



RIVER VALLEY TIMES

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JANUARY 9, 2026

**SEE
INSIDE**

Murieta Plaza Has New Owner



A sign advertises Murieta Plaza, which sold Dec. 12, 2025, for \$8.2 million and is now under new ownership.

Story and photo by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Murieta Plaza, the longtime commercial hub at the heart of Rancho Murieta, sold for \$8.2 million in a transaction that closed Dec. 12, according to Jon Bias, a broker with PDF Commercial.

The buyer is Vitaly Yanchuk, a Sacramento-area investor who purchased the property in his personal name, Bias said.

Sacramento County records show

the acquisition was financed in part with a \$5.44 million promissory note secured by a deed of trust in favor of Travis Credit Union in Vacaville. The documents also include an assignment of rents, a standard provision in commercial real estate loans that gives the lender the right to collect rents if a borrower defaults.

Property Included

Bias said the sale encompassed both the connected retail center and the adjacent office buildings,

covering two addresses: 7238-7268 Murieta Drive and 7281 Lone Pine Drive.

In total, the property includes approximately 65,633 square feet, consisting of two single-story retail buildings and two two-story office buildings, including the United States Postal Service location at the center's corner.

The property had been marketed for a limited period before going under contract, Bias said.

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Vehicle Strikes Officer at North Gate



By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - A Rancho Murieta Association compliance officer was struck by a vehicle during a hit-and-run incident at the community's North Gate on Dec. 17, prompting a California Highway Patrol investigation that is being treated as an assault with a deadly weapon.

According to a Rancho Murieta Community Services District security log, Administrative Sgt. Barino Arino was dispatched to the North Gate because a hostile individual had been yelling profanities at gate staff and refusing to identify themselves or state their business within the community.

When Arino arrived, he observed a black BMW sedan that had entered through the visitor lane after being refused entry by gate staff. Compliance Officer Chris Smith was outside his vehicle, issuing verbal commands to the driver to either turn around and exit the community or park. The vehicle then proceeded into the community, turned left and immediately entered oncoming traffic.

Arino followed the vehicle westbound toward Sacramento before returning to the North Gate. Upon his return, Smith reported that he had been struck by the vehicle. The South Gate was notified to contact CHP and the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire Department, which assessed Smith for injuries.

In a follow-up email responding to questions from the River Valley Times, Arino clarified that the driver entered through the visitor lane while screaming expletives. After being denied entry and told to exit, the vehicle drove into the community and turned into oncoming traffic near the gate area. Arino confirmed that it happened just after 1 p.m.

RMA General Manager Rod Hart confirmed the details remain limited because it is an active criminal investigation.

"I hope CHP can get somewhere with this," he said.

Asked about Smith's
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TESLA SUPERCHARGER STATION OPENS IN RANCHO MURIETA



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SLUGGISH ECONOMY DESERVES SPOTLIGHT



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STOP TRADING AWAY TALENT



PAGE 6



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Murieta Dance Company Heads to the Amazon Jungle



The Junior Ballet class performs during the Murieta Dance Company's annual recital held at the Murieta Plaza on Dec. 13 and 14. The musical tells the story of "Indiana Jones and the Lost Skull."

Story and photos
by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - With a cast of 106 dancers ranging in age from 2 to 18, Murieta Dance Company transformed an empty supermarket at Murieta Plaza into a time-traveling adventure during its 2025 year-end recital on Dec. 13 and 14.

The two performances, held inside the former grocery space, drew about 400 attendees on Saturday and approximately 430 on



For many of these 2- and 3-year-old dancers, this is their first time performing on stage.

Sunday, slightly exceeding the company's attendance goal and marking the culmination of its 13th year in operation.

This year's production, "Indiana Jones and the Lost Skull," blended tap, jazz, ballet, hip-hop, musical theater and

acting into a full-length original musical. Dancers brought to life an adventurous story set in 1937, with flashbacks to the 1940s, inspired by the Indiana Jones universe but reimagined through a youthful lens.

Company Director Doreen Zimmerman wrote the original script, which featured 16 speaking characters and incorporated 39 musical selections from a wide range of artists, including Lady Gaga, Justin Timberlake, Rachel Portman and Survivor.

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Murieta Plaza Has New Owner

value enhancement over time, and the strong sense of community support for local businesses.

History

Rancho Murieta developer Jerome Hoberg designed and built Murieta Plaza in 1984; when it opened in 1986, it housed the community's first grocery store and marked a major milestone in Rancho Murieta's growth.

Public records show the property was sold to Maple Leaf Investments in 2011 for \$6.4 million. Bias said he is not aware of any changes in ownership between the original opening and the 2011 transaction.

This story is at therivervalleytimes.com and on Facebook. ★

"I believe this transaction is a positive outcome for Rancho Murieta, as it places the property with a motivated local owner focused on the long-term health of the center and the surrounding community," Bias said.

No finalized plans have been announced for the shopping center or the former grocery store space, though the buyer is evaluating potential concepts. Bias said he is not aware of any specific capital improvement plans at this time.

industry shorthand for annual income equal to about 8% of the property's value.

At that rate, the implied valuation would be about \$8.75 million, generally consistent with the reported sale price.

Looking Ahead

Bias said Yanchuk was attracted to Murieta Plaza because of its location within a tight-knit community, the center's long-term stability, opportunities for thoughtful

recycling and recreational-vehicle sales.

All of the businesses and LLCs for which Yanchuk is listed in state filings are based in the Sacramento region.

Investment Context

An August Instagram post marketing the property described Murieta Plaza as a retail center and office park with 39 units, generating roughly \$700,000 in net operating income, and promoted it as an "8-cap" investment:

transition has been smooth, Bias said. PDF Group of Companies will continue to handle leasing activities at the center.

Buyer Background

According to state business filings, Yanchuk is listed as a corporate officer and registered agent for multiple LLCs and corporations in the Sacramento region, including Nor Cal Car & Truck Wrecking, Capital One Auto Dismantlers and True RV, which operate in auto

A Community Center

Murieta Plaza is home to many of Rancho Murieta's best-known businesses, including The Local Bean Cafe, Bridge House, Yogurt Pop, The Backyard BBQ Bar and Grill, El Gallo Restaurant, Ace Hardware (Rancho Murieta Hardware), Rancho Murieta Homes & Land and Murieta Dance Company.

Tenants have been notified of the sale, and the

Tesla Supercharger Station Opens in Rancho Murieta



The Tesla Supercharger station is now operating in the Bel Air Market parking lot.

Story and photo by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - A long-anticipated Tesla electric vehicle charging station has officially opened at the Murieta Marketplace shopping center, adding fast-charging capacity in Rancho Murieta after nearly a year of stops, starts and delays.

The Tesla Supercharger station at the Bel Air Market shopping center officially opened Dec. 11, according to Tony Velez, chief financial officer of Rancho Murieta Properties and the shopping center.

Construction on the project followed a winding path. Tesla and Rancho Murieta Properties held a pre-construction meeting on Jan. 14, and work began Jan. 27, Velez said. At the outset, Tesla estimated construction would take six to eight weeks, but progress stretched well beyond that timeframe.

"The delays were caused by Sacramento County's permit process, along with waiting for SMUD's energization process," Velez said.

Once construction was complete, the project sat idle for months while waiting for the station to be energized by Sacramento Municipal Utility District. Velez said the wait for power lasted "at least a few months," though he did not have an exact timeframe.

The Rancho Murieta site includes 12

Tesla V4 Supercharger units, the newest generation of the company's fast-charging technology. The V4 chargers feature longer cables designed to accommodate a wider variety of vehicles and are intended to support non-Tesla electric vehicles as well.

"That's what we were told in the pre-construction meeting," Velez said. "I've not heard otherwise."

In 2024, Tesla abruptly paused work on the project as part of a broader, nationwide shutdown of its EV charging division, sparking uncertainty about whether the Rancho Murieta installation would be completed. Work later resumed after Tesla reorganized its charging program, allowing construction to move forward again.

Velez said seeing the station finally open is a positive development for both the shopping center and the community.

"It's a great addition to the community," he said. "It will bring outside visitors to the shopping center. It satisfies our requirement to install EV chargers. Tesla picked up all of the cost to get it installed, saving us thousands of dollars."

The location is expected to be convenient for local shoppers as well as commuters traveling between Rancho Murieta and Amador County.

This story is at therivervalleytimes.com and on Facebook. ★

Utility Team Responds to Broken Water Main

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Rancho Murieta Community Services District utility workers responded to a water main break on Pescado Circle near Lago Drive on Sunday, Jan. 4 and remained on scene into Monday morning, according to Interim General Manager Amelia Wilder. She said an estimated 60,000 gallons of water were lost.

According to the district's security log, a security officer responded to a report of street flooding at 2:20 p.m. and discovered water seeping from underground between the asphalt and the sidewalk. The water department was then notified.

Wilder said five district employees responded to the scene Sunday, with six working on repairs Monday. She expected repairs to be completed later that day.

Equipment used in the repair included a backhoe, asphalt saw, dump truck, service trucks, and traffic control devices such as signs, barricades and cones. The district also contracted with Edco to provide a vector truck.

Wilder said she was not aware of any cause for the break other than the age of the infrastructure.

The incident marked the first use of the district's new emergency notification system. An alert sent at 4:43 p.m. stated,



Repair work on Pescado Circle is underway on Jan. 4. Courtesy photo

"A water main break has been reported on Pescado Circle. Water will be turned off for repairs and restored as soon as possible."

