



**Recognizing Domestic Violence Awareness Month**  
PAGE 10

**There is Only ONE KING, Jesus Christ**



# AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

VOLUME 20 • ISSUE 20

Serving Fair Oaks, Orangevale & Sacramento County

OCTOBER 24, 2025

**SEE INSIDE**

**'JUST SURREAL'**



PAGE 6

**BEANIE BABIES NEEDED FOR HOLIDAY GIFT DRIVE**



PAGE 2

**VOTING IN 2025 SPECIAL ELECTION**



PAGE 4



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## New Honorary Mayor Raises \$45,471



Past honorary mayors and candidates took the stage with Noah Wright. From left are Katie Yount (2023-2025), Jen Rodriguez (2022), Heather Ford, Jim Cralle, Keith Wright (2018), Noah Wright (2025/2026), Rachel Griffith (2016), Karyn Barth Moore (2015), Dot Boyd, Dustin Buck (2008), Cathy Smallhouse (1991) and Kimberley Pitillo, Fair Oaks Chamber CEO/President. Photo by Judy Andrews

By Judy Andrews

**FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG)** - In a historic achievement, 21-year-old college student Noah Wright has been named the 47th honorary mayor of Fair Oaks.

Wright raised an impressive \$45,471 during the Fair Oaks Chamber's recent 2025 to 2026 campaign.

"This is the highest amount ever raised by an honorary mayor since the program was created in 1979 as a creative way to support the chamber and local charities," announced Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce CEO/President Kimberly Pitillo.

The unveiling occurred on Oct. 7 during a special celebration for this year's two candidates at North Ridge Country Club. More than 100 supporters, including chamber members, past honorary mayors



Famous for his fedoras, Noah Wright takes the mic for his thank-you speech. Photo by Judy Andrews

and the candidates' family and friends, attended.

Wright replaces Katie

Yount, who served from 2023 to 2025, and raised more than \$34,000 during

her campaign.

Wright ran for the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Community Foundation, which will receive \$22,735, half of the total he raised. The Chamber of Commerce receives the other half to support its community programs and events.

Wright, a Bella Vista High School graduate, is a fourth-generation "Fair Oakian" and the youngest Fair Oaks honorary mayor to hold that title. He currently attends Sierra College and plans to transfer to University of California, Davis next fall to study winemaking. Wright has worked at several top-rated wineries in the area and last year studied winemaking in France. The trip was partly funded through a scholarship Wright received from the chamber's Youth Advisory Board.

Continued on page 3

## FORPD Board Honors Fair Oaks Theatre Festival

By Shaunna Boyd

**FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG)** - The Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District (FORPD) Board of Directors at its October meeting issued a proclamation honoring the cultural contributions of the Fair Oaks Theatre Festival, which recently decided to shut down after more than 40 years in operation.

Director Ralph Carhart read the proclamation, stating that the Fair Oaks Theatre Festival was founded by a "visionary group of local business leaders and community leaders who saw promise in the underutilized Veterans Memorial Amphitheatre."

Under the leadership of founders Wendell and Lois Frazier, and later continued by Tony and Barbara Sestito, the festival was a platform for Shakespearian productions, community performances, educational programs, and mentorship for emerging artists.

"The success and longevity of Fair Oaks Theatre Festival was made possible by the tireless efforts of passionate volunteers, directors, designers, actors, technicians, board members and community supporters," read Carhart.

"As a respected cultural institution in the region, they offered performances that enriched the lives of thousands of residents and visitors."

Now, the Fair Oaks Theatre Festival has "closed its curtain for the final time, marking the end of a beloved and influential era in Fair Oaks history," read Carhart. "The legacy of the Fair Oaks Theatre Festival shall be forever remembered as a cherished part of this community's identity and cultural history."

The board then considered adopting a Sidewalk Vending Policy, in order to align with recent state and county legislation.

District Administrator Mike Aho explained that the State of California passed a law in 2018 that legalized sidewalk vending statewide, as well as restricting local governments from prohibiting the practice. However, it does allow for reasonable restrictions on the place and manner of vending, as well as fines for violation.

Earlier this year, Sacramento County updated their vending regulations, requiring that vendors obtain a business license, comply with health and safety regulations, and observe operational standards. Regional parks

Continued on page 11

## Thousands Attend Village Park's Grand Opening



The grand opening weekend ended with a free Open House and Community Carnival. Photo by Judy Andrews



Visitors enjoyed relaxing on the green at Saturday's Folk Festival. The park has two open-air stages for pop-up concerts. Photo courtesy GreyDot Media

By Judy Andrews

**FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG)** - The anticipation is finally over and the excitement is just beginning at the new Fair Oaks Village Park and Performing Arts Center.

The Fair Oaks Recreation and Park

District (FORPD) recently hosted a four-day grand opening celebration from Oct. 9 to Oct. 12.

Most of the weekend activities were free, including a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday with speeches and proclamations from local dignitaries, live music and entertainment,

a kids' carnival, site tours, local vendors and much more.

"The turnout for the grand opening event was truly remarkable," said Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District's District Administrator Mike Aho. "The people of Fair Oaks

Continued on page 2

# Thousands Attend Village Park's Grand Opening



Friday's ribbon-cutting ceremony was open to the public. From left are Jen Schuler, Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Arts and Entertainment Manager; Josh Hoover, California Assembly Member; Noah Wright, Fair Oaks Honorary Mayor; Ami Bera, U.S. Representative; Ralph Carhart, Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Board Director; Mike Aho, Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Administrator; Delinda Tamagni, Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Board Chair; John O'Farrell, Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Board Director; Raymond James Irwin, Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Board Director; Darren Mounts, Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Board Director; Roger Niello, State Senator; and Rich Desmond, Sacramento County Supervisor. Photo courtesy GreyDot Media

*Continued from page 1*

came together to celebrate the reopening of what is considered the heartbeat of the community. Despite it being late in the year, the attendance far exceeded my expectations."

Chrysti Tovani, founder of I Love Oaks, managed a vendor booth on Sunday and was eager to share her perspective.

"The Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District did an amazing job putting it all together.

The new spaces are beautiful, practical, and truly built to bring people together," Tovani said.

Ticketed events at the grand opening included a Friday evening cocktail reception. About 100 guests were treated to a beautifully decorated sit-down gourmet dinner at the new Community Clubhouse, followed by the unveiling of the new Veterans Memorial Amphitheater with live

entertainment and dancing.

"It was an evening for the history books and a wonderful way to honor our community's past while welcoming a future of year-round arts, entertainment and family fun," said Fair Oaks Chamber Board Chair Mary Howard, who attended the dinner gala.

Saturday's events featured a free Folk Festival from noon to 6:30 p.m. with six different bands playing on the open-air

Plaza and Bandshell Stages. Event headliner, Jessica Malone Band, and opening act, Solebel, performed for ticketed guests in the Veterans Memorial Amphitheatre until 10 p.m.

The park's grand opening weekend concluded on Sunday with a free Open House and family-fun Community Carnival from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. "The new park has given us something to take pride in,"

said Tovani. "It's more than a playground or plaza; it's a stage for connection, a backdrop for small businesses to thrive and a place where Fair Oaks can step into its next chapter together."

The Fair Oaks Village Park and Performing Arts Center is located at 7991 California Ave. To find out more about upcoming live performances and special events, visit [fairoaksarts.org](http://fairoaksarts.org) or [forpd.org](http://forpd.org). ★

## Beanie Babies Needed for Holiday Gift Drive for Kindergarteners

By Claire Gliddon,  
Sacramento Blankets  
for Sacramento Kids Chief  
Blanket Gatherer

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - Got beanie babies? Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids (SBSK) is asking for donations of new or gently used Beanie Babies for their kindergarten project that takes place each holiday season.

Every September, Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids picks as many low-income elementary schools as they can and finds out how many kindergartners they have. Volunteers then make double-fleece blankets (about 50 inches by 60 inches) for all the youth, as well as a fleece pouch with a Beanie Baby in it to go with each blanket.

Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids gives these blankets and Beanie Babies to the children right before Christmas break. Some of the children live



Kindergarteners in a low-income Sacramento County classroom receive blankets and Beanie Babies as part of Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids' holiday drive. Photo courtesy of Claire Gliddon

in their cars or in places without heat and this is all they get for Christmas. In 2024, Sacramento

Blankets for Sacramento Kids gave out more than 3,300 blankets and Beanie Babies in their

kindergarten project, reaching 58 schools. Sacramento Blankets for

Sacramento Kids is a nonprofit organization that serves children in need from infants to 18-year-olds all year long. The kindergarten project is its special project each year.

This is the organization's 12th year running this project and members hope to continue doing it as long as they can get Beanie Babies.

Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids is always looking for new volunteers to make blankets all year round for children in need. Like to knit, crochet, sew, quilt, make no-sew blankets and have run out of people to make gifts for? We're looking for you!

