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AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

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Serving Fair Oaks, Orangevale & Sacramento County

SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

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Years of Service and Giving

How Janet and Warren McWilliams Shaped Fair Oaks



Known to locals as Mr. and Mrs. Fair Oaks, Janet and Warren McWilliams supported many charity groups, including the Fair Oaks Theatre Festival. Photo courtesy of the McWilliams.

By Keith Walter

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - For more than 60 years, Janet and Warren McWilliams have quietly but profoundly shaped the Fair Oaks community.

Through countless volunteer hours, generous donations and a steadfast belief in the power of neighbors working together, the McWilliams have left an imprint on nearly every corner of the village they've called home.

Their story is one of service, perseverance and love for a community that has grown and thrived alongside them.

Janet and Warren grew up and

raised their family in Fair Oaks at a time when the village still carried much of its rural charm. From the start, they were drawn to the close-knit spirit of the community. But rather than simply enjoying it, the McWilliams rolled up their sleeves and helped shape it.

Warren worked as assistant postmaster in Fair Oaks, where his friendly nature and deep local knowledge made him a familiar and trusted face. Janet balanced family and teaching responsibilities with an ever-growing commitment to community groups and service projects.

Building Traditions and Community Spaces

Some of the McWilliams' earliest

commitments were to the Fair Oaks Chamber, the Fair Oaks Rotary Club and Inner Wheel, and the Woman's Thursday Club. More recently, their fingerprints can be seen on improvements at the Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse, the amphitheater and neighborhood parks.

Together, they embodied the idea that building community spaces isn't just about bricks and mortar but about creating gathering places where memories are made.

The McWilliams also became key supporters of the Fair Oaks Theatre Festival. Year after year, they contributed both financially and with volunteer time, helping sustain the

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SMUD Offers Heat Pump Rebates

SMUD News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) and its customers have achieved a major clean-energy milestone for the Sacramento region.

Through SMUD's Advanced Home Solutions program, more than 20,000 gas-fired space and water heating systems were replaced with high-efficiency electric heat pumps. These upgrades are equivalent to converting 10,000 homes to all-electric living and cutting 20,000 tons of carbon emissions each year, the same as taking 8,000 gas-powered cars off local roads.

Households that switched from gas to electric using heat pump technology are saving an average of \$500 per year on utility bills. Together, customers are keeping a total of \$5 million annually in their pockets.

"Once my old gas water heater started having issues, I decided to take advantage of SMUD's rebate for a heat pump," said SMUD customer George El-Chemali. "Switching over has been nothing but amazing; it works better, it's more affordable and it feels good knowing the change is better for the environment."

More families are discovering that heat pumps can heat and cool their homes more affordably while helping keep the air cleaner, according to SMUD Distributed Energy Solutions director Rachel Huang.

"SMUD continues to show that clean energy isn't just good for the environment; it's good for family budgets, too," Huang said.

Heat pumps work like a two-way air conditioner, heating in the winter and cooling in the summer, powered by electricity instead of gas. Heat-pump water heaters use the same technology to deliver hot water while using up to 80-percent less energy than traditional models.

SMUD offers rebates to help more customers make the switch to heat pump technologies, including up to \$2,500 rebate for a heat pump HVAC system and up to \$3,000 rebate for a heat-pump water heater. These rebates can be combined with federal tax credits of up to \$2,000, (expiring Dec. 31.) as well as state and federal incentives.

Beyond heat pumps, SMUD offers rebates for induction cooktops and home EV charging. So far, residential customers have installed 8,000-plus chargers and 2,300-plus induction cooktops with SMUD support.

For more information, visit smud.org/GoElectric. ★

Village Park Grand Opening



A front view of the new Fair Oaks Performing Arts Center as seen from Plaza Park. Photo courtesy of Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District

By Shaunna Boyd

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - The Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District (FORPD) is hosting a grand opening of the newly renovated parks and facilities in the Village this October.

This expansive project saw improvements to

Village and Plaza parks, new playground equipment, upgrades to the Community Clubhouse, improved ADA access, additional parking and interconnected pedestrian pathways throughout the area. A complete renovation of the Veterans Memorial Amphitheatre,

now redesigned as part of the Fair Oaks Performing Arts Center, includes new seating and an interior Black Box theater space.

Much of the project funding came from Measure J, a voter-approved \$26.9 million bond measure passed in 2018. After design approval,

site demolition began in 2021, and construction officially started in 2022. This was an ambitious project, with various delays over the years due to the pandemic, extreme weather events and unforeseen site conditions. But the newly finished parks

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Chicken Festival Draws Thousands



Fair Oaks residents, Barbara and Renee, decided to show up to the event dressed in chicken costumes that they picked up last year. The two women have been best friends for 44 years.



Brooke from Gold River was one of several Girl Scout volunteers who came out to share her arts and crafts skills at the local Girl Scout Troop vendor booths.



Long-time Fair Oaks resident, Don Leek, is seen here with Rocky. Leek won the Cluck 'N' Crow Contest.



Chicken designers of all ages displayed their creative talent in the Great Chicken contest, where visitors voted for their favorite design.

Story and photos by Judy Andrews

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - Thanks to the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District, along with its sponsors and volunteers, the Chicken Festival has been going strong in

the community for 20 years. The popular event attracts thousands of visitors annually. This year's festival took place on Sept. 20 and lived up to expectations. From the hilarious Cluck N' Crow Contest hosted by the

Kiwanis Club of Orangevale-Fair Oaks to the Watering Hole hosted by the Rotary Club of Fair Oaks, there was something for everyone to enjoy throughout the day. Other event highlights included live music from The River City Outlaws and Dunsbar Road, the

Great Chicken (decorating contest), the Cornhole Tournament hosted by the Fair Oaks Chamber and Rocky's Roost Adventure Zone hosted by the Bella Vista Band Boosters. And Rocky's Roost Kids Zone sponsored by Learning

Jungle, the Food Court hosted by SacMoFo Food Trucks and dozens of vendors all added to the Chicken Festival fun. Of course, Rocky the Rooster was on hand, making sure everyone had a good time throughout the day. ★

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- Chicken Drumstick **99¢/lb**
- New Zealand Lamb Shoulder Chop Bone-In **\$4.99/lb**
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- Argentina Corned Beef 25% Less Sodium 12 oz **\$3.99/ea**
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- Deep Dahi Whole Milk & Low Fat Yogurt 5 lb **\$5.99/ea**
- Zergut Giant Beans in Tomato Sauce 550 gr **\$3.79/ea**
- Uvelka Buckwheat 1.5 kg **\$3.99/ea**
- Babkini Sunflower Seeds 500 gr **\$4.99/ea**
- Halal Fruit Jelly 12 oz **\$2.99/ea**

EUROPEAN DELI

- Columbus Black Forest Ham **\$9.19/lb**
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- Green Olives Stuffed with Jalapeno **\$5.19/lb**
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FROZEN & FISH DEPT

- Masago Seasoned Capelin Roe 170 g **\$4.99/ea**

HOUSEWARE

- Electric Rice Cooker (1.5qt) **\$54.99**
- Electric Rice Cooker (3qt) **\$59.99**
- Electric BBQ Grill **\$39.99**

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Years of Service and Giving

Continued from page 1
 festival through challenging periods. Their support ensured that generations of residents could enjoy Shakespeare under the stars, family comedies and youth theater productions.

Their dedication to preserving local history was equally strong. As active members of the Fair Oaks Historical Society, they helped maintain the community's sense of identity while celebrating its pioneer past. Janet, in particular, became known for her efforts to document local stories, ensuring that Fair Oaks' rich heritage would not be lost to time.

If there is one organization most synonymous with the McWilliams, it is the Fair Oaks Foundation for Leisure and Arts (FOFLA). Created after bringing the Sacramento Symphony to Fair Oaks for the Centennial, Warren and Janet helped found the Fair Oaks Foundation for Leisure and Arts and began the popular Concerts in the Park.

Warren was active in Rotary, rising to president in 1987.

Janet, meanwhile, poured her energy into the Woman's Thursday Club of Fair Oaks, where she held multiple leadership roles over the years. From organizing events to steering community projects, Janet helped the club remain one of Fair Oaks' most enduring service organizations.

Through both Rotary and the Woman's Thursday Club, the McWilliams championed projects supporting youth, schools, the arts, international service and



Warren and Janet McWilliams are at home in 2023, holding a family photo. Photo by Judy Andrews.

local nonprofit organizations. Their philanthropy extended even further, funding scholarships, donating to community causes and quietly supporting local charities whenever there was a need.

Mentors and Role Models

Perhaps the McWilliams' most lasting contribution is the example they set for others. Younger generations of volunteers often describe them as mentors, who not only encouraged participation but also demonstrated how to serve with humility and joy.

"They never told people what

to do," said longtime community volunteer Vicki Walter. "Instead, they invited you to be part of something bigger than yourself. That's why so many people followed their lead."

Their partnership as a couple also inspired admiration. For more than six decades, Janet and Warren have worked side by side, each complementing the other's strengths. Their teamwork shows that community service can be a family affair, one that enriches both the givers and those who receive.

Today, as the McWilliams

enjoy their well-earned retirement years, the legacy of their service surrounds them. Events they helped establish continue to thrive. Parks that they supported welcome new generations of families. Students who received scholarships have gone on to impressive careers of their own. And organizations such as Rotary, the Historical Society, and the Woman's Thursday Club remain strong because of their decades of dedication.

"Warren was president of the Fair Oaks Historical Society multiple times. He impressed all of

us at a meeting when he recited the street addresses of most of those present. As the retired assistant postmaster, he knew his customers and community well," said fellow Rotarian Ralph Carhart.

Celebrating a Lifetime of Giving

On Tuesday, Sept. 30, the Fair Oaks community will gather at the newly-remodeled Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse, 7997 California Ave., to honor Janet and Warren McWilliams for their lifetime of service. The celebration is an opportunity for neighbors, friends and fellow volunteers to say thank you.

It will be an evening not only of recognition but of gratitude for the couple who gave so much without ever asking for anything in return.

