

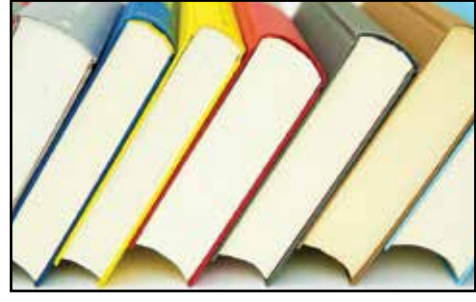


**Downtown Ice Rink Open for 33rd Season**

PAGE 2

**Textbook Feedback Wanted**

PAGE 12



# AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

VOLUME 20 • ISSUE 23

Serving Fair Oaks, Orangevale & Sacramento County

DECEMBER 5, 2025

**SEE INSIDE**

**2024 CROP AND LIVESTOCK REPORT RELEASED**



PAGE 3

**CLOSING THE ILLEGAL CAMPING LOOPHOLE**



PAGE 5

**STUDENTS INCREASE IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**



PAGE 6

## Holiday Events for All



2024 Fair Oaks Honorary Mayor Katie Yount and her daughter pose with Santa and Mrs. Claus at last year's Holiday Tree Lighting.

Story and photo by Judy Andrews

**FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG)** - Fair Oaks looks a little brighter this holiday season, thanks to the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District, the Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce and all the local groups and merchants who have worked hard to spread some cheer.

Many of the events in town are free to attend. Visit the new "Christmas in Fair Oaks: December Holiday Guide 2025" online at [fairoakschamber.com/ChristmasinFairOaks](http://fairoakschamber.com/ChristmasinFairOaks) to view these events and more. Follow along on Facebook to view the guide and receive event announcements at [facebook.com/](http://facebook.com/)

christmasinfairoaks. The Festival of Trees will be on display from Dec. 4 to 13 at the Village Park Plaza (7003 Park Drive). Although the contest has ended, you can view all the trees decorated by local families, groups and businesses. Meristem is hosting its Winter Fair & Wreath Walk from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6. The Wreath Walk begins at 5 p.m. Event highlights include crafts, handmade artisan gifts for sale and live music. Vote for your favorite wreath and savor treats from Meristem's Culinary Program while supporting autistic and neurodiverse young adults. The Meristem campus is at 9200 Fair Oaks Blvd.

Miller's Ace Hardware and I Love Fair Oaks will host Santa Paws from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6, featuring future service dogs in training, educational outreach, a hot cocoa bar and photos with Santa. Donations are welcome and will support Canine Companions' local chapter. The Fair Oaks Youth Advisory Board is back with their Snowman Scavenger Hunt from Dec. 6 to Dec. 8 at Fair Oaks Park, Miller Park and Gum Ranch Park. Collect the letters from the hidden snowman in each park to unscramble a festive word. Scan the QR code at each park, enter the unscrambled word and you could win a prize. For details, visit online *Continued on page 4*

### FORPD Executive Director

**Mike Aho to Retire**  
*New Search to Begin Soon*

By Shaunna Boyd

**FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG)** - At the Nov. 19 meeting of the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District (FORPD) Board of Directors, they considered the recruitment process for the district administrator position as the current administrator, Mike Aho, will retire on June 1, 2026. The board reviewed proposed updates to the district administrator job announcement to reflect the district's current strategic priorities, including long-term planning, sustainability and community partnerships. Staff are currently evaluating potential recruitment firms to assist with the hiring process. A separate request for board approval of a recruitment firm, along with associated costs, is expected at the Dec. 17 meeting. Once selected, the recruitment firm will create a comprehensive brochure outlining the position's role, responsibilities and qualifications. The brochure will also highlight the new capital improvements and the district's evolving mission. The board of directors voted 4-0 to approve the job announcement, with Director Ralph Carhart absent. The board then transitioned into a meeting of the Fair Oaks Recreation Foundation, and the financial reports, as required twice each year, were reviewed and approved. The board also reviewed the updated foundation bylaws, as part of the process to change the foundation into a separate entity. The bylaws' key changes included a name change to the Fair Oaks Recreation and Parks Foundation, as the board previously approved, and mission updates to include support for arts and entertainment and human needs. Voting board members were expanded from five to seven, with no more than two Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District directors serving on the foundation board. The membership structure was also updated to allow for the inclusion of nonvoting members. The district administrator or their appointee will serve as a non-voting CEO of the foundation. The district's attorneys have already reviewed the changes. If approved by the board, the updates will be submitted to the Secretary of State to approve the transition to an independent board. The district's goal is to complete this *Continued on page 4*

## Vet Center Named for ARC Benefactor

By Susan Maxwell Skinner

**CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG)** - A veterans' resource facility at American River College (ARC) was recently renamed for the late Carmichael construction giant, Joseph (Joe) Mohamed Sr.

A retired U.S. Army Colonel, Mohamed died in 2023 at age 94. In a career that began as a gardener on the College Oaks Drive college campus, Mohamed developed a fondness for the area and eventually built a home near the school.

Education was a passion for the descendant of a Palestinian family that immigrated to the United States in the early 1900s. "Dad was proud of America and he wanted to take care of its veterans," son John Mohamed said at a ceremony that marked the facility renaming. Gardener-turned builder and real estate developer Joe Mohamed attended the college before



Friends and family of the late Joseph Mohamed join American River College staff to celebrate the renaming of a campus veterans center in Mohamed's honor. From left are Major General Alice Astafan, Joseph Mohamed Jr., American River College President Lisa Cardoza, Shirley Mohamed, Robert Erickson, John Mohamed, Jenna Snyder, David Miramontes-Quinones, Amanda Carroll and Dr. Metwalli Amer. Photo by Susan Maxwell Skinner

transferring to California State University to complete his business degree. His three sons later crossed the street from home to study at American River College. "Dad believed in education," said John Mohamed. "He wanted to give back to

this college." As the patriarch's fortunes expanded through business and construction, *Continued on page 3*

# Downtown Ice Rink Open for 33rd Season

By Abbey Wicks

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The Downtown Sacramento Ice Rink, presented by Dignity Health, is now open through Jan. 19. Located in Ali Youssefi Square across from DoCo and the Golden 1 Center, the rink attracts some 40,000 skaters each season.

Ali Youssefi Square is at 705 K St., Sacramento.

“The Downtown Sacramento Ice Rink represents what downtown does best: bringing people together to create lasting memories,” said Michael Ault, the Downtown Sacramento Partnership executive director. “It’s a cherished Sacramento tradition and we’re grateful to our community leaders and partners for their support in bringing this tradition to life year after year.”

The price to skate remains the same as previous years: \$15 for general admission and \$8 for children aged 6 and under. Skating admission includes skate rental and sizes run as small as youth 8 and as large as men’s 15. Skaters can enjoy the rink from 2 to 9 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays and 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Fridays through Sundays (weather permitting). Skaters can call 916-738-0703 to find out if the rink is open during inclement weather.

Season events catered for youth skaters include annual Princess & Superhero Day, which took place Nov 15, and Crafting with Kindness, from noon to 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 23 and Sunday, Nov. 30. Copper House Boutique will lead both craft days with their



Skaters at last year’s Princess & Superhero Day were joined by characters, including Disney princesses Anna and Elsa. This year’s event took place Nov. 15. Photo courtesy of Downtown Sacramento Partnership



Skaters at the Downtown Sacramento Ice Rink on Nov. 12 exhibited all skill levels, from pro-skaters showing off impressive spins, to children aided by skating walkers. Photo by Abbey Wicks



New LED lights have been installed along K Street in Sacramento to promote evening pedestrian activity and safety. Photo by Abbey Wicks

safety along K Street, including in Ali Youssefi Square, new LED lighting has been installed from DoCO to the SAFE Credit Union Convention Center.

“These lights embody our commitment to reimagine downtown block by block, paying homage to the marquee lights which have lined K Street for generations and enhancing Sacramento’s central promenade for its next era of opportunity,” Ault said.

Along with supporting increased pedestrian activity throughout the evening hours, the new lighting also supports bicycle and public transportation use and embraces the foundational principle of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) by improving sightlines and increasing activity after dark, according to the partnership.

Better lighting encourages more foot traffic, which in turn promotes safety, supports local businesses and builds community pride.

The dynamic system will be capable of changing colors to mark holidays, community celebrations and Kings, Republic, Athletics and Hornets’ victories.

“When we invest in placemaking, we invest in people,” said Scott Ford, Downtown Sacramento Partnership deputy director. “Downtown Sacramento is truly a neighborhood that belongs to all residents and guests of our community. We want to ensure we are creating and maintaining an environment which is a positive reflection of Sacramento to the rest of the world.” ★

jewelry-making lessons.

Donation Weeks have been implemented this year to help spread holiday cheer. The ice rink has teamed up with Western Health Advantage and First

Step Communities to organize donations for those experiencing homelessness in the Sacramento area.

The ice rink will collect much needed items and accept donations all day

during Donation Weeks, which run from Monday, Nov. 17 through Sunday, Nov. 30. Skaters who bring something to donate will receive \$5 off skate admission. Suggested items

to donate include winter hats, gloves, scarves and blankets.

In an effort by the Downtown Sacramento Partnership to increase pedestrian activity and

**NORTHBRIDGE DENTAL**

**DENTAL IMPLANTS - THE BEST OPTIONS FOR MISSING TEETH**

— ALL TREATMENT PERFORMED IN ONE LOCATION FROM START TO FINISH —

<p><b>DENTURE TO IMPLANT</b> Removable</p>	<p><b>FULL ARCH BRIDGE TO IMPLANT</b> Fixed</p>
<p><b>SINGLE IMPLANT</b> Fixed</p>	<p><b>ALL ON FOUR</b> Fixed</p>
<p><b>IMPLANT BRIDGE</b> Fixed</p>	<p>Call today to schedule your <b>Free Consultation</b> with an Xray</p> <p>6600 Madison Ave Suite 4B, Carmichael, CA 95608 (916) 944-1197 www.nrd916.com</p>

**BEST OF FAIR OAKS 2025**

**Go & Vote online!**  
BestofFairOaks.com

**Nominations Open**  
**Voting Starts Nov. 13**

**CONTEST RULES**

Business must be located in Fair Oaks or be a Fair Oaks Chamber member. All votes must be cast online at **BestofFairOaks.com**

**ONLY ONE VOTE PER CATEGORY PER PERSON.**  
All voting entries must have complete information or the votes will not be counted.

Best of Fair Oaks winners will be presented at this year’s **You’re Invited!**

**TICKETS ARE EXPECTED TO SELL OUT FAST**  
Don’t miss your chance to attend the 10th annual “Best of Fair Oaks” event. This year’s event will be held:

**Where:** North Ridge Country Club, 7600 Madison Ave, Fair Oaks  
**When:** Thursday January 15, 2026  
**Cost:** Contact the Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce for detail  
**FairOaksChamber.com** or call **916-967-2903**

916-944-1197

# Vet Center Named for ARC Benefactor



Col. Joseph Mohamed Sr wears the dress uniform of the United States Army, circa 2010. Photo courtesy of Shirley Mohamed.

*Continued from page 1*  
Joe Mohamed donated land and funds to his alma mater. He sat on the American River College board for 18 years. His widow, Shirley Mohamed,

has continued her husband's mission to aid veteran students.

The school now has more than 700 veterans enrolled. Its resource center provides access to computers and a lounge for socializing. Staff assist students in VA (Veterans Affairs) outreach; trained counselors address post-traumatic stress. The center will receive a \$2.5-million state-funded makeover next year.

"The Mohamed family is excited ARC has expanded its role in helping our vets on campus," said John Mohamed. "Our family has a strong tradition of Army service. Dad

insisted all his sons served. My brother, Joe Jr., retired as a lieutenant colonel. James served for 35 years and I was a drill sergeant before I went into public life."

"Dad was a great patriot," the son continued. "I believe he's looking down today and he's proud. And we're proud they're honoring our family by having dad's name on such an important building."