The district recently transitioned from the CodeRed system to the SISA Smart Alert Platform operated by HQE Systems. Most phone numbers have been transferred from CodeRed, and residents may now enroll directly at rmcsd.sircom.org/subscribe.

This story is at therivervalleytimes.com and on Facebook. ★

Vehicle Strikes Officer at North Gate

Continued from page 1

condition, Hart said he appeared to be "okay" at the association's Christmas lunch on Dec. 19. But Hart declined to comment further, citing medical privacy laws.

CHP spokesman Officer Angie Monroe said the incident is being investigated as "a hit-and-run involving very minor injuries (sore knees from getting knocked to the ground)."

In a later update,

Monroe said a CHP officer reviewed entrance gate video footage showing what appeared to be an adult female attempting to enter Rancho Murieta through the exit gate while driving the wrong way.

"A male exited a truck and attempted to help the driver turn around. Instead, it appears she may have accelerated directly at him," Monroe said. "He was able to move mostly out of the way but was knocked to the ground."

Monroe said CHP is investigating the incident as an assault with a deadly weapon under Penal Code 245 and had no further details as the investigation continues.

Arino's security log entry said that the driver didn't appear to have any ties to the community or any reason to attempt entry.

This story is at therivervalleytimes.com and on Facebook. ★

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Free Car Seat Program Protects Children

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), has awarded Sacramento County Public Health a \$137,039 grant to continue and expand the reach of the car seat safety program in partnership with Dignity Health, Mercy San Juan Medical Center. The grant program runs through Sept. 30, 2026. This is the fifth consecutive year Sacramento County Public Health has received grant funding for its car seat safety program.

“Car seat safety saves lives but only when families have the knowledge and resources to use them correctly,” said Dr. Kasirye, Sacramento County public health officer. “With funding from the Office of Traffic Safety and our partnership with Dignity Health, Mercy San Juan Medical Center, we’re doing our part to make sure every child can travel safely.”

Car crashes are one of the leading causes of deaths and injuries for children and many of these injuries are easily prevented using child safety seats and seat belts. Using a properly fitted child safety seat can reduce the risk of car crash deaths by 71 percent for infants and 54 percent for toddlers ages 1-4, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

The goal of the car seat program is to give every child in Sacramento County access to the safest possible travel environment. The program provides child safety seat inspection and education classes; child passenger safety technician and recertification courses; no-cost child safety seats for families in need and community outreach efforts in underserved communities.

In 2025, the car seat safety program distributed more than 400 car seats to families in need. Over 1,300 parents, grandparents and caregivers learned about correct car seat use and installation through online workshops, in-person classes, community health fairs and school resource fairs, among other events.

“The value and importance of car seats cannot be overstated, as they are directly tied to the safety



“Car seat safety saves lives but only when families have the knowledge and resources to use them correctly,” said Dr. Kasirye, Sacramento County public health officer. Photo courtesy Freepik

and lives of children. Many of our clients come from countries such as Afghanistan and various Arab nations, where car seats are not commonly used, and where their importance is not fully recognized,” said Zalmai Ahadi, a caseworker at Al-Misbaah – a faith-based nonprofit that partners with Dignity Health to distribute car seats and educate parents.

“The collaboration and educational programs offered by Mercy San Juan Car Seat Program have a vital and life-saving impact for immigrant families.”

The program hosts workshops specifically targeting underserved and refugee communities, offering resources in multiple languages to make certain families, regardless of background or ability to afford a car seat, are equipped to protect their children on the roads.

According to Loran Abassi, program manager with the Refugee Enrichment & Development Association (REDA), one client arrived in

Sacramento in April 2025 with his five-month-old twins and was struggling to navigate life in a new country while learning how to be a first-time father. Unfamiliar with U.S. car seat laws and without the financial means to purchase car seats, he faced a critical safety gap for his children.

The Dignity Health Mercy San Juan Car Seat Program provided him with hands-on education about car seat safety and two car seats for his twins. He walked away with knowledge and tools to transport his children safely as he began a new chapter for his family in Sacramento County.

The program’s success hinges on community involvement. Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPSTs) are an integral part of the program and offer hands-on assistance at car seat inspection events. They’ve helped install over 600 car seats properly for families to make sure their children are safe.

“It has been a great privilege to do my part in ensuring that underserved and low-income

families in our community have access to appropriate child safety seats, regardless of their socioeconomic status,” said Allison Boltz, a community injury prevention educator at Mercy San Juan Medical Center. “Caregivers often share their gratitude and the sense of relief that comes with knowing that they are really doing their best to keep their children safe in their car.”

Iris Austin, the First Lady at Higher Heights Community Church, shared the story of a mother who attended one of the workshops with her mother-in-law, who recalled that her own son had been in a serious car crash as a child and still carries the scar today. During the training, the grandmother became emotional, reliving the fear and trauma of that experience.

A technician with the Dignity Health, Mercy San Juan Car Seat Program took time to walk with her to her vehicle and check the car seat installation, which was found to be incorrect. When it was gently corrected, the grandmother expressed

overwhelming gratitude, saying she never wanted her grandson to go through what her son had endured.

The Child Passenger Safety Program is designed to meet families where they are, whether that’s a workshop at their church or local health center, so they can receive a free car seat or learn about the importance of safe travel for their children.

Interested participants are encouraged to make a car seat safety check appointment at Methodist Hospital or Mercy San Juan Medical Center, and can call the Car Seat Hotline at (916) 864-5779 with any questions.

For more information about the program, visit Sacramento County Childhood Illness and Injury Prevention or contact Riley Stoltenburg at (916) 875-6094 or StoltenburgR@sac-county.gov.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). ★

First Flu-Related Death of the Season Confirmed

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County Department of Health Services, Public Health Division (SCPH) is reporting the first influenza-related death of the 2025-26 flu season.

The individual, who was a child, had no underlying medical conditions and died of complications of influenza (also known as the flu). At this time, vaccination status is unknown.

Some people are at high risk of developing serious influenza-related complications. This includes people 65 years and older, people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), pregnant women, and young children under 5 years old.

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The flu is different from a cold. The flu comes on suddenly. People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue



Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Photo courtesy Freepik

(tiredness), or vomiting and diarrhea.

Most people who get the flu recover in a few days to less than two weeks, but some people will develop complications (such as pneumonia) as a result of the flu, some of which can be life-threatening and result in death.

According to the California Department of Public Health, everyone over 6 months of age should receive the flu vaccine each year.

In addition to vaccination, the public is encouraged to take the following steps to protect themselves and others against flu, COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses: wash hands thoroughly and frequently,

cover coughs and sneezes, stay home from work or school when sick, consider indoor masking in crowded places, improve ventilation by opening windows or moving events outdoors, and disinfect frequently used surfaces.

For those at higher risk who do get sick, get tested and talk with your healthcare provider about treatment options.

Flu vaccines can be accessed at your healthcare provider’s office and many local pharmacies.

For more information, visit Sacramento County Department of Health Services, Public Health Division’s list of flu and covid vaccination locations at www.sacounty.gov. ★

Volunteers Needed to Help Understand and Address Homelessness



This community effort will not only help to determine the number of people experiencing homelessness in the Sacramento region but will also help us to: understand why people in our community become homeless; create better policies, programs and services; track progress in reducing homelessness. Photo courtesy Freepik

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Want to help Sacramento better understand and address homelessness? You’re invited to volunteer for the 2026 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count.

This community effort will not only help to determine the number of people experiencing homelessness in the Sacramento region but will also help us to: understand why people in our community become homeless; create better policies, programs and services; track progress in reducing homelessness and secure federal funding which supports local shelters and services.

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count will be held 5–11 p.m. on Jan. 26 and 27. Registration is required by Jan. 15.

“While it captures only a snapshot in time, the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count offers valuable, community-wide participation and insight. It helps us better understand homelessness in our region and ensures our community can continue accessing funding that directly supports our neighbors who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness,” said Dr. Trenton Simmons, chief program officer of Sacramento Steps Forward. ★

No experience is required for volunteers, with mini training video segments and other materials provided ahead of the nights of the count to help volunteers know what to expect. Volunteers will meet at one central location before heading out to predetermined routes across the County.

Volunteers will use a mobile phone app to record the number of people they encounter who said they would be sleeping outdoors or in vehicles. They also will conduct a brief survey with those willing to participate to better understand who is experiencing homelessness in Sacramento, for how long and what kinds of services could best assist them.

While volunteers focus on people living unsheltered outdoors, the overall Point-in-Time (PIT) Count includes those staying in respite centers and shelters.

To canvass, a volunteer must be at least 18 years old, be willing to travel by foot and car to predetermined locations and be willing to use their personal smartphone and flashlight.

Ready to be part of resolving homelessness in our community? Register now at www.sacramentostepsforward.org/data-and-analytics/2026-sacramento-point-in-time-count/. ★

Association Board Cuts Committee, Approves Equipment Purchases

Story and photos by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Association Board moved quickly through a relatively light agenda at its Dec. 16 meeting, with discussion centering on two items: the elimination of the Communications Committee and approval of plans to purchase new maintenance equipment at auction.

Communications Committee

Questions about the now-defunct Communications Committee arose during agenda items regarding the appointment of committee chairpersons for the coming year. After a motion and a second were made to approve a blanket nomination of directors as committee chairs, Board President Patrick O'Hern asked if there was any discussion. When audience member Tom Shewchuk attempted to comment, O'Hern told him the microphone was closed.