If you'd like more information about Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids, go to [www.sacblankets4kids.com](http://www.sacblankets4kids.com) to sign up. There is no pressure, no timelines, no meetings but just people who enjoy crocheting, knitting, quilting, sewing, making no-sew blankets and helping children at the same time. ★



# VOTE EARLY!

# AVOID LINES



**November 4, 2025, Statewide Special Election**

**Vote Early and Vote by Mail**

### All voters will be mailed a ballot

- Ballots will begin to arrive the week of October 6

### You can return your ballot

- By Mail
- At an Official Ballot Drop Box
- At a Vote Center (starting October 25)

**You can find a full list of Official Ballot Drop Box and Vote Center locations in your County Voter Information Guide or online at [www.elections.saccounty.gov](http://www.elections.saccounty.gov)**

**Vote Early! Vote by Mail.**

### My Voter Portal (MVP)

- Check your registration status
- View your political party preference
- Update your language preference if other than English
- Track your Vote by Mail status
- Access your Remote Accessible Vote by Mail Ballot
- Locate Official Ballot Drop Boxes or Vote Centers near you
- View your voting history

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# New Honorary Mayor Raises \$45,471



Noah Wright's volunteer campaign managers included Chamber of Commerce Board Chair Mary Howard and his grandmother, Jeanette Woodward, who is a chamber board of director. Photo courtesy of Mary Howard



Heather Ford proudly poses with her mother and father, Rotarians Jim and Diana Cralle. Ford fundraised for the Fair Oaks Rotary Foundation. Photo by Judy Andrews

*Continued from page 1*

"I wanted to follow in my father, Keith's, footsteps and give back to the community that has given me so much over the years," Wright told the crowd. "I started volunteering at the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank when I was nine. So it only made sense that I support them by choosing the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Community Foundation, which administers several local charitable programs, including the food bank."

Business owner and entrepreneur Heather Ford competed against Wright in the friendly four-month race from June to September. Ford raised \$26,127 for her chosen charity, the Fair Oaks Rotary Foundation. Thanks to her efforts, the foundation will receive \$13,063. The organization supports educational and charitable projects for youth and senior citizens in Fair Oaks and Sacramento County.

Known as "Mattress Mama" to her friends, Ford owns The Restful Roost, a boutique bedding store located at 8137 Sunset Ave., number 110, in Fair Oaks.

"My run for honorary mayor was about carrying on a family legacy of 'service above self,' which is a core value of the Rotary Club," Ford said. "It felt only natural to follow in the footsteps of my parents, Jim and Diana Cralle, who are proud Rotarians."

In a fun twist, both Ford's and Wright's fathers, Jim Cralle and Keith Wright, competed for the title in 2018. Although Keith Wright raised the most money, the men's combined effort brought in more than \$51,285 for the community.

"The Fair Oaks honorary mayor's program keeps getting bigger and better each time," Pitillo said. "Together, Noah and Heather raised an all-time high of \$71,598. To

date, all 47 honorary mayors, including Wright, have raised over \$633,905 for the community."

The race is volunteer-driven and non-partisan. Candidates raise funds through events organized and hosted by their campaign teams and generally held at venues owned by chamber members. The candidate who raises the most money for their chosen charity by the end of the campaign earns the prestigious title.

Wright and Ford acknowledged their campaign managers, sponsors, supporters and families for their behind-the-scenes efforts and dedication.

Wright's co-campaign managers included his grandmother, Jeanette Woodward, and Mary Howard.

Rachel Griffith was Ford's campaign manager with Anupama Shojaei.

In his thank-you speech, Wright shared,



Noah Wright poses with Angela Lee, the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Community Foundation's Operations Director. Wright raised more than \$45,471 for the foundation. Photo by Judy Andrews

"The honorary mayor's race is not about winning, it's about giving back to the community as a whole. Thanks to this program, we are bettering our community for the future."

We're excited to learn more about this new honorary mayor in the coming months and watch him serve the community at various events. This young man has a bright future ahead of him. ★

## clean power promise



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# Voting in California's 2025 Special Election

*How to Make Sure Your Ballot is Secure and Counted*



Pictured is California Secretary of State Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D. Photo courtesy of the California Secretary of State

**By Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D.**  
**California Secretary of State**

As voters across the state prepare to make their voices heard on Prop 50 — arguably one of the most important elections in California's history — it's essential their ballots are cast with confidence that their vote will be counted securely and on time.

There has been some misinformation surrounding ballots leading up to the Statewide Special Election on Nov. 4, and voters must understand the safeguards put in place to protect every ballot.

California ballots are designed with multiple layers of security. It is against the law to tamper with a ballot. Whether a voter chooses to vote by mail, drop off a ballot at a secure location, or vote in person, rules and regulations ensure ballots are not tampered with.

### How to Vote Securely by Mail

Mail ballots are sent to every registered voter in the state. Each envelope is carefully tracked from the moment it's issued, and every ballot returned undergoes signature verification and inspection. Election officials check for any irregularities, such as damage to the envelope, or other signs it was compromised, before the ballot envelope is opened. If there's a red flag, the voter will be notified and corrective action taken.

To make sure a mail ballot is counted, it must be postmarked on or before Election Day, Nov. 4. In some areas, the U.S. Postal Service may not postmark mail until the following day, so it's recommended to

send ballots early. If mailing on Election Day, ask a postal employee at your local post office for a manual postmark to confirm it was mailed on time.

### Secure Ballot Drop-Off

When returning a ballot in person, use only official, county-operated locations. Secure ballot drop boxes are constructed with tamper-resistant materials, locked, and anchored in place. Each box is regularly emptied by trained, bipartisan election staff following strict chain-of-custody procedures. Ballots can also be returned at any vote center, polling place, or county elections office, where election workers directly accept and track them through the county's system.

### Voting Safely at Polling Places and Voting Centers

Voting in person is another secure and reliable option for California voters. Polling places and vote centers are staffed by trained election workers who follow strict procedures to verify each voter, issue the correct ballot, and ensure every vote is properly recorded.

Ballots cast in person are immediately placed into secure ballot boxes or scanned using approved voting equipment that is tested and certified before every election.

These locations also provide language assistance, replacement ballots if one was lost or damaged, and same-day voter registration when needed.

### Still have Questions and Concerns?

Voters who have questions about their ballots or the security of voting should go to a trusted source such as the Secretary of State's office, which offers voter hotlines in multiple languages including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Thai, and more. Another option is to visit your county elections office. A complete list can be found at [sos.ca.gov/elections](http://sos.ca.gov/elections).

Additionally, the state provides tools to check when your ballot is received and counted, giving voters peace of mind and reinforcing the transparency of the process.

By taking the time to plan your vote, verify your registration, and use official information sources, you strengthen both your voice and the integrity of our elections. Make sure your voice is heard on Nov. 4. ★

# Windows for Warriors Program Honors Veterans

## California Energy Consultant Service News Release

**ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG)** - California Energy Consultant Service wants to give back to those who have served the country.

Together with Simonton Windows, California Energy Consultant Service is launching Windows for Warriors, a community program to honor a local veteran with a free whole-home upgrade of new Simonton windows and patio doors.

California Energy Consultant Service is now asking for nominations from the community. To nominate a veteran in the Greater Sacramento area whose

home could benefit from new, energy-efficient windows and doors or for more information, go online to [calenergyexteriors.com/windows-for-warriors](http://calenergyexteriors.com/windows-for-warriors).

The nomination form asks for the veteran's service background, their story and basic details about their home.

"This program is about more than windows. It's about honoring service, supporting families and showing how our community can come together to give back to those who've given us so much," said California Energy Consultant Service CEO Phil Isaacs.

Nominations are open now through Nov. 5. The winner will be announced on Veterans Day, Nov. 11. ★

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# Judge Dismisses Grand Jury Indictment Against Egghead Vandals

## Yolo County District Attorney News Release

**YOLO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - Judge Sonia Cortés of the Yolo County Superior Court dismissed a grand jury indictment against defendants Nathan Orr, (32), Lysandra Dasilva (32) and Cheyenne Xiong (22), all from Davis, on Oct. 14.

The indictment alleged that on May 24, 2024, conspirators Orr, Dasilva and Xiong spray painted University of California, Davis' famed Egghead statues, as well as many other buildings and signs, as part of a coordinated vandalism attack across the campus. The vandals' messages criticized the Israel-Palestine conflict and UC Davis leadership.

UC Davis Police Department officers captured Dasilva and Xiong fleeing the scene of the crime, according to the District Attorney's office, and the crimes resulted in more than \$4,200 in damages. UC Davis police forwarded the case to the District Attorney's Office and requested formal charges.

On July 19, 2024, a criminal Grand Jury of Yolo County citizens indicted Orr, Dasilva and Xiong on charges of felony vandalism and felony conspiracy; both Dasilva and Xiong were additionally indicted on misdemeanor charges of resisting, obstructing or delaying a peace officer.

On Oct. 14, Cortes dismissed the indictment against all defendants, over the

objections of the D.A., citing their willingness to pay restitution, their lack of criminal record and 12 hours of community service they had each voluntarily completed.

In addition, an official representative from UC Davis indicated that community service that included an understanding of efforts undertaken to maintain the statutes would be beneficial and that the university did not object to a resolution to the case that fell outside the criminal justice system.

The District Attorney's Office consistently opposed the judge's decision to dismiss the case, arguing that it was an illegal court diversion.

