



Eagle Presentation
Inspires Retired
Teachers

PAGE 3



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Pocket News

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MAY 22, 2026

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BUDGET FACES
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PAGE 8

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Brookfield Hosts 20th 'Incredible Edibles'



From left are the celebrity judges, Max "Pain" Griffin, UFC welterweight; Josh Emmett, UFC featherweight; K-La Duncan, Miss California United States; Viacheslav "Slava Claus" Borshchev, UFC lightweight; and a mystery judge who wore a paper bag.

Story and photos
by Stephen B. Clazie

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Brookfield School presented its 20th Annual Incredible Edibles Food Event on Monday, May 11.
Brookfield's John Flolo said, "It is a celebration of culinary creativity, teamwork and fun!"
Five teams, each consisting of 12 students from grades 5 through 8, teamed up with chefs and food truck

professionals for an epic cooking competition.
Brookfield School, located at 6115 Riverside Blvd., had two food trucks parked on the school quad.
The featured food vendors were Bacon Mania, Mulvaney's B & L, The Trap, Chickz on Wheels and Savory Dave's BBQ. Fresh Black Cod was caught and donated by Captain Anthony of Ferrari Fisheries. Purified Alkaline water was provided by Water & Salt.

Brookfield School offers educational and extracurricular programs to more than 150 students in kindergarten through 8th grade. They have a long history of competitive athletics and are recognized locally for their strong wrestling and cross-country programs.
John Flolo, Brookfield's athletic director and health and P.E. teacher, served as the emcee. He arranged for the contest judges through his
Continued on Page 3

City Repairs 7,761 Potholes in 49 Days



The city reported that 7,761 potholes were repaired following a citywide effort to identify streets in need of repair. Photo courtesy of City of Sacramento

City of Sacramento
News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The City of Sacramento repaired 7,761 potholes in 49 days as part of a citywide "pothole blitz" directed by City Manager Maraskeshia Smith and carried out by the Department of Public Works.
The effort began after city officials asked City Council offices on March 4 to identify streets and intersections in need of repair.
"Potholes have been one of the most consistent things I've heard about on my ride-alongs and interactions with residents," Smith said. "I'm proud of the work our Public Works crews accomplished through this blitz and appreciative of the collaboration between council offices, staff and community members who helped identify priority locations across the city."
Officials said all requests submitted by council offices, along with locations identified through field inspections, were addressed during the blitz.
Crews prioritized repairs using pavement condition data, resident service requests and district surveys. The city also assigned two employees to help identify potholes and pavement hazards throughout Sacramento's council districts.
Work initially relied on overtime to accelerate repairs and included week-end operations to reduce traffic impacts and avoid conflicts with scheduled overlay projects.
District-level totals for potholes repaired during the blitz include District 1 with 264; District 2 with 1,597; District 3 with 814; District 4 with 1,981; District 5 with 1,205; District 6 with 601; District 7 with 287; and District 8 with 1,012.
To report a pothole, people can dial 311 (within the city limits), use the 311 app, or submit a service request via email. ★

High School Cadets Support Farmers Market



Rose Gonzalez's favorite vendor at Elk 6's GreenHaven Pocket Farmers Market is Papa & Mama's Farm. In the photo, Mama Kha is handing Rose a bouquet of flowers for her aunt on Mother's Day.

Story and photo
by Stephen B. Clazie

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Not too many high school seniors are willing to get up early on a Sunday morning and begin volunteering at 6:30 a.m. for five and a half hours.
Every Sunday, about 12 cadets

from John F. Kennedy High School Criminal Justice Academy do exactly that. They are at the Elk 6 parking lot, only a couple of blocks north of Kennedy High at the end of Florin Road. They are there to help, especially the vegetable vendors, set up the GreenHaven Pocket Farmers Market (GHP).

One of those cadets is Rose Gonzalez, who is graduating this June. She has only been in the program for three years because, as a freshman, she attended a tech high school. She did not enjoy that program, but she has loved her experience at Kennedy's Criminal Justice
Continued on page 2

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Students Support Meals on Wheels Through Feed the Beat

Story and photo
by Stephen B. Clazie

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Students at Christian Brothers High School demonstrated creativity, compassion and community spirit during the successful Feed the Beat fundraiser held April 18, raising support for Meals on Wheels Sacramento County and its mission to serve local seniors.