Attendees are asked to bring potluck dinner items. This event is free but donations will be accepted at the door to help cover the cost of the event. RSVP online to eventbrite.com/e/mcwilliams-life-time-of-service-awards-tickets-1670733241099?aff=oddtcreator or to keith4rcfo@gmail.com.

As Fair Oaks looks ahead to the future, the McWilliams' story serves as a reminder of what's possible when residents invest their time, talents and treasure into the place they call home.

For more than 60 years, Janet and Warren have shown that true community isn't something you inherit; it's something you build, one act of service at a time. ★

Village Park Grand Opening



Guests will watch shows from brand-new seating in the Veterans Memorial Amphitheater. Photo courtesy of Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District

Continued from page 1
 and facilities will offer an enhanced experience for park visitors, creating a true gathering place for the community.

District Administrator Mike Aho said, "The community, the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Board, businesses in the Village and staff are all anxious to get the facilities opened and begin this new chapter for the arts and entertainment, and its impact and value to Fair Oaks."

The district anticipates a soft opening the last week of September, pending final inspections by Sacramento County. "The inspections are progressing well, although we don't have a specific date yet" for official approval, said Aho via email. While it's possible that minor last-minute issues could slightly delay the soft opening, Aho said "all indications suggest that there won't be any problems."

The grand opening celebration will offer a full slate of community events throughout the weekend, starting on Thursday, Oct. 9 at 8:30 p.m. with Comedy Under the Stars at \$20 per ticket.

The official ribbon cutting will be held on



New playground equipment in Village Park is ready for the community's younger visitors. Photo courtesy of Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District

Friday, Oct. 10 at 4:30 p.m., and is free to attend. After the ribbon cutting, there will be a ticketed gala with dinner, live entertainment and dancing. VIP tickets for the cocktail hour and dinner are \$165 per person. Tickets for the cocktail hour only are \$65.

The Fair Oaks Folk Festival will be held on Saturday, Oct. 11, from noon to 10 p.m. Free musical performances will be held throughout Village Park. Tickets (\$35 general admission, or \$55

VIP with Beer Garden access) will be available to see the headliners, Jessica Malone Band and Solabel, perform in the new amphitheater.

Finally, the opening weekend will conclude with a Community Carnival on Sunday, Oct. 12 from 10:00 a.m. to noon. This free family-friendly event will feature games, performances, activities and site tours.

For more information or to purchase event tickets, visit <https://activitymessenger.com/m/puZd58E>. ★

Teens Wanted: Lend a Hand!

Helping Hands OV News Release

ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG) - Got a rake? A lawn mower? A big heart? The nonprofit Helping Hands OV - Orangevale Fair Oaks encourages teens ages 13 to 17 to join its Green Teen Project, an enjoyable way to help neighbors in need while earning community service hours and prizes.

The Green Teen Project connects teens with residents who could use extra help around the yard. Volunteers can mow lawns, rake leaves and tackle small outdoor chores, making a real difference in someone's day and their community. It's hands-on, rewarding and an opportunity for teens to show off their yardwork skills (or learn a few new ones).

"Helping teens get involved in their community is exciting and inspiring," said Cyndi Rose, a Helping Hands OV board member. "It's simple, it's fun and it really makes a neighbor's day better."

Teens can sign up online at helpinghandsov.org. Once the form is complete, parents receive a consent form and teens receive a starter kit with a Green Teen T-shirt, safety goggles and more gear to ensure readiness to start helping on their own schedule.

The program is open to all Orangevale,

Fair Oaks, Citrus Heights and Folsom teens, whether they attend San Juan Unified schools.

Helping Hands OV is also participating in the sixth annual Fall Food Drive on Saturday, Oct. 4 at Divine Savior Church. Community members are encouraged to donate non-perishable food items to support families in need.

Can't drop off donations on Oct. 4? No problem. Donations can be brought by Thursday, Oct. 2 to one of five locations: Katie Yount State Farm, MODE Brewing, Scotty's Hideaway, Greenback Hazel Animal Hospital or Miller's Ace Hardware. Every item helps.

"Whether it's mowing a lawn, raking leaves or donating food, teens and families have a real chance to make an impact," said Sydnie Anderson, Helping Hands OV president. "Green Teen is about giving back, having fun and making your community a better place, one yard at a time."

For more information about the Green Teen Project and volunteering opportunities, visit helpinghandsov.org.

Helping Hands OV continues to make a meaningful impact in the community through volunteerism, service and programs that inspire unity. Teens and families are encouraged to take part in both initiatives and help foster a stronger, greener and more caring community. ★





Fair Oaks Historical Society's 50th Anniversary



130th Anniversary of Fair Oaks Colony

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Life-Saving Fight Against Stigma

Ostomy Awareness Campaign Ongoing

By Idaly Valencia

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Many people might not know the term "ostomy" but a Galt resident and a retired nurse have made it their mission to change that.

Dan "Dry Dock" Shockley, a retired U.S. Navy veteran, is raising awareness of his rare disease by advocating for policy and legislation, supporting research opportunities and educating medical students.

He has teamed up with retired ostomy nurse Joyce Moss, who has more than 40 years of experience, to lead a campaign focused on early colon cancer detection and ostomy surgery.

Shockley served 22 years in the Navy, including during the Persian Gulf War and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He retired at 43 after a career that took him to ports around the world.

In 2012, a routine checkup when Shockley was 51 revealed a life-altering diagnosis: attenuated familial adenomatous polyposis, or AFAP, a hereditary colon-cancer mutation. He had no symptoms or family history.

"Both sides of the Shockley family, we have no idea where it came from," he said.

A colonoscopy at the VA hospital in Oahu, Hawaii, led to genetic testing at Tripler Army Medical Center, which confirmed the diagnosis. The mutation was first identified by the late Dr. Henry T. Lynch, regarded as the founding father of hereditary cancer research. Shockley even met Lynch, who reviewed his case.

Doctors told Shockley that surgery was the only option, since untreated polyps carried a 100% chance of developing into colon cancer. He needed an ileostomy, a surgery that creates an opening, or stoma, in the abdomen to allow waste to exit the body when the colon or rectum cannot function properly.

"My mindset is, I tend not to think about things I'm not able to control, such as medical issues, but I can control my positive attitude," said Shockley.

Shockley leaned on his military mindset to face the diagnosis and the surgery's lifelong implications.

"The Marines' mantra is adapt, improvise and overcome," he said. "When I got diagnosed, I immediately went into battle mode in a positive way because I wanted to be able to take this on."

Shockley underwent a six-hour surgery to remove a large tumor and now lives with a permanent ostomy.

He joked with his doctors, asking, "Did you find everything you were looking for?" and used humor to positively cope with the situation.

Thirteen years later, Shockley no longer faces the threat of colon cancer and calls himself a hereditary colon cancer warrior.

"I go about my life like I don't have it," said Shockley.

He continues long-term care at Stanford Cancer Center and undergoes surveillance every other year. Shockley also shares his story and genetic results with medical students nationwide at universities including Rutgers, Michigan, Vanderbilt and Stanford.

Shockley formed a close bond with Moss, his first ostomy nurse at the VA hospital in Mather. Together, they lead an awareness campaign to help reduce stigma around living with an ostomy and to emphasize the importance of early colon cancer detection.



From left are retired ostomy nurse Joyce Moss and Galt colon cancer warrior and ostomy advocate Dan "Dry Dock" Shockley. Photo by Idaly Valencia

Moss told The Galt Herald that there is a shortage of ostomy nurses, with about 6,000 nationwide compared to an estimated 750,000 to 1 million patients. Certified ostomy nurses, she said, prepare patients for the lifelong care required.

She emphasized that stigma could leave some patients feeling isolated, limiting themselves from social experiences.

"There are many ostomates who end up being homebound, not because of physics but because of emotion," she said.

Moss also explained how the stigma often stems from cultural taboos.

"We don't like to talk about the bathroom," she said. "All of a sudden, you have this external pouch you're wearing, and once you become accustomed to it, it very much becomes part of your life... it's the fear of what others are going to think about it."

A common problem is patients not knowing where to find help or what devices are available, Moss said, since every ostomate is different. Families might also be unprepared for aftercare, she said, recalling a veteran whose wife managed his

care until she fell ill. Their adult children had never been taught to help their father who was an ostomate.

"So it's a matter of sharing that part of yourself that other people may not understand," Moss said. "There are lots of things that make it difficult to talk about and

that's the part that I think is really important, where people like Dan are really good about being open and sharing."

In 2023, Shockley's advocacy led to a California Senate concurrent resolution recognizing Oct. 7 as Ostomy Awareness Day. The resolution aligned with World Ostomy Day, observed every three years by the United Ostomy Associations of America.

On June 23, Senate Concurrent Resolution 73 was passed to establish June 16 to 22 as Familial Adenomatous Polyposis Awareness Week, the first in the country to pass as a resolution rather than a proclamation, Shockley said.

Sen. Roger Niello, who carried the resolution, said the effort is about compassion and visibility.

"It is important to foster understanding, reduce stigma and build a supportive community for those living with an ostomy," Niello said. "With recognition such as this one, I hope people remember that compassion for our friends and neighbors with health challenges starts here at home."

Niello credited Shockley for

inspiring the resolution.

"Mr. Shockley is the one that reached out to me and educated me about World Ostomy Day and I was inspired by the strength and resilience of individuals like him," Niello said. "Many quietly navigate life with courage, and honoring this mission is my way of standing beside them and helping others see the dignity in their journey."

When asked what advice he would give to someone newly diagnosed or preparing for ostomy surgery, Shockley said to be proactive.

"Ask lots of questions and talk to the medical professionals that are readily available that know about it... You know the old saying, there is no such thing as a stupid question," Shockley said.

He also advises patients to contact the United Ostomy Associations of America, which offers resources online and by phone.

Shockley said his goal is to continue raising awareness and destigmatizing ostomies, carrying forward the legacy of Dr. Lynch.

"He was still researching up until a month before he passed away," Shockley said. "When he passed away, I decided my focus needed to be educating medical students, virtually or in person, to continue his legacy."

Now, Shockley and Moss are working with Niello on a third state Senate resolution recognizing World Ostomy Day on Oct. 4, observed every three years on the first Saturday in October.