Student and non-student veterans can visit American River College Veterans Resource Center. The facility is located at 4700 College Oak Drive, Sacramento. ★

# County's 2024 Crop and Livestock Report Released



Wine grapes remained the county's leading agricultural commodity in 2024, with a value of \$167,905,000. Market milk followed at \$51,213,000 and pears ranked third at \$49,559,000. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

## Sacramento County News Release

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - The gross production value of all agricultural commodities in Sacramento County was more than \$536 million, county Agricultural Commissioner Chris Flores reported during her presentation of the 2024 Sacramento County Crop and Livestock Report at the Nov. 18 Board of Supervisors meeting.

Wine grapes were once again the leading cash crop in Sacramento County, with a value of more than \$167 million, or more than 31%, of the total gross value of all crops.

Market Milk snuck in to the number two spot with a total value of more than \$51 million, passing up pears, which came in at number three with a total value of more than \$46 million.

"Agriculture continues to be a cornerstone of our local economy and plays a major role in preserving the county's rural character," Flores said. "Our diverse agricultural landscape includes small farms, ranches, row crops, orchards and vineyards that produce everything from rice and tomatoes to pears and grapes, as well as strong dairy, livestock and aquaculture operations."

Wine grapes remained the county's leading agricultural commodity in 2024, with a value of \$167,905,000. ★

Market milk followed as the second top agricultural commodity at \$51,213,000. Pears ranked third at \$49,559,000.

Poultry, as the fourth top agricultural commodity in 2024, generated \$32,511,000.

Aquaculture, as the fifth top agricultural commodity in 2024, accounted for \$29,091,000. Aquaculture includes bass, carp, catfish, crayfish, sturgeon and caviar.

Nursery stock, such as ornamental trees, plants, Christmas trees and sod, totaled \$28,452,000 and is the sixth top commodity in 2024.

Cattle and calves were valued at \$22,419,000 as the seventh top commodity in 2024.

Rice reached \$15,627,000 and is the eighth top commodity in 2024.

Almonds brought in \$14,806,000 as the ninth top commodity.

Cherries at \$13,059,000 was the 10th top commodity.

The 2024 report includes information regarding the Agriculture Department's Pest Detection and Pest Exclusion Programs, the Phytosanitary Program, the Pesticide Use Enforcement Program and their Weights & Measures Program. The report, online at [agcomm.saccounty.gov/Pages/CropandLivestockReports.aspx](http://agcomm.saccounty.gov/Pages/CropandLivestockReports.aspx), also contains a simple and elegant 2026 calendar. ★



Single Again

Make the rest of your life the best of your life!

## Are You Single Again?

SingleAgain.com is a website dedicated to helping people put their lives back together again after divorce, separation or the loss of their spouse.

Visit us today at [SingleAgain.com](http://SingleAgain.com)



# Same-day care for same-day needs.

When life moves fast, your health care should keep up. Dignity Health offers convenient same-day care throughout Greater Sacramento—including Express Primary Care in Elk Grove and Roseville, and Urgent Care in Midtown Sacramento and Woodland. Whether you need relief from minor illness, a routine checkup, symptom management, or a flu shot, our providers are here to help you feel better, faster.



Visit Express Primary Care



Go to Urgent Care

Get in, get seen, and get on with your busy day.

Visit [dignityhealth.org/get-care-today](http://dignityhealth.org/get-care-today) to schedule an appointment. Same-day care facilities are a service of Dignity Health Medical Foundation.



## Real Christmas

It's parades and parties. It's food and family and shopping til you drop. And don't forget those treasured movies to see like "It's a Wonderful Life" and "White Christmas." Love those happy ending movies. But look out for those panic times...getting the right presents and sending those Christmas cards. Does anyone even send cards any longer? I do but I feel like a dinosaur. Still, I feel it's more caring that he or she took time to write a few words or even if they just sign it. Of course, try to find Christmas cards any where. Head to the computer and hit order. We are all in the same holiday boat, but perhaps we need to take a moment to think what Christmas is all about. Let's start with my panic attack I just went through. My main computer just had a melt down. NOOOOOO! Oh yes. So how will I buy and send presents and even those beloved cards? Of course I couldn't get a computer repair person for at least a week. Panic is building. Then I thought back to a time when computers and cell phones were just in our dreams. How did we navigate Christmas? We survived didn't we? And it was still a precious time without all that technology.

So let's look back to some trivia to remember about Christmas. Did you know that the first recorded celebration of Christmas was December 25, 336 AD, the first Federal Holiday in the U.S. began in 1870, Thomas Edison was behind those electric lights, the first Christmas card was sent in 1843, and today's Santa Claus dates back to Holland with St. Nicholas known as Sinter Klaas. The Dutch immigrants brought him to New York. But the details

of red suit, rotund belly, and reindeer pulling a flying sleigh was popularized by the 1822 poem "An Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas" with that immortal first line "Twas the was night before Christmas." Oh, and Rudolph the red nosed reindeer was a marketing campaign in 1939 when Montgomery Ward wrote it's own Christmas book to hand out to kids during the shopping season. But there was an incredible real life story that will melt your heart. On December 7, 1914, five months into the outbreak of fighting in WWI, Pope Benedict XV called for a temporary cease-fire during he Christmas season? Military leaders on all sides ignored the request. But troops in the trenches responded. Christmas Eve sounds of Christmas carols began ringing out in German and English across no man's land. The next morning unarmed German soldiers approached the English lines shouting Merry Christmas and were met with handshakes, gifts of chocolate and cigarettes along with a spirited game of soccer. It was called the Christmas Truce, short-lived and never repeated again. The message sent was sharing a sense of humanity even in the darkest moments. Perhaps we could learn a lesson from that truce.

So from the past to the present and into the future, let us learn what the real meaning of Christmas is all about. It's not all the hoopla of gifts and decorations and parties galore. It is the miracle of the birth of Christ combined with love and caring and sharing. It comes straight from the heart and soul. So from my heart and soul, I wish you and yours a very blessed and MERRY CHRISTMAS filled with LOVE! ★



## More Than Business: How Local Leaders Build Community and Everyone Rises

By Patsy McGavock JustServe.org

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - What happens when businesses do more than open their doors and customers do more than transactions? When they open their hands, hearts and time to the communities around them?

When writing, I begin with questions like these but the answers come from those I meet. Their stories. Their actions. Their hearts. This month, three business owners in Orangevale and Fair Oaks reminded me how deeply character drives success. Not just personal success but collective success. And how beautiful that is. I heard stories of students mentored, hope sustained, strength in consistency, values passed through family, and what happens when customers and community become family.

Cynthia Ellering, owner of Orangevale Dairy Queen, didn't plan to retire into a career of youth development. But after leaving court reporting and the family downsized locations to their original DQ store, their investment in local schools became the foundation of something bigger.

"If we invest in them, they invest in us," Ellering told me. "It's reciprocated. That's the goal."

That investment includes student fundraisers, job opportunities and collaborative events.

"About 70% of our hires come from CASA. We recruit there. They leave for college, return in summer and balance hours around school activities," said Ellering. "We've always had a relationship like that."

Community grew as her students brought ideas: car washes, walkathons, movie nights, football celebrations. Ellering finds ways to say "yes," even when ice cream isn't the answer: "We'd talk through the goal, find creative solutions." DQ's parking lot became a place where youth gained confidence and families felt seen.

That same spirit fuels Katie Yont, who opened her Allstate Insurance agency in Fair Oaks in 2019. New to Fair Oaks, she dove into everything she could: food banks, Rotary, Helping Hands of Orangevale Fair Oaks and the Chamber of Commerce.

"These groups really are like family to me," Yont shared.

That family showed up when she ran for honorary mayor, raising record funds for Rotary grants.

For Yont, community involvement isn't a marketing strategy; it's a lifestyle rooted in gratitude, inspired by her late father, a firefighter who modeled service above self.

That service shows up in the small things: making valentines for seniors, hosting nonprofit events in her office, being present when people need help.

Dustin Buck, of Buck Wealth Management, echoes that blend of gratitude, purpose and deep community roots. A Fair Oaks native, Buck began his career young, driven by a desire to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, both community leaders who lived the Rotary motto: Service above Self.

"If I wanted to see change," Buck said, "I needed to be part of it."

His early days were spent head-down, working hard, volunteering and listening. Through the Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce and Rotary, Buck found not only platforms for impact but lifelong mentors and mentees.

Today, Buck serves as an ambassador to new chamber members, helping guide others the way that he was once guided. Although Buck never planned it, community involvement naturally became a business advantage.

"People want to work with someone they know is invested," Buck said. "We haven't advertised in 10 years. It all comes from relationships."

These stories reveal a shared truth: when we lead with service, connection follows. Yont, Buck and Ellering didn't wait to be asked. They showed up, paid attention and looked for ways to say yes. They didn't do it for business but their businesses grew. They did it because it felt right. Because it mattered.

So what can we learn from them? Start small. Pick one cause that moves you. Join one club. Attend one meeting. Say yes once. Then again. Mentor one person. Lift someone up.

Because seeking to serve first sets off a powerful cycle. As community becomes family, they return that service back and all grow collectively.

As Buck said, "What I didn't realize was that it really came back to me tenfold more. Now, I can help the next generation."

Our future is shaped by what we give today. As these leaders show us, you don't have to choose between business success and doing good. You simply choose authentic connection and service.

You lift me and I lift thee, and we'll ascend together.

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

## FORPD Updates Administrator Job

Continued from page 1

process before June 1, when Aho retires.

The updated bylaws were approved 4-0. "I've been talking about resigning sometime in the near future," Director John O'Farrell said, and he will potentially time his departure with Aho's retirement

in June, after serving on the board for 21 years. The board will then need to appoint a new director to serve O'Farrell's term remainder.

The next Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Dec. 17. ★

## Holiday Events for All

Continued from page 1

forpd.org/Snowman-Scavenger-Hunt.

Fair Oaks Church (11427 Fair Oaks Blvd.) will host a special concert on Friday, Dec. 12, featuring the Jim Martinez Jazz Trio performing music from "A Charlie Brown Christmas." The program starts at 6:30 p.m. Donations will be accepted to support the musicians.

Join State Farm Agent Katie Yont for her annual Cookie Decorating and Toy Drive from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 18. Bring a new toy to donate to a local child in need. The event location will be at Yont's office, 8908 Madison Ave. (across from Safeway).

Join the Sunrise Community Church and its 60-voice choir at 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 21 for the Christmas Carol sing-along. The

church is located at 8321 Greenback Lane.

Farmer's Market Tuesdays is open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Tuesday this month at Fair Oaks Park, 11549 Fair Oaks Blvd., rain or shine. Pick up seasonal, fresh produce and meet many of the local farmers who participate. Shop for gifts from local artisans and buy homemade goodies from local bakers at the Farmer's Market.

Tickets for December events at the Fair Oaks Performing Arts Center are on sale, including the lively musical comedy "As You Like It" showing six dates; the Fair Oaks Comedy Series featuring headliner Nancy Lee; and a memorable screening of "Santa Conquers the Martians" with a live orchestra. For information and tickets for these events, visit online [www.fairoak-sarts.org](http://www.fairoak-sarts.org). ★

# LOCAL ARREST RECORDS

Find out what's happening  
in your local area at...

[AMERICANRIVERMESSENGER.COM](http://AMERICANRIVERMESSENGER.COM)

**ARREST LOGS UPDATED DAILY**

**Be a part of something important**

## Local Writers Wanted

**We are looking for local Freelance Writers  
to provide great coverage.**

**MPG Call us today at 916-773-1111**

**Protect and Heal your whole family  
with Affordable  
Chiropractic Memberships**

All-inclusive monthly memberships from \$35-\$55 per visit. CALL or TEXT us today!

**AMERICAN RIVER  
CHIROPRACTIC**

2280 Vehicle Drive, Suite 110  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

**916-776-6362**

[americanriverchiropractic.com](http://americanriverchiropractic.com)  
CALL or TEXT today!