"The judge's decision to entirely dismiss the felony indictment of the grand jury was unprecedented in my experience," District Attorney Jeff Reisig said. "Judges are not generally authorized to unilaterally divert criminals indicted by the grand jury. We believe that Judge Cortes' decision was improper. "Moreover, the decision by the official UC Davis representative to recommend against a criminal conviction flies in the face of their original request and referral for criminal prosecution and creates a dangerous precedent for future cases of such conduct, suggesting similar criminal behavior at UC Davis will be treated with kid gloves. This outcome is not good for public safety in our communities." ★



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To schedule Dr. Reichman to speak at your church, please call 817- 263-9968 or email [AhavathMessiah@gmail.com](mailto:AhavathMessiah@gmail.com)



**Publisher, Paul V. Scholl**

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Serving Fair Oaks, Orangevale and Sacramento County since 2006

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# Popp Talk

With Mary Jane Popp

## Boo-Zilla




Image by GraphicMama-team from Pixabay

It seems like 2025 has created a new Halloween monster called world strife. But the traditions of yesteryear still hold true. Halloween comes between fall and winter with a dire meaning for life and death. It combines celebration and death which we have already experienced beyond our wildest imagination this year. Halloween is thought to have originated with the Celtic Festival of Samhain. People would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off roaming ghosts. That was some 2000 years ago in the area that is now Ireland, the United Kingdom and Northern France. Their New Year was November 1 which marked the end of summer with a harvest and the dark cold winter, a time of the year that was associated with human death. Celts believed that on the night before the New Year, the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred. That's why they celebrated Samhain on October 31. They feared the roaming ghosts would cause trouble. They also thought the presence of other worldly spirits made it easier for the Druids and Celtic priests to make predictions about the future. Since this was a culture entirely dependent upon the volatile natural world, these prophecies were an important source of comfort and directions during the long and dark winter. Many cultures, including the Roman Empire that conquered the majority of the Celtic territory, combined the festivals of the Celts. So here we are in 2025 facing some of that volatile natural world and feeling helpless to make things go away...at least for now. Funny how history repeats itself in such strange ways. Anyway, Halloween came to America, but extremely limited in colonial New England by the rigid Protestants. Today's Halloween probably dates back to the early All Soul's Day parades in England when poor citizens would beg for food, and families would give them "soul cakes" in return for their promise to pray for the family's dead relatives. The soul cake was encouraged by the church as a way to replace the ancient practice of leaving wine and food for roaming spirits. Combine the different ethnic groups along with Native Americans and America developed its own Halloween. First there were parties as neighbors would share stories of the dead, tell fortunes, dance and sing. Eventually, they added ghost stories and mischief making. Then, in the second half of the 19th century, America was flooded with new immigrants because of Ireland's potato famine of 1846. Now you have a combo of Irish and English traditions. Then came dressing n costumes and going house to house asking for money or food. And so "trick or treat" was born. Young women believed they could divine the name of their future husband by doing tricks with yarn, apple parings and mirrors. It's amazing how things change. This year it's not a culture, but war and politics that takes the stage. Please stay safe and pray for a better Halloween for all ages!! HAPPY BOO-ZILLA DAY!!! ★

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# 'Just Surreal'

## Casa Roble Students Earn Pilot's Licenses Through Hard Work

By San Juan Unified School District staff

**ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG)** - Two Casa Roble Fundamental High School seniors reached new heights over the summer by earning their pilot's licenses before even graduating high school.

Alexander Shumaker and Leonardo Rosello were selected for the competitive Air Force Junior ROTC Flight Academy Scholarship Program, which gives nearly 200 cadets the opportunity to attend a flight training program during the summer.

Both Shumaker and Rosello balanced long days of schoolwork and flight hours to achieve this milestone in eight weeks, a feat that often takes others six months to complete.

However, the road to becoming a licensed pilot was far from easy.

"It's a pretty strenuous process," Shumaker said. "We had to study a lot. It was a lot of late nights of just aviation books, doing a lot of ground school and then lots of flight hours."

Said Rosello, "To put in perspective how stressful and taxing it was, I think I lost 20 pounds in the two months that we were out there and I was eating a lot, so I don't know if it was sweating in the plane or just stressing over tests but it's definitely a process."

Although studying took up a significant portion of their time, Shumaker said, the maneuvers were some of the most challenging parts for him.

"You're going up in the air and you have a lot of wind pushing you around," Shumaker said. "You have like three dimensions you have to work with and it gets pretty difficult with the amount of things you're looking at."

For Rosello, the most difficult part was the intense focus required when balancing schoolwork and training all day.

"Up until this point, this is the most intense academic activity I've gone through," Rosello said. "Our days were long and the only real time you had to yourself was when you were sleeping. It felt like you'd blink and the next day began."

Despite the challenges, Shumaker said, the moment that stuck with him most was when he first put on the flight suit.

"Just seeing and donning the flight suit for the first time. It's so cool, just looking at yourself in the mirror," Shumaker said.

Rosello's most rewarding moment came during one unforgettable sunset flight.

"It was golden hour, just surreal," Rosello said. "I couldn't believe where I was with my flight instructor,



From left, Casa Roble Fundamental High School students Alexander Shumaker and Leonardo Rosello earned their pilot's licenses through the competitive Air Force Junior ROTC Flight Academy Scholarship Program. Photo courtesy of San Juan Unified School District

who turned out to be a really cool person and a friend of mine toward the end. I think that's one of those moments I'll see on my death."

Casa Roble's Air Force Junior ROTC program played a central role in helping the two students take flight. Their instructor, Scott Dawes, said both cadets stood out for their determination.

"It takes commitment to get to those big moments," Dawes said. "What you put in is what you get out and they really demonstrated that. Their peers sometimes have a hard time getting their driver's license and these guys can fly to prom if they want."

Principal Tanya Baker agreed that their achievements show the power of real-world learning.

"This raises the profile

of our JROTC program on campus," Baker said. "We're known for strong athletics but this is like a championship too. Students can see

two of their peers becoming licensed pilots and they understand that's something big."

Shumaker and Rosello encourage younger students to pursue opportunities that might initially feel out of reach.

"Start right when you start thinking about it," Shumaker advised. "Do everything you can. If there's a club you can join, do it. Do everything because it all matters in the end. Also, join ROTC; you'll need to be in it at least a year if you want to apply for Flight Academy."

Rosello said, "You might feel like you're running out of time or you don't have enough time to do the things you need to do to get there. But if you don't make sacrifices for your dreams, your dream will become the sacrifice." ★



## COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Informing, Empowering and Engaging Readers with Their Community



## Saving a Divided Democracy, One Club Membership at a Time

Why America Needs More Clubs and Fewer Spectators

By Patsy McGavock JustServe.org

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - How does an ordinary person help save a divided democracy? Fifty years of data suggest: start or join a club and bring others with you. Do things, not view things, together.

In 1830, a French aristocrat studying American democracy noticed something unique: Americans form clubs. We formed lots of them. Alexis de Tocqueville called associations the "great free schools of democracy," where every day Americans practiced the skills of self-government, skills such as listening, leading, trusting, and solving problems through collaboration and compromise.

Nearly 200 years later, it feels we face a crisis of isolation and division. But the answer, perhaps surprisingly, hasn't changed: we need to be together. Regularly. In person. Whether it's a civic club, neighborhood barbecue, sports league or choir practice, the future of our democracy depends on it.

"There is no America without clubs," said Pete Davis, civic advocate and co-director of the 2024 documentary "Join or Die," which explores the life's work of social scientist Robert Putnam. "What happens when a society built on associations stops saying 'Sign me up' and starts saying, 'I'm not really a joiner?'"

The film's answer is clear: we come apart.

Putnam first raised warning in the 1990s, using an analogy: while Americans still bowled, they now bowled alone. Every area of civic life, including dinner parties, picnics and family meals, had declined steadily since the 1960s, many by 50%. Trust in government had declined 75% to 25%.

Through decades of research, Putnam found the most successful democracies, those that were stable, effective and trusted; shared one key trait: dense networks of civic and social connection.

"Politics, yes," he said, "but more importantly, reading groups, soccer teams, newspaper readership. It was layers of social trust."

Sorting dozens of variables to rank newly independent democratic Italian regions in the 1970s, Putnam found the correlation between civic engagement and democratic success was, in his words, "a straight line that almost never happens in social science."

In short, democracy doesn't start in Washington; it starts locally.

So why the decline?

When reviewing Putnam's research, U.S. Congress couldn't agree on a cause. But Putnam and others observed: "We let the rhythms of American life change." We lost our tempo of weekly, monthly and annual civic gatherings.

Over time, we moved indoors with our TVs, online with the web, and became twitter-pated by social media. We grew

tired: longer commutes, busier schedules, increasingly hostile national discourse. Slowly, we lost the warmth and accountability of face-to-face interaction, especially where we disagree.

As labor organizer Jane McAlevey bluntly put it: "You have to show up face to face, toe to toe, and engage in serious and meaningful conversation. Then you realize you have more in common than you don't."

"And then you all meet for choir practice later," added Putnam.

We turn the corner when we stop watching, stop scrolling and start showing up.

We're also losing hope and the emotional toll hits young people hardest. Gen Z and Millennials report record levels of burnout, loneliness and despair. In a *Fortune* interview, baby-boomer NYU professor Suzy Welch recalled asking a 25-year-old freelancer why she and her peers felt "just so burnt out," when boomers worked just as hard. The reply stopped her: "But you had hope."

Welch reflected: "We all did. We believed that if you worked hard, you were rewarded. That's the disconnect."

Restoring hope in young people with them, not just for them, is essential to renewing our divided democracy.

There's reason for hope. We've done this before.

In the early 1900s, during America's Gilded Age, the country faced deep social upheaval with industrialization, drastic financial inequality, party gridlock and a sense that America was falling apart. Yet, these divisions drove people to connect to make change. They knew they needed each other to do it. They formed clubs.

By 1910, a third of adult men belonged to at least one club. The General Federation of Women's Clubs grew from its 1890 founding to more than 1,000 chapters in eight years. African American clubs, student organizations, company clubs, civic clubs, local sports leagues and unions all multiplied.