More information and resources are available at the Carmichael Ostomy Association at coostomy.org and the United Ostomy Associations of America at ostomy.org.

Based in Carmichael, the Carmichael Ostomy Association has Zoom meetings from 10 a.m. to noon the first Saturday of each month with guest speakers and to discuss specific concerns, issues, suggestions and personal experiences. ★

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Applause for Literary Award Winners

By Kimberly A. Edwards

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Seven awardees will be recognized at the “100 Years of Writing Excellence in Sacramento” Gala on Oct. 18, when the California Writers Club Sacramento hits its century mark and celebrates at North Ridge Country Club in Fair Oaks.

The award recipients are 916 Ink, Capital Storytelling, Jan Haag, Ginger Rutland, Sacramento Poetry Center, Sacramento Press Club and Under the Gum Tree.

While recognizing that literary service abounds in our area, a Blue Ribbon Panel identified the above for nurturing the development of talent and appreciation for the written word and contributing to a larger purpose influencing Sacramento’s literary reach in children and adults.

The Oct. 18 Centennial will bring writers, reporters and historians together to learn about early writing and publishing in Sacramento. Partners and friends include the Crocker Art Museum, the California State Library, the Center for Sacramento History and the Sacramento Public Library

Keynote speaker and Pulitzer Prize winner Jack Ohman will talk about “At Wit’s End.”

A star-studded line-up featuring Rich Ehisen of Capitol Weekly, literary agent Sandra Proudman, Sacramento journalist at local CBS affiliate Alison Linton, Pushcart Prize nominee Carol Lynn Stevenson Grellas, cultural historian Maryellen Burns and documentary filmmaker Al González will entertain.

Kiyo Sato, 102 and the William Saroyan International Writing Award winner for “Dandelion



Keynote Speaker Jack Ohman will challenge attendees with his interpretation of “At Wit’s End.” California Writers Club of Sacramento



Kiyo Sato, 102 and the William Saroyan International Writing Award winner for “Dandelion through the Crack” (renamed “Kiyo’s Story”) will be at the gala. Sato’s book is on display at the Smithsonian Institute. California Writers Club of Sacramento

through the Crack” (renamed “Kiyo’s Story”) will attend. Her book is on display at the Smithsonian Institute. Attendees can bring along a copy of her book if they want an autograph.

Rare books from early California Writers Club members will be displayed at the gala. Many books were made into movies or popular TV series. One movie was nominated for an Academy Award. Also displayed will be a 1913 woodcut of the club logo designed by University of California, Berkeley professor Perham Nahl, nephew of Charles Christian Nahl, whose work hangs in the Crocker Art Museum.

The celebration includes a buffet, the Jazz Band “Syncopating Sea-Monkeys” of River City High School, and a no-host bar, including a Jack London “Glass in Hand.”

The California Writers Club is a nonprofit organization. For information on the event, buying tickets or sponsoring this literary event, visit online

sacramentowriters.org.

2025 Greater Sacramento Literary Awardees

916 Ink is a creative writing and literacy nonprofit organization since 2010 that provides workshops and tutoring to transform youth into strong readers, confident communicators and published authors. Programs increase literacy skills, improve vocabulary, teach empathy, positively impact social and emotional learning, and expand communication skills. Partnerships are with school sites and community groups serving marginalized students, including economically-disadvantaged, system-impacted youth and English Language Learners. 916 Ink has transformed more than 6,000 youth into authors in 300-plus professionally published anthologies.

Capital Storytelling is an arts education organization in Sacramento that empowers individuals to share their personal stories and, in doing so, to foster connection, empathy and compassion across race,

gender, religion, abilities, orientation and political affiliations. This is accomplished through classes and workshops and special programs, including an Immigrant Storytelling Program, which empowers first- and second-generation immigrants to share their stories, and a Story Ambassador Program, which trains leaders to lead storytelling workshops.

Jan Haag was a writing professor at Sacramento City College and journalism department chair, advising the student newspaper, literary journal and nonfiction magazine. Before that, she was a copy editor and feature writer for the Sacramento Bee, covered the capitol for United Press International and was editor of Sacramento Magazine. Haag has had many poems, essays and fiction published in journals and anthologies. Her poetry collection, “Companion Spirit,” is comprised of poems about her late husband. She is co-publisher of a Sacramento publishing company, River Rock Books. She

publishes daily poems on her website (janishaag.com) and is working on a poetry collection and a novel set in Sacramento in the 1950s and 1970s. She hosts writing groups, including a monthly Writing as Healing group in Elk Grove.

Ginger Rutland spent 17 years as a reporter with KCRA TV in Sacramento and then with KRON TV in San Francisco as that station’s capitol bureau reporter. She earned a local Emmy at KRON for her documentary, “Showdown at Diablo,” about the controversy surrounding the nuclear power plant’s building and commissioning at Diablo Canyon in San Luis Obispo County. Rutland wrote and produced a play, “When We Were Colored, A Mother’s Story,” adapted from her mother, Eva Rutland’s, memoir. The play is about a middle-class Black family’s journey from the segregated south before World War II to post-war California, through the Civil Rights era and Black Power Movement to the

racially-blended families of today.

The Sacramento Poetry Center, founded in 1979, offers readings, workshops, writers’ conferences, publications and a lending library. “Landing Signals, released on Oct.26, 1986, was the first major anthology (print and audio) of Sacramento poets. The center’s annual writers’ conferences and Poetry Month celebrations have featured some of today’s leading poets, including Pulitzer Prize winners Gary Snyder and Philip Levine, former U.S. Poets Laureate Juan Filipe Herrera and Robert Hass.

The Sacramento Press Club, established in 1961, is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to supporting the next generation of journalists through scholarships for college students. The scholarship program is paid for through member donations and ticket sales to regular events with California and national newsmakers. The Sacramento Press Club annually awards nearly \$60,000 in scholarships to a proudly diverse array of students.

Under the Gum Tree is a reader-supported, quarterly literary arts magazine publishing creative nonfiction and visual art. It champions the mantra of telling stories without shame since 2011. The mission is sharing stories that remind readers of shared humanity. Each issue includes seven to 10 original nonfiction stories and personal essays, one photo essay and one cover artist whose work is featured throughout the interior pages. The magazine nominates for the Pushcart Prize every year and essays published have been listed as notable in the Best American Essays. ★



Shred Day 2025

St. Vincent de Paul Fund Raiser
“Help Us Help The Poor”

5057 Cottage Way, at the Walnut Avenue Parking Lot
Saturday, October 18th
8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
 (Or until the truck is full)

On-site Shred Truck • You Can Watch

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\$1000 - \$2000
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Orangevale Woman’s Club’s

BUNCO NIGHT

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Friday

April 4th

Doors open 6
Games begin 7

Orangevale
Community
Center

6826 Hazel
Ave

Tickets \$25

Reserve your seat:

www.orangevalewomensclub.org
call/text 916-417-9750



Bring a package of menstrual items to receive 2 raffle tickets for the scratcher ticket apron!

A portion of the proceeds will go back to the Orangevale Community to support our scholarship fund and local school needs.



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Community Food Drive Aims for Record Year

October Fun for Everyone



Volunteers at the Orangevale Fair Oaks Food Bank Fall Community Food Drive, hosted at Divine Savior Church in Orangevale, have fun helping. Photo courtesy of Orangevale Fair Oaks Food Bank

By Patsy McGavock

ORANGEVALE/FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - The Fall Community Food Drive is a movement with momentum and momentum comes from the group, not the individual alone. Started in 2020 with one congregation following the big heart of one parishioner, the drive has grown to more than 50 organizations.

Each year, the community breaks the previous record, now at 30,000 pounds in 2024. Don't miss your opportunity to add weight to another record-breaking event at the Orangevale Fair Oaks Food Bank.

Divine Savior Catholic Church, located at 9079 Greenback Lane, Orangevale, will again host the drive-through drop-off drive from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 4. Most needed items are cereal, peanut butter, pasta, pasta sauce and ready-to-eat canned meals. Cash donations are welcome.

Hundreds of volunteers unload and sort food to music and good vibes. This year, two car clubs, the Sacramento Mustang Club and the Low Rider Commission, will also make deliveries and provide entertainment.

"What's awesome this year, with so much awareness now, are the number of sponsors and individual donors," said Marcus Arnold, the event founder who coordinates community partners alongside the food bank's community outreach coordinator Jose Zambrano. "We ask, 'Can you donate a case?' and people are responding," Arnold said.

One sponsor, Lindseys Olives, is donating cases of olives, thanks to a connection with a parent at Earl LeGette Elementary School.

"Right out of the gate this year, the schools have been really involved," said Arnold.

Elementary school staff and middle school student councils are taking the lead, while Twin Lakes art students are creating



Volunteers sort food at the Orangevale Fair Oaks Food Bank. Photo courtesy of Orangevale Fair Oaks Food Bank

promotional fliers. The food bank currently serves 4,300 individuals, or 1,500 families, up from 2,700 families last year.

"Our need for staple foods is growing as well," said Andrea Scollay, food bank director. "With so much going on in the world and everyday lives, we are offering a little hope and breathing room for these families."

Since 2020, the drive has expanded beyond churches to civic clubs, scout troops, sports teams, park and recreation departments and local businesses. Last year, Orangevale Water Company began sharing fliers in bills, reaching more than 7,900 customers. This year's greatest growth is in sponsors, school collections and interest clubs.

In a dedicated community circle, churches continue to join, including Radiant Church in Orangevale, relaunched and growing since 2023, and Celtic Cross Church in Citrus Heights.

"God willing," said Arnold, "we will be directing a lot of traffic this year. The awareness is just blowing up."

Be part of the momentum: share the message, invite others, fill a bag with staple foods and drive through the sixth annual Fall Community Food Drive on Saturday, Oct. 4. ★



Judy Andrews
By Judy Andrews, Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - October is a busy month in the community, especially with the grand opening of the new Village Park and Performing Arts Center at 4238 Main St., Fair Oaks. Take a look at the following events hosted by Fair Oaks Chamber members.

