once the district reaches 3,000 water connections and becomes subject to state urban water supplier regulations.

Houston said he had asked Water System Consultants – who recently prepared an Urban Water Supply Plan and Water Vision report for the City of Folsom



Jim Farrell describes some of the findings in the working group's report about the draft Integrated Water Master Plan. He was speaking at the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board meeting on Aug. 20.



This slide shows some of the points made in the working group's report.

– to submit a scope of work for a similar plan for Rancho Murieta. The district has already contracted with Water System Consultants for a groundwater study and is expected to retain the firm to prepare the Urban Water Supply Plan once the state requirement takes effect.

Jim Farrell

Farrell, who worked in health care strategic planning before retiring, authored most of the report. During the meeting, he used slides to highlight the working group's review of data accuracy and the assumptions underlying the study.

He noted many findings, but emphasized one key difference between the 2024 draft and earlier water studies from 2006, 2010 and 2016: for the first time, it identified a potential water supply shortage.

"If we have a drought, we run out of water," Farrell said. "That has never been said before in previous studies."

Farrell also raised concerns about the water demand from newly entitled lots in the Riverview and Residences subdivisions. He also emphasized that the planning process must account for the full potential buildout by Rancho Murieta Properties, even though the investment group has withdrawn the lots around the back lakes from its Sacramento County application and has not submitted an application to develop the 39 acres adjacent to the CSD office.

Janis Eckard

Eckard, a licensed real estate broker, has been a community advocate since 2006. That year, she began questioning district water studies that repeatedly increased the number of homes claimed to be supported by the community's water supply, even though the actual supply remained unchanged.

Speaking at the board meeting, Eckard

said she wanted to respond to a comment made by Director Randy Jenco at the Improvements Committee.

"You said that our report was simply making assumptions and that you preferred to rely on the experts," she said.

Eckard said the working group relied on the "ultimate experts": the California Department of Water Resources and the state Department of Health. Both agencies, she noted, had made it clear that the district could not use Lake Clementia as a source of drinking water because it is not permitted, nor could it rely on recycled water, which is not approved for residential use and lacks the necessary infrastructure for delivery.

She added that flashboards also could not be considered a tool for planning future development.

"Last but not least, they said you cannot use conservation as a planning tool," Eckard told the board. "In other words, a 50% usage reduction during drought conditions is too aggressive, and it places the community at risk of running out of water."

Eckard said the second consultant, Dan Adkins, informed her during a town hall meeting that the disputed recycled water figures used in their study originated from the district itself.

Eckard also pointed to the district's earlier history, noting that it modified its water supply reports after being sued by developers in 1989 and 1990.

"The assumptions changed at that point," she said. "They accepted the 50% usage reduction during drought conditions, and they also accepted the use of Clementia as a potable source of water. That is what brought it up to 1,000 more units."

Audience Comments

After Farrell and Eckard concluded their

presentations, Merchant opened the floor for audience comments.

Carol Prinzo said she had previously urged the board to consider a temporary moratorium until the community's water supply issues were resolved.

"At the time, my request fell on deaf ears and nothing happened," she said. "So the community took over and collected over 2,000 signatures... So where does the board stand today on a moratorium?"

Candy Hern addressed Directors Randy Jenco and Tim Maybee directly.

"You both have stood in opposition to members of the community who have voiced concerns about the accuracy of the Rancho Murieta water supply and the study, without giving us facts and proof of why you have taken that position," she said. "Will you please let the community review your facts and proof?"

Randy Jenco

Jenco, an engineer who serves as a director and sits on the Improvements Committee with Merchant, said he had better respond. He first asked whether the working group had involved Maddaus in its research. Merchant told him it had not.

Jenco said he disagreed with most of the conclusions in the working group's report.

"I think a lot of my problems with your report is that you didn't get input from Maddaus," he said. "I think you would have come up with a little bit different direction if you had her involvement, because you were working off the same template."