At a board meeting on Monday, May 11 Executive Director of Meals on Wheels Melinda Klick presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Eddie Torres for his “outstanding leadership and dedication in coordinating the fundraiser, which brought together students, volunteers, artists and supporters for an evening of entertainment and philanthropy.”

The event featured nine live band performances, artist and painter exhibits, and pottery-making demonstrations, showcasing the talents of Christian Brothers students while



One of nine bands performs at the Feed the Beat fundraiser held April 18 to benefit Meals on Wheels.

raising funds to support older adults and vulnerable community members.

“The energy, creativity and community spirit made the event both memorable and meaningful for all who attended,” wrote Brian Chin, president of the Board of Directors for Meals on Wheels Sacramento County, in a statement of appreciation.

Chin also said, “Proceeds from the Feed the Beat fundraiser will help Meals on Wheels Sacramento County

continue providing nutritious meals, wellness checks and compassionate support to seniors throughout the region.”

“This helps us meet our goal of ensuring that no senior goes hungry in Sacramento County,” he added.

Organization leaders noted that the fundraiser’s impact extends beyond meal delivery, helping ensure older adults receive connection, care and dignity.

Meals on Wheels is a

nonprofit organization that provides nutritious meals to eligible homebound seniors aged 60 and older. The organization delivers throughout Sacramento County five days per week, 250 days per year.

The Brick House is the current vendor to provide meals for the Home Delivery and Community Café meal programs.

Meals on Wheels officials also extended their appreciation to the students, faculty, performers, artists, volunteers and



Eddie Torres, center, a junior at Christian Brothers High School, receives a certificate of appreciation from Meals on Wheels Executive Director Melinda Klick, left, and a letter of congratulations from Board President Brian Chin, right, for organizing the Feed the Beat Fundraiser at Christian Brothers on April 18.

supporters who contributed to the event’s success.

Board President Chin, while presenting a letter to Eddie Torres, a junior at Christian Brothers High School, said, “Thank you again for your leadership, generosity and commitment to making a positive impact in our community. We are truly grateful for your support and look forward to future opportunities to collaborate.”

“With the help of an amazing community of fellow artists, I was

able to organize a benefit music festival this year to raise money for Meals on Wheels Sacramento County. The festival featured nine bands made up of musicians from throughout the Sacramento area,” Eddie said.

He concluded, “These artists, alongside a team of volunteers, made it possible to raise roughly \$1,500 for charity. I’m proud to be a member of this community and hope to see everyone there again next year.” ★

High School Cadets Support Farmers Market

Continued from page 1

Academy. She used that experience on her résumé to land a summer job as a camp aide at Camp Sacramento.

South Lake Tahoe has long been a cherished place for Rose, as well as for generations of Sacramento Valley

residents. Camp Sacramento has served as a family camp and conference center for the Sacramento Valley and beyond since 1920. Rose is looking forward to working there for two months this summer.

In the fall, she will major in administration of justice at both Sacramento City College and American River College.

After receiving her associate degree, she plans to transfer to California State University, Sacramento, to earn her bachelor’s degree.

After Sac State, she hopes to attend the Sacramento County Sheriff’s Office Basic Academy, a P.O.S.T.-certified basic academy.

The program is approximately 24 weeks long and consists of 956 hours of training. Upon successful completion, recruits

receive a Certificate of Completion for a Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) Basic Course, which can be used to apply for employment with most law enforcement agencies throughout California.

Vic Cima, general manager of the farmers market, says the JFK cadets, like Rose, have been a great addition this year.

“They really help the vendors and the customers,” he said. ★

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Eagle Presentation Inspires Retired Teachers

Story and photo by Stephen B. Clazie

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - California Retired Teachers Association (CalRTA) State Capital Division 5 President Christi Campo welcomed wildlife photographer Susan Maxwell Skinner to the division’s general spring meeting at Sierra 2. Skinner presented a slideshow and spoke about the nesting of bald eagles on the lower American River.

Skinner first discovered the species along the American River Bike Trail near Folsom in 2016 and followed a nesting pair over 10 years documenting the growth of their family. With wingspans reaching up to seven feet, the eagles have become a powerful symbol of wildlife in the area.

“Our bald eagles don’t migrate; they stay in the region all year,” Skinner said.

This was the first time they’d been recorded here.

“You can tell from my accent that I am an immigrant,” Skinner told the audience. Originally from New Zealand, she became a naturalized American on March 29, 2017.