The spooky season starts on **Thursday, Oct. 2**, with a **Boo Bash and Trunk or Treat Fundraiser** at Fair Oaks Park (11549 Fair Oaks Blvd.) Enjoy an evening of ghoulish grub (in partnership with Food Truck Mania) and trick-or-treating with the kids. Event hours are from 5 to 7:30 p.m. The event is free but space is limited. Pre-register today at the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District website: forpd.org/events.

The Orangevale-Fair Oaks Community Foundation is hosting its **sixth annual Food Drive on Saturday, Oct. 4**, at Divine Savior Catholic Church (9079 Greenback Lane, Orangevale). Food drop-off hours are from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. For a list of food needs, visit the Orangevale-Fair Oaks

Food Bank website at ovfofb.org/blog. Celebrate the grand opening of the new Village Park and Performing Arts Center beginning Thursday, Oct. 9, with Comedy Under the Stars. Be among the first to experience the newly renovated Veterans Memorial Amphitheatre. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. and the show



starts at 8:30 p.m. For details and ticket info, visit forpd.org/events.

Don't miss the first **Fair Oaks Folk Festival on Saturday, Oct. 11**, at the new Veterans Memorial Amphitheatre located in Village Park. This all-day celebration features two outdoor stages, local food and drink and a VIP Lounge. General admission tickets are \$35 each or \$55 for the VIP experience. For more information, visit forpd.org/events.

Meet up with your neighbors at the **Fair Oaks Community Carnival** at Village Park on **Sunday, Oct. 12**, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bring the family for a day of fun and games, live performances, new facility tours, and more. Admission is free.

Be sure to mark your calendar for the **Fair**

Oaks 130th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, Oct. 25, at Village Park. Opening Ceremonies begin at noon., followed by live music by the band On Air until 4 p.m. This event is free for all ages.

Tickets are now on sale for the **Fair Oaks Historical Society's 50th Anniversary Celebration Dinner** happening on Saturday, Oct. 25. Happy hour begins at 5 p.m., and the dinner banquet will be served at 6 p.m., followed by music and entertainment until 8 p.m. For more information, visit: fairoakshistory.org/events.

Craft your most spooktacular and creative scarecrows to be displayed at the Village Park Plaza from **Oct. 27 to Oct. 31**. Prizes will be awarded by popular vote from the public.

Families, groups, individuals and businesses are invited to participate. For more information about the **Fair Oaks Village Scarecrow Spectacular**, visit forpd.org/events.

Creep on over to Village Park for the **Monster Mash Midway on Thursday, Oct. 30**, from 2 to 5 p.m. Kids of all ages will enjoy ghoulish games, eerie entertainment and spooktacular photo ops. This free event occurs alongside the Rotary Club's Safer Halloween, featuring trick-or-treating throughout the Village. For details, visit forpd.org/events.

Have a safe and fun Halloween. See you in Fair Oaks! ★



Fewer Sucky Days

Are you grumpy? Can you change? You might after you check in with my Happiness Expert. They call her "Your Ray of Sunshine" and she is on a mission to inspire happier, healthier lives. With humor, heart, and six simple steps, **Deborah Mallow** hopes to help you overcome procrastination, self-doubt, and get you unstuck with **"6 Steps to Fewer Days That Suck."** She gave me an abbreviated version on my POPPTALK Radio Show.

1. THE DECISION. IT ALL STARTS WITH AWARENESS AND THE CHOICE TO PRIORITIZE WELL-BEING. It's the first step because nothing changes without the decision to change. Understand thought patterns, triggers, and nurtures self-acceptance. Create your own positive routines. Research shows we can counteract negative thoughts and the natural cortisol spike (our body's stress hormones) that occurs after waking. Deborah's routine is to give yourself a hug of acceptance. Smile at yourself in the mirror—proven to release feel-good hormones. Add a word of gratitude, or an upbeat affirmation and carry that with you throughout the day.

2. DITCH BAD HABITS. LET GO OF WHAT HOLDS YOU BACK. Before we build—we need to clear the space. It's the second step because, before we can build better habits, we need to make space by letting go of what drags us down. Daily Decisions flip the script. Replace negative self-talk and energy drains. SCIENCE BACKED calls for Reframing, non-productive thoughts helping to build confidence and resilience...nurturing well-being.

3. THE MINDSET SHAPES HOW YOU THINK. It's the third step because once bad habits are gone---we can build a strong mental foundation. DAILY DECISIONS reframe thoughts. Choosing to re-

spond—not react (not allowing emotions to drive the bus) is what helps us manage circular thoughts, worry, fear, burnout, anger etc. SCIENCE-BACKED means our brains thrive on patterns. Daily practice = long-term change + positive thought habits that stick.

4. THE ACTION. DON'T JUST DREAM—PLAN, THEN DO. This is the fourth step because, with a clear head and a strong mindset, we're now ready to act and incorporate what uplifts us into our daily routines and creates simple habits that spark joy and motivation. SCIENCE-BACKED means Taking action, creates momentum and improves mood, and reduces stress, procrastination, and excuses.

5. ATTITUDE. SHOW UP WITH POSITIVE ENERGY TO HELP TACKLE CHALLENGES AND SET-BACKS. It's fifth because action without the right attitude can burn us out. Show up consistently, stay positive, and pass it on. SCIENCE-BACKED means Natural mood-boosters like walking, decreases sensitivity to stress and pain. Laughter and joy-based activities release endorphins and reduces stress.

6. COMMITMENT. KEEP GOING EVEN WHEN IT'S HARD. Transformation begins with consistency. Own your path forward...one intentional choice at a time. It's sixth because nothing sticks unless we commit to it. Value yourself, stick to your vision, build on your wins and be kind to yourself and others. SCIENCE-BACKED means Helping others activates the brain's reward center and boosts well-being.

Check out www.dailydecisions.com/ inspire to join her free inspirations. And don't forget Deborah Mallow's **"6 Steps to Fewer Days That Suck"** to get unstuck! **NEW LIFE! NEW YOU!** ★



Stained Glass Concert

October 25 | 7:30pm

Fremont Presbyterian Church: 5770 Carlson Dr, Sacramento, CA

VIVALDI Gloria
MOZART Regina Coeli
JAMES WHITBOURN Requiem Canticorum and Lux in Tenebris



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Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



Can it be that the NBA preseason is upon us, and less than two weeks away? Yes, Kings fans, it's nearly time to don those jerseys and break out the rally towels once again.

Much has been said about the lack of moves the Kings have made during the offseason, and the numbers don't lie.

Aside from shoring up the point guard position with the acquisition of veteran Dennis Schroder, Sacramento has only the draft to look back on as it relates to adding talent to this year's squad.

Much discussion about adding Russell Westbrook to the team, and a constant dialogue about acquiring Jonathan Kuminga from the Golden State Warriors, but as of today, neither of those transactions has been consummated.

Do the Sacramento Kings really need those two players to be successful this year? You bet they do, and Scott Perry is on the hot seat before he literally has a chance to sit down. This is the life of an NBA general manager, and it's what he signed up for.

Obviously, there are other players besides Westbrook and Kuminga that could add talent to the current squad, but for now if we can believe what we hear and read, the focus remains on these two veterans to boost our winning chances.

Fans and Pundits are looking askance at the Kings in general, so what are the glaring needs that can silence the critics and get the Sacramento Kings out of the gate on a winning note?

Front court help remains the most pressing need, and athletic big men are a tough commodity to come by, particularly this late in the off season.

Watching 6'9" Trey Lyles quietly walk out the back door after four plus years with the Kings made no sense, and losing a proven veteran was a gut punch to those of us that appreciated what Lyles brought to the court every night. Mistake, yes, I believe it was a definite mistake, but the Kings will have to move on and try to find someone to replace those missing minutes going forward.

Isaac Jones has been waiting for an opportunity to log more minutes, and this may be the chance he has been

looking for. But even if Isaac steps up and plays well, the Sacramento Kings are still in need of front-court help.

Apparently, the pressing issue that has stalled trade talks with Jonathan Kuminga, has been the Kings reluctance to giving the Warriors a 1st round unrestricted free agent in the package.

The Kings have been willing to offer up a first round draft pick, but it comes with restrictions.

I believe the time has come to acquiesce and give the Warriors the unrestricted 1st round pick they're looking for. Kuminga is worth it, and his upside is huge.

On paper this just doesn't seem to be a difficult decision, so I'm baffled that the Kings don't see the obvious upside to pulling the switch.

The energy that the Kuminga trade would bring to Sacramento is incalculable, but rest assured it wouldn't hurt ticket sales!

As fans we can only go by what's reported and what we read, but for this writers money, do what is necessary to put the name of Jonathan Kuminga on the roster, and let's start the 2025/2026 season of a high note.

I also support adding aging veteran Russell Westbrook, largely because he has a reputation for being an excellent team player and would add a presence in the locker room that is hard to measure. In addition, Westbrook looks and plays like he did ten years ago, and whether occasionally starting or coming off the bench, there is no doubt in my mind that Westbrook will be a welcome addition that will bring with it wins.

Is there a surprise in store that no ones heard or read about? Probably, and let's hope that Scott Perry has done his homework and has just such a surprise in store for the Kings faithful.

Don't lose heart, Kings fans because it's always darkest before the dawn.

Stay tuned and get ready, because NBA basketball is right around the corner!

All the best!

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

Social Security Matters

Should I Claim Social Security Early Because it is Going Bankrupt?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: My best friend is going to be 62 and wants to begin taking her Social Security immediately. Her reasoning not to wait is the thought that it is going to run out in 10 years, so she wants as much of her money before that happens. I have paid into Social Security my entire working life (44 years and counting). What are your thoughts on taking it as soon as you are eligible? **Signed: Uncertain what to do.**

Dear Uncertain: Deciding when to claim Social Security is a sometimes-confusing task, but no one should ever claim SS early because they believe Social Security will go bankrupt in the near future. Social Security cannot and will not go bankrupt. What your friend may be referring to is the fact that Social Security will be facing some financial issues in 2033 unless Congress acts soon to reform the program. And they will act, but likely not until they must.