Jenco added that he had spent considerable time reviewing the draft IWMP and submitted questions to Maddaus, who told him, "No. CSD won't let me answer these. They want to answer them." He said he never received answers to his questions "and wasn't asked to be part of the working group for obvious reasons."

Jenco pushed back on several of the working group's assumptions, arguing it was unreasonable to say the district would never use recycled water for residential purposes and insisting there was no reason Lake Clementia could not be used once it is permitted.

Even so, Jenco said he was in full agreement that the district must secure a secondary water source.

"I'm looking for a solution, and to get to a solution, how much water do we need?" he said.

John Merchant

In addition to serving as board president, Merchant has also been vice president of Save Our Lakes & Open Spaces since its formation in 2015.

A retired businessman, he offered detailed comments during the discussion of the working group's report and highlighted one key takeaway.

"If there is an accomplishment, either from Maddaus or from the working group, it is that I think we are somewhat comfortable at this point that we have a demand number that looks realistic," Merchant said.

He also addressed the next steps in finalizing the draft Integrated Water Master Plan (IWMP) prepared by Maddaus and Adkins.

"What we have to do about it is step two, and that is a WSC thing," he said. "That's one thing we have to clear up pretty quick; WSC won't proceed until we close out the deal with Maddaus. So whatever the board decides to do, they are going to do. And then if we can get that done, we can proceed with WSC."

Other Comments

Director Linda Butler and General Manager Houston also weighed in on the working group's report, but Director Tim Maybee did not comment.

This story is online at therivervalleytimes.com. ★

CSD Board Covers Completed Audit, Finance Records

Story and photo by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The status of the Rancho Murieta Community Services District's overdue audits – one finished and two still pending – was a major topic when the board met Aug. 20.

In a separate action, the board appointed Cecilia Min as director of finance and administration. (See related story.) Min has served in the role on an interim basis since May and has overseen the work needed for all three audits.

Ingrid Shepline, an accountant with Richardson & Company, presented the results of the 2021-22 audit, which was just completed.

Min told the board she expects to have draft audits for 2022-23 and 2023-24 ready by mid-November. She also reported on other financial matters at the meeting.

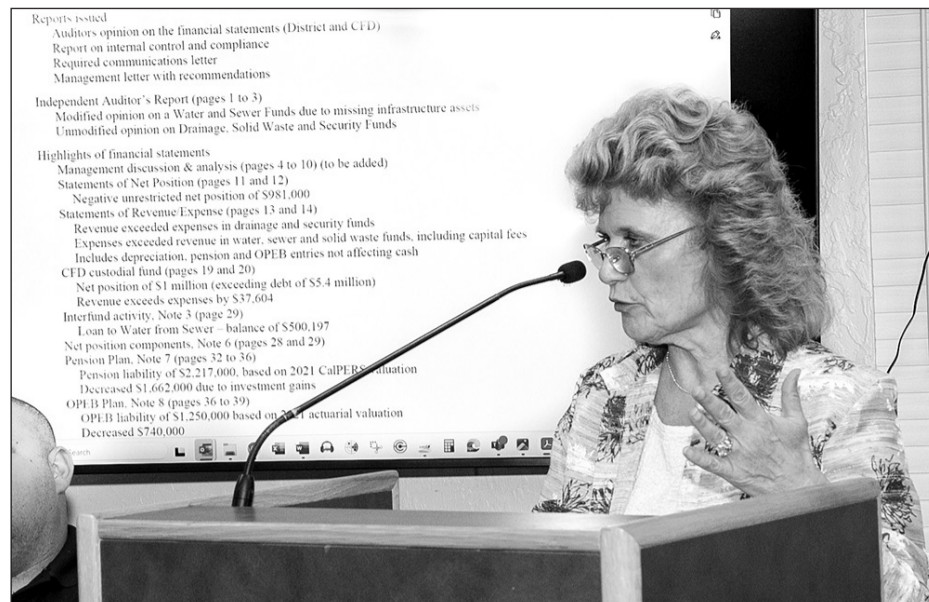
Audit Results

Shepline told the board that Richardson & Company had issued a modified opinion on the financial statements for the water and sewer funds because of missing infrastructure assets. The district's other funds – drainage, solid waste and security – received an unqualified report.