Skinner explained differences between male and female eagles, noting that females are larger and have a different head shape. She also pointed out that, at the time of its discovery, this couple was nesting closest to Sacramento in recorded history for its species.



Susan Maxwell Skinner flexes her own muscles from toting a Canon camera with a 600mm lens, while standing in front of a slide showing an eagle carrying a branch. “It’s astonishing what they are able to haul,” said Skinner.

“They are fantastic parents,” Skinner said. “We could all learn so much from them. Momma and Papa share all domestic duties; they’re very much a family. Their pantry is

always full, and the new hatchlings eat every 30 minutes or so.”

Skinner added with a laugh, “The mates build a home, and then they make a baby.”

Their nesting material includes pine needles, containing the same disinfecting element originally used to make Pine-Sol cleaner. Pine-Sol was originally made with pine oil

when it was introduced in 1929, though modern versions no longer contain it. The eagles, however, still line their nests with pine needles, helping to maintain a clean environment.

During the past 10 years, Skinner has spent countless hours observing the birds during breeding season, sometimes standing in one spot for up to 12 uninterrupted hours. Using a Canon camera with a 600mm lens, she captures strikingly detailed images. The lens alone weighs more than six pounds, making handheld photography especially challenging.

“The sharpness of her photos is unbelievable,” attendees noted, as Skinner displayed images of a mother eagle feeding a 2025 eaglet and another carrying a branch, demonstrating the bird’s ability to lift up to a third of its body weight.

Smiling, Skinner flexed her arm and joked, “Big lenses; they weigh a ton.”

Lens weight does not include camera body. Shooting without a tripod requires strong stabilization techniques.

Skinner also spoke briefly about her late husband, Sacramento bandleader John Skinner, who died a year after she became a U.S. citizen. A Vietnam War veteran and U.S. Air Force pilot, he later flew for Flying Tigers and Federal Express. While at home, he led the John Skinner Band. Susan was his singer.

Skinner’s image of “Momma” eagle feeding a 2017 eaglet captured a moment that still excites her. In that year, local schoolchildren named the first two eaglets “Poppy” and “Peekaboo.”

“It was wonderful to see these eagles with their first babies,” Skinner said, “and incredible to watch those tiny chicks grow to full size in just 12 weeks, then learn to fly.”

Each year, she has witnessed a new generation of eaglets make debut flights before establishing lives of their own.

Another slide showed an eagle carrying a branch.

“It’s astonishing what they are able to haul,” said Skinner.

Skinner’s talk included a demonstration of eagle vocalizations.

“Some are harsh,” she said. “Some are sweet. They chat with a big range of sounds.”

Through her photography and dedication, Skinner continues to bring attention to the increasing numbers of this raptor species on the American River, offering both education and inspiration to observers.

The bald eagle is one of the most well-known symbols in United States history, embodying freedom and the American dream. For this local photojournalist, and naturalized American citizen, that dream has been fully realized. ★

Brookfield Hosts 20th ‘Incredible Edibles’



Judge Max “Pain” Griffin was seen taking photos of what he was eating. He said, “This is not my first rodeo!” He explained that all of the judges took photos to help remember what they ate with each entry.

Continued from page 1 connections with Ultimate Fitness, a mixed martial art (MMA) and combat sports gym in Sacramento famously associated with UFC legend Urijah Faber.

The celebrity judges were Max “Pain” Griffin, UFC welterweight; Josh Emmett, UFC featherweight; Viacheslav “Slava Claus” Borshchev, UFC lightweight; and K-La Duncan, Miss California United States.

There was also a mystery judge who wore a large paper bag. Before the contest started, the mystery judge was revealed. Some of the students had their suspicions. It was Dr. Jo Gonzalves, author, historian and retired head of Brookfield School for 16 years.

This was the first year the annual event featured professional chefs.

“In the past, the students

prepared the food, and all of the entries featured one common ingredient,” said Dr. Gonzalves.

This was not Dr. Gonzalves’ first time serving as a judge. She recalled the year when peanut butter was the common ingredient and remembered “salami and peanut butter sandwiches competing against peanut butter milkshakes.”

The retired head teacher was never afraid to eat whatever the students served.

Judge Griffin was seen taking photos of what he was eating.

“This is not my first rodeo!” Griffin said. He also explained that all the judges took photos to help remember what they ate with each entry.

After deliberation, Flolo announced the results.

Bacon Mania won Most



Savory Dave Eats won Best Presentation.

Creative.