The fact is, Social Security still has about \$2.7 trillion in reserved funds which are now being

used to pay full benefits. If that Reserves balance were to be fully depleted, then Social Security would need to go to a "cash basis" (essentially, paying out in benefits only what is received in SS taxes), which would result in about a 21% cut in everyone's benefit. In other words, even if Congress neglected to reform the program, beneficiaries would still get about 79% of their monthly benefit starting in about 2033/2034. Hardly anyone believes that Congress will fail to eventually reform Social Security, and, in fact, they already know how to do that reform (they just currently lack the bipartisanship to accomplish it). But neglecting reform would amount to political suicide for all members of Congress, which is extremely unlikely to happen.

Here at the AMAC Foundation, we are confident that Congress will soon address Social Security's future financial dilemma, and we have been working on potential solutions. We have, for several years, been providing these suggestions to various members of Congress, and those members are now considering our proposals. Thus, we do not suggest making a Social Security claiming decision based on fear of the program going bankrupt. That fear is unfounded. Instead, we suggest that everyone decide when to claim based upon their individual personal situation,

considering their need for the SS money, their life expectancy, and their marital status. And remember, claiming early (before one's SS full retirement age (FRA)) also means Social Security's Annual Earnings Test (AET) will apply (the AET limits how much can be earned from working before FRA is attained).

So, our thought on the wisdom of taking Social Security as soon as you are eligible is that it is often not a wise decision, and certainly not if that decision is made based on fear of Social Security "not being there" soon. Instead, we suggest making your Social Security claiming decision based upon your unique personal circumstances, including, especially, your life expectancy, financial need, and marital status.

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The Siren Song of Despair

Charlie Kirk was a one-man answer to campus illiberalism. He rose to prominence at a time when university administrators and progressive students were working in league to make campuses no-go zones for conservatives.

They effectively banned them from their faculties. They didn't invite them on campus, or if they did, they were liable to disinvite and cancel them. They banned so-called hate speech. They shouted down speakers they didn't like. They created "safe spaces." In short, they did everything they could to render the opposing point of view illegitimate and indefensible.

Kirk showed not only that it was possible to punch through these obstacles and get a hearing, but to win the argument despite them.

He created a student movement that he leveraged into a huge, multi-faceted organization and that he mobilized to vote in 2024, to great political effect.

He was provocative, occasionally outlandish and sometimes wrong, but always interesting and brave.

His events on campus should be viewed as a public service. All of the best, most creative college deans could have gotten together to figure out how to routinely get thousands of energized students to

events about public affairs, and never managed it. No worries. Kirk figured it out for them. That he was shot while he engaged in an act of peaceful persuasion makes his murder all the more devastating.

Kirk wasn't a literary figure, but his assassination was a little like, say, William F. Buckley or James Baldwin getting gunned down in the midst of their famous 1965 debate at the Cambridge Union.

What Kirk was doing drew on some of the finest traditions of civilized life. Gathering on a hill to hear people speak and argue, like what we saw at Utah Valley University prior to the shot ringing out, is as old as the Pnyx in ancient Athens.

The university as a battleground of ideas, with clashing worldviews vying for influence, goes back to the Middle Ages. Founded in 1231, the University of Paris quickly became "a forum where great questions of theology, society, and government were analyzed and answered," writes historian Dan Jones.

More fundamentally, language and abstract reasoning make us distinctly human; violence, the tool of brutes, does not. What are young people on the right to conclude from the horror at Utah Valley? Progressives viewed Kirk as a "MAGA view" (as a New Republic headline put it in the immediate aftermath of his shooting), but for his fans, he was a figure of hope and inspiration.

It's also important to realize that Kirk worked diligently and effectively to bring disaffected kids into mainstream politics.

He pushed back against anti-semitism and other poisonous influences. The far-right envied and hated him.

It would be natural for Utah Valley to become the Right's equivalent of Kent State in the 1970s, a shattering experience, and a radicalizing one.

Charlie Kirk did it the right way, and now he's gone. He espoused the Christian faith, and what did it get him? He believed in open debate, and it left him defenseless unto his enemies. He did his enemies the favor of taking their arguments seriously, whereas (presumably) one of them used a bullet to silence him forever.

To quit on persuasion, though, is the counsel of despair. Political violence in a free society is always wrong. There's no substitute for convincing our fellow citizens, and we should also assume -- as Kirk did, even with the odds stacked heavily against him -- that they can be convinced by good arguments made sincerely and passionately.

Kirk's murder will long be remembered as a symbol of the irrationality and hatred of this era, with, one fears, worse to come. His life's work, on the other hand, is a testament to how one person can, with enough pluck and talent, move the needle of our politics.

Kirk fought back against illiberalism, and his supporters -- when the shock and grief subsides -- should be equally committed to his mission.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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Sky-High Living Costs Afford It the Nation's Highest Poverty Label - Again



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

Last year's presidential election underscored, particularly to Democrats, that the costs of living were a major factor in the outcome.

Inflation had increased sharply during Joe Biden's presidency, and voters' angst about rising prices worked against Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign to succeed him in the White House.

Not surprisingly, therefore, when the California Legislature opened its 2025 session, its dominant Democrats declared that they would focus on taming the state's notoriously high costs for housing, fuel, utilities and other necessities of modern life.

The session ended last week and as it did, by happenstance, the Census Bureau reported that California once again has the nation's highest "supplemental" rate of poverty when its living costs are included in calculations over a three-year period.

California's rate, 17.7%, means that nearly 7 million of its residents are impoverished, 5 percentage points higher than the national rate and tied with Louisiana. The lowest rate is 6.7% in Maine.

California's rate is also 2.3 percentage points higher than it was in the Census Bureau's previous three-year calculation, implying that its living costs vis-à-vis incomes had

increased markedly.

The situation is even gloomier in a report last month from the Public Policy Institute of California and the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality.

Using methodology similar to that of the Census Bureau, they calculate that 16.9% of Californians were poverty-stricken in 2023 and another 17.9% were near-poor. That translates into 13.2 million Californians struggling to put roofs over their heads, food on the tables, fuel in their cars and electric power in their appliances and light fixtures.

Los Angeles County, which has about 25% of the state's population, has the highest poverty rate of any county, 19.9%. Poverty in the Central Coast region is nearly as high at 19.3%, while Sacramento has the state's lowest rate, 13%.

Another data point about poverty in California is found in the newly enacted state budget. It declares that 14.9 million Californians are enrolled in Medi-Cal, the state's health care program for the poor.

So, one might wonder, did the Legislature's 2025 session deliver on promises to reduce the costs of living?

Legislative leaders claim some success.

"We went big," Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, said in a summary of the session's work. "We produced results. We delivered historic progress — on housing, on energy, on climate, on health care, and on human rights. And that progress is something every one of us can be proud of."

"And while our work is not finished fixing California's housing system,

this year marked a turning point in California's housing story," Rivas continued. "And today, we also advanced the most significant energy package in years. We passed measures that will deliver real relief for families on their electricity bills. We took action to stabilize gas supplies, to prevent price shocks — while keeping health and environmental protections in place."

By easing what had been a crackdown on gasoline refiners and sanctioning more oil production, legislators and Gov. Gavin Newsom say they are avoiding a gasoline supply crisis that could send costs soaring as the state shifts to a zero-emission economy. Two refineries have already announced closure plans, and Chevron has dropped hints that it could abandon its Richmond refinery.

By integrating California's electric power grid with those of other Western states, the elected officials say, shortages of electric power will be mitigated.

By reducing impediments to housing development, they say, higher levels of construction will moderate increases in rents and home prices.

Whether any of these legislative efforts actually lower or at least stabilize Californians' living costs won't be known for months, or even years. Meanwhile, California's high poverty rate will continue to be a civic embarrassment.

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. ★

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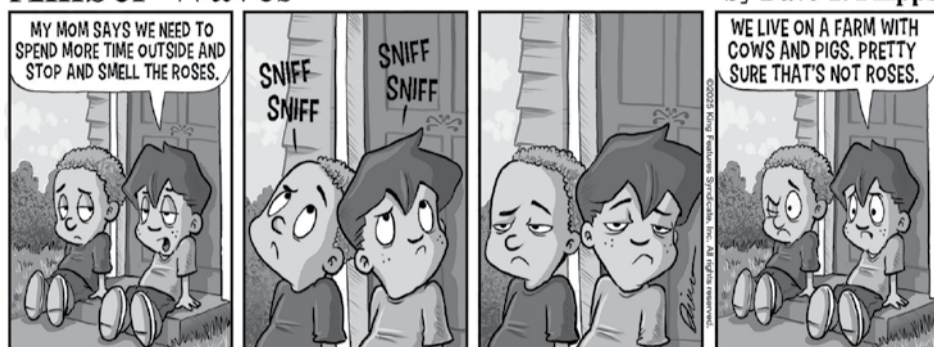
The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



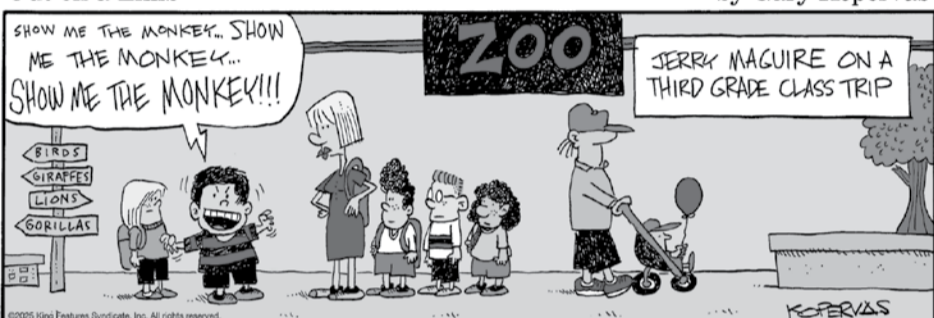
Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