An unqualified report, often called a clean opinion, indicates the auditor found the financial statements present a true and fair view of the district's finances in accordance with accounting standards. A qualified, or modified, opinion means the statements are fairly presented except for a specific issue that is material but not pervasive.

The audit report also cited five material weaknesses and two significant deficiencies, most of them carried over from the three previous audits. Shepline said the problems stemmed largely from a shortage of finance staff.

"Cecilia had to jump into midway through fiscal year of 2021-22 to get



Auditor Ingrid Shepline provides an overview of the completed 2020-21 audit at the Rancho Murieta Community Services Board meeting on Aug. 20.

everything cleaned up to get where we are actually issuing a report," the auditor said.

Examples of internal control issues included delays in reporting payroll transactions and incomplete bank reconciliations. One reason for the modified opinion, Shepline said, was that developer-constructed infrastructure turned over to the district had not been quantified or recorded in the district's books.

"So, basically these assets are missing," she told the board.

Shepline also outlined recommendations that did not rise to the level of material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Among them were auditing capital assets, reviewing the district's reserves policy, updating a procedures manual that has not been revised in 10 years, and integrating the billing system with the general ledger.

"The billing system was unable to generate an accounts receivable aging report, so that is something that needs to be looked at," Shepline said.

When Board President John Merchant asked for comments, Director Tim Maybee said he didn't see any surprises.

Merchant agreed, noting that Min and her staff have been addressing problems as they arise. While the next two audits may be easier because staff now understand issues they didn't before, he cautioned the district will likely continue to face similar problems that could result in repeated findings from the auditors.

"The goal is that we can somehow work our way through where we get a clean audit," he said.

Director Linda Butler asked when the district will be able to determine the amount of its reserves.

"Not until the books get updated," Shepline replied.

On another point, Min reported that the 2021-22 audit included 34 adjustments: corrections of misstatements needed to balance accounts.

"That's not acceptable to me, so we need to make sure we don't have that many journal entries going forward," she said.

At the Aug. 19 Finance Committee meeting, Shepline noted that a typical audit would include only five to 10 adjustments.

Financial Report

Min reported that staff is making good progress on the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial records. She said 97% of the data for those years has already been entered into the district's Great Plains software.

She noted it was fortunate that one of the Robert Half temporary accountants hired by the district had experience with the district's older software. In addition, she brought in a Great Plains consultant to help with the data transfer.

Min said she expects to have draft audits for both years completed in November.

For years, district finance staff told the board that the Great Plains software was outdated and unsuited for a government agency because it could not handle fund accounting. As a workaround, staff relied on Excel spreadsheets. Min discovered that Great Plains did include a fund accounting module, but it had never been activated.

Min also updated the board on staffing changes, though she did not say whether they were affecting progress on the audits. One of the district's accounting clerks has left, and the CSD accountant is working part time while on paternity leave. In addition, one of the Robert Half junior accountants will be leaving at the end of the month.

To fill the gaps, Min said the district will bring in a higher-level temporary accountant to assist with accounts payable and to cover for the district's accountant. She also noted that she took over payroll in July and has already identified several areas for improvement.

Background

At the June Financial Committee meeting, Min reported significant challenges with the 2021-22 audit, which had already been submitted to the auditing firm. After sending a list of outstanding items to the district in February, the auditors received no response and were preparing to move on to another client, until Min intervened.

To keep the auditors engaged, she suspended all work on the 2022-23 and 2023-24 audit preparations and directed the temporary accountants, district accounting staff and other CSD employees to focus on resolving the 2021-22 audit issues.