The result? A 60-year upswing in democratic health, even through depression, hard public discourse and two world wars.

Average Americans turned it around. We can again.

As Putnam said, "The future of your country is in your hands. You can decide to change history."

Learn how in the next issue of Community Connection. Until then, I'd love to hear from you.

Ponder this: What do you love to do—and how can you connect with 10 other people to do it, together and regularly? Email me. Let's start a movement—together.

Patsy McGavock is a volunteer community advocate working to inform, empower and engage readers with their community. Connect with Patsy at PatsyMcGavock.JustServe@gmail.com★

## Fixing Sacramento County's Roads

A Straightforward Plan that Works

By Sacramento County Supervisor Rosario Rodriguez



If you've driven anywhere in Sacramento County lately, you've probably noticed the same thing I have: our roads are in rough shape. Potholes, cracks and worn pavement have become the norm instead of the exception. The truth is that the condition of our county's road network has continued to decline and unless we act, it's only going to get worse.

Right now, Sacramento County's average Pavement Condition Index, or PCI, is just 41 out of 100. That is considered poor by engineering standards, meaning many of our roads are approaching the point where simple maintenance is no longer enough. Our backlog of deferred road repairs is now estimated at more than \$1 billion, more than double what it was less than a decade ago.

In Sacramento County, we've done what we can with the tools we have. For several years, the County has dedicated about \$20 million annually from its General Fund to road repair, a significant commitment that few other counties make. As I've settled into this role and spent time in our communities, I've also seen how Citrus Heights is investing its own General Fund dollars into local road improvements and taking an entrepreneurial approach that stretches every dollar further.

This commitment has delivered real, visible progress in recent years. Still, without a dedicated funding source, both the County and most cities face an uphill battle. Communities with local sales tax measures, such as Elk Grove and Rancho Cordova, are moving ahead more quickly, while others must continue stretching limited resources to keep pace.

Part of the reason we're here is because the gas tax and vehicle fees people already pay are not keeping pace with rising costs and declining state and federal funding. When the most recent state gas tax increase was passed in 2017, it was promoted as the solution that would finally fix our roads. The public messaging was convincing but the actual measure told a different story.

Even before it passed, the previous county supervisor for this district warned that it would only cover a small portion of our road maintenance needs and that our PCI would continue to decline. Unfortunately, that warning proved correct.

The revenues from that gas tax helped slow the decline for a few years but they were never enough to reverse it. Meanwhile, the state's distribution formulas have shifted funding toward statewide priorities and larger metropolitan centers, leaving counties like ours to fend for ourselves. At the same time, construction costs have skyrocketed, and as more residents switch to electric vehicles, gas tax revenues continue to fall.

That's why I've asked county staff to bring forward a proposal for the Board of Supervisors to consider: a small, time-limited sales tax that would be used only to repair existing roads in unincorporated Sacramento County — nothing else. This would likely be a half-cent or smaller increase for up to 10 years, overseen by a citizen advisory committee to ensure every dollar is spent as promised.

Unlike past proposals that spread money across unrelated projects such as buses, bike lanes or light rail, this plan would be narrow, transparent and entirely focused on the issue residents care about most: fixing the roads we already have.

People tell me all the time that they would support a tax if it actually went to fixing the roads. This proposal is exactly that. It would finally allow us to fully address the backlog and restore Sacramento County's roads to a level of quality that residents expect and deserve.

We cannot keep waiting for someone else to fix this. Either we make the investment now or we allow the problem to grow more expensive every year. I believe residents are ready for a straightforward plan they can trust — one that delivers visible, measurable results.

If you'd like to share your thoughts or learn more about this proposal, please reach out to my office at 916-874-5491 or email SupervisorRodriguez@sac-county.gov. Together, we can make sure Sacramento County's roads are safe, reliable and something we can all be proud of again.

Sacramento County Supervisor Rosario Rodriguez represents the 4th District, which includes all or part of the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, Rio Linda, Elverta, Gold River, Rancho Murietta, North Highlands, Carmichael, Foothill Farms and Fair Oaks. ★

# Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



Well Kings fans, the preseason is behind us, and there is one difference between last year's results and this year. Thanks to a stirring 117-116 win over the Los Angeles Lakers Friday night the Kings will enter the regular season on a winning note.

Fans will remember that one year ago with Mike Brown at the helm, the Kings ran through the preseason without a single win and finished the first 20 games of the regular season with a sorry win/loss record. That tepid beginning would be a catalyst that would eventually lead to the dismissal of coach Brown and bring on Doug Christie as the interim head coach.

Now one win certainly doesn't portend a definite turnaround, but winning never hurts, and what came out of the win over L.A. was very telling.

After a less than stellar beginning for newly acquired point guard Dennis Schroder, the much-traveled guard broke out of a scoring slump with a rousing 25 points to lead all scorers on the Kings team. Moreover, Schroder looked like the veteran NBA point guard he is, and was impressive the way he managed the game and distributed the ball.

Certainly, it's a huge relief for Doug Christie in light of loosing forward Keegan Murray for probably the next 6 weeks, and Domantas Sabonis pulling a hamstring that will limit his action entering the upcoming season.

Fortunately, the injury to Sabonis does not appear to be severe, so there is optimism that he will be back sooner rather than later.

The prevailing question going into the Laker game was who will fill the vacated minutes of Keegan Murray, and can the Kings find any kind of a flow as it relates to their offensive schemes? Although the Kings competed from start to finish, that question wasn't completely answered in the one-point win over the hometown Lakers, but we at least got a glimpse of what might be going through the coaches mind.

Isaac Jones finally got some quality minutes logging 23, and played solidly with 10 points, 3 rebounds, and 2 assists off the bench.

Dario Saric added 10 points of his own and 6 rebounds. Dario played 25 minutes

and while not sterling, was solid on both ends of the floor.

Keon Ellis returned to form with a stirring 20 points in 26 minutes of action, and it appears likely that these 3 players will be called upon to fill in for the largest portion of minutes replacing Keegan Murray.

The key question is whether Doug Christie can turn the injury to Keegan Murray into something positive, and that would be using these minutes wisely to bring on players that have the most to give.

I continue to be an advocate of Isaac Jones, largely because he has never been given enough court time to see his full repertoire, and given his size and length, Isaac is difficult for opposing teams to guard around the rim. He is particularly adept at finishing lobs and has a soft touch in the low post.

Dario Saric has been around longer, and I think the Kings know what they can expect from him, but let's use this time wisely to find out who else we have that can be a key contributor.

Another bright spot was the play of 2nd round draft choice Max Raynaud, who added 9 points and 2 boards in only 16 minutes, and is appearing to be more and more comfortable with every game.

Not be overlooked is the stellar play of Nique Clifford who has become the bastion of consistency. Nique played 33 minutes giving the Kings a much needed 13 points, 5 boards, and 7 big assists. Clifford has played the preseason as a standout on both ends of the floor and is giving everyone notice that this rookie is NBA ready.

Can Kings fans get excited with only one win to show for their preseason endeavors? You bet they can!

Friday night's game was a win over a quality team led by svelte Luca Doncic, and it was accomplished with Sabonis, Murray, and Malik Monk on the sidelines!

Don't underestimate the contribution that this future hall-of-famer, Russell Westbrook, has to offer, and if he can fit in with his new teammates, Westbrook could be the unforeseen x-factor that the Kings so badly need.

All the best!

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

## Social Security Matters

### How Do I Navigate the Social Security Maze?



By Russell Gloor,  
AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

**Dear Rusty:** I am a woman, turning 65 this October (2025). It seems that deciding when to claim Social Security is complicated. I would like more information to navigate through this maze. Thank you.

**Signed: Ready to Claim**  
**Dear Ready:** Deciding when to claim Social Security can be challenging, but we hope to make it a bit easier for you. You can, of course, call us at any time to speak to one of our certified Social Security Advisors, but I'll share some pertinent information here as well.

Be aware that at age 65, you have not yet reached your Social Security (SS) full retirement age (FRA). Born in 1960, your FRA is age 67, and that is when you can get 100% of the SS benefit you've earned from a lifetime of working. If you claim SS at age 65, your monthly amount will be reduced by about 13.3% from your age 67 entitlement (a permanent reduction). If you wait a bit more and claim at age 66 the reduction would be about 6.7%. To get 100%

of your "primary insurance amount" you should wait until age 67 to claim. Note you can also wait longer than your FRA and earn Delayed Retirement Credits up to age 70, when your monthly amount would be about 24% more than your FRA entitlement.

If you are still working, at age 65 you will also be subject to Social Security's Annual Earnings Test (AET) which limits how much you can earn when collecting SS benefits before your full retirement age. The earnings limit for 2025 is \$23,400 (changes annually) and if you earn more than that, SS will take away \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. There is also a special rule for the first calendar year you are collecting early benefits, which will result in you not getting benefits for any month your work earnings are more than \$1950 after your early benefits start. So, if you claim SS at age 65 and continue to work, you won't get any SS benefits in any 2025 month thereafter that you earn more than the monthly limit (unless your total annual; 2025 earnings are less than the annual limit). FYI, the earnings limit no longer applies once you attain your full retirement age.

In the end, deciding when you should claim Social Security should consider your need for

Social Security money, your life expectancy, your plans for working, and your marital status. If you are (or were) married, you might be eligible for a spousal (or ex-spouse) benefit. You may also want to peruse the Social Security Q&A section at our website [www.SocialSecurityReport.org](http://www.SocialSecurityReport.org). So, as you have already discerned, deciding when to claim Social Security can be confusing, but we are always here to assist you as needed. You can either call us directly at 1.888.750.2622 or email your specific Social Security questions to us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). In either case, we will be most happy to help you decide when to claim, based on your unique personal circumstances.