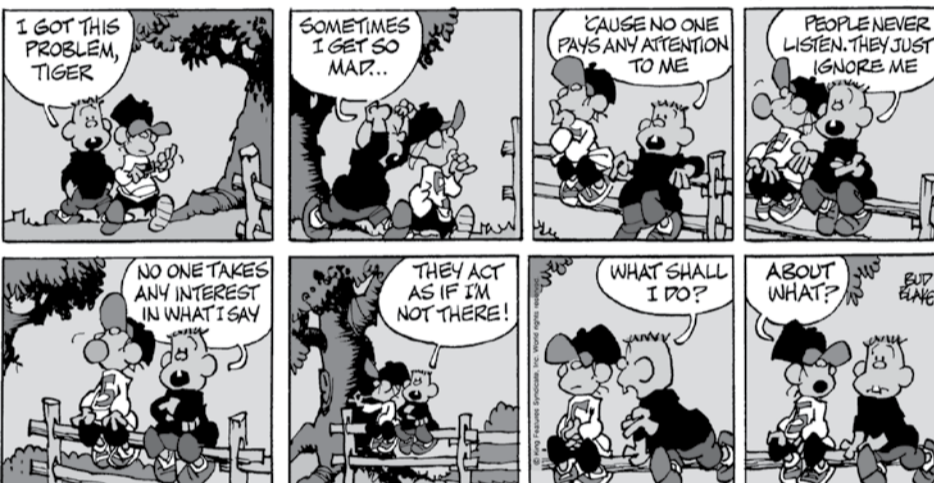
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



GRIN AND BEAR IT

Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



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CLUES

ACROSS

1. "___ of New York," 2002 movie
6. That guy
9. Extinguish birthday candles
13. Impolite dinner sound
14. Division of time
15. Forgo
16. On the move
17. Lake, in France
18. Alaska native
19. "The heaviest metal"
21. "Inert gas of balloon fame"
23. "Jersey Shore" network, acr.
24. Move like parasailor
25. Pick up, as in a criminal
28. Z, NATO phonetic alphabet
30. "A ship without ___," or one without purpose
35. Paella pot
37. Nessie's turf
39. Sweating room
40. Cyberspace soliloquy
41. "Gold"
43. Foul substance
44. Ruled
46. Dish out
47. Belgium's currency
48. Lands (2 words)
50. Indira Gandhi's dress
52. ___ Without Hats, band
53. Sheltered nook
55. Gross National Product
57. "Majority of elements on periodic table"
60. "Iron"
63. Fortune teller's card
64. Anger
66. Saharan rest stop, e.g.
68. Venerated paintings
69. Acquired
70. Beside, archaic
71. Curious
72. Professional basketball league, acr.
73. Paterfamilias, tenderly

DOWN

1. General Services Administration
2. Additionally
3. Common allergens
4. Tale-spinning brother
5. Prosecco cocktail
6. Position of leadership
7. George Gershwin's brother
8. Village People's "___ Man"
9. Island near Java
10. Stead
11. Reproductive cell
12. Kind of nurse
15. The Beatles' "I Am the ___"
20. Throat lobe
22. "Lend me your ___"
24. Glucose+fructose
25. "Like Ar, Xe and Ne"
26. Completely dedicated (2 words)
27. Hair color
29. High in decibels
31. Small European freshwater fish
32. Pasta wheat
33. Accustom
34. *Rn, known for seeping into homes
36. Forever and a day
38. Dance with leis
42. Join companies
45. Old European coins
49. D.C. mover and shaker, for short
51. Encroachment
54. Victory hand gesture
56. Life force, in Sanskrit
57. Type of shark
58. Aphrodite's son
59. Broadway recognition
60. Greek salad ingredient
61. Not mint
62. This over matter?
63. *Sn, element in bronze
65. "To ___ Peter to pay Paul"
67. Pig pen

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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.

WE SUPPORT FIRST RESPONDERS

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From This Tragedy, More Voices Must Rise

Silencing one voice cannot end the conversation. It must awaken a chorus of many

By Hector Barajas,
California Globe

Charlie Kirk's death on September 10 was more than a personal tragedy; it struck at the very heart of free speech in America. For years, he had become a modern symbol of debate culture, a figure willing to put himself in front of hostile audiences and say, "Let's talk."

In a time when disagreement often leads to shouting, shaming, or silencing, Kirk chose dialogue — once so common it wasn't even considered special in America, but now it seems like a lost art.

Kirk built his career not by hiding from critics but by meeting them head-on. In person, not from the safety of an online echo chamber. On college campuses across the country, he welcomed tough questions from students who often opposed everything he represented. He listened, he argued, and he stood his ground with facts, critical thinking, and a depth of knowledge rare for any citizen, especially someone his age.

It was not about demanding agreement but about proving that open dialogue matters more than uniformity of thought. He even sat with California Governor Gavin Newsom; while the two disagreed on most issues, they still managed to show millions of viewers what respectful debate



Charlie Kirk and his wife, Erika, speak together at an event in Texas in 2025. Photo courtesy of CA Globe

could look like.

That choice to engage with opponents was no small act. In today's culture, it is easier to cancel, shame, or attack than to have a real conversation. Too many people treat disagreement as something to shut down and silence. Kirk refused to play that game. He believed the only way to sharpen your own argument was to test it against the strongest case from the other side. In that way, he upheld the older American tradition of free speech, where ideas meet head-on and the best argument stands.

His assassination is therefore not only the silencing of one

man, but also an assault on the heart and soul of America. When violence is used to end debate, free speech itself becomes the casualty. We cannot accept a future where the price of speaking out is fear for your life.

There is also a broader warning in this tragedy. Political violence doesn't stop with one person. Once it becomes acceptable to kill or threaten a voice because you disagree with it, the door opens to silence anyone.

Today it was Charlie Kirk. Tomorrow it could be an elected official, a professor, a journalist, a union organizer, or a student. Free speech is not a partisan value. It is the foundation of

democracy, and without it, every other right grows weaker.

Charlie Kirk forced people to think, respond, and defend their beliefs. He showed that disagreement doesn't have to lead to dehumanization. He showed that you can argue passionately and still see the humanity in the person you're debating.

Perhaps even more troubling than the cancer consuming the art of civil discourse is that Charlie Kirk's underlying message was essentially one of love and respect for our country, our fellow citizens, our values, our history, and our future generations.

There is a poignant video clip

circulating online of George Carlin, the sardonic comedian and social critic, who framed assassination this way:

"It's interesting to notice who it is we assassinate. You know who it is — it's always people who told us to live together in harmony and try to love one another. Jesus. Gandhi. Lincoln. John Kennedy. Bobby Kennedy. Martin Luther King. Medgar Evers. Malcolm X. John Lennon. They all said try to live together peacefully . . ."

Sadly, we've experienced too many of these tragic moments in American life. Kirk's assassination is yet another.

But like other moments in history, this tragedy can be a turning point. The best way to honor Kirk's legacy is to refuse silence. We must keep speaking, listening, and debating, even when it is uncomfortable. Fear cannot be allowed to dictate our voices. The future of free speech, and the restoration of respect and love for this nation and for our fellow countrymen, depends on it.

Hector Barajas is a communications strategist who advises companies, associations, and campaigns on public affairs and policy issues. He is the founder of Amplify360 Inc., a strategic communications firm, and a frequent commentator on politics, legislation, and Latino issues in English and Spanish-language media. ★

Please, Conversation Not Assassination

By Dr. Glenn Mollette

Charlie Kirk was a man who had opinions and vocalized them. He believed in free speech. He also believed in the right of free speech for those who disagreed with him. In his Turning Point rallies, he gave untold numbers of people the opportunity to express their opinions and to debate him. He respectfully gave each person the time to state their case on whatever the subject. Charlie was adamant, profound and articulated strong convictions.

Sadly, a deranged 22-year-old man from Utah took Charlie's life. It has been reported that the gunman had previously stated at a family dinner that he thought Kirk was filled with hate. When Kirk spoke at a university rally in Utah, the gunman plotted and positioned himself to shoot a single long-range rifle shot that took Kirk's life. The man ran back to his home where he later had no choice but to confess to his father that he was indeed the man who had been videotaped at the rally who took Charlie Kirk's life. The lone assassin is an evil coward who silenced one of America's star voices. At least he thought he did. Charlie Kirk has become more known, and his sound clips have been heard more in the last few days than in his entire ministry/career. Kirk has been propelled by the assassin to a status in American culture that will never be forgotten. Instead of silencing Kirk he magnified Kirk's voice and message a hundred or more times. Kirk is now being remembered around the world.

Charlie Kirk used his voice. Every American is entitled to this freedom. His voice cost him his life.

Abraham Lincoln gave his life

reuniting our country and abolishing slavery. A cowardly assassin took Lincoln's life as he leisurely watched a play at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. John F. Kennedy used his voice to excite the American people and to bring about a positive attitude in the country but was gunned down by an assassin from a hidden window in downtown Dallas, Texas. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a man with a great voice who stirred the hearts of millions of Americans and brought about liberating change for black Americans. An assassin who disagreed with King cowardly hid and took King's life with a bullet. Malcom X and Bobby Kennedy were orators for positive change in America but someone who disagreed with their views killed them.

The greatest voice of hope, love, change and forgiveness, who ever lived, was Jesus Christ. A cowardly crowd yelled for him to be executed.

These mentioned voices were not silenced by hideous crowds or hidden gunmen. Each of their voices have rung loudly and clearly. Their legacies have only grown bolder and stronger.

It is sad that Charlie Kirk's assassin did not go down to the rally, stand up like a man and challenge Kirk in a debate. He could have told Kirk what he thought about him and given Kirk a chance to respond. But no, he was a weak, spineless man filled with more hate than probably anyone in America at that given moment. It's one thing to have a hateful, negative thought, but it's another to allow hate to act itself out in such a way.

Violence is never the answer. Let's keep America free. Free to speak, free to debate, free to practice and express our religion. Let's have peaceful and strong conversation, not assassination. ★

never backed down from his beliefs, his faith, or his love of this country.

Charlie brought light into dark places. On campuses where free speech is under attack, he stood strong and gave others the courage to speak up. As the founder of Turning Point USA, he organized a movement that will shape generations.

He was bold in his faith, clear in his convictions, and fully embraced his conservative values.