The Trap, located right next door to the school and established in 1861, was selected as Most Delicious for its smash burgers.

Brookfield students can smell those burgers, but they are not old enough to

enter The Trap.

Chickz on Wheels won Most Savory. Savory Dave Eats won Best Presentation.

Mulvaney’s B & L took home Best in Show, Grand Champion for its deep-fried black cod tacos. ★

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[illegible]

The Meadows at Country Place was decorated for a weeklong celebration marking its 15 anniversary.

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The building at 10 Country Place is called The Meadows at Country Place. It is a facility that specializes in caring for individuals with Alzheimer's, dementia, and other serious health-related conditions. It could just as easily be called "Rangi," because it truly reflects the heart and dedication of Rangi Giner.

She is the owner, but she is not the kind of owner who lives across town and shows up once a month to collect a check. Her home is right next door, making this a truly family-owned care facility.

She emphasized, "We're here 24 hours a day with sufficient staff to provide the support residents need for daily living while maintaining dignity, self-respect and quality of life."

Rangi previously owned a care facility in Las Vegas that housed 10 residents. She wanted to expand, but the cost of doing so there was too high. Instead, her husband, John Cimino Jr., came to Sacramento and designed and built



Rangi Giner welcomes Father Mitch Maleszyk from St. Anthony Catholic Church to The Meadows at Country Place to bless the 15th-anniversary celebration.

The Meadows at Country Place to accommodate 34 residents.

Many people thought she was crazy to build The Meadows at Country Place. When it opened on May 7, 2011, she was someone from out of town who knew no one and had no established clientele. Some thought they would go broke, but within six months, every room was occupied.

Each room is designed for two residents, for a total capacity of 34. However, some families prefer their loved one to have a private room, while some spouses share a room together. The Meadows presently has 25 residents, and every room is occupied.

Rangi laughs and said, “You can do the math and figure out how many rooms are private and how many have two occupants; either

two residents or a married couple.”

Her husband passed away on May 11, 2020. This May 11, she and her team began a week-long celebration marking The Meadows at Country Place's 15th year. Father Mitch Maleszyk from St. Anthony Catholic Church blessed the celebration.

The celebration also served as a community outreach event. The parking



Residents enjoyed the beautiful garden on the opening day of the weeklong celebration of The Meadows at Country Place's 15th anniversary.

lot, surrounded by a beautiful garden, welcomed the Cooked by Gio food truck on Monday, tucked beneath low-growing trees.

The week's activities included: Tuesday, May 26, Picnic at the lake in Greenhaven; Wednesday, May 27, Residents' Bazaar; Thursday, May 28, Staff Appreciation at Legacy, with a blessing of the caregivers' hands by Chaplain George of Absolute

Compassion Hospice;
Friday, May 29, 15th-Year
Anniversary Celebration

The Meadows at Country Place is truly an extension of Rangi, and the philosophy of this family-run care facility is:

“With our supportive assistance, you can become the care manager rather than the full-time caregiver. Together, we will care for the whole person.” ★

***City of Sacramento
News Release***

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The City of Sacramento will expand its automated parking enforcement program by deploying AI-assisted technology on three parking enforcement vehicles to identify vehicles illegally blocking bike lanes, with a focus on school zones citywide.

will launch a 60-day warning period for drivers illegally stopping or parking in bike lanes. Live citations will begin July 13.

“This program is about safety,” said Megan Carter, the city’s traffic engineer.

“Vehicles blocking bike lanes force people into traffic, reduce visibility and create unnecessary risks near schools, transit stops and busy corridors. The

warning period gives drivers time to adjust before live enforcement begins," Carter added.

The expansion builds on Sacramento's automated bike lane and bus stop enforcement programs launched with Sacramento Regional Transit in 2025, including the nation's first bus-mounted automated bike lane enforcement system. Parking enforcement officers are also currently

able to issue citations when they encounter vehicles blocking bike lanes during regular patrols.

This program is made possible by Assembly Bill 361 (AB 361), which authorizes California cities to use forward-facing cameras for enforcing parking violations in bike lanes and transit zones; a vital legislative step toward making streets safer for everyone.

Since launching in 2025,

the automated enforcement programs have issued 32,478 bus stop violation citations between Feb. 18, 2025, and May 12 and 25,312 bike lane violation citations between June 14, 2025, and May 12.

City officials said adding the technology to city parking enforcement vehicles will allow enforcement staff to more proactively identify bike lane violations in high-priority areas.