**We now offer  
MESSAGE THERAPY**  
by experienced practitioners

**NEW PATIENT SPECIAL  
\$50 FIRST HOUR**

- Improves mobility, maintains flexibility
- Family owned and operated
- 25+ years experience serving the community
- Affordable memberships - plan for your health
- All inclusive - services and therapies
- Relieves pain from head/back/neck/sciatica

• Improves mobility, maintains flexibility

• Family owned and operated

• 25+ years experience serving the community

• Affordable memberships - plan for your health

• All inclusive - services and therapies

• Relieves pain from head/back/neck/sciatica

# Roger's Review

By State Senator Roger Niello



By Supervisor Rosario Rodriguez

# Closing the Illegal Camping Loophole

I was briefed on this gap in our laws. I immediately began asking why the county could not step in on private property when an encampment created a clear nuisance or danger.

After raising these questions, I convened meetings with county counsel and law enforcement to understand the underlying issue. Through that work, we learned that the county already has a nuisance abatement process for hazardous conditions on private property but illegal camping had never been formally connected to it.

This missing link is what we are now working on to fix. On Dec. 16, the Board of Supervisors will consider a change to the unlawful camping ordinance that closes this loophole. If adopted, it will allow the county to begin abatement when a private property owner is absent, unreachable or unwilling to act, using the same nuisance abatement process that already exists for other dangerous conditions.

Law enforcement supports this update because it provides a clearer path to protect neighborhoods from blight and unsafe conditions. Deputies will continue to offer services first and help people connect with housing, mental health support, substance use treatment and other resources. For individuals who refuse services and continue to seek ways around the law, our communities deserve stronger tools that keep neighborhoods clean and safe.

This ordinance is an important step in restoring order and accountability. I look forward to the board's discussion on Dec. 16 and to continuing our work on solutions that support both public safety and public compassion.

If you'd like to share your thoughts or concerns with me, you can always reach my office at 916-874-5491 or email me at [SupervisorRodriguez@saccounty.gov](mailto:SupervisorRodriguez@saccounty.gov).

*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.* ★

Over the last several years, homelessness in Sacramento County has changed dramatically. Much of this began after a Ninth Circuit court decision made it essentially legal for people to camp on public property unless enough shelter beds were available. Cities and counties across the West Coast felt the impact, including ours.

Camps grew along our parks, trails, and the American River Parkway, and local governments were left with very limited tools to address it. COVID then intensified the problem. More people fell into crisis, service providers were stretched thin and encampments expanded into places we had never seen before. Even when deputies and outreach teams worked to offer services, they were often stuck in a legal gray zone where enforcement was not permitted.

In 2024, the United States Supreme Court issued a ruling that reversed the old Ninth Circuit decision. For the first time in years, Sacramento County once again was able to enforce rules against camping on public property. The county immediately began work to restore safety and access to parks, open spaces, and trails while continuing to offer supportive services as the first step in every contact.

As enforcement on public land increased, many illegal encampments shifted to private property. Some owners posted signs or signed a "602 notice," which allows the Sheriff's Office to enforce trespassing laws when the owner is not present. But many owners do not have these notices and the challenge becomes even more difficult on vacant parcels or when the owner lives far away and cannot be reached.

This created a frustrating situation for neighborhoods and law enforcement. Businesses cannot monitor their property around the clock and deputies have limited authority without the proper legal tools. Meanwhile, surrounding communities deal with the impacts that come with unmanaged camps, including trash, fires, unsafe conditions and blocked walkways.

Early in my first year on the board,

As the end of the year approaches, I am deeply grateful for the trust you have placed in me to represent our communities. I have five bills that passed the legislature and was signed by the governor this year, and here is the list.

With the support of the County of Placer, I authored Senate Bill 359. This measure establishes clear guidelines for the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration and confirms that the existing tax exemptions for fuels, such as diesel and compressed natural gas, used by public transit operators also apply to counties that operate their own transit services directly.

When engaging in a home improvement contract, consumers should be informed about who will be providing the service. I proposed Senate Bill 517 to allow consumers to make an informed decision regarding their home improvement project by requiring a home improvement contract to provide a disclosure if subcontractors are being used on a project.

I introduced Senate Bill 568 to make sure that the requirement to have epinephrine available in public schools is applied in school programs including preschool. Epinephrine is currently required in public schools, and our school health professionals have the medication on hand to provide lifesaving treatment. My bill provides the necessary clarification to this requirement so that our public schools and their programs are prepared to assist any student who might need epinephrine.

Senate Bill 765 establishes the giant garter snake as the official state snake. The giant garter snake can only be found in California. Declaring the giant

garter snake as the official state snake of California acknowledges the important place of the species in the ecology, agriculture and water resources and reinforce the state's commitment to protecting endangered species. It has been my honor to work on this legislative proposal with the California Rice Commission and Save the Snakes, a local nonprofit organization whose mission is to conserve snakes around the world through education, research and community support.

Having spent my early career as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), I have great respect for the accounting industry and am pleased that Senate Bill 788, which eliminates unnecessary regulatory overlap and confusion, was also signed by the governor. This bill reduces compliance burdens and costs for Certified Public Accountants and Certified Public Accountant firms, and California consumers can continue to access the trusted tax professionals they need to meet their compliance needs.

You can review a more extensive list of the bills I introduced this year on my website at [sen.ca.gov/niello](http://sen.ca.gov/niello), and happy holidays to you and your family!

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

**WE SUPPORT FIRST RESPONDERS**

## GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

### Come and Experience God's Amazing Grace

Come grow with us at Grace Baptist Church where the Old Time Gospel Message is still preached and God-Honoring music is still sung. Grace Baptist still stands on the Principles, Doctrines and Separation, found and taught in The Bible.

**PASTOR CHARLES CARTER**  
6724 Palm Avenue, Fair Oaks, CA 95628

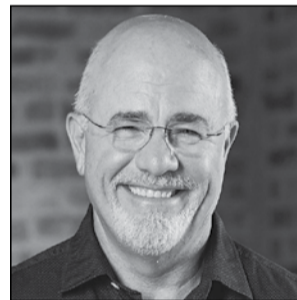
(Located one block South of Madison; just East of Dewey)

#### SERVICE SCHEDULES

<b>Sunday Schools</b> (All Ages) - 9:45 am	<b>Sunday Worship</b> 11:00 am	<b>Sunday Evening</b> 6:00 pm	<b>Wed. Evening</b> 7:00 pm
-----------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------

CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION (916) 967-3915 [WWW.GBCFAIROAKS.NET](http://WWW.GBCFAIROAKS.NET)

## Dave Ramsey Says She'll Be Just Fine



Dave Ramsey

Dear Dave,

My mom is 76, and the only debt she has is about \$60,000 left on her mortgage. She has \$600,000 in retirement accounts, plus a long-term care insurance policy. But she has just \$25,000 in a money market account with check-writing privileges for everyday bills and purchases. To be honest, this worries me. She has always lived within her means, so am I wrong to be concerned? She has also been talking about paying off her mortgage, and I'm not sure how I feel about that, either. I'd love your opinion.

- Kelly

Dear Kelly,

You sound surprised that she'd still be in the stock market at her age. In my mind, that's not a bad thing at all. It might not be what the typical financial planner would tell you to do, because for the most part they'll try to get you to be super-conservative with your money as you get older. But from the way you've described things, it sounds

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

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

- Dave

**The Best Laid Plans...**

Dear Dave,

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

- March

Dear March,

If I were in your shoes, I'd pay extra on the house.

On the other hand, you're not really doing a *bad* thing by putting the extra cash into retirement, either.

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

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

- Dave

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

**Publisher, Paul V. Scholl**

*American River Messenger* is a member of **Messenger Publishing Group**

To submit your articles, information, announcements or letters to the editor, please email a Microsoft Word file to: [Publisher@mpg8.com](mailto:Publisher@mpg8.com). **Be sure to place in the subject field "Attention to Publisher". If you do not have email access, please call us at (916) 773-1111.**

**AMERICAN RIVER Messenger**

*Serving Fair Oaks, Orangevale and Sacramento County since 2006*

It is the intent of the *American River Messenger* to strive for an objective point of view in the reporting of news and events. It is understood that the opinions expressed on these pages are those of the authors and cartoonists and are not necessarily the opinions of the publisher or our contributors.

The *American River Messenger* is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or materials. The entire contents of the *American River Messenger* are copyrighted. Ownership of all advertising created and/or composed by the *American River Messenger* is with the publishing company and written permission to reproduce the same must be obtained from the publisher.

Subscriptions should be mailed to:  
*American River Messenger*  
2508 Garfield Ave., Suite A, Carmichael, CA 95608.

Subscription rate is \$39 per year in Fair Oaks and Orangevale. The *American River Messenger* is published twice-monthly.  
Call 916-773-1111 for more information.

*We are proud members of these newspaper associations.*

**MPG**

**WE SUPPORT FIRST RESPONDERS**

# Students Show Continued Increase in Academic Achievement

## Chronic Absenteeism Continues to Fall

By MPG Staff

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY REGION (MPG)** - The California Department of Education on Nov. 13 released the 2025 California School Dashboard and new DataQuest files, reporting improved outcomes across all major indicators of student success.

The state's graduation rate reached 87.5 percent, the highest level since the Dashboard launched in 2017 and an increase of 4.5 percentage points over that period. Officials said the gains were stronger among several student groups, including Pacific Islander students, who saw a 4.1 percentage point increase. African American students improved by 3.5 percentage points. Long-term English learners gained 3.3 percentage points, foster youth improved by 2.8 percentage points and students with disabilities improved by 2.7 percentage points.

College and career readiness also improved. The state reported that 51.7 percent of graduates were prepared for college and career, an increase of 3.1 percentage points. The share of students completing the A-G course requirements rose to 53.9 percent. These requirements represent the minimum set of courses needed for admission to California's public universities.

Chronic absenteeism among students in transitional kindergarten through eighth grade continued to fall. The statewide rate declined to 17.1 percent,



Chronic absenteeism among students in transitional kindergarten through eighth grade continued to fall. Photo by RDNE Stock project

down more than 10 percentage points from its peak of 30 percent in 2022. The drop from 2024 to 2025 was one percentage point. State officials said the slowdown in the improvement rate shows that more targeted efforts will be needed to reengage families and students who remain chronically absent.

Academic performance also showed modest improvement, consistent with results released in October from statewide assessments.

For the first time in the Dashboard's history, all indicators appeared in the yellow or green categories, which signal

improvement across both current performance and year-over-year progress.

State leaders said the positive trends reflect major investments in TK-12 education, including initiatives such as community schools, expanded learning programs, universal school meals and literacy coaches.

"Seeing modest improvement on every Dashboard indicator should encourage us to deepen our investments in every child's progress," State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond said in a statement. He said he was encouraged by reduced achievement gaps but added that more

work remains.

Gov. Gavin Newsom said the results show progress but emphasized the need to continue expanding support for students and educators.

"The more we can invest time, energy, and resources into our kids, the better their future can be," Newsom said.

State Board of Education President Linda Darling-Hammond said the outcomes demonstrate continued recovery from the pandemic. She cited rising graduation rates, stronger college and career readiness, and improved academic performance. She added that significant work

remains to sustain and accelerate progress.

The California Department of Education noted that many districts across the state showed substantial gains, which officials said highlight how targeted investments can advance student achievement. The 2024 Budget Act included \$133.8 billion for K-12 education, the highest per-pupil state funding level in California's history.

California has also expanded access to transitional kindergarten for thousands of four-year-olds and added \$215 million to the Literacy Coaches and Reading Specialists Grant Program, which supports early literacy programs and interventions for students who need additional help.

The California School Dashboard is a central component of the state's accountability system and includes data on graduation, suspensions, test scores, English learner progress, college and career readiness, chronic absenteeism and local indicators.