Following the vote, O'Hern said he suspected Shewchuk wanted to speak about the Communications Committee and offered an explanation for its disbandment before allowing Shewchuk to comment.

Under rules adopted by the board in September, residents may only speak during public comment and are no longer permitted to address agenda items while the board is discussing them. (See the separate story in this issue.)

O'Hern explained the board's reasoning. O'Hern said the Communications Committee was created to help oversee the transition when Greenfield Communications was brought in, but that role is no longer necessary. He said much of the work has since shifted away from the committee and is now handled by the office, particularly Administrative Assistant Matt Matisse.

"He does a fantastic job for the E-blast and paperwork that goes out, any written materials that go out," O'Hern said,



Audience member Tom Shewchuk says the board's decision to disband the Communications Committee would result in the loss of a valuable "brain trust." He made the remarks at the Dec. 16 Rancho Murieta Association Board meeting.

adding that the association plans to handle communications in-house going forward.

Shewchuk told O'Hern he understood the explanation about the committee that had been chaired by Director Danny Carrillo before he resigned.

Although Shewchuk acknowledged that the committee may have gone "off line" beyond its original charter, he said that did not diminish the contributions of its members.

"I attended three or four of those meetings, and there's a lot of good input from that team," Shewchuk said. "I would hate to see it go away just because Danny left the board and losing that whole brain trust with Martha (Glunt) and Nellie (Bloomquist) and the others."

O'Hern responded that the issue remains under consideration, saying, "It's a work in progress."

O'Hern said the board trusts staff to handle communications for now and is still evaluating its options. He emphasized that feedback from residents will be considered and noted that the Communications Committee could be re-formed in the future if needed.

Auction Equipment Purchase

The board discussed maintenance equipment needs during the Maintenance Committee report, where O'Hern and



Director John Haviland shows an example of the signs that were to be given to winners of the annual Holiday Lights following the meeting.

Maintenance Supervisor Troy Schaffner outlined plans to replace a 2006 Ford truck equipped with a manlift and chipper box. The truck no longer complies with California Air Resources Board diesel regulations. Schaffner said the association planned to purchase two separate pieces of equipment at auction – a newer chipper truck and a stand-alone aerial lift – to reduce costs and extend equipment life.

"Currently, it's a chipper truck with an aerial lift on it now, and if we split those up, obviously that will give both of those tools a longer life, but it will give them more flexibility for the crew to be in multiple places, or just be safer in one location," Schaffner said.

He emphasized safety as a primary motivation.

"Tree work is the most dangerous thing that the RMA maintenance does, and this is going to make our guys a lot safer," he said.

Schaffner confirmed that the 2006 truck's reserves total \$147,890, and it may sell for about \$50,000 at auction, which would require an out-of-state buyer due to emissions rules. The board authorized purchases not to exceed \$175,000.

General Manager Rod Hart later said Schaffner secured an aerial lift on tracks at auction, while the chipper truck price ran too high. Instead, the association

purchased a low-mileage 2024 Chevrolet chipper truck locally.

"It was Troy doing some wheeling and dealing, and we were able to stay underneath what the board approved," Hart said.

Hart said the aerial lift will improve access and safety.

"It's on tracks so we can move it much closer to trees than we have ever been able to do before," he said. The 2006 truck will be sent to auction next month.

Other Business

The board formally approved the 2026 slate of officers following a unanimous public vote. The appointments included O'Hern as board president for a second term, Director Chris Childs as vice president, Director John Van Doren as treasurer and chair of the Finance Committee, and Director Tom Reimers as secretary.

The board also approved a blanket nomination of committee chairs. Van Doren and Ernie Cowles will co-chair the Architectural Review and Finance committees. Reimers will chair Compliance. Directors Scott Adams and John Haviland will co-chair Governing Documents. O'Hern will chair Maintenance, Adams and Van Doren will co-chair Parks, and Haviland will chair Recreation.

Directors approved the purchase of a new steel shade structure for Lake Clementia at a cost of \$58,500 and authorized the write-off of \$6,781.85 in bad debt from a deceased resident.

Haviland also announced the 30 winners of the association's annual Holiday Lights Contest and showed an example of the sign to be given to winners, along with a gift certificate. Unlike in previous years, none of the winners attended the board meeting to accept their awards.

The board's next meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 20, when directors are expected to discuss and likely finalize new e-bike rules.

This story is at therivervalleytimes.com and on Facebook. ★

Association Board Tightens Public Comment Rules

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Association Board has revised how public comment is handled at its meetings, a change that narrows when residents may speak and removes the opportunity to comment on agenda items after board discussion.

Under the current format, public comment is limited to a single open-forum period at the beginning of each meeting. Once the board moves into agenda items and discussion begins, the microphone is closed to the public, and no additional comment is taken before board votes.

Board President Patrick O'Hern said the change is intended to keep meetings orderly and prevent a small number of speakers from monopolizing discussion.

"They have an open mic for three minutes at the beginning of the meeting and then they can't talk about it at all," O'Hern said in a conversation after the Dec. 16 meeting. He added that residents who want to follow up can submit comments by email or contact General Manager Rod Hart directly.

O'Hern and Director Scott Adams, both attorneys, emphasized that RMA is a private homeowners association, not a public agency, and is governed by the Davis-Stirling Common Interest Development Act rather than the Brown Act.

"They have an agenda, so they know

what's coming up," Adams said. "There are different ways we are doing it, and this is the way we did it."

What Changed

Before the policy revision, RMA agendas allowed two separate opportunities for public input. Residents could speak during a general public comment period on any issue within the board's jurisdiction, including items not on the agenda, subject to a reasonable time limit. In addition, public comment was opened on each agenda item after board discussion and before final action.

That second opportunity has been eliminated. While residents may still comment at the start of the meeting, they can no longer respond to points raised during board deliberations.

The revised agenda language also formally establishes a three-minute speaking limit per person, with discretion for the president to adjust time limits depending on the number of speakers and the length of the agenda.

O'Hern said those limits are necessary to maintain control of meetings, noting that there have been times when large numbers of residents wanted to speak.

"There was a period of time when we had 20 people wanting to speak," he said. "Otherwise they will go on and on."

Board Discretion and Exceptions

O'Hern acknowledged that he has occasionally allowed residents to speak outside

the formal public comment period when he believed it was appropriate. At the most recent meeting, resident Tom Shewchuk was permitted to comment during discussion because O'Hern said he already knew the substance of his concern.

"I knew where Tom was going to go with it," O'Hern said. "So I let him speak. And I've let other people speak, too."

However, those instances are discretionary rather than guaranteed under the policy.

Reduced Resident Input

The most significant impact of the change is not the three-minute limit, which is common at many public meetings, but the loss of the ability to comment after hearing the board's discussion.

Board deliberations often introduce new information or clarify assumptions, making post-discussion comment more informed and meaningful.

Under the new structure, residents must anticipate issues and speak before discussion begins, without the opportunity to respond to points raised during deliberation.

Legal Footing

The revised agenda cites several sections of the Civil Code and the Davis-Stirling Act. Civil Code §4930(a) requires that members be given a reasonable opportunity to speak on agenda items before or during board consideration, but it allows boards to set reasonable time limits and

procedures.

O'Hern said the board researched the issue before making the change and included statutory references on the agenda to explain the legal basis.

"We didn't just decide we were going to do that," he said. "We did a lot of research."

O'Hern told the River Valley Times that the revised language was published several months ago (on the Sept. 16 board meeting agenda) and didn't draw any comments at the time.

"Nobody ever asked," O'Hern said. "You're the first to ask."

A Shift in Meeting Dynamics

While the policy appears to meet the minimum requirements of state HOA law, it represents a shift in how resident participation fits into board meetings: from interactive, item-by-item input to a single, front-loaded comment period.

As O'Hern noted, the approach mirrors practices he has seen elsewhere.

"That's how we did it at the Stockton City Council," O'Hern said, referring to his experience with public meetings. "Once you're done, the council goes on and does its business."

For residents, the change does not eliminate public comment, but it does change its role: from responding to board discussion in real time to offering input before deliberations begin.

This story is at therivervalleytimes.com and on Facebook. ★

MEMORIAL

WILLIAM "BILL" HOSKINS • 11/22/1943 – 12/11/2025

Bill Hoskins was born on November 22, 1943, to Homer and Eileen Hoskins in Santa Maria, California. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Virginia "Ginny" Sweet Hoskins; his children, Mack (Jennifer) Hoskins and Kristin (Todd) Van Nuys; his grandchildren, Trent, Brendan, and Drew Van Nuys, and Naomi and Sydney Hoskins; his sisters, Diane (Paul) Courtney and Barbara (Frank) Machado.

Bill grew up in Paso Robles and graduated from Paso Robles High School. Following his military service, Bill built a long and respected career in the almond industry, spending most of his professional life with Blue Diamond Growers. He retired in 2008 as Director of Quality Control and Laboratory Services.

Bill and Ginny made Rancho Murieta their home



for 41 years. Outside of work and into retirement, Bill enjoyed fishing and golfing, achieving three holes-in-one over the years. He loved traveling with Ginny and friends, and especially cherished time spent with his grandchildren, cheering them on at their many sporting events.

Bill lived a full and meaningful life grounded in faith, family, hard work, and love. He was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather, and a true friend to many. He will be remembered for his kindness, generosity, humor, and the deep love he shared with all who knew him.