Drivers who stop or park in bike lanes will be subject to a \$150 citation once live enforcement begins July 13.

The increased citation amount, approved by the Sacramento City Council as part of the city's updated fees and charges schedule, also applies to violations involving red curbs and bus zones.

During the initial 60-day rollout period beginning May 13, violators will receive warnings instead of citations as the city conducts public outreach and education about the new program. ★

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You’ve Voted! What’s Next?

**Sacramento County
Voter Registration and
Elections Office
News Release**

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)
- Voters can use the My Voter Portal (MVP) to check the status of their voted ballot. Visit: <https://myvoterportal.saccounty.gov/LookupVoter>.

Why Did I Receive a Notice About My Signature?

If we are unable to confirm that your signature on your pink Vote by Mail return envelope matches your signature on file, we will contact you to ensure your ballot is counted.

California law allows you the opportunity to correct your signature on your pink Vote by Mail return envelope up until two days before the election is certified.

To correct your signature, you may: print, complete, and return a Signature Verification Statement at VRE or any Vote Center; resolve your signature using My Voter Portal (MVP); or complete and return the letter we sent you using the postage-paid envelope.

Without your signature, your ballot will not be counted.

Where are the Election Results?

View the Election Results Schedule so you know when to expect the next update. View the schedule: elections.saccounty.gov/content/vre/us/en/election-information/june-2--2026-statewide-direct-primary-election--election-results.html#gsc.tab=0.

Curious about what we still have left? Check out the What's Left to Process page at elections.saccounty.gov/content/vre/us/en/election-information/what-is



After the polls close at 8 p.m. on Election Day, the work continues as we diligently process, verify and ensure all eligible ballots are counted. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County Voter Registration and Elections Office

[left-to-count.html#gsc.tab=0](#) to see the work that continues.

What Happens After Election Day?

Did you know? Depending on the type of election, we have between 28 and 30 days to certify the election. After the polls close at 8 p.m. on Election Day, the work continues as we diligently process, verify and ensure all eligible ballots are counted. Accuracy takes time.

The Official Canvass: Division 15, Chapter 4.

In this phase we audit and account for all ballots that were issued, voted, and those that were not used. This phase includes, but is not limited to, the following tasks:

Reconcile the number of ballots counted, spoiled, canceled or invalidated due to identifying marks, over-votes, or as

otherwise provided by statute, with the number of votes recorded, including VBM and provisional ballots, by the vote counting system.

Process and count any valid VBM ballots not included in the semi-final election results. These VBM ballots are returned on Election Day to our office, at a Vote Center, to an Official Ballot Drop Box location or timely via USPS.

Receive, confirm, and process Signature Verification Statements.

Count any valid write-in votes. Duplicate any damaged ballots, if necessary.

Reporting final results to the governing board and the Secretary of State, as required.

Conduct the 1% Manual Tally: Division 15, Chapter 4, Article 5.

The 1% manual tally process

validates the tabulation of ballots generated by the electronic voting equipment before certifying election results. Precincts utilized for the 1% manual tally are selected at random by the elections official. For each contest not included in the 1% manual tally, an additional voting precinct with that contest will be selected and tallied. Coming Soon.

Process Conditional Voter Registration (CVR) ballots: California Code of Regulation. Title 2, Division 7, Chapter 1, Article 3.5.

CVR extends the existing 15-day registration deadline in California to eligible voters, allowing them to register and vote provisionally 14 days prior to an election through Election Day. Voters that are not registered must be processed using CVR.

Certify the Election: Division

15, Chapter 4, Article 6.; Division 17.

Once the Official Canvass is complete, we will sign a certificate to certify the election results.

Election materials shall be sealed and retained for 22 months from the date of the election for federal elections and six months from the date of the election for local elections.

Recounts: California Code of Regulation. Title 2, Division 7, Chapter 8.

After we certify the election results, any voter may request for a recount within five (5) calendar days. For more information about recounts, visit: elections.saccounty.gov/content/vre/us/en/recounts.html#gsc.tab=0.

For more information about the June 2, 2026, Statewide Direct Primary Election, visit: elections.saccounty.gov/#gsc.tab=0. ★

Remote Accessible Voting Available in Sacramento County

**Sacramento County Voter
Registration and Elections Office
News Release**

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Voters can request and receive access to the Remote Accessible Vote by Mail (RAVBM) system. The County of Sacramento has selected Democracy Live to provide this service. The RAVBM system allows voters to download and mark their correct ballot privately and independently using their own assistive technology, print their marked ballot and mail it to the Elections Office to be counted.