Alongside the Dashboard, the California Department of Education released several DataQuest reports for the 2024-25 school year. These include four- and five-year graduation rates, suspension and expulsion rates, chronic absenteeism data, absenteeism by reason, stability rates, and homeless student enrollment.

More information on the Dashboard is available on the California Department of Education's website at [cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardresources.asp](https://cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardresources.asp). ★

## DA Thien Ho Launches 'The People vs. The Golden State Killer'



Following the remarks at the Nov. 12 "The People vs. the Golden State Killer" book launch, attendees participated in a lively Q&A session and book signing, celebrating both the release of the book and the culmination of decades of investigative work. Photo courtesy of D.A. Thien Ho

Books Forward News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho celebrated the launch of his new book, "The People vs. the Golden State Killer," at the Sacramento Central Library's Tsakopoulos Library Galleria on Nov. 12.

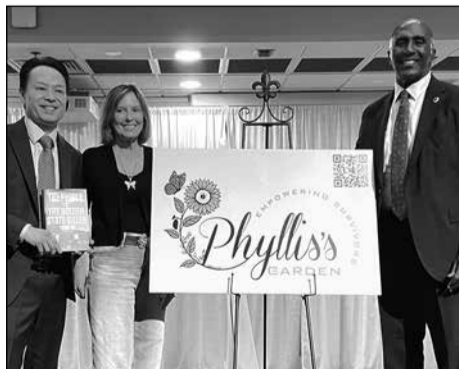
Released on Nov. 11, the book achieved #1 New Release status on Amazon.

The memoir offers an extraordinary look at the investigation, arrest, and prosecution of Joseph James DeAngelo, one of the most notorious serial killers in U.S. history. Unlike most accounts, Ho's book centers on the survivors, investigators and prosecutors, highlighting their courage and perseverance while honoring the resilience of victims' families.

"Too often, the spotlight stays on the monster. I wanted to shift the focus to the heroes: the survivors, the investigators and the prosecutors who never gave up. They are the soul of this case," said Ho.

At the Nov. 12 event, Ho shared behind-the-scenes stories from the case, offering insights into both DeAngelo's criminal mind and the process of seeking justice.

Ho also highlighted the critical use of investigative genetic genealogy, which allowed investigators to trace distant relatives through public DNA databases and identify DeAngelo after decades. This breakthrough not only solved one of California's most infamous cold cases but has transformed how law enforcement



"The People vs. the Golden State Killer" is now available nationwide at major retailers and online. Photo courtesy of D.A. Thien Ho

tackles unsolved crimes nationwide.

"Justice, for me, was not just a sentence; it was a sense of peace for the survivors who carried these scars for decades. I came to this country as a refugee fleeing violence. To now serve as the elected district attorney and bring one of the nation's most brutal serial predators to justice was full circle. It is deeply rewarding to know that the work we did, including the breakthrough use of genetic genealogy, will have a lasting impact."

Following the remarks, attendees participated in a lively Q&A session and book signing, celebrating both the release of the book and the culmination of decades of investigative work.

"The People vs. the Golden State Killer" is now available nationwide at major retailers and online.

For more information, visit <https://www.thienho.org/>. ★

## Community Foundation Partners with Health Net

Sacramento Region Community Foundation News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento Region Community Foundation has activated its Sacramento Region Emergency Relief Fund in response to an urgent and immediate community crisis - severely strained food banks that are struggling to serve an increasing number of local families facing serious food insecurity.

With food banks and pantries throughout the region already stretched alarmingly thin, local nonprofits report sharp increases in food requests due to inflation, lingering effects of the pandemic, and the SNAP interruption that created a tipping point for many families already on the edge of financial instability.

What originally started as a \$100,000 grant grew by an additional \$30,000 boost from Health Net, bringing the total to \$130,000, demonstrating the powerful impact that pooled contributions of all sizes can make.

"At Health Net, we know that strong communities start with access to healthy food," said Amber Kemp, vice president of Medi-Cal Strategy, Execution, and Engagement. "This funding allows us to partner with local organizations to ensure families have the resources they need to thrive. Together, we're building healthier neighborhoods and a brighter future for all."

Grants designed to provide immediate relief will support key local food assistance providers throughout the region. These one-time grants will help food assistance providers serving children, seniors and working families across the Sacramento region. The six organizations receiving immediate emergency funding from this grant include Elk Grove Food Bank



In response to an urgent and immediate community crisis - severely strained food banks that are struggling to serve an increasing number of local families facing serious food insecurity. Courtesy photo

Services, Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank, Rancho Cordova Food Locker, River City Food Bank, Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services and Twin Lakes Food Bank.

"This is absolutely the right investment to make at this critical moment in time," said Kerry Wood, CEO of the Sacramento Region Community Foundation. "With the foundation's focus on health equity and the dire food situation faced by hundreds of thousands of local families, we are committed to standing with our nonprofit partners on the frontlines of hunger relief. Our region's families cannot wait for long-term solutions when the need is this urgent and immediate."

Established by local donors in 2005, the Sacramento Region Emergency Relief Fund is designed to provide swift and strategic response to local emergencies, such as the food crisis happening now. Over the past two decades, the fund has provided emergency support for COVID-19 response, wildfires and other regional crises. The fund is fueled by community donations, allowing philanthropic people and partners across the region to pool resources and respond collectively when emergencies strike.

This latest grant continues a legacy of responsiveness, addressing an exceptional situation where immediate action is needed but is just the beginning. The foundation encourages community members to join this critically important effort to keep food on the table of local families by donating online to the Sacramento Region Emergency Relief Fund at [srfc.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit\\_id=1787](https://srfc.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=1787).

"While philanthropy alone cannot solve food insecurity, collective generosity can make a world of difference in ensuring that families have food and support during this crisis and beyond," added Wood.

This grant is in alignment with the foundation's continuing efforts to address food insecurity. In fact, the Foundation also recently committed \$1 million over three years to address food insecurity in Yolo County, combining short- and long-term strategies for sustainable food access. Over the past week, foundation fundholders have also increased granting to support food banks and pantries throughout the region.

More information about the Sacramento Region Community Foundation and charitable giving can be found at [www.sacregecf.org](https://www.sacregecf.org).

Since 1983, the Sacramento Region Community Foundation has awarded more than \$275 million in grants and scholarships on behalf of local people, families and businesses, and through its flagship program, to grow charitable giving in the capital area Big Day of Giving. The center of philanthropy in the capital area, the Sacramento Region Community Foundation's mission is to lead, serve, and inspire enduring philanthropy for a just and vibrant Sacramento region. Learn more at [www.sacregecf.org](https://www.sacregecf.org). ★

# Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



Will the real Sacramento Kings please stand up. Yes, Kings fans, it's been a conundrum to say the least, and in spite of a 5 and 16 record to start the season, bright spots have actually surfaced.

Stuck with 3 paltry wins just one week ago, the Sactown boys went into the city of Denver, and handed the first place Nuggets a surprising 128-123 defeat. Perhaps equally surprising was the 117-112 win over the Timberwolves just 2 nights later before a roaring crowd at Golden One Center. Both victories came with big man Domantas Sabonis sidelined with a knee injury, leaving fans and pundits wondering what can these guys do if they play like this at full strength?

Well, that's certainly a good question, but we can all remember what the team looked like 3 seasons ago when Domantas arrived in Sacramento and led the Kings to 48 wins and a playoff berth. That team led the NBA in scoring but also had a vaunted point guard by the name of DeArnon Fox.

I think it's important to take a closer look at these back-to-back wins that the Kings recently put together and try to find a common thread. It's actually very obvious. In both wins the Kings shot remarkably well from the free throw line, something that has been seemingly impossible for this team to do. Against the Nuggets the Kings went 22-23 missing amazingly only one shot the entire night. Two nights later against the Timberwolves the Kings went 26-28 from the line missing only 2 shots.

Now compare that with Sunday night's game against the Grizzlies. 59% from the free throw line in a tight game converting on only 13 of 22 attempts in a 115-107 loss.

Unfortunately, the game against the Grizzlies has been the pattern we've seen all too often when the Kings put together that alarming 8-games losing streak.

So, even with Domantas Sabonis sidelined, the Kings are capable of taking down some of the best teams in the NBA, but making their free throws is absolutely critical!

Unfortunately, the Kings are among the worst shooting NBA teams when it comes to free throws, and as we've seen, if wins are to come that pattern has to change.

Doug Christie can talk all he wants to

about defense and playing for 48 minutes, but if his team can't convert from the line the stats don't lie.

But the Sacramento Kings can only play the players on the court, and this year's pattern of substitutions has been a head scratcher. Last year's first round draft choice Devin Carter has been all but forgotten as he sits game after game on the pines. A solid defender, good rebounder, and efficient scorer around the rim, Devin appears not to be in the Kings future and fans want to know why.

The coaching staff talks about a youth movement while second year player Isaac Jones was recently cut from the team. 6'9" with a huge wingspan, Isaac was scooped up by the first place Detroit Pistons almost immediately, and it won't surprise me to see them utilize Jones moving forward.

The number 1 problem has been identified and it's the inability to shoot free throws with any consistency, but what is #2?

The coaching staff and entire franchise can't evaluate talent! Drafting talent over the years, and talent that resides already on the team.

Allowing Jonas Valanciunas to get away was a huge mistake, and one that has benefited the Denver Nuggets greatly.

No one could see or even imagine a Kings team with Domantas at the #4 and moving Valanciunas to the #5.

Any way you look at it, the Kings shot themselves in the foot when they let Jonas walk away.

Defensive standout Keon Ellis is getting less and less playing time, logging all of 6 minutes in the loss to the Grizzlies, and fans attending home games have taken to collectively calling, "we want Keon, we want Keon!"

This is not a good look, but it begs the question, why? Why do fans have to beg the coach to play a player that could obviously help the team?

Player evaluation, it's as simple as that.

Don't put all the blame for a 5-16 record solely on the players and give the coaching staff a pass.

All the best!

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

## New Studies Gives Lowdown on California's Sky-High Living Costs



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

We Californians know, or should know, that while living in this state has many positive aspects, we are paying through the nose for the experience.

A flurry of recent studies drives home how deeply California residents must dig to meet costs of living that are either at or near the highest of any state.

One comes from the Legislative Analyst's Office, the Legislature's advisor on the state budget, delving into the astronomical costs of buying a home.

The LAO study found "California home prices far exceed the rest of the country." Mid-tier homes, those roughly in the middle of the price range, are more than twice as expensive as the typical mid-tier home elsewhere in the U.S. Monthly payments for such homes run about \$5,500 in California, 74% more than what they were 25 years ago.

The study also found that the annual household income needed to qualify for a mortgage on a mid-tier California home in September was about \$221,000 — more than two times the median California household income in 2024, which was \$102,000.

For a bottom-tier home, about \$136,000 in annual income is needed to qualify for a mortgage — about 33%

higher than median household income was in 2024.

The data illustrate why California has the second lowest rate of home ownership in the nation. Just 55.3% of Californians live in homes they or their families own, slightly higher than New York's ownership rate.

It's not surprising that hundreds of thousands of California residents, unable to aspire to home ownership, have decamped for more affordable states, such as Texas, where home prices are a fraction of California's.

Those who do migrate to other states find not only are houses much less expensive but fuel for their cars and utilities to light, heat and cool their homes are markedly less expensive.

The Center for Jobs & the Economy, an offshoot of the California Business Roundtable, continuously monitors energy costs in California and other states. Its latest report says gasoline, averaging \$4.64 a gallon in California, is as much as \$1.50 a gallon higher than in Texas and other states. California's electrical power rates are roughly twice as high.

Another take on California living costs comes from the Transparency Foundation, a conservative economic think tank.

It gathered a wide variety of factors and calculated living costs for an upper-middle class California family with a \$130,000 annual income. It concluded the family would pay \$29,753 more per year than the national average for housing, utilities, health care, taxes and other costs of living.