A Celebration of Life will be held January 9 at 1:00 p.m. at Rancho Murieta Community Church, with a reception to follow. Private burial at Dixon Memorial Veterans Cemetery.

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Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



On Dec. 27 the Sacramento Kings treated the hometown fans to a post-Christmas treat with a stirring 113-107 victory over the visiting Dallas Mavericks. It was a reminder that although Dallas is a notable team with playoff intentions, the Kings have the talent to match up nightly with any team in the NBA. They have demonstrated this repeatedly, but the conundrum has been a complete lack of consistency as it relates to game over game results.

Why, you ask? The singular question that begs for an answer.

Injuries have played a role to be certain, but every NBA club must contend with injuries.

If I had to answer this question as honestly as I could, I would turn to the one player on this year's squad that has the greatest impact and that is none other than Domantas Sabonis. Over the past 3 ½ seasons Domantas hasn't just led the NBA in rebounding and double-doubles, he's been the singular stabilizing influence on a team that needs a leader like none-other. Sabonis' nightly consistent reinforcement of the fundamentals in playing the paint the old-fashioned way, gives every player on the floor a boost of confidence.

Domantas has a motor that just won't quit, and his enthusiasm for the game of basketball is simply contagious. Players want to play with this guy, and former King Jonas Valanciunas was vocal in his admiration for Sabonis and his desire to play alongside the Kings big man.

Unfortunately, the Kings did not value the talent that Valanciunas brought to the floor and allowed him to walk out the back door. Denver did not hesitate to provide their multiple MVP center Nikola Jokic with a resplendent backup, and Valanciunas has thrived this season in his new role.

The number one problem the Kings have had to face this season is not having Domantas on the floor, and their record shows it. 8 wins in 35 contests matches the worst start for an NBA season in the Sacramento Kings franchise history, and this is not a record you want to be a part of. Getting Sabonis back on the floor will be the first step in establishing what this year's team really is, but the Kings face a real dilemma.

GM Scott Perry is making noises that this year's team is about to receive a complete face lift, and Domantas Sabonis name has been mentioned or at least rumored in possible trade rumors. That would be mistake of herculean proportions.

Breaking news, the grass is not always greener on the other side.

Do you not remember what the organization did just one year ago when it inexplicably sent face of the franchise DeAaron Fox to the San Antonio Spurs?

DO NOT trade Domantas Sabonis. Draw a line in the sand, NOW, and build around a player that gets fans on their feet every game!

Stop trading away talent that makes other NBA teams stronger such as Davion Mitchell, DeAaron Fox, Issac Jones, and Boston Celtic starting center Neemias Queta. Yes, Neemias Queta, that the Kings had the good sense to draft 39th overall in the 2021 NBA draft and then send him to the G league where he thrived.

Fans saw something in this raw rookie and gave him more votes than any other King when it came to All-star voting that season.

The front office saw things differently and waived Queta in August 2023, and he was immediately scooped up by the Boston Celtics. Signed to a 2-way contract, Queta went on to help Boston win and NBA championship that same season and has since worked his way up to become this year's starting center. In the recent 120-106 loss to the Celtics, Queta provided the Kings with an up front and personal look at why their decision to let him go should have been reconsidered. Queta held down the paint efficiently all night, while posting 13 points, 5 rebounds, and 3 big blocks.

Simply stated, the Sacramento Kings must stop giving away valuable NBA talent and find someone in the organization that can effectively grade players and determine who is and who is not a viable NBA player.

Stay tuned Kings fans because Domantas will hopefully return soon, and then we can see what this team can do with a true NBA center on the floor.

Happy New Year Kings fans and by all means do not give up hope! ★

New Year May Entertain Political Junkies, but Sluggish Economy Deserves the Spotlight



By Dan Walters,
CALMatters.org

As the new year begins, there's no shortage of political trends to keep Californians preoccupied, entertained or perhaps appalled — particularly the state's transcontinental feud with President Donald Trump.

There is Gov. Gavin Newsom's all-but-announced campaign for president, centered on his self-appointed role of resistor-in-chief to Trump. As Newsom continues to troll Trump this year we may learn whether it continues to advance Newsom as a White House frontrunner or becomes tiresome and off-putting.

As 2025 ended Axios, a news website, reported that Newsom's potential rivals are ratcheting up efforts to undermine his bid, arguing that, as a California progressive, he's unelectable.

Another point of political fixation is Newsom's successful effort to gerrymander California's 52 congressional seats to help Democrats recapture control of the House in 2026. Whether it works is a question hanging over his presidential ambitions.

Still another is the campaign to choose a successor to Newsom. It so far has attracted a large contingent of Democrats without, as yet, a clear leader. There's a theoretical possibility that with as many as a dozen Democrats in the field, the

two Republicans could finish first and second in the June 2 primary and face each other for the governorship in November, despite the GOP's very weak standing among voters.

This year's election cycle also promises to be another showdown of moneyed interests via dueling ballot measures, with those either increasing or decreasing taxes at the top of the heap.

While political junkies can feed their habits this year, the more profound issue that faces California will be its moribund economy.

Newsom often brags that California's \$4 trillion economy, were it a nation, would rank fourth in the world. However, it has seen zero net job growth since the COVID-19 pandemic ended and recently has experienced employment shrinkage.

More than a million Californians in the labor force are jobless and the state's unemployment rate, currently 5.6%, has been the highest or near the highest of any state for several years.

Employment doldrums have affected even the state's hallmark sectors, most obviously Southern California's withering film and TV production industry and the Bay Area's high technology concentration.

The latter has almost single-handedly propped up the state's economy and generated a huge portion of tax revenues, but layoffs have proliferated as artificial intelligence is increasingly employed — a syndrome that also affects Hollywood.

Stubborn, or even increasing, unemployment makes it more difficult for state and local governments to cover their budget deficits — thus underpinning the

thrust for tax increases on state and local ballots. The sluggish economy also hampers efforts to improve two of the state's most pressing socioeconomic issues, its highest-in-the-nation poverty and homelessness levels.

Even Californians who have homes and jobs are feeling the economic pinch. Combining economic data with polling results, the Public Policy Institute of California recently discovered rising economic angst among California residents.

"California is one of the largest economies in the world, but many working Californians do not feel economically secure (and) they struggle to pay their bills, save for the future, and balance the demands of work and daily life," PPIC reported, adding that polling data "indicate that pessimism about future economic opportunity has become even more pervasive amid recent economic volatility."

As he shifts into presidential campaign mode, Newsom has every reason to keep bragging about the state's economy. But those running to replace him and state legislators should make 2026 the year to recognize that California has serious problems, to bore into the underlying causes and to do what they can to once again make California thrive.

History tells us that taking prosperity for granted — think Detroit — is an invitation to economic ruin.

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 My Wife Believes She Can Get a Spouse Benefit While I'm Still Alive; Can She?



By Russell Gloor,
AMAC Certified Social
Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: A friend of my wife told her, and she believes, she could receive a Social Security benefit based on my SS benefit that I'm currently receiving while I'm still alive. I told her she could only receive spouse survivor benefits. Is there any truth to what she now believes? Would you settle this issue for us please? Thank you.
Signed: Uncertain Husband

Dear Uncertain Husband: Well, surely don't want to get in the middle of your marital discussion, but I'll be happy to explain Social Security's rules about your wife's eligibility for spousal benefits while you are both still living. And just for awareness for both of you, the rules about spousal benefits are one of the most confusing areas of Social Security.

Per Social Security's rules, a spouse (e.g., your wife) can receive a "spousal boost" from you — while you are still living — if the SS retirement

benefit she is personally entitled to at her full retirement age (FRA) is less than 50% of the SS retirement benefit you are (were) entitled to at your FRA (full retirement age amounts are used to calculate living spouse benefits, regardless of when each of you actually claimed your Social Security).

So, if your FRA entitlement benefit amount is more than twice your wife's FRA entitlement benefit amount, she can, indeed, get a "spousal boost" from your record while you are both still living. The spousal boost is added to her own SS retirement amount and will be based on the difference between her FRA entitlement and half of your FRA entitlement. Thus, in this discussion, your wife may be correct — she may be able to get a spousal boost from you while both of you are living, depending on how your personal FRA retirement amounts compare. The best way for your wife to find out is to contact Social Security on 1.800.772.1213 to inquire, and if she's eligible, also make an appointment to apply for her spousal benefit.

And to clarify your wife's options as your possible widow, a surviving spouse can also get a survivor benefit if their marital partner passes away, but only if the deceased spouse's current benefit (at death) was more than the surviving spouse is already

receiving. The surviving spouse receives the higher amount, instead of their own smaller Social Security retirement benefit.

But here is an important thing to know: Whenever any Social Security benefit (including a spousal or surviving spouse benefit) is claimed before the recipient's full retirement age, the payment amount is permanently reduced (both spousal and survivor benefits do not reach maximum until the recipient's full retirement age). And just to complete the picture for survivor benefits, a surviving spouse is also entitled to a one-time, lump-sum death benefit of \$255 if their marital partner dies, in addition to any other benefit they are entitled to.

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No, the USS Liberty Incident Wasn't Israeli Treachery

stroyer escort, which was denied, and orders to the Liberty to withdraw about 100 miles from the front were delayed in a communications tangle.

That morning, an ammunition dump ignited in the coastal city of El-Arish in the Sinai, and the Israelis (wrongly) believed the location had been shelled by Egyptian ships. The Israeli navy spotted the Liberty heading toward Egypt and (wrongly) concluded it had been one of the attackers. Two Israel Mirage jets saw no identifying markings on the Liberty (a later U.S. inquiry speculated that the flag might not have been visible for lack of wind) and strafed the ship. More Israeli jets napalmed the Liberty.