Watch the video on the RAVBM system at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54-Xbg5Nbg4>.

All registered voters in Sacramento County are eligible to use this system

pursuant to California Elections Code section 3016.7.

When

Access the service anytime, day or night, starting 29 days before an election.

How

Go online and enter your information in My Voter Portal to obtain your correct ballot. Visit: myvoterportal.saccounty.gov/LookupVoter.

Voters can vote on any computer with internet access and a printer. Email vbm@saccounty.gov or call (916) 875-6155 for help with the RAVBM system.

Practice On Our Demo Site

Voters can now practice using a DEMO version of the RAVBM system. This DEMO site simulates the

RAVBM voting experience, allowing voters to learn how to navigate and use the system in preparation for a real election. Voters can select their language and font size preferences in the top right corner, read and watch instructions on how to mark a ballot, and practice marking and printing a DEMO ballot.

Note: This DEMO version of the RAVBM system is for demonstration purposes only and cannot be used to submit an Official Ballot.

Visit: sites.omniballot.us/06067/demo/app/home?pid=2.

Assistance for Voters with Disabilities

The County of Sacramento Voter Registration and Elections Department has a long-standing commitment to work with voters with

disabilities to help them exercise their right to vote. Voters are encouraged to contact the Voter Registration and Elections Office at 916-875-6451 or voterinfo@saccounty.gov with specific requests for assistance. ★





VOTE EARLY!

AVOID LINES



June 2, 2026, Statewide Direct Primary Election

All voters will be mailed a ballot

- Ballots will begin to arrive the week of May 4

You can return your ballot

- By Mail
- At an Official Ballot Drop Box
- At a Vote Center (starting May 23)

You can find a full list of Official Ballot Drop Box and Vote Center locations in your County Voter Information Guide or online at www.elections.saccounty.gov

Vote Early! Vote by Mail.