Charlie is now with the Lord — but the work he started isn't finished." ★

America's Sports Teams Pay Tribute to Charlie Kirk

The White House News Release

WASHINGTON, CHRISTIAN NEWSWIRE (MPG) - The White House releases the following:

From coast to coast, sports teams and organizations paused this week to commemorate the legacy of Charlie Kirk. The White House recognizes these profound tributes that celebrate Kirk's enduring legacy as a champion for faith and patriotism and honor the remarkable impact he had on millions of Americans.

NFL franchises, including the Green Bay Packers, New York Jets, Dallas Cowboys, Miami Dolphins, New Orleans Saints, Kansas City Chiefs, Pittsburgh Steelers, Tennessee Titans, and Arizona Cardinals

all held moments of silence or special recognitions.

In baseball, the Chicago Cubs and New York Yankees paid tribute. College football teams, such as the South Carolina Gamecocks, LSU Tigers, and the Wyoming Cowboys, joined in — as did the UFC and NASCAR, showcasing the broad reach of Kirk's influence.

These tributes reflect the widespread admiration for Kirk's dedication to inspiring the next generation of American Patriots. We commend these organizations for honoring a figure who championed the values that unite us all, and we join the nation in celebrating his legacy. ★

Liberty Counsel: Message From Mat Staver Regarding Charlie Kirk

Liberty Counsel News Release

We are heartbroken to learn that Charlie Kirk has been shot while speaking at Utah Valley University.

Our prayers go out to Charlie, his wife and two young children, and all those affected by this tragic and senseless

act of violence.

We ask everyone to join us in praying for Charlie and his family, for peace, and for strength during this incredibly difficult time.

And we pray against this senseless hatred and disdain for human life that elevate violence over dialogue. ★

Bera Condemns the Killing of Charlie Kirk

Office of U.S. Representative Ami Bera, M.D. News Release

WASHINGTON, D.C. (MPG) - Representative Ami Bera, M.D. (CA-06) released a statement after conservative activist Charlie Kirk was shot and killed at an event at Utah Valley University on Sept. 10:

"This is a dark day for America. The killing of Charlie Kirk is a horrific and deeply disturbing act of political violence. I condemn it in the strongest possible terms.

"Political violence is a cancer on our nation. We

don't have to agree with one another's beliefs — in fact, we may find some views deeply offensive or wrong — but we must reject violence as a means of resolving disputes. It corrodes the very foundation of our democracy and threatens the freedoms we all cherish. Democracy demands that we resolve our differences peacefully through debate, civic engagement, and at the ballot box.

"I urge law enforcement to use every available resource to bring the perpetrator of this act to justice. There must be

accountability. We cannot allow violence to take root as a tool of political expression in America.

"In moments like these, we must rise above partisanship and reaffirm a simple truth: violence against anyone — Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative — has no place in our society. No person or political party is immune to this disturbing and growing trend. Above all else, we are Americans.

"My thoughts and prayers are with Mr. Kirk's family, loved ones, and all those impacted by this heinous act of violence." ★

Republican Leaders Issue Joint Statement on Assassination of Charlie Kirk

Assembly Republicans News Release

SACRAMENTO (MPG) - Assembly Republican Leader James Gallagher (R-East Nicolaus) and Leader-Elect Heath Flora (R-Ripon) issued the following statement on the assassination of conservative leader and Turning Point USA founder, Charlie Kirk:

"In the 21st century, no one did more to lead the conservative youth movement than Charlie Kirk. He spoke the truth, welcomed respectful debate, and

Restored Locomotive on Display in Historic Roundhouse

California State Railroad Museum News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) -

In partnership with Friends of No. 9, the California State Railroad Museum is excited to announce the beautifully restored No. 9 steam locomotive and companion exhibit are now on display inside the museum's historic Roundhouse. No. 9 is the only surviving locomotive of the Mount Tamalpais Scenic Railway, a tourist railroad in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that enabled tourists to leave the city and enjoy the scenic beauty of Mount Tamalpais and, later, Muir Woods.

In addition to seeing No. 9 up close, museum visitors can learn more about the history of the Mount Tamalpais Scenic Railway and the prized locomotive by watching a special 8-minute video that is part of the exhibit.

The Mount Tamalpais Scenic Railway, built in 1896, was known as the "Crookedest Railroad in the World" based on its 8.2-mile route with 281 curves climbed from Mill Valley (70 ft) to the summit (2,353 ft). At the top, visitors



Restored No. 9 Steam Locomotive is on display for a limited time at the California State Railroad Museum. Restorations on the historic locomotive with California roots began in 2019 and were completed this year. Photo courtesy of the California State Railroad Museum/Kim Whitfield

enjoyed sweeping views of San Francisco and the Pacific as they danced and dined at the Tavern of Tamalpais. Despite its popularity, rising automobile travel, mounting debt and a 1929 wildfire ended operations by 1930.

The Heisler locomotive No. 9 dates to 1921 when it was purchased by the Mount Tamalpais

and Muir Woods Railway of Mill Valley to operate on the rails of the scenic tourist railway. In 1924, the locomotive was sold and spent the next two and a half decades working for lumber companies in Siskiyou and Humboldt counties.

In 1953, the Pacific Lumber Company bought the locomotive for display next to its new

museum in Scotia, California. The locomotive was later put up for auction in 2018 when a group of dedicated rail fans joined together to raise funds to secure No. 9 and begin restoration. The dedicated group was steadfast in their focus to return No. 9 to its Mt. Tamalpais roots and viewed it as the "last piece

of a lost era."

Carefully researched, the meticulous restoration work began in 2019 and will be completed in 2025. The historic locomotive remains an important piece of logging, tourist and rail history.

"The restoration of the No. 9 represents the very best impulses of the preservation community," said Dr. Ty Smith, Director of the California State Railroad Museum. "Although the locomotive won't steam passengers up Mt. Tamalpais, it serves as a window into a remarkable episode in California History. We're grateful to be able to share in telling this important story."

The prized No. 9 steam locomotive and companion exhibit will remain on display in the museum's Roundhouse until January 2026. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., regular admission to the California State Railroad Museum is \$12 for adults, \$6 for youth (ages 6 to 17), and are free for children five and under.

For more information about the California State Railroad Museum and Foundation, visit www.californiarailroad.museum. ★

Sacramento to 'Light the Town Pink' for Breast Cancer Awareness

Albie Aware Breast Cancer Foundation News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) -

Sacramento is set to glow pink this September and October as the community comes together to "Light the Town Pink" in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The campaign invites residents to display a pink light bulb at home or work as a visible show of solidarity with breast cancer survivors, their loved ones and those currently in treatment.

For every bulb distributed, a donation will be made to Albie Aware Breast Cancer Foundation, a local nonprofit organization that provides life-saving breast cancer testing, prevention education, advocacy and support services.

Community partners KYMX MIX 96 and Bonney Plumbing, Electrical, Heating & Air have joined forces to help distribute bulbs throughout the Sacramento region, with the goal of seeing 3,000 homes shining pink this fall. There are three easy ways to take part: stop by any MIX event, book an appointment with Bonney or request a bulb online at bonney.com.

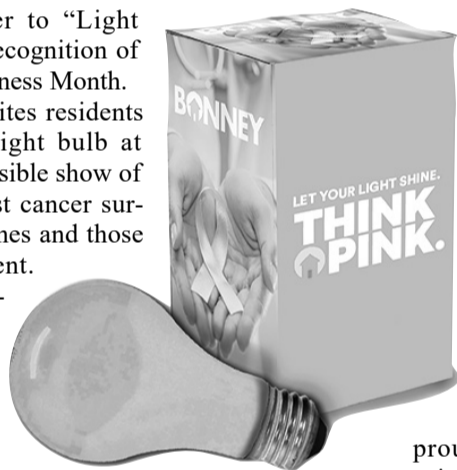
"Something as small as a pink light can

have a huge impact," said Doug Carson, founder of Albie Aware Breast Cancer Foundation. "It not only honors survivors and those currently fighting breast cancer but it also fuels our ability to provide critical resources to people here in Sacramento who need them most."

Bonney Plumbing, Electrical, Heating & Air has also pledged a donation for every bulb distributed to ensure this campaign translates into direct support for Albie Aware Breast Cancer Foundation's programs.

"At Bonney, we're proud to stand with our community in this effort," said JR Pasion, CEO of Bonney. "Lighting the town pink is a visible reminder that no one faces breast cancer alone and we're honored to support Albie Aware's mission in such a meaningful way."

Organizers hope the glowing displays across Sacramento will spark conversations around early detection, ongoing research and the importance of strong support networks. From neighborhood porches to local storefronts, Sacramento's skyline could take on a new glow this fall in honor of survivors and their families. ★



September is National Preparedness Month



Sacramento County officials encourage having open conversations about emergencies and disaster preparedness. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) -

September marks National Preparedness Month, the annual campaign to remind everyone that preparing for emergencies and disasters can keep them, their families and their communities safe.

Ensuring that the county is ready to handle natural and man-made emergencies is the responsibility of the Office of Emergency Services (OES).

It's nearly impossible to predict when the next disaster will hit Sacramento County but Office of Emergency Services staff say it's important to be ready for what might come next, whether it's floods, fire or an attack. That's why the county is encouraging residents to learn how to protect themselves and their families from emergencies and disasters.

Starting a conversation today can help you and your family take more action to prepare. By taking simple steps, you can build your preparedness at your own pace.

The Office of Emergency Services suggests setting aside a time when everyone is calm and relaxed. It might help to hold continuous discussions, so decisions aren't rushed and everyone is more comfortable talking about the topic. Talk about steps

you've taken to prepare and encourage others to ask questions about preparedness actions that might work for them.

While you might not know when a disaster will happen, you can begin to take easy but impactful steps now to keep your family safe.

The public can find more ways to protect themselves and prepare for an emergency or crisis at sacramentoready.org.

Sacramento County residents are encouraged to sign up for Sacramento Alert at sacramento-alert.org to receive emergency alerts by email, phone or text. Residents will only receive alerts that are critical and time-sensitive, including flooding, levee failures, severe weather, disaster events, unexpected road closures, missing persons and evacuations of buildings or neighborhoods in specific geographic locations.

The flooding that stuck Sacramento County in 2017 and 2023 disrupted lives and caused destruction totaling in the tens of millions of dollars.