The absence of return fire puzzled the Israelis, who paused to ensure they weren't hitting an Israeli vessel. Assured it wasn't one of their own, they renewed the assault.

Still uneasy, they looked for identifying markers again. They saw no flag, but made out Latin, not Arabic, letters on the hull. That strongly suggested the vessel wasn't Egyptian.

Yet, a squadron of Israeli torpedo boats determined that the Liberty's silhouette matched an Egyptian supply ship. A request for identification from the Liberty received no affirmative reply.

The Liberty's captain ordered his men not to shoot at the torpedo boats, but one gunner briefly fired and there were further discharges from exploding ammunition. Believing

they were taking incoming from an Egyptian ship, the torpedo boats requested permission to fire and got reluctant assent. A torpedo slammed into the Liberty, blowing a hole 24 feet tall by 39 feet wide and killing more than two dozen sailors.

Eventually, an Israeli torpedo boat picked up a raft from the Liberty with U.S. naval markings and the Israelis realized their tragic error. They apologized instantly to U.S. naval attaché Ernest Carl Castle, and an Israeli helicopter attempted to take him out to the Liberty (the effort was foiled by darkness). The Israeli torpedo boats offered assistance to the Liberty, which was rebuffed.

As Michael Oren points out in his history of the Six-Day War, none of the common conspiracy theories makes sense. There was no way that Israel — desperate for U.S. support and wary of Soviet enmity — was going to make an act of war against a friendly superpower. Nor did Israel need, as is sometimes posited, to hide its gains in the Sinai from the U.S., or its plans to hit Syria. It hadn't executed Egyptian POWs, so that didn't justify a murderous cover-up, either.

Both official Israeli and U.S. investigations determined that the attack was a friendly fire incident, but for Israel and the Jews in the current environment, the truth is no defense.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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Services District Sets Water Emergency Hearing

Story and photo by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Although the decision was not unanimous, the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board voted at its Dec. 17 meeting to hold a public hearing on Jan. 27 to consider declaring a water emergency.

The directors also discussed a range of other topics, including steps needed to convert Lake Clementia for potable water use, issues with the gate arms, emergency notifications, audit updates and related matters, and positive news about the community's drinking water.

Emergency Water Hearing

After Board President John Merchant requested that a public hearing on a water emergency be placed on the agenda, Merchant and Directors Linda Butler and Bill Gere voted in favor, Director Tim Maybee voted no and Director Randy Jenco voted "present."

Although the initial plan was to hold the hearing on Jan. 22, Interim General Manager Amelia Wilder said the date was later changed to Jan. 27, with a 6 p.m. start time at the Rancho Murieta Community Church on Cantova Drive.

Calls for the Rancho Murieta Community Services District to declare a water emergency date back to July 2024, when residents organized a petition drive urging the board to declare a development moratorium until supply and infrastructure capacity could be fully evaluated. The effort, led by Save Our Lakes & Open Spaces, reflected growing concern about long-term water availability amid ongoing development and the absence at that time of an updated Integrated Water Master Plan.

Throughout 2024 and 2025, the CSD board acknowledged the requests



Longtime community advocate Janis Eckard urges the board to declare a water emergency. She was speaking at the Rancho Murieta Community Services Board meeting on Dec. 17.

but declined to declare a water emergency, citing the need for additional technical data and updated planning documents. In September, however, the board voted 3-2 to begin a water moratorium process, with Merchant, Butler and Gere voting in favor, and Jenco and Maybee voting no.

At the December meeting, Merchant recommended holding the hearing at the church, saying, "They have an incredible facility over there. The visibility is a lot better, and the seating is a lot better."

Developer Bob Keil asked the board to refresh his memory about what the meeting would cover. Merchant said it was a requirement under Water Code Section 350 that the district hold a public meeting and post a notice in a newspaper before declaring a water emergency. After Keil asked whether the reasoning behind a moratorium would be disclosed before the meeting, Merchant assured him that it would.

Before the brief board discussion, two audience members urged the board to declare a water emergency. Longtime community advocate Janis Eckard expressed long-standing frustration with the community's unresolved water problems and what she described as divisive infighting.

"The developers are not bad people. I know all of them personally," she said. "They are good people."

Eckard first raised

concerns in 2006 about the district overstating water availability, and she is upset that nothing meaningful has been done in nearly 20 years.

Eckard identified three major problems: the lack of an emergency water supply since the 1976-77 drought; insufficient reservoir capacity to withstand a repeat drought or major wildfire; and inadequate tank capacity to support firefighting during hot weather.

Eckard urged the board to declare a water emergency with language clarifying that it would not be used as an anti-development tool.

"All it does is put in a pause," she said. "We sit down with the developers. We try to figure out: Is there a means of coming up with another water supply?"

She also encouraged creative problem-solving, such as asking nearby landowners/developers about land for a reservoir or tanks, and stressed community cooperation rather than infighting.

Carol Prinzo also urged the board to act.

"I want a solution. I want a plan. I'm tired of the red herring called a lawsuit. We need to get past that," she said.

Lake Clementia

Merchant said he placed Lake Clementia on the agenda to approve the steps needed for it to be considered a potable and emergency water source. The ensuing discussion made clear that converting

Clementia would involve complex technical, regulatory and legal work and would likely require outside assistance.

In the end, the board followed the suggestion of district counsel Patrick Enright, who recommended that Interim Operations Manager Travis Bohannon and other staff prepare a comprehensive report for the next board meeting outlining the full process for pursuing Lake Clementia as a water source. The report would include required testing, permitting steps, timelines, costs, realistic expectations and options, and note any potential need for legislative or consultant assistance.

Gate Arms

In her general manager's report, Wilder described the difficulties of repairing the gate arms because vendors did not have the necessary parts on hand, with Butler adding details in her role as chair of the Security Committee.

Butler said Security Sgt. Brandon Arino determined that not just the arms but the entire gate mechanisms need replacement. She added that the committee proposed immediately repairing the broken middle north gate and replacing two gate mechanisms per year over the next three years, with estimated replacement costs ranging from \$18,000 to \$25,000 per mechanism.

Other Business

In her general manager's report, Wilder said Code

Red experienced a data breach and was shut down. The district has used Code Red to provide urgent communications specific to Rancho Murieta, such as issuing a boil-water notice after a vehicle struck and destroyed a fire hydrant.

Wilder said Arino located and implemented a replacement emergency alert vendor at the same price with improved service, known as the SISA Smart Alert Platform. Staff imported the district's contact data into the new system, with previous subscribers remaining enrolled, and posted notice of the change on the district's website and Facebook page. She also noted that Sacramento County's reverse 911 system is separate and recommended that residents sign up for those alerts as well.

Audience member Tom Shewchuk offered to help the board run more efficient meetings free of charge. He said he taught effective meetings at Intel for 20-plus years and believes he can cut five hour board meetings to under two hours and three hour committee meetings to under one hour.

At Wilder's request, the board discussed possible changes to the days and times of board and committee meetings, with a final schedule to be determined at future meetings. However, it is likely that future board meetings will begin at 3:30 p.m. instead of 5 p.m.

Cecilia Min, the director of finance and

administration, reported that she and her staff remain focused on completing the audit work and current-year financials.

Bohannon said the state now requires water districts to test for PFAS: so-called "forever chemicals" that persist in the environment and can accumulate in people and wildlife. He said four consecutive quarters of testing showed no PFAS detections in the community's water supply.

Bohannon also provided an update on repairs to Lift Station 6B near the wooden bridge, saying the upcoming rains would test the system and related improvements.

Although scheduled to approve next steps to repair a drainage culvert at the equestrian center, the board referred the issue to the Improvements Committee, which was scheduled to meet Jan. 6.

The board also received the required annual report on the Community Facilities District formed in 2014 to help fund a new water treatment plant, approved a vacation accrual reconciliation requested by Min, and received an update on human resources activities and preparations for hiring a new general manager.

The board's water emergency hearing is scheduled for 6 p.m. Jan. 27 at the Rancho Murieta Community Church. The next regular board meeting will be held Feb. 18.

This story is at therivervalleytimes.com and on Facebook. ★

SECURITY LOGS

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

Dec. 13

10:35 p.m., Speeding Complaint: Reporting party called about a silver SUV speeding by as they walked down Reynosa near Zancata Court. It was also reported that the vehicle turned around to make contact with reporting party, only to speed off instead. Subject gone on patrol arrival.

Dec. 14

5:10 p.m., While on routine check of Chesbro Lake, patrol observed Dodge pickup access Chesbro Lake pathway. Driver then parked vehicle next to the back of address on Playa Del Rey. When patrol advised driver of the no pathway access for motorized vehicles, driver stated "the warning sign does not apply to him, due to location of his house, and the need to be able to access the backyard by vehicle." Patrol advised driver once again of the no pathway access by the motorized vehicle. Driver ignored the warning and stated: I need to work on my backyard." Patrol departed area without any further incidents; vehicle remained on the pathway.

Dec. 16

5:15 p.m., report of disabled vehicle: driver locked out of the vehicle on Murieta Parkway left turn lane. Driver arrived to Murieta North, attempted to make a U-turn, proceeded into Murieta Parkway left-turn resident lane. Driver then exited vehicle to use intercom system; driver door closed by itself. Upon arrival to the

location, patrol conducted traffic control, rerouted vehicles out from the left turn lane, while driver attempted to unlock the vehicle. After numerous attempts, driver was able to unlock the vehicle. Traffic clear; driver left Murieta North eastbound Jackson Road.