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## Still No Progress After Newsom's Housing Pledge



By Dan Walters,  
CALMatters.org

Eight years ago, as he began his campaign for governor, Gavin Newsom described fixing the state's chronic housing shortage as a moral imperative.

"This is a question of who we are," Newsom wrote in 2017. "Housing is a fundamental human need — let's not forget the human face behind the dire statistics.

"Housing instability can cause genuine mental and physical adversity," he added, "and lead to insufferable decisions: no one should have to choose between paying rent or buying groceries. Knowing that too many Californians face this kind of anxiety breaks my heart."

Newsom pledged that as governor he would lead the effort to develop 3.5 million new housing units by 2025, "because our solutions must be as bold as the problem is big.

"I realize building 3.5 million new housing units is an audacious goal," Newsom continued, "but it's achievable. There is no silver bullet to solve this crisis. We need to attack the problem on multiple fronts by generating more funding for affordable housing, implementing regulatory reform and creating new financial incentives for local jurisdictions that produce housing while penalizing those that fall short."

The 3.5 million-unit goal

was never anywhere near realistic. It would have required increasing construction from about 100,000 units a year when he made the pledge to more than 400,000, doubling peak production in this century.

That said, Newsom has over the almost seven years of his governorship, pretty much, done what he said he'd do to increase housing. He has signed multiple bills meant to speed up housing permits by eliminating state and local legal impediments, capped by two major measures this year.

Newsom signed Assembly Bill 130, which makes it more difficult to use the California Environmental Quality Act as a tool to block housing projects, and Senate Bill 79, which overrides local government land use authority to authorize multi-family, multi-story housing projects near transit stops.

Meanwhile Newsom's Department of Housing and Community Development has set statewide goals of 180,000 new units a year and 2.5 million units over eight years. It also imposed ambitious quotas on local governments to designate land for residential development and cracked down on communities that impede multi-family projects for low- and moderate-income families.

The latter effort responds to the most acute aspect of California's shortage — housing the nearly 35% of Californians who are living in poverty or near-poverty, mostly due to housing costs that are among the nation's highest.

With the enactment of AB 130 and SB 79, the looming conclusion of Newsom's governorship and the

likelihood that he will run for president, it's time to appraise results.

Has the production of housing in California substantially increased? Unfortunately, no.

At the time Newsom made his pledge, about 100,000 units were being built each year, with the net increase substantially lower due to losses by fire or destruction. Eight years later, it's virtually unchanged, no matter which authority one consults.

The Census Bureau reports that between 2019, when Newsom took office, and 2024 new housing permits in California ranged from a high of 120,780 units in 2022 to a low of 101,546 last year. Newsom's own budget agrees with the Census Bureau's data for the same period and projects future construction through 2028 at 100,000 to 104,000 units a year.

Clearly, even though systemic barriers to housing construction have been eased, many developers have been unable to see housing in California as a good investment. The COVID-19 pandemic, which had massive economic impacts, and increases in interest rates to battle inflation also have had an effect.

Housing is far more complicated than Newsom depicted it when he made his promises. He gets a 'B' for effort — and an 'F' for results.

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. ★



The "ceasefire now" crowd finally got its ceasefire, although not the way it hoped.

Israel and Hamas have agreed to stop the fighting in Gaza, while the terror group will release all Israeli hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

There's always a chance the agreement falls apart. Still, it isn't creating jubilation from all the people who have been braying for Israel to end the war. There are two reasons -- one is that the deal is favorable for Israel, and the other is that the deal's architect is a president of the United States whom, the fiercest advocates of a ceasefire hate.

If it holds, the agreement is the biggest victory yet for Donald Trump's hyperactive, transactional diplomacy.

A lifetime of maneuvering for advantage in the real estate and media worlds in New York City -- searching for and using every ounce of leverage -- was better preparation for high-level international diplomacy than if Trump had spent a lifetime on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Whereas "international opinion" believed we had to isolate and cut off Israel, Trump arched the Jewish state, bombed Iran and squeezed Qatar to bring Hamas to heel -- and it worked. The deal is a tribute to avoiding the well-worn ruts of Middle East diplomacy.

## The Gonzo Brilliance of Trump's Gaza Diplomacy

As for Israel, it needed to find a way out of a conflict that had become a PR disaster. Getting the hostages back is an important national goal, even if the exchange is lopsided (these swaps always are). Meanwhile, Israel will pull back to an agreed-upon line, but still hold an estimated 53% of Gaza as a security buffer. Even if things eventually go south again, Israel has bought time by decimating Hamas and significantly diminishing the threats from Iran and Hezbollah.

It is certainly true that Phase 2 of the deal, which is supposed to disarm Hamas and establish a technocratic Palestinian government in Gaza, will be much more difficult to pull off. If it were to come to fruition, though, it would be transformative for Israel's security and for the lives of Gazans.

There will presumably be no speeches at Hollywood awards ceremonies crediting Trump for his peace-making. Among other things, there's too much cognitive dissonance in saying, "I think President Trump is a dangerous fascist -- but appreciate how bound and determined he is to end conflicts around the world."

Trump is a gonzo version of standard U.S. foreign policy. All American presidents want to make peace in the Middle East, and all want, whether they say it or not, to win the Nobel Peace Prize. What's different about Trump is his methods, and his openness about

seeking a call from the Nobel committee.

A hallmark of his policymaking at its best is an unwillingness to take "no" for an answer, an unremitting sense of urgency and a creativity that is considered unrealistic or reckless by conventional metrics. We saw it during his first term with his success in securing the border, with the historic achievement of Operation Warp Speed and with the Abraham Accords.

"The reasonable man adapts himself to the world," George Bernard Shaw maintained, "the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man."

In this sense, Trump is usefully unreasonable. Everyone around the world needs to be a little afraid of him, while he is willing to talk to anyone or consider anything. His optimism can be misplaced (the Ukraine war was a tougher nut than he thought) and his highly personalized diplomacy can misfire (he got unnecessarily crosswise with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi), but he can also prove all his doubters wrong.

The Washington cliché is that there is no limit to the good you can do if you don't care who gets the credit. Trump shows, to the contrary, that sometimes there is no limit to the good you can do if you want all the credit.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.  
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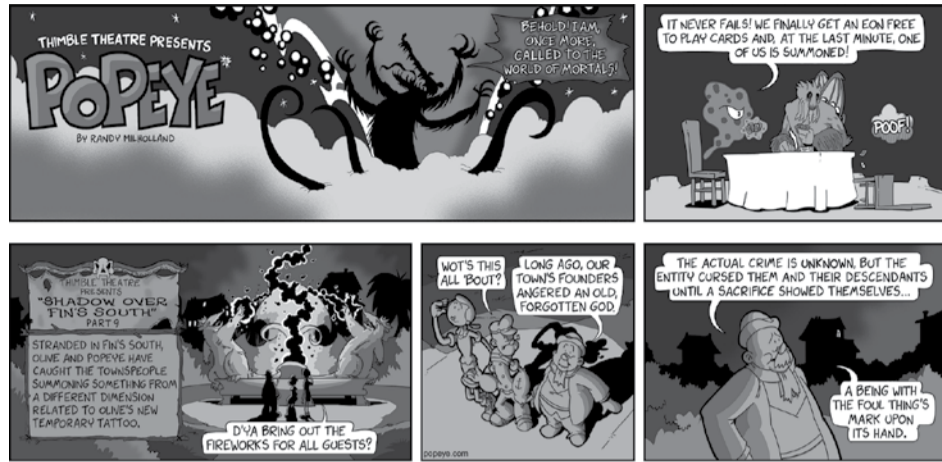
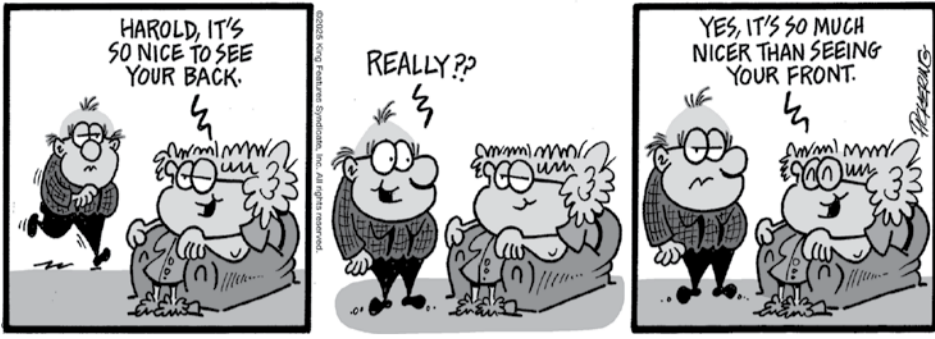
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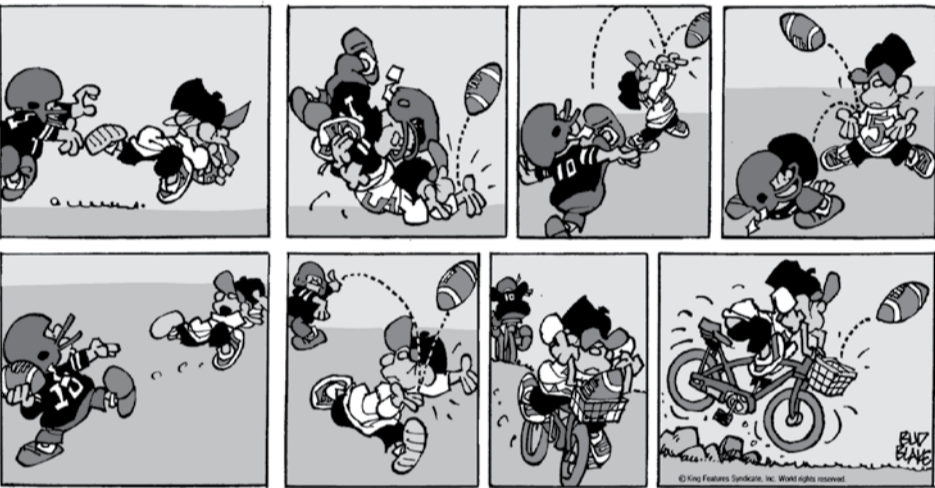
BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