Scan the QR code or visit myvoterportal.saccounty.gov

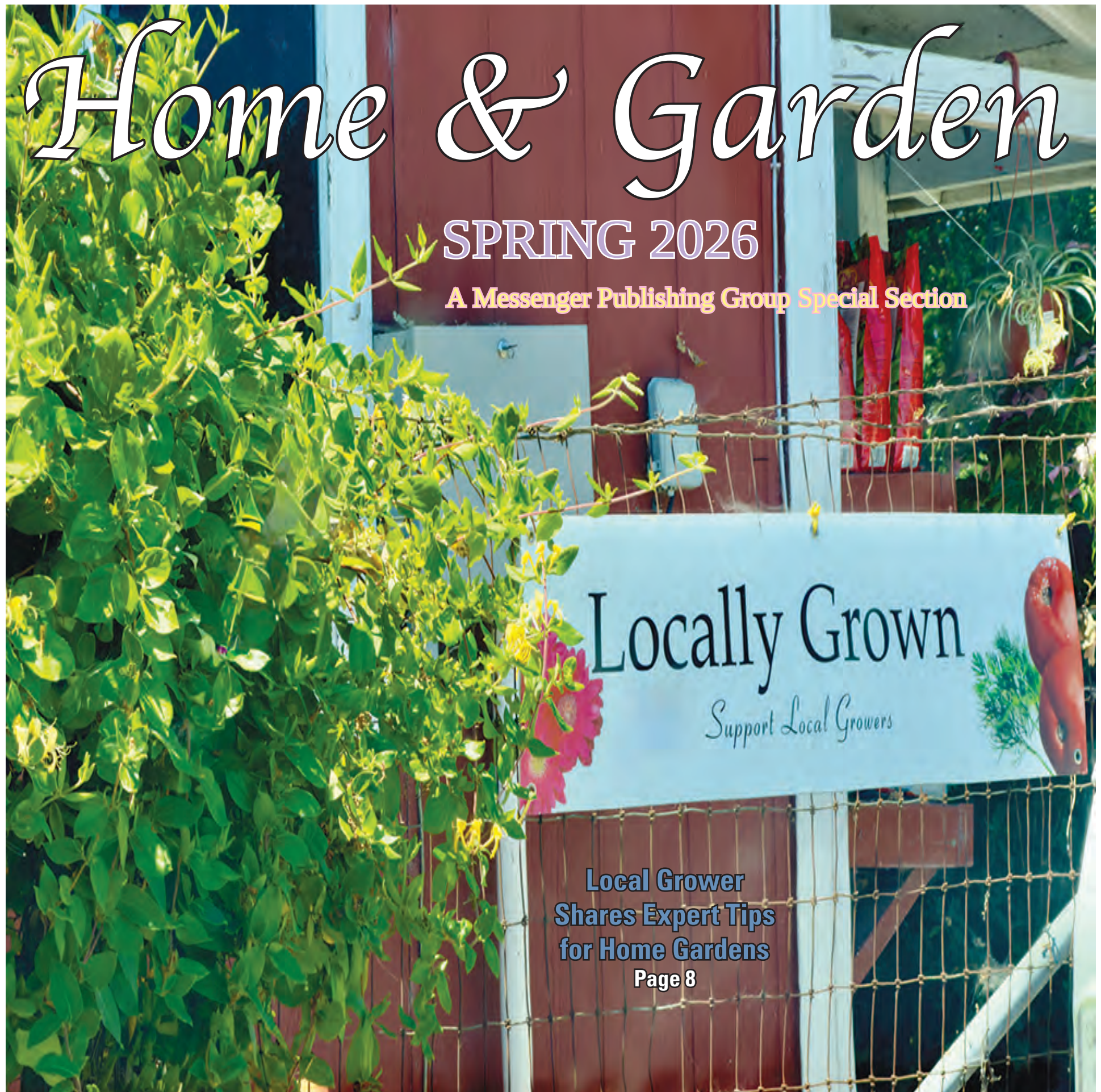


Vote Early and Vote by Mail

My Voter Portal (MVP)

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

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**Local Grower
Shares Expert Tips
for Home Gardens**

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How to Start Growing Produce at Home

By Feature Impact

Growing your own produce is an all-around smart practice, from the money you'll save at the grocery store to the contributions you can make toward a cleaner planet.

Maintaining a garden takes some effort, but it's a project even a beginner can tackle with ease. Consider these tips to start growing your at-home garden:

1. Select a Perfect Spot. You'll want to place your garden in an area where you see it often so you're reminded to weed and care for it regularly. Find a flat area you can access easily, where erosion and other pitfalls (including hungry wildlife) won't be a problem.

2. Choose Between Ground and Containers. There are pros and cons to gardening in containers vs. the ground, and there's no universal right choice. Rather, the best garden depends on your goals

and preferences. A ground garden usually offers more space and may provide a better growth environment for roots. However, a container garden is often easier to maintain and may be all you need if you wish to grow just a few plants.

3. Understand the Importance of Quality Soil. You may think any dirt will do, but keep in mind the soil you plant in will be the primary source of nutrients for your produce. Not only that, but quality soil provides stability so plants can root firmly and grow healthy and sturdy to support their bounty. Quality soil also allows for ample drainage. Organic matter like compost, leaf mold or aged manure all help improve soil quality.

4. Keep Water Close. Lugging water can quickly eliminate the pleasure of tending your garden, so be sure you're situated near a hose. You'll know it's time to water when the soil is dry about an inch below the surface.



Starting with veggies you know you like is a smart starting point since you'll be pouring sweat equity into making them grow. Photo courtesy of Unsplash

5. Plan for Plenty of Sun. A bright, sunny spot is a must, since most vegetables, herbs and fruits depend on six or more hours of sun every day. Remember the sun's path changes throughout the year, and as trees and foliage grow, they may produce more shade with each growing season.

6. Consider What You'll Grow. Starting with veggies you know you like is a smart starting point since you'll be pouring sweat equity into making them grow. Over time, you might add new varieties, but early on, keep your focus on foods you know you like so you can see a meaningful return

and avoid waste. You'll also need to consider what you can grow to maturity within your area's growing season. If necessary, you might want to start transplants you can nurture indoors before moving them outside when the temperatures allow.

7. Plant According to a Calendar. Knowing how long it takes different foods to mature will help you create a planting calendar. You don't want to harvest everything at once, and if you stagger planting and replant what you can, you'll have a garden that produces food for your family for a longer period of time. ★



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How to Help Tomatoes Thrive on Hot Days



On days with temperatures above 95, pollen in tomato flowers dries up and no fruit results. Pinch off spent flowers; the plant will grow new ones -- maybe during cooler weather. Kathy Morrison/SacramentoDigsGardening

By Debbie Arrington
Sacramento Digs Gardening

Tomato weather has arrived in Sacramento. With several days forecast in the upper 80s and even low 90s, expect your vines to soak up that heat and really grow.