The 2025 National Preparedness Month puts a spotlight on a topic many don't think about. Planning ahead now means being ready when disaster strikes in the future. ★

Helping Older Resident Repair Home



The Sacramento County Age-Friendly Community Initiative micro-grant program funded much-needed home repairs for an older woman living on a fixed income. The grant is part of a one-time fund allocated by former Supervisor Don Nottoli and Agency on Aging Area 4 administers the funds. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - When a 77-year-old Sacramento County resident began facing mounting fines and pressure from her homeowners' association (HOA) over much-needed repairs to her home, she wasn't sure where to turn.

Living on a fixed income, the cost of repairs seemed out of reach until Sacramento County's Senior and Adult Services Division (SAS) stepped in. The division teamed up with community partners to restore her home, resolve her homeowners' association issues and help her remain safely in the community she has called home for decades.

The homeowner, a widow who raised her children in Sacramento County,

reached out for support earlier this year.

With guidance from Sacramento County staff and partners at Agency on Aging Area 4, she began setting goals to both address her immediate housing needs and work with the homeowners' association to pause fines. Agency on Aging Area 4's Senior Connections program, which is funded by Sacramento County, supported the woman through the process.

Agency on Aging Area 4 case manager Danielle Neef-Dawes worked with the homeowner throughout the process. The homeowners' association agreed to stop issuing fines and reduce existing penalties while repair work was underway.

The Sacramento County Age-Friendly Community Initiative (SCAFCI) micro-grant program funded

the repairs for the woman's home.

Dr. Julie Bates with Agency on Aging Area 4 facilitates the Sacramento County Age-Friendly Community Initiative program. The grant is part of a one-time fund allocated by former Supervisor Don Nottoli and Agency on Aging Area 4 administers the funds.

"This success story is a perfect example of what can happen when county services and community partners come together to support older adults," Bates said. "Programs like the SCAFCI micro-grants allow us to address real needs quickly and help people remain in their homes and communities."

By June, the home was power-washed, dry rot was replaced and the entire exterior was freshly painted. Today, the home not only meets homeowners' association standards but also provides a safe and comfortable place for the 77-year-old to age in place.

Once the repairs were complete, the homeowner reached out to thank everyone who worked on her home and expressed her gratitude through a message.

"The house looks so beautiful! I have no words. Thank you doesn't seem to be enough. From my heart, thank you so much," the homeowner said.

Through partnerships such as the one with Agency on Aging Area 4, Sacramento County works to ensure older adults can



Thanks to the Sacramento County Age-Friendly Community Initiative micro-grant program, repairs such as those to make this deck safe and functional for a Sacramento senior resident were completed. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

access resources they need to live comfortably in their homes.

To learn more about Sacramento County's Senior and Adult Services, visit its website at dcfas.saccounty.net.

Visit the Agency on Aging Area 4 website at agencyonaging4.org to learn more about its programs. ★

San Juan Education Foundation Names STARS Hall of Fame Honorees



Melissa Lloyd of Mira Loma High School's Class of 1990 is a Child Protective Services deputy director with Sacramento County. Photo courtesy of the San Juan Unified School District



Josh Emmett of El Camino High Fundamental School's Class of 2003 is a mixed martial arts fighter. Photo courtesy of the San Juan Unified School District



Joanna Rowland of El Camino Fundamental High School's Class of 1996 is a children's author. Photo courtesy of the San Juan Unified School District

San Juan Unified School District News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The San Juan Education Foundation honors exceptional San Juan Unified School District alumni at the annual "An Evening with the STARS" gala on Oct. 10.

The gala not only celebrates

and honors individuals who have made an impact on the district but also supports the San Juan Education Foundation by raising funds to provide San Juan Unified teachers and students with the resources and opportunities essential to academic success.

The STARS Hall of Fame shines a spotlight on alumni

who show excellence and creativity in their careers, inspired by a San Juan Unified District education. Honorees are selected from nominations submitted by the community, making this recognition especially meaningful.

This year's honorees are Melissa Lloyd, Mira Loma High School's Class of 1990,

Child Protective Services deputy director at Sacramento County; Joanna Rowland, El Camino Fundamental High School's Class of 1996, children's author; and Josh Emmett, El Camino High Fundamental School's Class of 2003, mixed martial arts fighter.

Join the San Juan Unified

School District in celebrating these honorees at the "An Evening with the STARS" gala from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Oct. 10 at The Center at 2300, 2300 Sierra Blvd., Sacramento.

To learn more about the event and purchase tickets for the gala, visit online sanjuan-educationfoundation.ejoinme.org/EWTS2025. ★

Del Campo Students Build Pig Sheds

Swine Sanctuaries Through Design Build Competition



Del Campo High School students faced summer heat, heavy materials and the pressure of working under professional timelines during the 40th annual Design Build Competition. Photo courtesy of San Juan Unified District



Hosted by the Construction Industry Education Foundation, the 40th annual Design Build Competition brought together high school teams from throughout the region to design and build a structure while meeting strict industry standards. Photo courtesy of San Juan Unified District

San Juan Unified School District News Release

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - Del Campo High School students put their classroom skills to the test at the 40th annual Design Build Competition by constructing custom pig sheds that were later donated to a nearby animal sanctuary.

The event, hosted by the Construction Industry Education Foundation, brings together high school teams from throughout the region to design and build a structure while meeting strict industry standards.

"Projects like these do a great job of making it feel like a real jobsite and

creating the stressors you see in real life," said Samuel Baeder, who teaches Career Technical Education (CTE) Construction Technology at Del Campo.

Students faced summer heat, heavy materials and the pressure of working under professional timelines. Baeder added that this type of project also helps students strengthen social skills as they collaborate with peers they might not know well.

"We had teams of people who were slightly more advanced but we worked together to help them get the hang of it real quick," said S, a 12th-grade student. "It was fun and tiring. You had to keep your hat on the whole time and it was

super sweaty but it makes sense."

Hayden, also a 12th-grade student, said he has had some construction experience but appreciated the chance to work on a project that wasn't focused on electrical work.

"It was fun. I'm kind of used to it already because my uncle runs a shop," Hayden said. "But it was nice to know that these sheds are actually going to animals in need."

S added that knowing their work would provide shelter for animals motivated the team more than the competition itself.

"The entire time we knew these were going to be donated, so we weren't really trying to win the competition. We were

more focused on this being available for the pigs that were going to use it," S said.

Although Del Campo High School's team was not able to finish everything they wanted during the competition, Baeder said, they brought the structures back to campus to complete them before delivering them to Only Sunshine Sanctuary.

Both Hayden and S said the project affirmed their future career goals.

"This project helped to harden my perspective on going into construction. I think that path would be better for me," S said.

Hayden said, "I already had a good idea of what I wanted to do before this but this project kept me on that full course all the way down." ★

FORPD Board Approves Budget

By Shaunna Boyd

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - At the August Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District (FORPD) board meeting, a resident asked during public comment about the removal of a memorial fountain honoring Dick and Jean Hill for their work with the Fair Oaks Theatre Festival.

According to the resident, the fountain had remained outside the Veterans Memorial Amphitheatre during construction for the Village improvement project "but suddenly the fountain was gone."

District Administrator Mike Aho said the fountain had been scheduled for removal and was not planned to be replaced as part of the project. Dick and Jean's son, David Hill, had been notified, Aho said, and the district plans to recognize their contribution in a memorial garden that is under development.

Next, the board continued a discussion about the location of a bronze dedication plaque to be displayed at the

new Fair Oak Performing Arts Center, the Measure J-funded Village improvement project's centerpiece.

The plaque will honor current directors, past directors who served during the planning and approval of Measure J, the district administrator and the Fair Oaks community for their support of the project.

Some directors toured the site and determined five possible locations that would ensure maximum visibility, with some interior and exterior options.

Aho said he preferred the outside options and director Ralph Carhart agreed.

Director Raymond James Irwin made a motion to install the plaque on the wall outside the lobby entrance near the stage facing the park. It was approved three to two, with chair Delinda Tamagni and director Darren Mounts dissenting.

The board members also reviewed the final budget for fiscal year 2025-2026. The preliminary budget was already reviewed and there were only minor changes to consider.

Based on actual collections and information from the Sacramento County Tax Assessor's office, revenues for property taxes increased by \$30,363.

In staffing expenses, a 3.1% cost-of-living increase for employees will be primarily covered through savings, such as positions that were refilled at lower steps, resulting in reduced costs in group insurance and workers' compensation. These savings resulted in an increase of \$457.

An adjustment was also needed, due to a \$34,900 increase in services and supplies, including liability insurance, county costs, security, registration services and auditor services. However, there is \$23,000 cost savings in parks and maintenance, paint supplies and actuarial services. The balance adjustment required an increase of \$11,900.

The Fiscal Year 2025-2026 final budget totals \$4.4 million, with full-year funding for authorized permanent positions, services and supplies expenditures, and capital expenditures.

The board members voted unanimously to approve the final budget.

There were no changes to the 2025-2026 Measure J bond budget and it was also unanimously approved.

Parks and Facilities manager Sean Ventura presented an update about the district's application for California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) funding.

"This one is directly tied to the winter storms we had in January of 2023," said Ventura. "I've been working with FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) since that time to try and receive funding for several damages we've had throughout the parks."

Those storms caused significant destruction and 47 trees went down throughout the district, requiring extensive debris removal. Federal Emergency Management Agency awarded the district approximately \$51,899, which is distributed through the Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

An authorized representative must be appointed to represent the district and the board members voted unanimously to appoint District Administrator Aho.

Administrative Services manager Jennifer Larkin recommended the selection of a new financial audit services vendor. The district contracted with the previous auditor for five years and, according to Larkin, the general best practice is to go out to bid every five years for these services.

The district received four proposals and staff selected Fechter & Company CPAs as the best option. According to Larkin, it is a local company that has previously worked with the district and has a base of established knowledge. The scope of work will include two financial audits this year at a contract total of \$22,000.

The board approved the contract 4-0, with Chair Tamagni abstaining.

During staff updates, Aho said that the Village improvement project is still on track for a grand opening in October. ★