## GRIN and BEAR IT

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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### CLUES

- CROSSWORD**
- ACROSS
- Eye affliction
  - Nickname
  - Christmas tree variety
  - Not we
  - Use a whetstone
  - Lyric poem
  - New Haven University
  - Unrivaled
  - Buenos follower
  - \*Number one pumpkin-growing state
  - Phishing attack
  - Dead to the world
  - Albanian money
  - \*"One, two, \_\_\_'s coming for you"
  - Harasses
  - Bloodshot
  - System of news-groups on Internet
  - Muscular strength
  - Not odds
  - Zedong of China
  - Do penitence
  - Form of wrestling
  - Certain Native American dwelling
  - Cleopatra's cause of death, supposedly
  - \*\_\_\_ O'Rourke of "Poltergeist"
  - \*Silver ammo, useful against werewolves, sing.
  - Rooster's girlfriend
  - Seattle's \_\_\_ Needle
  - Sportscaster Andrews
  - \*One of two first ever fun size candy bars
  - Unbroken mustang
  - In \_\_\_ of
  - Lash mark
  - Missouri River tributary
  - Chooses
  - \*"Rice of "The Vampire Chronicles" fame
  - \*\_\_\_ the fields we go"
  - Turkish title of respect
  - Oxen's harness
- DOWN
- Hog haven
  - Like certain ice tea
  - Holler
  - Pupil protector
  - Driver's license sticker
  - Dark
  - #63 Across, pl.
  - Forum, pl.
  - Previously mentioned, acr.
  - Hi-\_\_\_ monitor
  - Pooh's repast, pl.
  - Drawing support
  - \*Bobby \_\_\_ of "Monster Mash" fame
  - River in India
  - Auction batch
  - Like classic TV's Prince
  - Variety show
  - a.k.a. dropsy
  - \*"What witch's familiar says
  - Sandbar
  - Sometimes it's perfect
  - Hide under a rug
  - Independent chieftain
  - Old horse
  - \*"What Michael Myers says
  - Without self-control

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# Women's Empowerment Program Celebrates 100th Graduating Class

## Sacramento County News Release

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - Fourteen graduates recently took a determined walk up to the stage amid cheers, applause and, for many, tears.

Tears in their eyes, and in the eyes of the staff, friends and family that have supported them through the hardest years of their life.

Tears of sadness and pain for their past and tears of hope and joy for their future.

As each graduate was introduced, another graduate adorned their neck with a brilliant purple and pink sash, symbolizing their transition into their story's next chapter.

Graduations are largely symbolic but the tangible and real results experienced by these Women's Empowerment program enrollees will shape the rest of their lives. The 14 graduates from the 100th graduating class of the Women's Empowerment program carry the weight of 99 classes before them and hold promise for the countless classes that will come after.

For more than 20 years, Women's Empowerment has equipped women experiencing



The 100th class of Women's Empowerment program graduates recently celebrated with a powerful commencement ceremony. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

homelessness by providing education, employment readiness, childcare and community support to help them rebuild their lives and move into independence.

"This 100th graduation is more than a number; it represents hundreds of women who have taken steps toward stability, confidence and a brighter future," said Women's Empowerment Executive Director Lisa Culp. "We are honored to walk alongside them as they reclaim their

lives and inspire our entire community with their courage."

Since its founding, Women's Empowerment has graduated more than 1,800 women, many of whom have secured employment, housing and educational opportunities.

The program combines job training, counseling, health services and mentorship to address barriers faced by women experiencing homelessness. Several classes that the graduates said

were particularly impactful focused on anger management, budgeting, cooking, parenting, ready to rent and resume building.

The recent ceremony was filled with heartfelt speeches from the graduates about what the program and the support of staff and fellow enrollees meant to them. Stories of addiction, trauma, domestic abuse, pain, disappointment and hopelessness gave way to dreams of self-sufficiency,

sobriety, productive futures, sustained employment and permanent housing.

One graduate shared her experience in the budgeting class.

"They are teaching us how to budget if we want a future, not just a paycheck," she said. "We are better now than we were yesterday and we'll be better tomorrow, thanks to the love and support this program has given us."

The ceremony ended with the graduates' children giving them roses, a gesture from the childcare team to show how proud they are of the graduates' accomplishments and a reminder why they are working so hard to change their circumstances.

Another graduate, in closing the ceremony, said, "Breaking generational poverty, addiction and abuse is the most important thing we can do for the next generation. These children have endured trauma as well. Showing our kids that we are strong, resilient and worth more than the life we currently have is priceless. This program gives us the power we need to choose a new life, a new path. I now know that I am important. My voice matters. My story matters. And it's just beginning." ★

## Recognizing Domestic Violence Awareness Month



Bonnie Prehoda receives the annual Domestic Violence Prevention Collaboration award on Oct. 2 at Citrus Heights City Hall. Sacramento County's Senior and Adult Services Division staff members from left are Deputy Director Melissa Jacobs, Human Services social worker and supervisor Christina Boakye-Donkor, Family Services supervisor Kelley Nyberg, Adult Protective Services' Bonnie Prehoda, Adult Protective Services' Kelley Nyberg and Human Services program managers Brian Pyne and Martha Haas. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

### Sacramento County News Release

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento County's Department of Child, Family and Adult Services is recognizing October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The Department of Child, Family and Adult Services supports both survivors and families through programs and partnerships that protect children, older adults and dependent adults.

Through partnerships with community organizations, law enforcement and service providers, the county's Department of Child, Family and Adult Services ensures that survivors have access to safety, resources and compassionate support.

This year, Sacramento County is proud to recognize one of its own staff members for their work with domestic violence survivors. Adult Protective Services social worker Bonnie Prehoda was selected by the Domestic Violence Prevention Collaboration to receive its annual Domestic Violence Prevention Collaboration Award.

The Domestic Violence Prevention Collaboration, a coalition of law enforcement representatives, government agencies and nonprofit organizations that has served the community since 2003, works to prevent domestic violence through advocacy,

education, intervention and coordinated response.

Each year during Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Domestic Violence Prevention Collaboration honors individuals who demonstrate extraordinary dedication to survivors and the fight to end family violence. Prehoda was formally honored on Oct. 2 at Citrus Heights City Hall.

Prehoda is just one of many employees working for Sacramento County who raise awareness and support community members impacted by domestic violence. We can all do our part to help domestic violence survivors and those who might currently be experiencing domestic violence. Sacramento County encourages all residents to learn more about available resources, speak out against family violence and support survivors in their journey to healing and safety.

To report child abuse in Sacramento County, call the 24-Hour Child Abuse Hotline at 916-875-5437 (875-KIDS).

To report elder or dependent adult abuse in Sacramento County, call Adult Protective Services at 916-874-9377. For emergencies, dial 911.

This October and every month, Sacramento County stands with survivors, honors the advocates who work tirelessly to support them and reaffirms its commitment to ending the cycle of family violence. ★

## Pump Prices Rise Slightly after Southern California Refinery Fire

### American Automobile Association News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - As autumn sets in, the national average price for a gallon of regular gasoline has dropped to \$3.11 from the \$3.15 average two weeks ago, as of Oct. 9.

According to the Energy Information Administration, demand for gasoline has fallen to a four-month low, contributing to the continued decline in pump prices. With the third quarter of 2025 ending in higher gasoline inventories and the seasonal transition from summer-grade to winter-grade fuel, consumers are likely to see even lower prices at the pump in the coming weeks.

Northern California refineries are expected to help cover supply in Southern California following the Chevron refinery fire in El Segundo two weeks ago. The average cost of regular gasoline in California rose two cents per gallon since two weeks ago to \$4.66.

"Events that slow or stop gasoline production can prompt increased bidding for available gasoline supplies," said Doug Johnson, spokesperson for American Automobile Association (AAA) Mountain West Group. "Pipeline disruptions, planned or unplanned refinery maintenance or refinery shutdown may cause prices to increase especially the longer they remain offline. However, there is good news around the corner. California switches to the cheaper winter-grade fuel, starting Nov. 1."

AAA reported fuel prices on Oct. 9 as \$4.75 in San Francisco, \$4.65 in Oakland, \$4.60 in San Jose, \$4.61 in Sacramento, \$4.59 in Fresno and \$4.52 in Stockton.

According to Energy Information Administration data, gasoline demand increased from 8.51 million barrels per day two weeks ago to 8.91 million barrels per day. Total domestic gasoline supply decreased from 220.7 million barrels to 219.1 million. Gasoline production increased two weeks ago, averaging 9.8 million barrels per day.