This story is online at therivervalleytimes.com. ★★

Security, Developer Access are CSD Topics

Story and photo by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Community Services District board met Aug. 20 and discussed a range of topics, including security updates and an easement request from developers.

The board also received reports on the recently completed 2021-22 audit and from a working group that analyzed the draft Integrated Water Master Plan, and welcomed two new hires. (See four separate stories in this issue.) Additionally, directors received staff reports and elected board officers.

Security

Director Linda Butler, who chairs the Security Committee, reported that the district currently has only two patrol officers, although efforts are underway to hire two more. She noted that this staffing "barely covers the 24/7/365 schedule" and that Sgt. Brandon Arino fills in during vacations and unexpected absences. As a result, there will be times when patrol coverage is unavailable. Butler also reported that the gate staff includes seven full-time and four part-time officers.

Later in the meeting, Butler asked the board to consider her revision of the Community Service Officer job description. She said that the existing description was problematic because it had been copied from the Roseville Police Department without any modifications for the district. The board agreed to send the job description to the district's HR vendor for review.

Butler also sought board input on the equipment



Resident Candy Hern makes a public comment at the Rancho Murieta Community Services District meeting on Aug. 20.

that the district should supply to patrol officers. Arino began by recommending a return to the past practice of equipping security patrols with firearms, handcuffs, batons, pepper spray and potentially adding tasers. Arino also noted the district has four ballistic vests and has obtained quotes for body cameras.

Providing officers with multiple tools would enable them to follow a use-of-force progression, starting with verbal commands and escalating as necessary, according to Arino. He also noted that the community presents multiple targets for crime.

Although several directors disagreed with Arino's position, they said that they appreciated his candid comments.

The board debated at length about what equipment is appropriate, given that the patrol's role is only to "observe and report." Ultimately, Director Bill Gere suggested tabling the discussion for consideration at a later date.

Developer Access

Representing Rancho Murieta Properties, engineer Mike Robertson said

the company is seeking an easement through district property to connect 39 acres to the intersection of Jackson Highway and Murieta Drive. He emphasized that Rancho Murieta Properties has no immediate plans to develop the site, although the idea of building an apartment complex and homes had been floated in the past. Board members concluded the discussion with a general sentiment that they would prefer to wait for a more definitive development plan before considering any easement request.

Operations Report

Director of Operations Eric Houston reported that water consumption is roughly half the annual average, likely due to cooler weather. Clementia, Chesbro and Calero reservoirs are about 90.3% full, according to Houston. As a tertiary wastewater project nears completion, the district is experiencing more wastewater than usual for this time of year. Without the tertiary plant operating, some water had to be diverted from Clementia to the country club for

irrigation, and the district will also likely need to dispose of excess treated wastewater at the Van Vleck spray fields.

Houston also reported that the new fuel station is nearing completion, which will eliminate the need for district trucks to refuel at a local gas station and is expected to save about \$50,000.

In a separate agenda item, Houston received board approval for the purchase of an advanced water metering infrastructure for about \$165,000, as authorized in the current budget. The purchase includes software and a radio tower; some of the remaining funds will be used to add endpoints to existing water meters, allowing them to be read remotely.

Houston received board approval to add a third fountain to the Lost Lake retention basin, located off Reynosa Drive, to improve water quality and reduce stagnation. The project's cost is \$3,676.

He reported on efforts to complete a throttling valve that will equalize water levels in the district's two storage tanks.

The need for the valve

became apparent during a heat wave last summer, when the water level in the Rio Oso tank dropped sharply.

Houston said that he hopes the work will be finished by the time the first homes in the Residences come online, possibly as soon as December.

IT Report

IT Manager Andy Lee reported that he is overseeing the rollout of new iPhones for district staff, although the process has been delayed due to issues with AT&T and Apple.

Lee also noted that the district's surveillance cameras are aging; he is working with vendors on pricing and hopes to complete the upgrade by the end of the year.

Lee said he is also continuing to replace all district desktops and laptops, migrating to Windows 11, and upgrading the network infrastructure.