Dec. 17

3:16 p.m., Administrative Sgt. Arino was dispatched to the North Gate for a hostile person cussing at North Gate staff refusing to identify self and business within the community. Upon arrival, Sgt. Arino observed a black BMW sedan facing oncoming traffic and Compliance Officer C. Smith outside of his vehicle giving verbal orders for the vehicle to turn around and exit the community or park. Sgt. Arino proceeded toward the incident, following the vehicle out of the North Community. The subject continued westbound toward Sacramento. Sgt. Arino returned to the North Gate, relaying information to the South Gate to contact CHP as Officer Smith stated he was struck by the subject vehicle. CHP was contacted as well as Sac Metro Fire Department to assess Smith for injuries. No further information is available at this time. Initial investigation has revealed the subject does not have ties to the community nor is there a reason for the subject to attempt entry into the community.

2:10 p.m., Report of a homeless camp on the west shore of the Cosumnes River near the Rancho Murieta Country Club. Patrol conducted inspection of the river upstream from the Yellow Bridge to the country club area. Area clear; unable to locate homeless camp.

Dec. 21

1:46 a.m., Observed vehicle accelerate

to excessive speed and fail to stop at stop sign at Murieta Parkway and Alameda Drive. This is common, repeated behavior from this individual. Citation issued.

Dec. 23

9:57 a.m., Suspicious Vehicle, Murieta Garden, Legacy Lane: Sgt. Arino was dispatched to a call regarding a suspicious occupied vehicle, a Black Subaru. Sgt. Arino made contact with a male driver in the passenger seat sleeping. Subject was advised he was trespassing and to vacate the area. Subject complied and left the area.

8:20 p.m., report of vehicle in the median on Murieta Parkway in front of the RMA HOA building. Upon arrival, patrol located vehicle that collided with a tree in the median near RMA HOA building. Upon contact with a driver, patrol observed deployed airbags, notified Sac Metro 359. RM359 conducted driver evaluation, advised to start CHP; driver appears under influence. CHP arrived, conducted DUI investigation. Driver transported to UC Davis Medical Center, where CHP confirmed a DUI case. Vehicle was towed from the property by CHP. Major damage to the RMA property, broken tree, landscape, irrigation lines, Christmas lights.

Dec. 24

8:20 p.m., report of chlorine leak at Water Treatment Plant. Operator Bohanon notified; conducted preliminary inspection, Sac Metro 359. RM359 arrived, and together with Bohanon proceeded to Water Treatment Plant to assist Bohanon in locating the leak. Sac Metro Hazardous Materials unit arrived about 9 p.m. At 9:35 p.m., Sac Metro HazMat cleared the area; no leak found; area secure.

Dec. 27

6:12 p.m., Petty Theft: Patrol made contact with owner of El Gallo Restaurant, who showed surveillance video of a suspect breaking into two white Ford F-150s outside El Gallo in Murieta Plaza. Suspect male, age 30-40, short, black hair, heavy build, no visible tattoos, last wearing black hoodie, red sweatpants. Suspect in what appeared to be a burgundy Honda Odyssey, license number not available, driving outbound Lone Pine Hill.

Dec. 28

7:10 p.m., report of loud party Gate Restaurant at Murieta Inn. Party about 10 people, loud, disturbing other guests; manager requesting patrol to ask party to quiet down or leave the restaurant. Upon arrival, patrol contacted the party, requested to quiet down; party complied. Manager, in patrol presence, advised party to keep noise level down.

Dec. 29

7:30 a.m., petty theft: Compliance Officer Smith contacted Sgt. Arino to advise RMA maintenance of noticing the locks were pried off to both generators and a battery was stolen.

5 p.m., report of panhandling at Chevron station. Upon arrival, patrol located subject approaching vehicle asking for money. Made contact with subject, advised of no panhandling, requested to leave area. Subject complied without any further incidents.

9:30 p.m., Patrol located Honda Civic with two occupants, male driver and female passenger, parked at the ATT building. Patrol made contact with the driver, advised of private property trespassing, requested to leave area. Driver complied without incidents. ★

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Kiwanis Club Crab Feed Tickets on Sale

The Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta's 12th Annual Crab Feed will be held Saturday, Jan. 31 at the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church Social Hall. The Crab Feed is the club's largest fundraiser of the year, supporting programs for children, youth and families, including the Easter Egg Hunt, scholarships, and youth sports and scouting.

A limited number of tickets will go on sale Saturday, Jan. 10 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (or while supplies last) in front of The Local Bean in the Plaza Shopping Center. Cash and credit cards will be accepted. For ticket information, contact Jeannette at 408-515-2636.

The club is also collecting raffle items for its popular raffle baskets. Retail and restaurant gift cards, certificates for services, wine, beer, décor, pet items and art are all welcome. Higher-priced items may be designated for the silent auction. To donate items, contact Bonnie at 916-502-3260.

For updates, follow the Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta on Facebook or visit rmkiwanis.org. Thank you for your continued generous support.

New Community Alert System Launched

The Rancho Murieta Community Services District has launched a new alert system to notify residents about emergencies inside the community.

The SISA Smart Alert Planform by HQE Systems is replacing the CodeRed system that was in place for years. Staff has moved most telephone numbers from CodeRed to SISA.

Residents may now enroll directly at rmcsd.sircom.org/subscribe. Once you have enrolled, you will be able to update addresses, phone numbers and email address at rmcsd.sircom.org/account.

The new system was first used on Jan. 4 to notify residents about a water main break on Pescado Drive.

Residents also are encouraged to sign up for the Sacramento County Emergency system to be notified of area emergencies such as fires, floods and evacuations at

sacramento-alert.org.

Blood Drive Set for Jan. 26

Vitalant will hold its next Rancho Murieta Community Blood Drive from noon to 6:15 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 26 at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, 14673 Cantova Way.

The event is sponsored by the Rancho Murieta Women's Club and the Knights of Columbus. Appointments can be made online at donors.vitalant.org using blood drive code SMFM053 or by calling Vitalant at 877-258-4825. Walk-ins will be accepted as space permits.

Donors will receive a \$2 off coupon from Go 4 Pizza and be entered into a drawing for a \$50 Go 4 Pizza gift card donated by Carole Thames of Town and Country Real Estate. Vitalant also will hold a separate drawing for one of 26 \$500 gift cards.

Eat well and drink plenty of water before donating, and bring a photo ID. For eligibility questions, call 877-258-4825 or visit vitalant.org. One donation can save more than one life: There's no substitute for volunteer blood donors.

Kiwanis Hosts Pharmacy Speaker Jan. 15

The Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta is hosting a community information evening about the SDHC (Same Day Health Care) Pharmacy's MednRX Kiosk & Lock Box during its regular Kiwanis meeting on Thursday, Jan. 15, promptly at 7 p.m. at The Villas Clubhouse.

Representatives from SDHC Pharmacy will share their unique pharmacy kiosk concept. The community is welcome to join us. Contact Bronwyn at 916-384-6444 for more information.

Bridge House Slates Grand Opening Jan. 10

The new Bridge House Café in Murieta Plaza will hold a grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony on Saturday, July 10, at 10 a.m.

Other events are planned throughout the day featuring local artisans, food tastings, as well as wine and beer tastings for \$10. The local jazz quintet Baggs Grove will perform from 5 to 8 p.m. ★

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Republic FC Adds Two Local Standouts on USL Academy Contracts