The national average per kilowatt hour of electricity at a public EV charging station stayed the same last week at 36 cents, according to AAA, and California's average was at 38 cents.

The nation's Top 10 most expensive gasoline markets, as of Oct. 9, are California (\$4.66), Washington (\$4.50), Hawaii (\$4.47), Oregon (\$4.12), Nevada (\$3.90),



As autumn sets in, the national average price for a gallon of regular gasoline has dropped to \$3.11 from the \$3.15 average two weeks ago. Photo by Engin Akjurt from Pixabay

Alaska (\$3.86), Arizona (\$3.50), Idaho (\$3.48), Utah (\$3.38) and Pennsylvania (\$3.28).

The nation's Top 10 least expensive gasoline markets, as of Oct. 9, are Oklahoma (\$2.60), Mississippi (\$2.67), Arkansas (\$2.69), Louisiana (\$2.70), Texas (\$2.70), Tennessee (\$2.72), Wisconsin (\$2.74), Kentucky (\$2.76), Missouri (\$2.76) and Alabama (\$2.76).

The nation's Top 10 most expensive states for public electric charging per kilowatt hour, as of Oct. 9, are West Virginia (53 cents), Alaska (50 cents), Hawaii (46 cents), South Carolina (44 cents), Alabama (43 cents), New Hampshire (43 cents), Arkansas (43 cents), Louisiana (42 cents), Montana (42 cents), and Wisconsin (42 cents).

The nation's Top 10 least expensive states for public electric charging per kilowatt hour, as of Oct. 9, are Kansas (26 cents), Missouri (27 cents), Maryland (28 cents), Nebraska (28 cents), Utah (28 cents), Delaware (32 cents), Vermont (32 cents), North Carolina (32 cents), Iowa (33 cents) and Colorado (33 cents).

Drivers can find current gas and electric charging prices along their route using the AAA Mobile App at [aaa.com/mobile](http://aaa.com/mobile), now available on CarPlay.

Find current fuel prices at [GasPrices.AAA.com](http://GasPrices.AAA.com).

AAA Mountain West Group is a membership and full-service leisure travel organization, serving more than 6.8-million members across Northern California, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, Montana, Wyoming, and Alaska. AAA offers roadside assistance and electric vehicle (EV) resources, along with auto repair, travel, insurance, financial and home security services. ★

## Sacramento State's Enrollment Continues to Climb

### Sacramento State News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - California State University, Sacramento's (Sacramento State) enrollment continues to climb with record numbers despite significant challenges at the state and federal levels.

In March, Sacramento State announced that it had reached its highest enrollment in the university's

history for spring at 30,164, exceeding enrollment goals set out by the California State University system.

With a just-concluded enrollment census this fall, Sacramento State set another record with the largest fall enrollment post-COVID at 31,307.

"These numbers mean we are offering an outstanding, world-class education," said Sacramento State President Luke Wood. "We continue to grow our hive, our home."

Over the last 10 years, California

State University, Sacramento has seen an enrollment increase of 6.7 percent. University officials attribute these increases to innovative and collaborative recruitment efforts.

These efforts include new academic programs, including the Bachelor of Fine Arts in architecture studies, a new concentration on practical applications of artificial intelligence and one of the largest criminal justice programs in the country.

Sacramento State partners with high schools, community colleges and community organizations offering guaranteed admissions.

Historic initiatives such as the Black Honors College, Combat U, Wilcety Native American College and Guardian Scholars Promise also play a role in attracting scholars.

Sacramento State offers programming that reaffirms the university's designations as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), Asian American

Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) and Black-Serving Institution (BSI).

Additionally, Sacramento State provides pathways for academic revival and adult learners to complete their degrees.

With strong industry ties and hands-on opportunities, students are choosing Sacramento State to access opportunities that will shape their future well after graduation, according to the university. ★

# Find the Helpers

By Janna Haynes

## SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)

- On Thursday mornings in Orangevale, residents experiencing homelessness can get a hot meal, a shower, some clothes and a meaningful conversation with Community HealthWorks (CoHeWo) case workers that can help with a myriad of service connections on the road to exiting homelessness.

In a partnership between Sacramento County Department of Homeless Services and Housing, Community HealthWorks and the Homeless Assistance Resource Team (HART) Orangevale/Fair Oaks chapter, people living unsheltered in some of the farthest reaches of Sacramento County have a day each week to feel seen, heard and loved.

On Tuesday mornings, another team sets up a simple tent, table, jugs of water and a box of donated food items at the park in Township 9, along the American River Parkway. Community HealthWorks staff have iPads to access the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and ensure people have the services they need and are enrolled in the programs they want.

Both locations are staffed by compassionate staff members who know the regulars and treat them with dignity and respect. Before they even walked up, we talked about who they expected to see and the hope that they would show up. These office hours happen throughout the county, giving unsheltered folks in need of connection some much-needed stability.

In Orangevale, a woman walked up with a baby stroller but inside, to my surprise, was a small black and white cat. She came for a shower, a meal and a conversation with a group of workers that knew her well. Human connection,



The Community HealthWorks mission is to advance community, social and economic health one person at a time. In 2024, Community HealthWorks connected more than 1,050 Sacramento County residents to housing and shelter. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

even just once a week, keeps many hopeful.

Another gentleman walked up for his appointment to be entered into the Homeless Management Information System for the first time. He wanted to enroll in CalFresh benefits and get on the shelter list. His case worker seemed relieved that he showed up. The unfortunate reality of homelessness is lack of stability; whether transportation, scheduling or a harsher reality, they get swept.

Gabby, Aaron and Canyon connect with several clients during the two-hour event, guiding new clients through the intake process which assesses their status through a check of vulnerabilities, available resources, criminal history, financial resources and more. Gabby said that many clients are initially hesitant to honestly answer questions about criminal history and mental illness.

"We can help clients clear misdemeanor warrants that block people from getting into housing. We can make connections with clinicians, critical medications and mental health treatment. Once they find that out, they're more willing to be transparent with us," Gabby said.

I asked them why they do this job, specifically why they choose to work in the field instead of in a shelter. Aaron said, "I want to

bring resources outside of four walls, where so many people are suffering. Meeting clients where they are helps build trust. They are in the trenches; so are we."

Canyon agreed but for him, it's more so a life mantra: "I believe that while you're alive, do things that make a difference. Do work that makes life better for everyone. So many people think they aren't worthy or don't deserve help but they do."

Gabby has a history of working in family education, group homes and similar nonprofit organizations with a mission to help homeless.

"The system has failed people. Unhoused people aren't helpless but they do need a bridge to resources and education. I love educating the community and being part of the change," Gabby said.

At Township 9, a man wandered up on a bike, peeking into the box of food donations. He was thrilled to see an assortment of sweets. He said that he's currently sheltered nearby at the Gathering Inn. He declined a water jug, leaving it for those who are completely unsheltered.

Another regular practically ran up to the tent. He shared an elaborate story about an army general and a battle just over the hill. He held a can opener as if it was a

bayonet and it was clear he's suffering from mental illness. But Crystal and Nate from Community HealthWorks know him, understand what to expect and engage him in meaningful conversation, offer him water and food and treat him with respect.

Just a few minutes later, a woman walked up asking for help because she found two tiny kittens in the middle of the road but could not help them because she has two dogs. Crystal called 3-1-1 to make a connection to animal control. Meanwhile, staff engaged her in conversation and she said that her neighboring encampment was recently swept and her friends lost their dog crate and a stack of vital documents. The trauma rolls through nearby encampments fearful of similar activity.

It is a familiar story in many areas of Sacramento County: the clearing of encampments sets residents back through the loss of IDs, paperwork, survival gear and perhaps most importantly, trust in the system.

Nate said he has been helping the homeless for years as a volunteer.

"I didn't even know this was a paid job. I've always helped people that do not have any support or resources. I love people. Everyone is human and deserves to be treated with dignity and

respect," Nate said. "People feel forgotten and that makes them hopeless. Even if I am just helping them get a new ID or some food, it helps them feel seen, puts a smile on their face. That is what it's about for me."

As Crystal got off the phone with 3-1-1, relaying instructions to move the kittens to a safe place, she added her work philosophy: "Everyone has turned their back on these people; they don't deserve that. I have so much empathy for people. Really, I think I was made for this job. People need the most help when they're at the bottom."

Community HealthWorks mission is to advance community, social and economic health one person at a time. In 2024, Community HealthWorks connected more than 1,050 Sacramento County residents to housing and shelter. Community HealthWorks facilitated a wide range of services, including assisting 8,200-plus individuals with Medi-Cal enrollments and renewals, 9,800-plus medical and behavioral health appointments scheduled, and more than 10,000 food supports (Cal-Fresh services) to reduce hunger and food insecurity.

It is such a blessing to my soul to be around folks who care so deeply for strangers, for the forgotten, for the people that society has decided aren't worth their time. But they are worth our time. They are important and special and deserve to live a safe, dignified life. This Community HealthWorks team isn't just checking the boxes; they are truly helpers.

As Mr. Rodgers once shared, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"

Janna Haynes is a Sacramento County public information officer. ★

## FORPD Board Honors Fair Oaks Theatre Festival

Continued from page 1

limit vending to certain areas and times in order to ensure ADA access and general visitor safety.

As a special district, the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District must align with the existing state and county regulations. If approved by the board, the draft policy will be sent to the legal team for review before official adoption at a future meeting.