Additionally, Lee is seeking a new vendor to replace outdated equipment that facilitates communication between district offices and the wastewater plants.

Other Business

In other business, the board unanimously elected John Merchant as president and Butler as vice president.

The board approved the purchase of a new Ford F-250 pickup, which had already been authorized in the current budget, and granted permission for out-of-state training for chief plant operator Travis Bohannon.

The training will cover membrane systems currently used at the district's water treatment plant.

The board approved reimbursement of a \$380 plumbing bill for the repair of a water main in Murieta Village. Directors agreed with staff's recommendation to raise the \$5,000 threshold so future repairs can be approved by staff without board action.

The finance report is included in the separate story about the audits.

The community services board's next regular meeting will be at 5 p.m. Wednesday Sept. 17.

This story is online at therivervalleytimes.com. ★

SECURITY LOGS

Following is a summary of activity for the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Security Department for the following dates. Note: these log entries are condensed. For full security log details, go to the CSD website at rmcsd.com.

Aug. 22

3:30 a.m., Welfare Check, Anillo 2 Park. Reporting party concerned their friend was attempting

to drive after being dropped off. Subject's vehicle located unoccupied in his driveway upon arrival.

8:12 a.m., Vehicle Accident: White BMW 320 made contact with the middle island of the resident lane, just missing the bollard.

Video footage was reviewed and middle resident lane was observed to have no damage. Driver of vehicle appeared to

be OK as male subject exited after the incident to assess damage to vehicle. Administrative Sgt. Arino made contact with resident, who stated he was OK, just misjudged as he was merging over to the lane. Medical was not needed and no damage to property was observed.

Aug. 24

12:07 a.m., Trespassing: Vehicle at Lake Calero after hours. Vehicle

departed upon arrival. 10:10 p.m., Burglar alarm for RMA maintenance yard. Alarm off and area clear on arrival. No sign of forced entry or break-in.

Aug. 25

1:16 p.m., Disturbance: Followed up with Village Management regarding an incident that occurred Aug. 24 around 3 p.m. during the Luau event that took place in the clubhouse. A

resident entered the building, approaching a Village employee; a verbal altercation ensued over a billing issue. Both parties began pushing each other. Another resident got involved in attempts to mediate the situation, resulting in a physical altercation. The situation later calmed down on its own.

Sacramento County Sheriff's Department was notified by initial reporting

party and an incident number was provided to all parties.

No arrests were made and one person was later self-transported to the hospital for injuries in result of the incident.

Sept. 1

11:29 p.m., Alarm, Burger King: Company called stating audible alarm activated.

Alarm off on arrival and area secure. ★

County Names Hancock Teacher of the Year

By MPG Staff

ELK GROVE, CA (MPG) - Elk Grove Elementary School teacher Bethany Hancock was named 2025 Teacher of the Year by the Sacramento County Board of Education and honored alongside Sacramento teacher Derek Tahara at an Aug. 22 ceremony.

The Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) recognized district Teachers of the Year and announced the two county winners during its annual celebration at the Hilton Sacramento Arden West.

Hancock, a third-grade teacher in the Elk Grove Unified School District, and Tahara, a third-grade teacher at David Lubin Elementary School in the Sacramento City Unified School District, received the Elinor Lincoln Hickey Award of Merit, the top honor bestowed by the board. Trustees O. Alfred Brown Sr., Vanessa Caigoy, Heather Davis and Youth County Board Member Nairobi Dunbar presented the awards.

The Sacramento Scottish Rite continued its tradition of awarding perpetual trophies to the winners.

Hancock and Tahara now join a select



Bethany Hancock, a third-grade teacher at Elk Grove Elementary School, was named 2025 Teacher of the Year by the Sacramento County Board of Education.

group of educators who will represent Sacramento County in the California State Teachers of the Year program. Past honorees include Elinor Hickey, the 1978 County Teacher of the Year and namesake of the award.