"This report should be a wake-up call to all Californians, that they are

being unfairly punished by the bad policies imposed on them by their politicians — and they are literally paying the price for it," Dave McCulloch, the foundation's chairman, said in a statement about the report.

A new poll by the Public Policy Institute of California confirms that Californians worry about living costs. Nearly a third of those polled said they, or someone in their household, have reduced food purchases to save money.

The California Farm Bureau revealed that a traditional Thanksgiving dinner for 10 people will cost a California family \$72.61, well above the national average of \$55.18.

Finally, there's a new report from WalletHub, a website devoted to personal finance, implying that Californians are taking on more debt to pay their rising bills.

In this year's third quarter — July through September — the average California household added \$880 in new debt, increasing the total owed to \$259,773, second only to residents of Hawaii.

All together, Californians' personal debt increased by \$11.8 billion during the quarter.

Now it's nearly \$3.2 trillion, just a bit lower than their \$3.6 trillion in annual personal income.

A truly staggering number.

*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.* ★

## Social Security Matters Is Social Security Really a "Good Deal?"



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

**Dear Rusty:** You've said in the past that most people recoup their SS contributions within five years of starting benefits, thus Social Security "is an exceptionally good deal." Your calculation is correct but misleading; if it were not, SS would have been insolvent long ago. I will, in fact, get "my" contributions back in about five years, but my employer's contributions will take another five years, and that is money that my employer could have been paying me, so they are really "my" contributions. But even that ignores the time value of money. I did a calculation as if my contributions, along with those of my employer, were invested in an account earning 5% per year. That would provide me the equivalent of SS income for 24 years, approximately what my life expectancy was when I retired. So, it's not a bad deal, but it is hardly exceptional. It is roughly the equivalent of me investing that money throughout my career and using the total to buy an annuity.

Of course, Social Security does have the advantage of certainty, at least until it goes broke. My portfolio

would not earn a steady 5% every year, though that is at the low end of what financial managers would expect over a long period. And it does force people to save, many of whom would otherwise make no provision for retirement. **Signed: Realistic Senior**

**Dear Realistic:** Thanks very much for your feedback on my previous article. I think it's important to draw a distinction for SS contributions made by an employer, because that is not money the individual personally pays, but rather an obligation for employers to help fund the Social Security program. Without that federal obligation, it is doubtful that employers would, instead, provide employees with equivalent additional compensation, so the thought that these are really your contributions is not a fair assessment. Indeed, they are contributions which happen to be tied to your earnings level (to a cap), for which employers receive relief on their corporate income tax, and likely would not make if not required by law.

As you have noted, Social Security has the advantage of certainty, something which is lacking when it comes to investing the equivalent amounts in the financial markets. And, as you have hinted, there exists a substantial failure by future American retirees to save adequately for their retirement, a problem well known in most financial circles. Thus, the certainty of Social Security makes it a crucial part of everyone's retirement planning — and it will be there! Despite all the

anxiety attributed to the current financial issues facing the program, there is little doubt that Social Security is here to stay. The question is — what reform is needed to make the program fully solvent for generations of future Americans? The Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC) has developed a proposal to sensibly reform Social Security and avoid the currently projected 2033 date that the SS Trust Funds are expected to be depleted (which will necessitate an across-the-board cut for everyone). We have little doubt that the reform needed will happen (it would be political suicide for Congress if it did not), and hopefully soon. You can read about AMAC's proposed solution at this link: [www.amac.us/social-security-guarantee](http://www.amac.us/social-security-guarantee).

Again, thank you for your feedback and commentary. Please know that we very much appreciate your thoughts and are always willing to discuss these issues.

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



## The Epstein Conspiracy in Plain Sight

Regardless, populists have a different narrative at hand that is consistent with the known record. Namely, that some of the most privileged members of our society — at the very top of the financial, academic, political, media and social worlds — had no standards or ethics, and embraced Epstein as a friend and consigliere.

Epstein knew influential people, so influential people felt that they should know him. They considered him fun, and useful — for advice, for banter, for introductions, for information and for donations. The emails suggest that Epstein missed his calling as a high-level, seamy advice columnist to the rich and powerful.

Want to know more about the reputation of the woman you are having an affair with? Seeking advice on how to gain political influence in Europe? Wondering how you're handling your interactions with a potential mistress? Looking for insights about Donald Trump? Trying to survive sexual harassment allegations? Need a reference for a gastroenterologist? Well, then, ask Jeffrey Epstein.

He emailed with former Harvard president Larry Summers, the linguist Noam Chomsky, venture capitalist Boris Nikolic, Emirati businessman Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Trump activist Steve Bannon, the journalist Michael Wolff, the artist Andres Serrano, the department store scion Jonathan Farkas and former White House counsel Kathryn

Ruemmler, among others. It's not as though Epstein was particularly insightful, but if he knew so many important people, he must know something, right?

As for his scrape with the law, clearly all had been forgiven and forgotten. If he was in the good graces of the social wrangler Peggy Siegal, whose job was to get bold-faced names to accept invitations, he must be OK. For some of Epstein's correspondents, it was part of his appeal that he was disreputable. Larry Summers, who leaned on Epstein for romantic advice, asked him at one point: "How is life among the lucrative and louche?"

Epstein's social currency is one reason that he got off so easily the first time he was prosecuted — he hired the best, most connected defense attorneys, who outclassed and intimidated his prosecutors.

As for Trump, he is guilty of enjoying Epstein's company a couple of decades ago, presumably for the same reason so many others did. But he had a falling out with Epstein long ago. Trump didn't have anything to do with him at the time that so many others in these emails were socializing with Epstein, confiding in him and asking him for insight on Trump. That's a disgrace, and it's always been in plain sight. In the Epstein story, it's not so much follow the money — although that's important and still mysterious — as follow the social network.

*Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review. (c) 2025, by King Features Synd., Inc.* ★

# Defendant Sentenced for Killing Unhoused Man

**Sacramento County District Attorney's Office News Release**

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - On Oct. 10, the Honorable Matthew Gary sentenced Richard Bradford to 76 years to

life in prison. On Aug. 5 of this year Bradford was convicted by a jury of second-degree murder. The jury also found true the allegation that Bradford discharged a firearm causing death as well as the aggravating factor that he used a weapon.

Bradford was also convicted of felon in possession of a firearm. The Court further found true that Bradford has two prior strike convictions and additional aggravating factors; that the defendant had served a prior prison term and that his prior

convictions were numerous and of increasing seriousness.

On Oct. 8, 2023, Bradford murdered Joshua Rash, who was living in an encampment. Bradford had gone to the encampment to take the victim's dog. The victim armed

himself with a metal pole to prevent Bradford from taking his dog. Bradford then shot the victim in the chest and left him underneath a bridge on Gerber Road. When the victim's body was found, his dog was sitting by his side. ★

## CALL A PROFESSIONAL

**SLS Superior Landscape Services**  
Landscaping and Maintenance

- Sprinkler Repair/Install • Pruning
- Mowing/Trimming • Fertilizing

Insured Lic#794551  
(916) 728-5812 • Cell (916) 761-0999  
Dave Cochran Owner • dave\_SLS@surewest.net

**Jose's Landscape Maintenance**

- ✓ General Lawn Service
- ✓ One Time Clean Ups
- ✓ Lawn Aerate
- ✓ Dethatch
- ✓ Sprinkler Repair

Call Jose at 916-991-6923  
Gen. Bus Lic # 32014-01649 \ Spe Bus Lic # 12016-00134

**AFFORDABLE TRENCHLESS & PIPE LINING**

Install a Water/Electric line under your existing driveway!

SEWER PROBLEMS? WATCH OUR VIDEO.  
www.ydig.com

We're #1 in the #2 business  
Off (916) 488-1215 Lic #754886

**SMOOT LANDSCAPING**

- Drought tolerant landscape
- Low voltage lighting
- Garden renovations
- Concrete and stone
- Consultations available

Celebrating 45 years  
**916.454.1300**  
www.SmootLandscaping.com • Contractor License #633224

**TRACTOR SERVICE**

- Mowing • Rototilling
- Discing • Scraper/Loader

Call **(916) 991-8431**

**GREENWAY TREE SERVICE**

Specializing in Expert Tree Pruning, Tree Removal & Stump Grinding

Free Estimates  
Competitive Prices  
Licensed and Insured  
**(916) 224-9750**

**Mary Shyer**  
Neighborhood Dog Walker

Email: shyermary9@gmail.com  
Phone: (916) 281-9442  
Rover: www.rover.com/sit/marys07242

**Rio Linda Eye Care**

Laser Surgery • Eye Glasses • Contact Lenses  
• Eyewear for Computer Users

**Dr. William Fleischmann**  
(916) 991-8444  
Saturday Appointments Available  
6716 RIO LINDA BLVD., SUITE B, RIO LINDA

**RESTORE YOUR FLOOR HARDWOOD FLOORING**

Revive • Restore • Refinish  
Hardwood, Laminate, and Vinyl

- Sand & Finish
- Repairs
- New Installations
- Recoating

New Installation & Repairs  
Family Tradition Since 1957  
Lic. #794448  
sacramento hardwood.com  
1.800.725.3320 916.342.6596

**FOLLOW US**  
for Local News and much more!

**Messenger Publishing Group**  
Facebook: @MPG8dotcom

**FULL RANGE OF FLAT ROOFING SERVICES**

- New Construction • Leak Repairs
- Waterproofing • Top-Grade Materials
- Experienced • Reliable • Honest Pricing
- Excellent Customer Service

We take pride in completing every project on time and to the highest standards.  
**Call Today! (916) 267-5026**

**Rewired To Read** Reading & Spelling Specialist

rewiredtoread.com  
**916-664-6805**  
LeAna Spletstoeser AA, AS, M.A.  
26 Years Experience

# Local Classifieds Advertise in your local community newspaper Call 916-773-1111

<p><b>Clubs</b></p> <p><b>JOLLY HOOKER FISHING CLUB</b></p> <p>Our fishing interests are Trout, Kokanee, Salmon, and Strippers</p> <p>Monthly Breakfast Meetings 2nd Friday of the Month Opens 7 am, Breakfast 8 am.</p> <p><b>Rancho Cordova Elk's Lodge</b> 11440 Elks Circle. Contact Steve Milanovich (916) 761-6513 Make sure to leave a message. Join us, we look forward to meeting you.</p> <p><b>GOT LOCAL NEWS?</b> Call (916) 773 1111</p>	<p><b>Hall Rentals</b></p> <p><b>VFW Post 6158</b></p> <p>8990 Kruithof Way, Fair Oaks, CA <b>916-966-1663</b> vfw6158.com/rent-our-hall/</p>	<p><b>Hall Rentals</b></p> <p>Event hall for rent. 2,800 sq. ft. Coffee bar. Plenty of parking. Saturday and Sunday. \$500. 5809 Gibbons Dr. (916) 470-7323. (11/7/25)</p> <p><b>Help Wanted</b></p> <p>SK Hynix NAND Product Solutions Corp DBA Solidigm has an opening in Rancho Cordova, CA for SW Eng. Dsgn &amp; dvp op systms. MS reqd. Salary: \$124,592-\$178,690. Telecom may be permit. When not telecom, must rprt to wrk site. To apply email resume to HRResumes@solidigm.com &amp; ref job#8612763 (12/05/25)</p>	<p><b>Health/Wellness</b></p> <p>XOSIALX – Get Social. Be EXCEPTIONAL XILERATE is redefining energy for everyone. It provides an authentic, jitter-free boost that appeals to both regular energy drink users, and those who may have avoided them due to artificial ingredients or harsh effects. FREE TO JOIN. www.canderson.xosialx.com (TFN)</p>	<p><b>Landscaping</b></p> <p><b>CREATE YOUR PARADISE</b></p> <p>Winter Yard Cleanups, Complete Landscape Design/Installation, Sprinkler System Installs/Repairs, All Types Concrete Work, Fence Installation, Retaining Walls- All Types, Drainage Systems-all types, Landscape Lighting, Residential/commercial American Landscape Design &amp; Installation. Est 1987 American Construction &amp; Property Maintenance Company WE ACCEPT VISA &amp; MASTER CARD <b>(916)612-0776</b> Lic#690968</p>	<p><b>Landscaping</b></p> <p><b>YARD SERVICE</b> ONE-TIME CLEANUP Mow, Weed, Prune &amp; Haul NEED: Landscaping bark? Gutters cleaned? Light fence work? CALL 916/205-9310 or 916/627-9000/</p>	<p><b>Tree Service</b></p> <p><b>BP TREE SERVICES LLC.</b></p> <p>TREE &amp; STUMP REMOVAL TREE TRIMMING/ SHAPING FREE ESTIMATE 10% OFF WITH THIS AD Insured, Workman's comp, Arborist <b>916-722-6321</b> BPTreeServices.com VISA / MASTER CARD California Contractors Lic #1036031</p>
	<p><b>Are You a Pro?</b> Get the word out!</p> <p>Advertise in the Classifieds Call 916-773-1111</p>	<p><b>KP International MARKET</b></p> <p>Many Positions are Available. Please no phone calls. Apply in person. <b>10971 Olson Dr. Rancho Cordova, CA 95670</b></p>	<p><b>We Support Our Military</b></p>	<p><b>Music Lessons</b></p> <p><b>Guitar Lessons</b> Beginner to Advanced . \$20/ half-hour; \$30 full hour. 916-507-6658, freddiebbalbert@gmail.com (12/31/2025)</p>	<p><b>Roofing</b></p> <p><b>BERNARDINO ROOFING</b> Reroofs, Repairs, Maintenance, Dryrot, Gutters, Family Operated. BBB MEMBER! ***FREE ESTIMATES*** SENIOR DISCOUNTS <b>916.920.0100</b> www.bernardinoroofing.com</p>	<p>Advertise in your local community newspaper Call (916) 773-1111</p>