Director Carhart said his biggest concern had been whether this would affect vendors at district events but he was relieved to find they are not included under these regulations.

Each park will have a map of designated allowable vending area and, Aho said, "It's a very limited area."

He added that vending can also be prohibited if it interferes with district events, rentals, or other permitted activities.

The policy draft was approved 4-0, with Vice Chair John O'Farrell absent.

Next, the board discussed a new trespassing policy, which would provide clear guidelines for preventing, identifying and responding to individuals trespassing on district property.

Currently, the district relies on state and county codes regarding trespassing, which does not provide clear guidelines regarding staff authority or



The Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Board of Directors issued a proclamation honoring the cultural contributions of the Fair Oaks Theatre Festival, which recently ceased operations after more than 40 years. Photo courtesy of Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District

communication and coordination with law enforcement. The proposed policy defines staff roles for responding to incidents of trespassing, as well as procedures for initial contact, documentation, and referral to the Sheriff's Office.

The policy provides a transparent, legal framework to ensure fairness, consistency, and safety in enforcement actions. It also reinforces the district's commitment to public safety and compliance with state and county laws.

Park and Facilities Manager Sean Ventura said this policy is not geared toward penalizing people who hang out a bit later than park closing hours.

Instead, it's aimed at "the repetitive problems that don't leave and curse at the staff."

The board voted 4-0 to approve the policy.

Ventura also introduced a staff request for the purchase of new parking lot striping equipment. He said the parking lots of all the district parks in the district need periodic restriping to maintain safety, functionality, and ease of use for visitors. The district also regularly needs to paint lines on fields for both softball and football games.

The district's current paint striping machine was purchased 13 years ago and recently stopped functioning, and repair attempts were unsuccessful.

Staff requested funds not to exceed \$8,000 to purchase a gas-powered Graco LineLizer 3400. The equipment cost is \$7,000, plus additional taxes and shipping costs.

Ventura said the current quote to contract out for parking lot restriping at Phoenix Park is around \$20,000—and the lines need to be redone at every park every 1-5 years depending on use. So, investing in the equipment now will save the district a lot of money over time.

The board voted 4-0 to approve the purchase through Landscape and Lighting District funds.

The board then convened a meeting of the Fair Oaks

Recreation Foundation, a non-profit public benefit corporation that serves as the fundraising source for the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District. The mission of the foundation is to support recreation, arts and entertainment programs, and maintain parks and facilities to benefit the residents of Fair Oaks.

The foundation has been chaired by the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District board members but best practice recommends such organizations be separate entities, so the Board has undertaken the process of updating the bylaws to allow that change. As part of that process, Aho introduced various options for new foundation names.

After some discussion, the board agreed on the Fair Oaks Recreation and Arts Foundation (FORAF), stating that the name encompasses all the foundation's focus areas.

During general board comments, all the directors hailed the Village Park grand opening as a great success and said they've received very positive feedback from the community about the improved parks and facilities, as well as the slate of programming and events.

The next Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Nov. 19. ★

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**MOZART**  
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**JAMES WHITBOURN**  
Requiem Canticum  
and Lux in Tenebris



Chris Mackey  
Baritone



Rachael Davis  
Soprano



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Soprano

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Saturday, December 13 | 3:00pm  
Memorial Auditorium  
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# New Home Sales Dip in September

**North State Building Industry Association News Release**

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - As many prospective homebuyers waited to see what happened with mortgage interest rates, new home sales in the Sacramento region dipped in September but remained above the average number of sales for the month, according to the North State Building Industry Association.

North State Building Industry Association-member homebuilders reported selling 430 homes, 5 percent above the average 409 sales during September dating back to 1997. Sales were down 13 percent from August and 19 percent below September 2024. Building Industry Association President and CEO Tim Murphy said that many buyers are hoping that interest rates drop further before pulling the trigger.

"While mortgage rates have dropped to below 6.5 percent, many potential buyers are betting that they will fall even further in the near future," Murphy said. "It is also possible that buyers are waiting to see how soon the government shutdown is resolved. Markets like certainty and homebuyers are no different."

Murphy said that many area builders

continue to offer generous incentives to help make home buying more attainable and there is a wide selection of styles and locations in the 197 active new home communities from Yuba City to Galt. And Murphy again called on area governments to streamline the permitting process and reduce the fees that now average more than \$100,000 per home.

"Too often, the permitting process takes years between when a new development is proposed and when construction actually begins, and along with high fees and other costs, builders can't meet the demand for housing. Until this gridlock is broken, demand will continue to outstrip supply and housing costs will remain challenging," Murphy said.

In September, Roseville recorded the most sales with 98, followed by 75 in Rancho Cordova, 51 in Sacramento, 50 in Plumas Lake and 36 in Elk Grove. Natomas was sixth with 29 sales, followed by Lincoln (25), Folsom (13), Rocklin (11) and El Dorado Hills (10).

North State Building Industry Association statistics covered 197 new home communities reported by members in Amador, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties. ★

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**KP KARAOKE SPECIAL**  
Sun-Thu Come before 6pm (Valid Time)  
Fri-Sat Come before 5pm (Valid Time)

- For 6 people \$115.00** - Gratuity  
3 Hours Karaoke + Pizza + Pitcher Soda + 2 Main Dishes (Small Room)
- For 12 people \$210.00** - Gratuity  
3 Hours Karaoke + 2 Pizzas + Pitcher Soda + 4 Main Dishes (Medium Room)
- For 14 people \$230.00** - Gratuity  
3 Hours Karaoke + 2 Pizzas + Pitcher Soda + 4 Main Dishes (Family Room)
- For 18 people 295.00** - Gratuity  
3 Hours Karaoke + 3 Pizzas + Pitcher Soda + 6 Main Dishes (Large Room)
- For 28 people \$395.00** - Gratuity  
3 Hours Karaoke + 3 Pizzas + Pitcher Soda + 6 Main Dishes (Party Room)

Dishes To Choose From: Chicken Fried Rice, Beef Fried Rice, Pork Fried Rice, etc.

**FROZEN & FISH DEPT**

- Odenyasan Fish Cakes 275 g REG. \$6.99/EA **\$4.99/ea**
- Seasoned Pollock Roe 1 lb REG. \$19.99/EA **\$12.99/ea**

**WEEKLY MEAT SPECIALS**

- London Broil/Top Round Roast **\$5.29/lb**
- Beef Ribeye Roast - Bnls **\$8.49/lb**
- Chicken Drumsticks **89¢/lb**
- Cushion Roast Boneless **\$2.99/lb**
- Pork Loin Country Style Ribs Boneless **\$3.49/lb**
- Center Cut Pork Loin Chops Boneless **\$3.49/lb**

**WEEKLY HALAL SPECIALS**

- Chicken Drumsticks **99¢/lb**
- New Zealand Lamb Shoulder Chop **\$5.99/lb**
- London Broil/Top Round Roast **\$5.79/lb**

**FRESH PRODUCE**

- Rainbow Bell Pepper **\$3.49/bag**
- Mushroom Whole White 8 oz **\$1.99/ea**
- Russet Potato 10 lb **\$1.99/bag**
- Garlic 5 pcs U.S.A **\$1.59/ea**
- Pomegranate **99¢/lb**
- Persimmon Fuyu **\$1.29/lb**
- Kabocha **69¢/lb**
- King Oyster Mushroom **\$1.69/lb**

**AMERICAN/HISPANIC GROCERY**

- Walkers Mini Short Bread 5.3 oz **\$1.69/ea**
- Ariel Multi Purpose Detergent Powder 7.51 lb **\$13.99/ea**
- Kellogg's Rice Krispies Treats 6.2 oz **\$3.49/ea**
- Kraft Dressings 3 Kinds 16.1 oz **\$2.49/ea**
- Heinz Tomato Ketchup 38 oz **\$2.99/ea**

**ASIAN GROCERY**

- Thai Monosodium Glutamate 500 g **\$4.49/ea**
- Anahaw Taro Leaves (Dried) 4 oz **\$2.99/ea**
- Noh Char Siu Seasoning Mix 2.5 oz **\$1.99/ea**
- Curu Long Banh Trang Rice Paper 12 oz **\$1.99/ea**
- Butterfly Fujian Green Tea 3.52 oz **\$1.99/ea**

**EUROPEAN GROCERY**

- Polinka Cream Fudge Candy 1 kg **\$7.99/ea**
- Ulker Dubai Chocolate 93 gr **\$6.99/ea**
- Ichnya Condensed Milk 378 gr **\$2.99/ea**
- Rigo Lux Herring in Tomato Sauce 300 gr **\$3.99/ea**
- Chernogolovka Carbonated Drinks 0.5 liter **\$1.49/ea**

**EUROPEAN DELI**

- Columbus Seasoned Roast Beef **\$13.19/lb**
- Columbus Beef Pastrami **\$12.09/lb**
- Pitted Olives & Garlic Salad **\$5.79/lb**
- Cerignola Olives **\$7.39/lb**

**FROZEN & FISH DEPT**

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

**HOUSEWARE**

- Electric Rice Cooker **\$54.99**
- Electric Rice Cooker **\$59.99**
- Electric BBQ Grill **\$39.99/ea**

Advised items good at KP International Market - Rancho Cordova location ONLY. We reserve the right to LIMIT QUANTITIES. Not responsible for TYPOGRAPHICAL OR PICTORIAL ERRORS. All advertised items are SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. Sorry NO RAINCHECKS. PRICES EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 22 - OCTOBER 28, 2025.

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