Sacramento Republic FC News Release

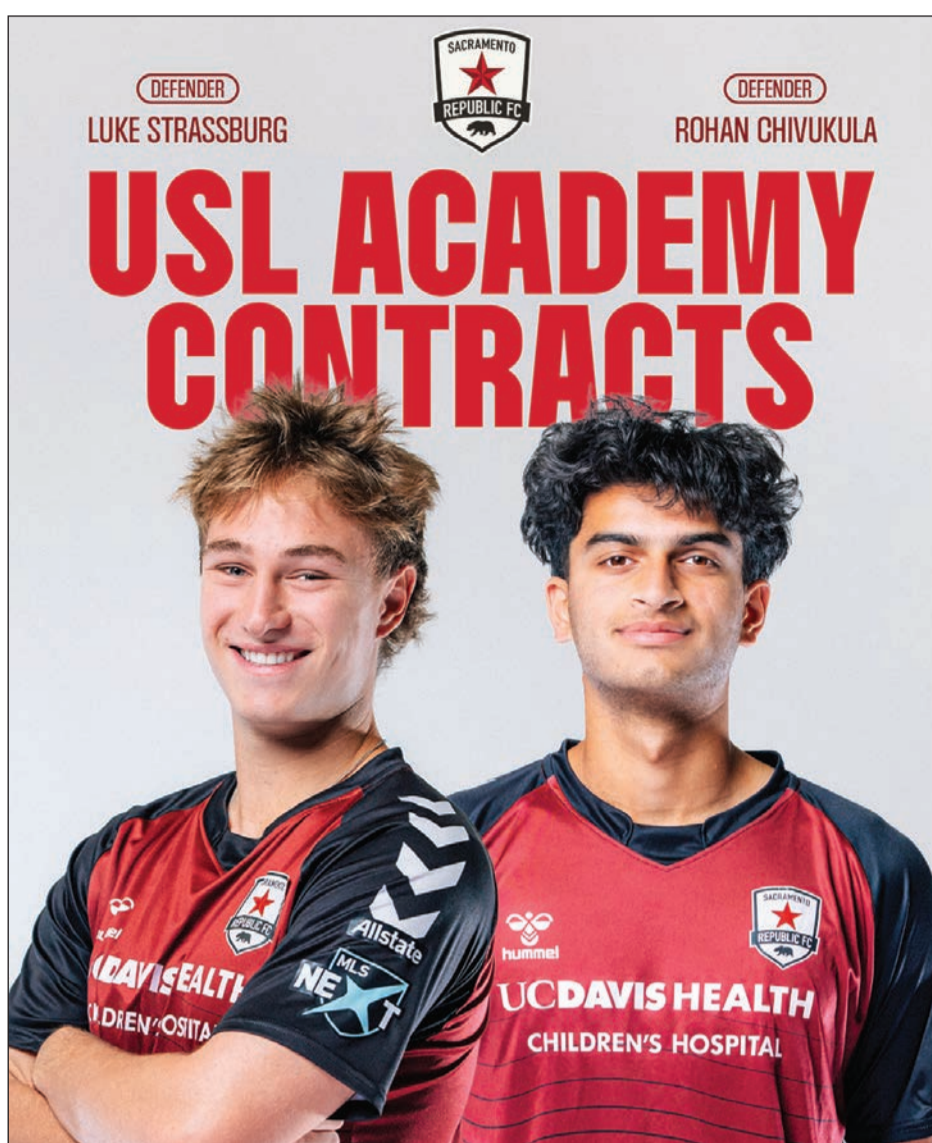
SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Republic FC announced Dec. 19 the addition of academy players Luke Strassburg and Rohan Chivukula to the club's first team roster. The defenders have signed USL Academy contracts, pending league and federation approval and will be eligible to play in first team matches in 2026.

"These signings reflect the strength of our pathway and commitment to developing local talent," said Republic FC Head Coach Neill Collins. "Bringing academy players into the first team environment prepares them for the next level and we have no doubt that Luke and Rohan will continue to represent the academy well during training camp and throughout the season."

Strassburg and Chivukula both currently play for Republic FC's U-19 academy team, which has opened up the 2025-26 campaign with an impressive 9-1-1 record.

Eighteen-year-old Rohan Chivukula joined Republic FC's academy in 2024 to take the next step in his development. He quickly became a key piece of the U-19's backline and in Chivukula's first year, the squad posted an overall record of 16-3-3 and won the Northwest Division of MLS NEXT before advancing to the Round of 32 in the postseason. The Folsom High School graduate previously featured for El Dorado Hills Soccer Club and Sacramento United, and will play at the collegiate level for American University in the fall of 2026.

Strassburg is a longtime member of the Indomitable Club. The Elk Grove native joined at the U-13 level in 2020



Strassburg and Chivukula both currently play for Republic FC's U-19 academy team, which has opened up the 2025-26 campaign with an impressive 9-1-1 record. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Republic FC

and has since featured in every age group in the last five years. He has been a part of some of the top teams

in club history, reaching MLS NEXT Cup each season. During the 2023-24 season, Strassburg and the U-16

team went undefeated in 29 straight games from September in April, and in 2025 his U-17 team claimed three wins in the MLS NEXT Cup Playoffs to advance to the Semifinals – the best finish by a Republic FC squad since 2022. He has also received multiple invitations to U.S. Soccer ID camps and training camps. Prior to joining Republic FC, Luke played for the San Jose Earthquakes' youth academy and Sacramento United. He has committed to play at San Diego State in the fall of 2026.

USL Academy contracts allow academy players the chance to train and compete with the first team in professional matches while retaining their NCAA eligibility. Since its inception in 2015, Republic FC's Academy has created a strong, local pipeline of youth players ready for professional-level competition, with over 40 players earning the opportunity to join the first team on USL Academy contracts and over 25 going on to sign professional contracts with Republic FC or other clubs. In 2024, players from Sacramento's youth academy combined for 80 gameday roster selections, 56 appearances, and over 3,000 minutes.

Republic FC's 2026 season officially kicks off on March 7 when the club hosts FC Tulsa at Heart Health Park. Season ticket memberships are on sale now, offering a range of benefits including discounts on merchandise and access to exclusive fan experiences, as well as priority seat selection in the new Republic Stadium at The Railyards. For more information, or to purchase a membership today, visit SacRepublicFC.com/Memberships. ★

Carter Begins Assembling Staff with Initial Round of Hires

Sacramento State Athletics News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento State head coach Alonzo Carter named several assistant coaches and staff personnel to his staff, it was announced Dec. 30. The hirings include offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau, defensive coordinator Adam Clark, associate head coach Angus McClure and general manager Jon Osterhout. Carter also retained Kris Richardson as the offensive line coach/run game coordinator, Bobby Fresques as the quarterbacks coach/pass game coordinator and Josh Brown as the safeties coach. In all, the staff will feature over 300 years of cumulative coaching experience.

Kiesau has served as the offensive coordinator at Fresno State, Boise State and Auburn during his lengthy collegiate career. He spent the past three seasons as an offensive quality control coach at Florida.

His offensive staff will include Richardson and Fresques who return for their eighth year with the program and have seen the team qualify for the NCAA FCS Playoffs four times. Richardson has mentored several FCS All-Americans, including current Tennessee Titan Jackson Slater. This past season, his group paved the way for a rushing attack which ranked third in the FCS with 365.4 rushing yards per game. In his time leading the Sacramento State quarterbacks, Fresques has guided FCS All-Americans Kevin Thomson and Asher O'Hara, as well as Jake Duniway and Chandler Konkin.

Former Sacramento State offensive lineman and assistant coach Angus McClure will return to campus as the associate head coach and work with the offensive line. Since leaving Sacramento



Sacramento State head coach Alonzo Carter named several assistant coaches and staff personnel to his staff. Photo courtesy of Sacramento State Athletics

State, McClure has had stints at Nebraska, Buffalo, UCLA, Nevada and Kansas.

Eric Scott will serve as the team's wide receivers coach. Scott has spent the last two seasons as the head coach at West LA Junior College. Prior to taking that position, Scott was the wide receivers coach and passing game coordinator at San Jose State from 2021-23 where he worked alongside Alonzo Carter.

On defense, Adam Clark will come to Sacramento State after leading the defense at Northern Arizona for the past two seasons. In his first season, NAU ranked second in the Big Sky and 12th in the FCS in interceptions. The unit also led the league in pass defense and was second in total defense.

Brown will shift to coach the safeties in 2026 after leading the team's linebackers this past season. During the year, he overcame several injuries to his position group to have three players rank among the top five on the team in total tackles.

That included Oscar Moore who led the team with 69 total stops. Brown has also coached at McNeese, UTEP, Hawaii, Nevada, Cal Poly, Kansas and Arizona State during his career.

Kenwick Thompson will coach the linebackers and brings experience as an FCS defensive coordinator as well as a position coach at the P4 level. Thompson was the defensive coordinator at Florida A&M in 2025 and was previously on Jeff Tedford's staffs at Cal and Fresno State as well as stints at San Jose State, Vanderbilt, East Carolina, UNLV and UAB.

Dakari Monroe will follow Carter from Arizona to Sacramento State and will coach the Hornet corners. Monroe was a defensive graduate assistant for the Wildcats the past two seasons and helped the team advance to the Trust & Will Holiday Bowl against SMU. He played four seasons at San Jose State where he twice led the team in interceptions before a stint with the Kansas City Chiefs.

Milo Austin will serve as Sacramento State's special teams coordinator. Austin has held the same role at Elon since 2022 where he has coached an FCS All-American kicker, punter and kick returner. He has also been the special teams coordinator at Texas Southern, Delaware State and Morehead State.

The team's personnel efforts will be led by former Sacramento State All-American Jon Osterhout who returns to campus as the general manager following a great career as the head coach at American River JC. With the Beavers, Osterhout led the team to an 88-39 overall record and took the team to seven postseason appearances, including six trips to the state playoffs. Osterhout was a four-year starter for Sacramento State on the offensive line where he garnered All-America honors while leading the way for Charles Roberts' record-setting rushing efforts.

Chris Parry, who has been on staff since 2019, will continue to serve as the assistant general manager. Parry has been a part of player evaluation, roster construction and scholarship management during the program's run of success since his arrival.

Record-setting receiver Otis Amey has been named the director of player development. Amey was an All-American for Sacramento State and still owns nearly all the career receiving records. Following his time as a Hornet, he played with the San Francisco 49ers as well as stops in the Arena League and UFL.

Kenny Macklin will remain at Sacramento State and take the position of Chief of Staff. CJ Pollard will also return as the Director of Recruiting.

The additions are the first to the staff for Carter who became the 14th head coach in school history on Dec. 15. ★

A's Agree to Terms with LF Tyler Soderstrom

Athletics News Release

LAS VEGAS, NEV (MPG) - The Athletics have agreed to terms with left fielder Tyler Soderstrom on a seven-year contract through the 2032 season with a club option for 2033, the club announced Dec. 29.

Soderstrom batted .276 with 25 home runs, 93 RBI and an .820 OPS in 158 games last season with the A's after combining

to hit .204 with 12 home runs, 33 RBI and a .636 OPS in 106 games over his first two seasons. He began the season as the A's starting first baseman, moved to left field (where he had not played professionally) when Nick Kurtz was promoted on April 23, moved back to first base while Kurtz was on the injured list from May 25 to June 8, and returned to left field after that. Soderstrom had a team-leading 93 RBI, which were the most

by an A's player 23 years old or younger since Eric Chavez had 114 in 2001. He had 11 outfield assists, which tied for third in the majors, and ranked fourth among left fielders in defensive runs saved (10).