**FOLLOW US**  
for Local News and much more!

**American River Messenger**  
Facebook: @ARMMPG8

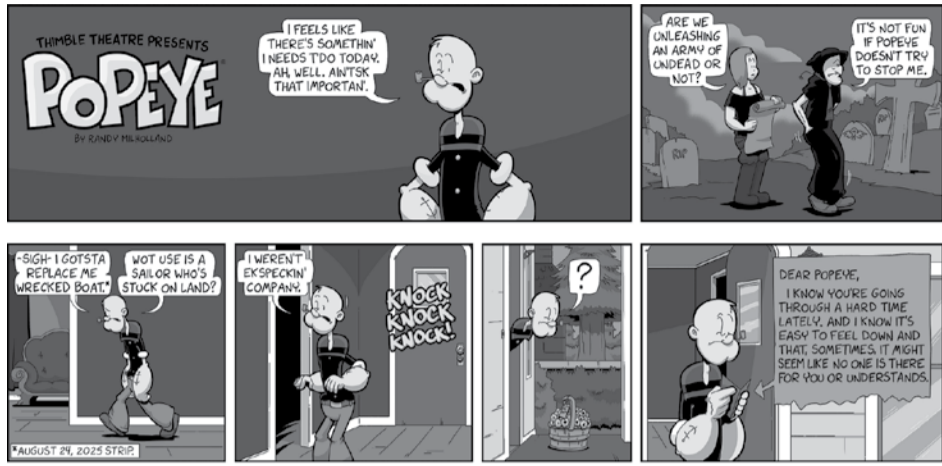
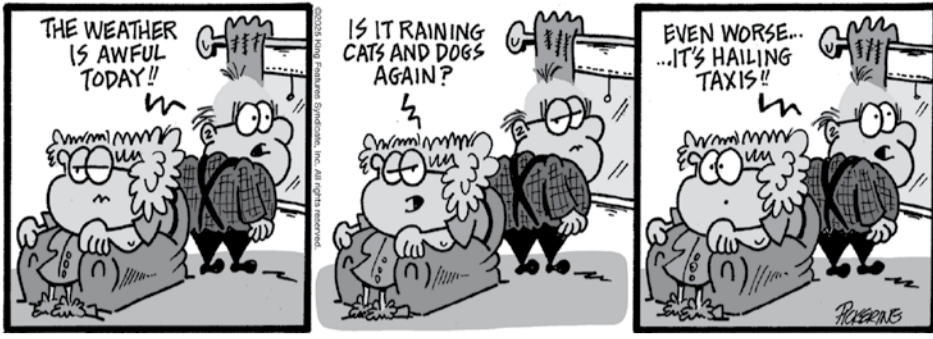
**MPG**

Advertise in your Local Community Newspaper  
Call **916-773-1111**

# COMICS & PUZZLES

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



Out on a Limb

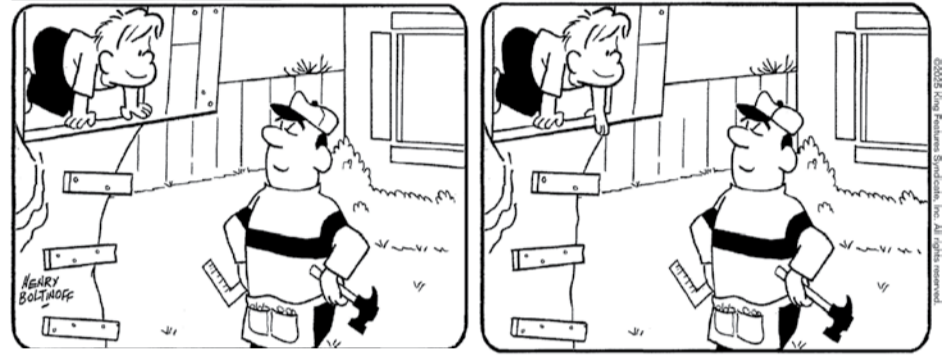
by Gary Kopervas



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



GRIN THE BEAR IT

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



F	L	A	W	S		I	T	S		A	R	Y	A	
L	I	T	H	O		L	E	I		O	N	I	O	N
A	L	O	U	D		K	E	G		F	O	G	G	Y
P	O	P	P	I	N	S		M	U	F	A	S	A	
			S	U	E		R	A	K	E				
B	A	T		M	A	R	E		E	N	I	G	M	A
E	P	E	E		P	I	T	H		D	R	E	A	R
L	I	M	Y		S	C	R	A	G		E	T	U	I
L	A	P	E	L		H	A	L	L		S	A	V	E
E	N	T	R	A	P		C	O	O	L		T	E	L
				R	A	P	T		B	A	A			
	M	O	W	G	L	I		B	E	R	L	I	O	Z
D	O	N	E	E		A	L	L		V	I	L	L	A
O	T	T	E	R		N	E	O		A	V	I	A	N
C	H	O	P			O	U	T		L	E	A	F	Y

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD • DISNEY CHARACTERS

**CLUES**

**ACROSS**

- Imperfections
- Part of T.G.I.F.
- Stark daughter on "Game of Thrones"
- Kind of print, for short
- Hula dancer's flowers
- Kitchen tear-jerker
- Viva voce
- Draft beer container
- Confused
- Irreverent Disney nanny
- "Scar's older brother"
- Famous T-Rex
- Gardening tool
- Louisville Slugger
- Stallion's mate
- Famous ciphering machine
- D'Artagnan's weapon of choice
- Essence
- Gloomy and drab
- Containing limestone
- Scrawny one
- Purse to match a gown
- Spot for boutonniere
- John Oates' partner Daryl
- Prepare for a rainy day
- Catch in a snare
- Rapper LL \_\_\_ J
- \_\_\_ Aviv
- Wholly engrossed
- Call to Bo Peep
- Shere Khan's sworn enemy
- Marie's and Toulouse's younger brother
- Beneficial
- Opposite of nothing
- Pancho's last name
- Weasel's aquatic cousin
- "New" prefix
- "Like Iago in "Aladdin" or Laddy Kluck in "Robin Hood"
- Karate blow
- Not safe in baseball
- Like salad greens

**DOWN**

- Part of an envelope
- Nani Pelekai's little sister and new pet owner
- At the summit of
- Beats, slangily
- Hypertension sufferer's dietary concern
- Sorts
- Driver's aid
- Fraternity letter
- Dwarf buffalo
- Oil field structures
- Moving meditation practice
- "\_\_\_ day now"
- Hurt or upset
- Some tides
- Israel Kamakawiwo'ole's strings
- Take back
- "Beast's love interest"
- Bee-related
- Act like a siren
- Macaulay Culkin's "Richie \_\_\_"
- Wraths
- Gain access to (2 words)
- Shade of violet
- "a.k.a. Little Mermaid"

Switch & Get \$25

Off First Month of New Service! USE PROMO CODE: GZ590

Consumer Cellular

CALL CONSUMER CELLULAR 888-804-0913

© 2023 Consumer Cellular Inc. For promo details please call 888-804-0913

**Classified Advertising**

Sell Your Stuff! Reach 1000's of Readers Every Week!

MPG

916.773.1111

6	1	7	4	8	5	9	3	2
3	8	9	1	2	7	5	4	6
2	4	5	9	6	3	1	7	8
7	6	4	5	1	8	2	9	3
1	9	3	2	7	6	8	5	4
5	2	8	3	4	9	6	1	7
8	5	1	7	3	2	4	6	9
9	7	6	8	5	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	6	9	1	7	8	5

**SUDOKU**

Call today and receive a FREE SHOWER PACKAGE PLUS \$1600 OFF

SAFE STEP WALK-IN TUB 1-855-576-5653

6						9		
			1			7	5	4
2	5		6					
	6	4			8	2		
						7		
		8	3			6	1	
				3		4		9
7	6	8		4				
	2							5

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

MPG

# Sacramento Superior Court Hosts Adoption Day Event

**Sacramento Superior Court News Release**

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento Superior Court finalized and celebrated the adoptions of children from foster care on Adoption Day, Nov. 15.

Adoption Day is an opportunity to increase public awareness of the need for adoptive parents and educate prospective adoptive parents about the adoption process. It is also a time to celebrate local families who have opened their lives to children needing permanent homes.

“Courthouses are often stressful places to visit but this is a special opportunity to witness love and joy, and we are delighted to host this annual adoption day event,” said Juvenile Court’s Presiding Judge Kristina Lindquist.

Adoption Day in Sacramento County is a collaborative effort between multiple agencies.

“I am proud of the hard work our court staff and community partners put into this successful event, as well as the collaboration, dedication and care they put into every single case throughout the year,” Lindquist said.

During Adoption Day, judges



The Sacramento Superior Court finalized the adoptions of 26 children from foster care at the Juvenile Courthouse on Nov. 15. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Superior Court

and court staff were joined by community partners, including the Department of Child and Family Adult Services, Court Appointed Special Advocates of Sacramento (CASA), Parent Cooperative Community, Sacramento Sheriff’s Department Youth Services Unit, Sacramento Public Library, Zeta Phi Beta and Wayfinder.

“All children deserve to have a family and strong connections for life. Adoption is a great work of love and provides a child the

opportunity to develop secure attachments and be supported to achieve optimal physical and emotional growth and health overall,” Sacramento County’s Deputy Director of Child Protective Services Melissa Lloyd said about adoption.

Adoption Day festivities included adoption proceedings, refreshments and children’s activities, such as face painting and balloons.

The Nov. 15 event from 9 to 11:30 a.m. was at the Juvenile

Courthouse, 9605 Kiefer Blvd., Sacramento.

“We are glad to celebrate the adoptions that are occurring on Adoption Day but we should also take this time to reflect that there are many more children and youth who are still looking for permanent homes,” Lindquist said. “It is important to raise awareness of the need in our community for additional foster and adoptive families. Every child deserves the love and connection of a supportive family.”★



Adoption Day in Sacramento County is a collaborative effort between multiple agencies. Lend a Heart is an all-volunteer organization that provides animal-assisted therapy to the Sacramento area and surrounding counties with teams of certified handlers and therapy dogs. An adoptee plays with one of the therapy dogs on Adoption Day. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Superior Court

# Keeping Your Peace Through the Holidays



A group sits at a table for a holiday feast. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

**By MPG Staff**

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - While many residents spend the season preparing Thanksgiving meals, lighting the menorah, decorating their homes or planning festive gatherings, others experience the holidays as a period of heightened stress.