The two winners were selected by a committee of education professionals,

including past Teachers of the Year, who interviewed candidates and reviewed essays from 13 district nominees. Large districts are eligible to nominate two teachers each year.

The program is presented by Sacramento County Office of Education in partnership with the Sacramento Kings,



Elk Grove Elementary School teacher Bethany Hancock received the Elinor Lincoln Hickey Award of Merit. Photos courtesy of Elk Grove Unified School District

Sacramento Republic FC, Sacramento River Cats, SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union and Sacramento Scottish Rite.

Sacramento County Office of Education serves more than 258,000 students across 13 districts in the county, providing direct education, training and support services. It also leads the Capital Service Region, a 10-county area in Northern California. ★

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Geeky Getups, '80s Music Delight Crowd

Continued from page 1

fantastic time and remember how grateful we all are for being in Rancho Murieta.”

Turner also acknowledged the third appearance of a food truck at an ETC concert.

“A big thanks to Drewski’s for helping keep us fueled up while we enjoy the music,” he said.

His introduction of the Murieta Dance Company was anything but ordinary. Turner told the audience, “Close your eyes and give them some privacy because we really don’t have a dressing room.” Moments later, Director Doreen Zimmermann unveiled a striking visual effect with dancer Valeriya Koveva, who appeared 10 feet tall thanks to a long, flowing skirt.

Zimmermann said the inspiration struck in the middle of the night.

“I woke up at 3 a.m. thinking about how to illustrate the song ‘Dance Me to the End of Love’ by Leonard Cohen,” she said. “I kept the thought and started working on the skirt the next day. The idea is to dance on a dance floor in a grand and over-the-top way.”

Concert

When it came time to introduce the headliners, Turner built the excitement.

“We’ve got a band that brings all the energy, all the fun and all of the unforgettable hits from the best decade ever,” he said. “Get ready to sing, to dance, to nerd out, because the ’80s show is here.”

The Spazmatics launched into their set with a booming rendition of



Band members parade through the dance floor after coming down from the stage.



Hijinks like this are all part of the show.

“No Parking on the Dance Floor.”

Fans wasted no time rushing forward, quickly filling the dance floor, though with barely enough space, there was more parking than dancing.

Many of those on the dance floor clearly grew up in the ’80s, with some

even sporting colorful outfits from the era.

The musicians topped them, dressed in deliberately nerdy attire from the same decade and pulling off the kind of hijinks fitting for a band called The Spazmatics.

The crowd sang along word-for-word to the

band’s playlist, which featured hits like “My Prerogative,” “The Boys Are Back in Town,” “I Can’t Go for That” and “What I Like About You.” The set closed with an over-the-top performance of “Bohemian Rhapsody,” with the audience shouting out lyrics on cue.



Re-creating an iconic moment in the film “Titanic,” the guitarist supports the drummer as he leans over the imaginary ship’s railing and sings “My Heart Will Go On.”



Youngsters scramble for a T-shirt tossed into their midst by emcee JT Turner. He also used a cannon to fire bigger shirts into the crowd on the hill.

After the crowd called for an encore, the band kicked it off with “Play That Funky Music,” then sashayed into disco favorites like “Shake Your Booty” and “Stayin’ Alive” before circling back to their original sound.

The crowd wasn’t the only one having a good time. Drummer Wayne Famous, serving as the band’s spokesman, said afterward, “The concert was overwhelmingly cool. The crowd was very vocal, super enthusiastic and very nice people.”

Turner said this summer’s ETC concert series was a clear success.

“Each show brought out great crowds, amazing

music and a special sense of community,” he said. “We look forward to every summer at the amphitheater. It’s always rewarding to see people dancing under the stars and enjoying the lake backdrop.”

Planning is already underway for next year.

“The board is exploring bands and ideas to keep building on the energy and momentum we had this year,” Turner said. “Our goal is to always bring top-notch entertainment and create unforgettable community experiences by the lake.”

See more photos from the event at therivervalley-times.com. ★

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