Soderstrom is a .250 career hitter with 37 home runs, 126 RBI and a .754 OPS in 264 games in three seasons in the majors. He was the A's first round selection in the 2020 First-Year Player Draft out of Turlock High School

and was primarily a catcher in his first pro season in 2021. The 24-year-old left-handed hitter split his time between catcher and first base in 2022-23, played mostly first base in 2024 and saw his most action in 2025 as an outfielder.

Soderstrom is one of three players under contract through at least the 2028 season, when the A's are scheduled to open their new ballpark in Las Vegas. He joins Lawrence Butler, who inked

a seven-year deal through the 2031 season with a club option for 2032 on Mar. 10, 2025, and Brent Rooker, who signed a five-year contract through 2029 with a club option for 2030 on Jan. 23, 2025. ★



Murieta Dance Company Heads to the Amazon Jungle

Continued from page 1

The storyline begins when a mysterious package arrives at Indy Jones' doorstep, revealing the journal of her missing grandfather: the famed Indiana Jones. The diary recounts a doomed expedition to the Amazon jungle decades earlier, where a sacred skull was stolen from the Temple of the Sun, costing one man his life and bringing misfortune to the others involved.

Determined to finish her grandfather's mission, Indy sets off for the Amazon with her brother and two friends. There, they encounter the jungle's queen and her people, and several adults involved in the skull's mysterious disappearance. Finding the skull and restoring the balance of the jungle becomes the focus of everyone involved.

Zimmerman said the creative process begins with a concept, followed by months of music selection and character development.

"The characters kept building over time," she said. "I wanted to give as many kids the opportunity to speak as possible, even though managing 16 microphones was a huge challenge for our sound team."

The production included more dialogue than ever before: a trend Zimmerman said reflects students' growing enthusiasm for acting as well as dance.

"It is a big job to dance, speak, and change costumes in seconds," she said. "It takes discipline, and the kids love the challenge."

Zimmerman also served as the acting coach, guiding students as they transitioned rapidly between speaking roles and dance numbers, often with only seconds to change costumes and remove microphones. A coordinated team of parents worked quietly in the wings to keep performers on schedule.

Rehearsals for the recital began in September, with cast members meeting weekly, while music selection, choreography development and dance training took place throughout the year. The production included unique costumes for each dance number, along with elaborate sets and props.

Zimmerman received support for the production from choreographers Maddy Carges, Sienna Zimmermann, Dria



Surrounded by the performers, director Doreen Zimmermann thanks the many supporters in the audience.



Debating their next strategy are, from left, Sienna Zimmermann as Indy Jones, Giuliana Lai as best friend Sophie, Lilianna Lorey as Marion, and David Schneider as Indy's brother Shorty.

Hanson and Corinne Salas, as well as vocal coach Laurel Robbins Goodson. Zimmerman and her husband, Soeren Zimmermann, selected the music cuts and created many of the stage props with help from Bryan Holmes and Dawn Lorey-Holmes.

Lighting was handled by Wyatt Gaylor, Soeren Zimmermann and James Dorant, while Scott Rau and Alex Rau managed sound. Zimmerman singled out Scott Rau for special praise, noting the extensive programming required to manage dialogue and microphones throughout the show.

Jeremy "JT" Taylor served as the energetic emcee for both performances.

One crowd favorite returned for a third year: the dads. This year, 11 fathers took the stage, rehearsing weekly since September.

"The dads are a must by now," Zimmerman said. "They worked hard and took it seriously, and the audience loves it."

Before the recital and during intermission, attendees enjoyed beer, wine and

other refreshments, bid in a silent auction, and purchased flowers and Murieta Dance Company merchandise.

At the close of Sunday's performance, Zimmerman thanked families, volunteers and supporters, emphasizing the yearlong effort behind the production.

"It takes a whole village," she told the audience. "The kids work hard all year long, and it really came together again this weekend."

She also announced next year's theme: a murder-mystery production inspired by "Clue."

Zimmerman began teaching dance 13 years ago with 18 students at the Murieta Health Club. Today, the Murieta Plaza studio serves about 120 students, including adults. She said dance offers children far more than technical skills.

"A dancer needs strength, discipline, compassion and the ability to work as a team," she said. "Dance is so much more than just pointing your toes. It's hard work that pays off in the long term."

Reflecting on the growth of the annual



Jema Nauman performs to the song "Bigger Person."



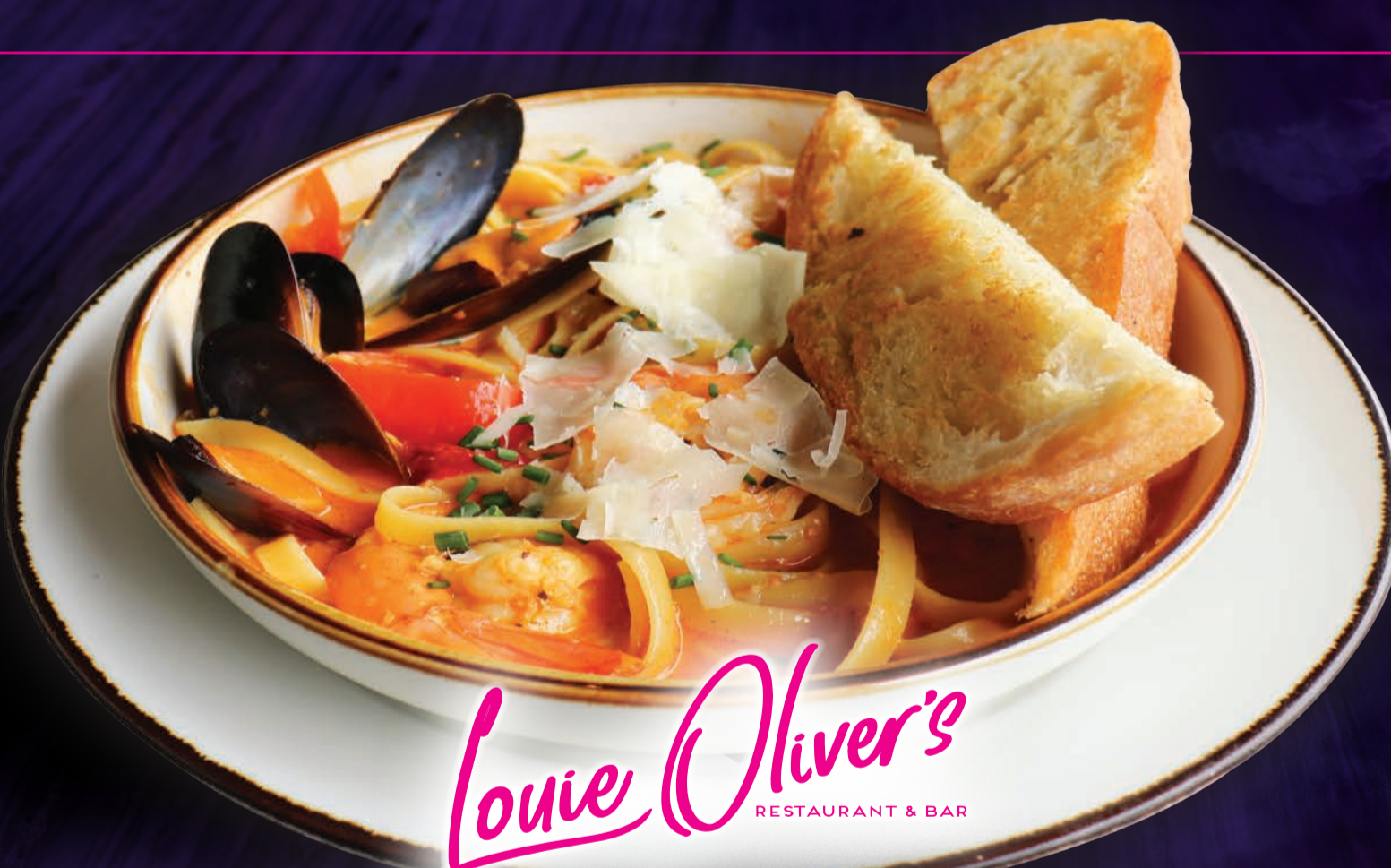
The dads lift Mikey Wong into the air during their show-stopping performance.

recitals, Zimmerman said each year brings higher ambitions and greater polish.

"We try to top the previous show or at least match it," she said. "That keeps us on our toes."

Quoting Indiana Jones, she summed up the message she hoped families and students would take home: "Go big or go home."

See more photos at therivervalleytimes.com and on Facebook. ★



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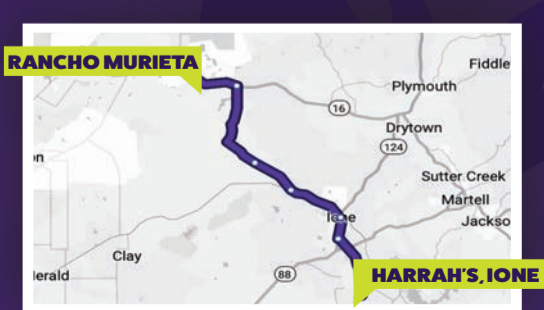
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