Feelings of overwhelm stemming from financial strain, social pressures, loneliness or challenges related to substance use are common this time of year.

To support residents navigating these emotional ups and downs, the Sacramento County Department of Health Services is sharing guidance to promote behavioral health and help the community cope with

holiday-related pressures.

Health officials say that the first step is acknowledging how you feel. Recognizing signs of stress or disruptions to normal routines can make it easier to respond early. Maintaining consistent sleep schedules and mealtimes can also support emotional stability during a busy season often filled with additional events.

The Sacramento County Department of Health Services also encourages residents to make a plan for managing stress. Whether it’s taking a walk, relaxing in front of the television or connecting with friends through online games, identifying enjoyable activities provides a reliable outlet when

emotions run high.

Connecting with others is another key recommendation. A quick phone call, text message or social media check-in can lift both your spirits and the recipient’s. Officials emphasize that reaching out, no matter the method, helps strengthen support systems.

County health professionals also urge residents to remain mindful of alcohol and substance use. For individuals in recovery or those who find holiday gatherings triggering, planning ahead can be critical. Strategies such as having an exit plan, contacting a trusted person or choosing a nonalcoholic drink can help prevent setbacks. Resources are available for anyone concerned

about their use or their ability to cope.

Knowing when and how to seek support is essential. Residents experiencing serious feelings of depression, anxiety or isolation are encouraged to reach out for help. The 9-8-8 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline connects callers to local crisis centers, and in situations requiring in-person support, Sacramento County’s Community Wellness Response Team could be dispatched.

The Behavioral Health Services Screening and Coordination Team operates a 24/7 hotline offering brief screenings and referrals to appropriate mental health services at 916-875-1055 or 888-881-4881. The Mental Health

Urgent Care Clinic at 2130 Stockton Blvd., Building 300, in Sacramento provides walk-in crisis services for all ages and can be reached at 916-520-2460.

Sacramento County officials remind residents that holiday stress is common and that it is acceptable and encouraged to seek peace wherever possible. They emphasize that no one needs to face these challenges alone and recommend turning to friends, family members or professionals for support.

More information and additional behavioral health resources can be found on Sacramento County’s Behavioral Health webpage at [dhs.saccounty.gov/BHS/Pages/BHS-Home.aspx](https://dhs.saccounty.gov/BHS/Pages/BHS-Home.aspx). ★

# Help Pets Safely Enjoy Holidays

**By MPG Staff**

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - The holidays bring gatherings, festive décor and plenty of special meals but the season can also present hazards for household pets, according to Sacramento County’s Bradshaw Animal Shelter.

Shelter officials are encouraging pet owners to plan ahead to ensure that celebrations remain safe for cats and dogs.

Food is among the most common holiday risks. While some seasonal dishes are safe for pets in small portions, such as plain turkey or chicken without skin or bones, plain sweet potato or pumpkin, simple fruits and vegetables, and xylitol-free peanut butter, many traditional items should be kept out of reach.

Chocolate, onions, garlic, grapes, raisins, sugar-free foods containing xylitol,

cooked bones, alcohol and raw dough are dangerous and life-threatening for pets. The shelter urges owners to stick with pet-specific treats when in doubt and to secure trash bins to prevent scavenging.

Decorations also pose potential dangers. Tinsel, ribbon and string can cause intestinal blockages if swallowed. Glass ornaments can break and injure pets, while holiday lights and electrical cords might tempt chewers. The shelter recommends keeping candles out of reach or opting for flameless versions to avoid burns or fires.

Several popular holiday plants can be toxic as well. Poinsettias can cause mild stomach upset, while mistletoe and holly can lead to vomiting and diarrhea. Lilies are especially dangerous for cats and should be avoided entirely. Artificial greenery can offer a festive alternative

without the risk.

In addition, the shelter notes that the holiday season’s busier household routines can be stressful for animals. Visitors, parties and frequent door openings could overwhelm pets or create opportunities for escape. Officials advise providing a quiet retreat, reminding guests not to feed pets table scraps and ensuring collars, ID tags and microchip information are up to date.

If a pet ingests a potentially harmful substance, owners should contact their veterinarian immediately or call the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Animal Poison Control Center at 888-426-4435.

Bradshaw Animal Shelter staff wish the community a safe and happy holiday season and encourage residents to keep their pets in mind as they celebrate. ★

# Holiday Airport Travel Ramps Up

**By MPG Staff**

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento International Airport (SMF) has prepared for another busy holiday travel season, with passenger volumes expected to exceed last year’s total.

Between Thanksgiving and the New Year, hundreds of thousands of travelers will pass through the Sacramento International Airport.

During the Thanksgiving period, the busiest day was expected to be Sunday, Nov. 30.

For the winter holidays (Dec. 24 to Dec. 31), 30-percent more seats are available compared to the same week in 2024, which means the potential for even more travelers at the Sacramento International Airport.

“We know how important these trips are for our passengers,” said Sacramento County Department of Airports’ Airport Operations and Public Safety Deputy Director Sheri Thompson-Duarte. “We’re ready for a safe, efficient and festive holiday season and we encourage travelers to plan ahead so they can ensure their journeys stress-free.”

In addition to preparing for higher passenger volumes, travelers will find new dining options throughout the terminals.

Sidewalk Juice and West Coast Sourdough are now open in both terminals, offering fresh sandwiches, soups and smoothies, while Terminal A welcomes Golden Grove Market and a new Starbucks location.

Travelers can make their holiday trips smoother by arriving early and allowing extra time for the busiest travel days. Airport officials recommend getting to the terminal at least two-and-a-half hours before domestic flights and three hours before international departures to accommodate parking, check-in and security screening.

Drivers should check parking availability in advance, as the parking garage and daily lot often fill quickly during peak morning hours. Officials suggest using an Economy lot and taking a shuttle to the terminal. Real-time parking updates are available on the Sacramento International Airport website at [flysmf.gov](https://flysmf.gov).

Those picking up arriving passengers can avoid curbside congestion by using the airport’s free cell-phone waiting lot until the passengers are ready for pickup.

Travelers are also encouraged to pack smart and review Transportation Security Administration (TSA) guidelines for carry-on items, especially when bringing food, gifts or liquids. ★

# Sacramento State Volleyball Secures Five Major Big Sky Honors

## Sacramento State News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento State volleyball's remarkable 2025 campaign continued as the Hornets collected five major awards in the annual All-Big Sky Conference selections, highlighted by sophomore outside hitter Victoria Marthaler being named Big Sky Most Valuable Player.

The Hornets earned four individual specialty honors, the most of any program in the league, with Marthaler taking MVP, senior setter Kate Doorn named Setter of the Year, junior Reese Ampí earning Libero of the Year and freshman outside hitter Keonahi'ilani Solaita selected Freshman of the Year.

In addition, senior middle blocker Ashlynn Archer, one of the nation's top performers at her position, was named first team All-Big Sky.

Marthaler and Doorn joined Archer on the first team, tying the program record with three first-team selections in a single season.

The honors arrive as Sacramento State concludes the regular season with a 19-9 overall record and 12-4 conference mark, finishing second in the Big Sky standings.

Marthaler became the eighth Hornet, and the first since 2023, to earn Big Sky MVP honors. One of the nation's top six-rotation outside hitters, Marthaler leads the Big Sky and ranks sixth nationally with 4.96 kills per set, while adding 5.46 points per set, eighth-best in the country. She has posted double-figure



The honors arrive as Sacramento State concludes the regular season with a 19-9 overall record and 12-4 conference mark, finishing second in the Big Sky standings. Photo courtesy of Sacramento State Athletics

kills in 25 matches, including eight with 20 or more and three with at least 30. A three-time Big Sky Offensive Player of the Week, Marthaler is averaging 5.72 kills per set in conference play. Her current season average would rank fourth in program history.

Doorn, the first Hornet ever named Big Sky Setter of the Year, guided one of the league's most efficient offenses. Sacramento State leads the Big

Sky in points per set (17.62) and hitting percentage (.265) in conference matches, a figure 38 points higher than the next closest team. Doorn averages 9.16 assists, 0.41 aces, 2.38 digs and 0.54 blocks per set, and owns 11 double-doubles this season. In league play, Doorn leads the conference in aces (0.48 per set) and ranks second in assists (10.13 per set). Doorn is just two assists shy of 3,000 for her collegiate career.

Archer continued her dominance as one of the Big Sky's most efficient attackers, averaging 2.76 kills and 1.07 blocks per set while hitting .436, a mark that leads the Big Sky and ranks eighth nationally. If the season ended today, her hitting percentage would set new Sacramento State and Big Sky single-season records. She has hit at least .300 in all but four matches and surpassed .400 on 18 occasions. Archer is also the only player in the conference to earn both offensive and defensive weekly awards this season.

Ampí became the fourth Hornet, and the first since 2016, to win Big Sky Libero of the Year.

Despite missing three matches to injury, Ampí ranks third in the conference with 4.30 digs per set and has recorded double-digit digs 22 times, including six matches with at least 20 and two with 30 or more. Ampí owns a .940 serve-receive percentage, having been aced just 26 times on 421 attempts, and is a two-time Big Sky Defensive Player of the Week.

Solaita, Sacramento State's first Big Sky Freshman of the Year since 2020, quickly cemented herself as a six-rotation starter and has opened each of the last 21 matches. Solaita averages 2.05 kills, 1.80 digs, 0.27 aces and 2.45 points per set, while elevating those numbers in conference play to 2.44 kills, 2.12 digs and 0.33 aces per set. Her aces per set in league matches rank eighth in the conference. Solaita has reached double-digit kills seven times, including a season-high 20 at Idaho State, and earned Big Sky Offensive Player of the Week honors on Nov. 3. ★



## Caden Pinnick Named Jerry Rice Award Finalist



The Jerry Rice Award includes true and redshirt freshmen, and all 13 Football Championship Subdivision conferences are represented by a finalist. The recipient, to be selected by a national voting panel, will be announced on Dec. 3, after press time, and honored at the Stats Perform National Awards Show on Jan. 3 in Nashville, Tennessee. Photo courtesy of UC Davis Athletics

### UC Davis News Release

**DAVIS, CA (MPG)** - No. 8 University of California, Davis football redshirt freshman Caden Pinnick has been named a finalist for the Jerry Rice Award, putting him among the best 25 freshmen in the nation.

Pinnick becomes the first Aggie to be named a Jerry Rice Award finalist since Rex Connors earned the nod in 2022. A multi-national player of the week and conference player of the week honoree, Pinnick ranks among the top quarterbacks in the nation across several categories.

During the season, Pinnick tied a conference

record with three straight Big Sky Offensive Player of the Week awards and twice was named a National Offensive Player of the Week.

The Aggie quarterback ended the year among the best quarterbacks in the Big Sky Conference, racking up 2,527 total passing yards, 24 passing touchdowns and an average of 252.7 passing yards per game in 10 starts. Pinnick had a season completion percentage of 71 percent, rushed for 312 yards and scored three times on the ground.

In the conference, Pinnick finishes the regular season leading in passing yards per completion, passing efficiency, points

responsible for per game and yards per pass attempt.

Pinnick also finishes top five in the conference in completion percentage (second), completions per game (fifth), passing touchdowns (second), passing yards (fifth), passing yards per game (fifth), points responsible for (third) and total offense (second).

Nationally, Pinnick ended the season ranked fifth in the nation in passing efficiency, 10th in passing yards per game, 12th in passing touchdowns and 24th in total passing yards.

The Rice Award, celebrating its 15th anniversary season, is named after legendary Hall of Fame wide receiver Jerry Rice, who starred in the Football Championship Subdivision at Mississippi Valley State University. Past recipients include Cooper Kupp, Chase Edmonds, Trey Lance, Cam Ward and Shedeur Sanders.

The Jerry Rice Award includes true and redshirt freshmen, and all 13 Football Championship Subdivision conferences are represented by a finalist. The recipient, to be selected by a national voting panel, will be announced on Dec. 3, after press time, and honored at the Stats Perform National Awards Show on Jan. 3 in Nashville, Tennessee. ★

## Republic FC to Host Open Tryouts on Jan. 10 and 11

### Sacramento Republic FC News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - As Republic FC prepares for the 2026 United Soccer League (USL) Championship Season, the club will again host open tryouts, an opportunity for local top talent to showcase their abilities in front of professional coaching staff with the goal of earning an invitation to the team's preseason training camp.

This year's tryouts on Jan. 10 and 11 at Bartholomew Sports Park in Elk Grove are open to athletes ages 16 years and older. Players are encouraged to sign up early and take advantage of \$50 off discount that runs through the end of the year.

"We've shown that we can successfully identify top-caliber players for both our first team and academy through tryouts and we look forward to another year of quality competition," said Republic FC President Todd Dunivant.

Open tryouts play a key role in the club's roster development. Since 2014, six players have signed with the first team after impressing at tryouts, often using the opportunity to springboard successful careers.



Each year, at least one person is guaranteed an invitation to join the team for training camp, which provides trialists the opportunity to train alongside professional soccer players and compete against teams from various soccer leagues, further providing exposure to talent scouts. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Republic FC

In 2023, defender Aldair Sanchez attended tryouts after his second college season and launched his pro career after a strong training camp. In two seasons with the Indomitable Club, Sanchez became one of the most consistent young players in the league.

Each year, at least one person is guaranteed an invitation to join the team for training camp, which provides trialists the opportunity to train alongside professional soccer players and compete against teams from various soccer leagues, further providing exposure to talent scouts.

The wide range of

paths was demonstrated by two attendees from the 2025 tryout. Miles Rice, a senior at Chico State, and Tag Chalmers who had formerly featured for Central Valley Fuego, both stayed with Republic FC throughout preseason. Rice went on to sign a short-term contract with USL League One side Charlotte Independence, while Chalmers inked to a USL Academy Contract and trained with Republic FC's first team throughout the year.

For more information on tryout registration and requirements, visit [SacRepublicFC.com/ Tryouts](https://clubs.bluesombrero.com/Default.aspx?tabid=1431279) or email [Tryouts@SacRepublicFC.com](mailto:Tryouts@SacRepublicFC.com). ★

## Registration Now Open for Republic FC's Winter Break Camps

### Sacramento Republic FC News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento Republic FC has opened registration for its 2025 Winter Break Camps. This December, players ages 4 to 16 can join the club for two fun and engaging camp experiences led by a professional trained and licensed coaching staff.

The only winter soccer camp run entirely by a local professional club, the program will focus on developing individual technical skills in a supportive, development-focused environment.

Each camp will include expert instruction, an official Republic FC camp T-shirt, and a ticket to a 2026 home match at Heart Health Park.



The only winter soccer camp ran entirely by a local professional club, the program will focus on developing individual technical skills in a supportive, development-focused environment. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Republic FC

Players will have the opportunity to gain new skills, meet new friends and prepare for their upcoming season.

The first camp will be held on Monday, Dec. 22 at Promontory Community Park in El Dorado Hills. Players ages 4 to 6 will train from 9 to 10:30 a.m. while players ages 7 to 16 will participate from 9 a.m. to noon. The second camp will take place on Dec. 23 at Woodland Sports Park in Woodland, following the same age groups and times.

Registration for both camps is now open. Families are encouraged to sign up early to secure their spot.

Register online at <https://clubs.bluesombrero.com/Default.aspx?tabid=1431279>. ★

# Textbook Feedback Wanted by Dec. 17

By Patsy McGavock

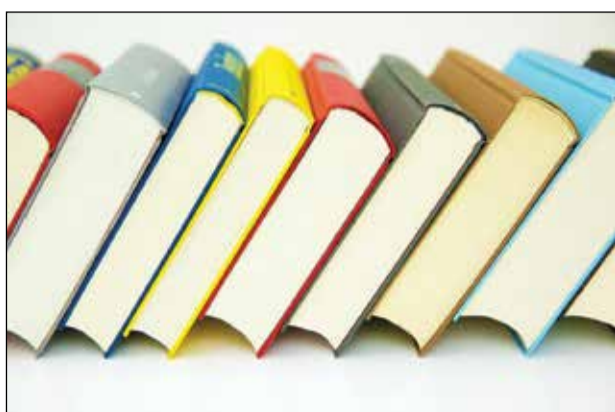
**SACRAMENTO AREA, CA (MPG)** - Through Dec. 17, San Juan Unified School District asks parents and community members to provide feedback on textbook choices that the district's adoption committees will soon make that will be used for the next seven years.

The proposed textbooks, used by students in transitional kindergarten through 12th grade include TK-8 math to high school history, psychology, ethnic and language studies.

To review the proposed textbooks, visit [SanJuan.edu/curriculum](http://SanJuan.edu/curriculum). Find materials being considered, tips for how to review, feedback forms and other resources. To review physical books, schedule an in-person appointment at Choices Charter School by emailing [loretta.naas@sanjuan.edu](mailto:loretta.naas@sanjuan.edu).

While selection committees of teachers and community members review rubrics, hear publisher presentations, narrow options and try materials in pilot classrooms, public review is a final piece to the selection process. Recommendations move to the district Curriculum and Standards advisory committee and ultimately to the district's Board of Education.

In early November, district staff gave an update to the district's public Curriculum and Standards advisory committee,



Find materials being considered, tips for how to review, feedback forms and other resources. To review physical books, schedule an in-person appointment at Choices Charter School. Photo by Hermann Traub from Pixabay

sharing the large teacher interest specifically in math adoptions and excitement in selecting which history and language texts to review. Staff hope that more families and community members match that excitement and provide input.

"Whether you join us in person or review online, your feedback is important," states the district's Sept. 29 announcement. It helps guide final decisions.

Participation is growing but is still small. While selection committee applications rose from 32 last cycle to 92 this year, only 22 public reviews had been submitted by early November. While up from 12 last year, it's still a small response in a district of nearly 40,000 students.

Why take the time? Because these materials are part of your child's learning experience. Research consistently shows that student achievement improves when families engage collaboratively in their children's education,

even in acts such as reviewing curriculum.

Strong home-school partnerships support stronger outcomes. When you review materials, whether as a parent, grandparent, mentor or neighbor, you're telling a child, "I'm part of your learning team."

Reviewers don't need to be experts or to read the whole book. Pick and compare one or two aspects or sections of each text. Ask: does this help my child learn and stay engaged? Does it help them practice and master standards? Could I see myself supporting learning at home using these materials? Give specific feedback.

Set 30 to 40 minutes to review a course that matters to your family and help shape a better learning experience for all.

*Patsy McGavock is a Curriculum, Standards & Programs Advisory Committee member in San Juan Unified School District, supporting family and community engagement.* ★

Sacramento CHORAL SOCIETY & Orchestra

# Home for the Holidays

Saturday, December 13 3:00pm

Sacramento Memorial Auditorium 1515 J Street

Celebrating 30 Amazing Years!

Audience singalong  
Candlelit procession  
New and familiar Choral orchestral holiday songs

Radiant music for Christmas

SCSO Christmas CD's available at the concert



CONDUCTOR Donald Kendrick

HEADLINER Sam Faustine Tenor

TICKETS: \$43 - \$63 (includes facility fee) - Students 50% Discount  
SAFE CU PAC Box Office 916-808-5181 or Ticketmaster.com

SAVE THE DATE

# Messiah Sing-Along

Friday, December 26 | 2:00pm  
First United Methodist Church, Sacramento

Purchase tickets at [sacramentochooral.org](http://sacramentochooral.org) or at the door

**KP International MARKET**  
FOOD COURT NOW OPEN  
10977 Olson Drive Rancho Cordova, CA 95670  
916.853.8000  
Market: 7 Days 8am-9pm  
Food Court: 7 Days 11am-3:30pm  
Korean/Mex/Viet: 7:30pm last call  
Chinese/Japanese: 9:00pm last call

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

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

Dishes To Choose From

**FROZEN & FISH DEPT**

- Spring Rolls Shrimp Japchae 278 g REG.\$5.99/EA **\$2.99/ea**
- Cooked Frozen Boiled Corn 360 g REG.\$3.69/EA **\$1.99/ea**

**WEEKLY MEAT SPECIALS**

- Rump/Bottom Round Roast Boneless **\$4.99/lb**
- Beef T-Bone Steak **\$5.39/lb**
- Chicken Drumsticks **79¢/lb**
- Pork Neck Bones **\$1.99/lb**
- Pork Loin Country Style Ribs - Bnls **\$2.99/lb**
- Pork Loin Chops Bone-In **\$2.49/lb**

**WEEKLY HALAL SPECIALS**

- Chicken Drumsticks **89¢/lb**
- New Zealand Lamb Shoulder Chop Bone-In **\$5.99/lb**
- Rump/Bottom Round Roast Boneless **\$5.29/lb**

**FRESH PRODUCE**

- Mini Sweet Pepper 1 lb **\$2.59/ea**
- Fairy Tale Pumpkin **69¢/lb**
- Tangerine 2 lb Bag **\$2.49/bag**
- Bartlett Pear **79¢/lb**
- Russet Potato 10 lb **\$1.99/bag**
- Sleeved Garlic 5 pc China **\$1.79/ea**
- English Cucumber **99¢/ea**
- D'Anjo Pear **99¢/lb**

**AMERICAN/HISPANIC GROCERY**

- La Moderna Marias Cookies 19.75 oz **\$1.99/ea**
- Latin Fusion Fruit Drinks with Pulp 16.9 fl.oz **\$1.29/ea**
- Rosarita Refried Beans 16 oz **\$1.49/ea**
- Bauducco Wafer 3 Flavors 5 oz **\$1.19/ea**
- Nate's Raw Honey 16 oz **\$5.99/ea**

**ASIAN GROCERY**

- Kapal Api Cappuccino 2 in 1 Coffee 7.9, 9.5 oz **\$4.29/ea**
- Spam with Tocino Seasoning 12 oz **\$4.99/ea**
- Yeo's Soy Milk Drink 10.1 fl.oz **\$1.29/ea**
- Buddha Tapioca Starch 14 oz **\$1.29/ea**
- Huy Fong Sriracha Chili Sauce 28 oz **\$3.99/ea**

**EUROPEAN GROCERY**

- Ahmad Tea English Tea No. 1 100 T/B **\$7.99/ea**
- Skyvrianka Unsteamed Buckwheat 800 gr **\$1.99/ea**
- Polinka Eggplant Spread 540 gr **\$2.99/ea**
- Ulker Tea Biscuit 400 gr **\$2.49/ea**
- Otomi Water Cake 250 gr **\$4.99/ea**

**EUROPEAN DELI**

- Ham off the Bone **\$6.49/lb**
- Pan Roasted Turkey Breast **\$11.99/lb**
- Greek Black Olives **\$6.09/lb**
- Green Cracked Olives **\$4.59/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**

Advertised items good at KP International Market - Rancho Cordova location ONLY. We reserve the right to LIMIT QUANTITIES. Not responsible for TYPOGRAPHICAL OR PICTORIAL ERRORS. All advertised items are SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. Sorry NO RAINCHECKS. PRICES EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 03 - DECEMBER 09, 2025.

Advertised items good at KP International Market - Rancho Cordova location ONLY. We reserve the right to LIMIT QUANTITIES. Not responsible for TYPOGRAPHICAL OR PICTORIAL ERRORS. All advertised items are SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. Sorry NO RAINCHECKS. PRICES EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 03 - DECEMBER 09, 2025.