But how hot is too hot? That's the tomato conundrum – tomatoes are temperature-sensitive.

Too cold, they won't thrive. (If afternoon highs linger below 70 degrees, they'll barely grow; that's why Sacramento tomatoes aren't planted in February.) Too hot, they won't set fruit. (And what's the point of all vines and no tomatoes?)

Tomatoes love heat and sun, but there's a limit. That dividing line is 95 degrees. When temperatures stay above 95 degrees (and we'll be there soon!), tomato flowers may drop off or refuse to set fruit. Leaves can fry and turn crispy. Ripening tomatoes may split or develop calluses.

Give your vines a hand – along with enough water and shade – to cope with the coming heat. This advice comes from UC Cooperative Extension master gardeners as well as longtime local tomato growers:

Water early and deep. Irrigate your tomatoes in the

morning, making sure water reaches down at least 6 inches into the soil. How do you know? Test the soil with a probe or long screwdriver; it should easily plunge into the soil. Or use a trowel, dig down and look.

During hot weather, water tomatoes two to three times a week. Tomatoes normally wilt during a hot afternoon; that's OK. But if they're wilted in the morning, water immediately. (Note: A few heirloom varieties, particularly of Russian origin, have a natural tendency to wilt all the time. But if you are growing one of these, you've probably noticed this already.)

Tomatoes planted in containers may need extra water every day during hot weather. Their potting soil tends to dry out faster.

Keep watering consistent and don't let soil dry out completely. That can lead to blossom end rot, the hard brown callus on the flower end of a tomato.

Watch for proper pollination. Tomatoes are wind pollinated; no bees necessary. But when temperatures reach 95 degrees (and stay hot), tomato pollen dries out and refuses to "stick." If your vines are producing plenty of blooms but not actually setting fruit, it may be temperature-related. Pinch off those barren blooms to prompt the plant to send out more

flowers. (Then, keep your fingers crossed that we'll have some cooler afternoons.)

Mulch is your friend. Make sure your vines have at least 2 to 4 inches around them to help keep roots cool and soil evenly moist. Straw, leaves or shredded bark make the best tomato mulch. Many gardeners prefer straw (not hay) because its light color reflects intense sun rays instead of absorbing that added heat. (Also, hay contains seeds that can sprout and suck nutrients out of soil; straw has no seed.)

Don't fertilize during a hot spell. Feeding tomatoes on 100-degree days just puts more stress on the plant.

Tomatoes love sun, but they can get sunburned. If leaves or developing fruit look bleached-out or burned, give your vine some afternoon shade. Erect a temporary shade structure by draping burlap or shade cloth over the tomato cage or trellis. This also helps prevent fruit from cracking.

If foliage turns brown, leave the dead leaves in place for now. They help protect the fruit from sunburn. After the heat has subsided, prune off the completely dead leaves so new foliage can grow.

For more from Sacramento Digs Gardening, visit @sac-digsgardening on Instagram.

Tips for Keeping Hardwood Floors Handsome

By Feature Impact

Consider these tips for keeping hardwoods in tip-top shape:

Guard Against Water

Water can penetrate deep into the wood, causing stains and ruining the outside finish. Use plastic trays under potted plants and pets' bowls. Wipe up spills and accidents immediately.

Use Area Rugs

If you have any heavy traffic areas – by the front door, hallways or around the kitchen table or couch, for example – use area rugs to protect against wear and tear. Area rugs are also an easy way to boost the style factor of your home.

Take Off Your Shoes

Encourage family members and guests to take off their shoes when they walk in. Shoes can bring in sand and dirt, so position area rugs at door

entryways to act as barriers.

Sweep or Vacuum Regularly

Dust and dirt can act as sandpaper, wreaking havoc on your floor's finish. A weekly sweep can help keep this at bay while enhancing your flooring's general appearance. If using your vacuum, be sure to use an attachment with soft brushes to guard from additional wear.

Clean Naturally

For a deep clean, ditch the harsh chemicals. Simply pour 1 cup of vinegar into a bucket with 1 gallon of water, mixing well. Use a soft mop and move in the direction of the floorboards. Go over with a clean, soft towel to dry excess water.

By following these simple steps, you and your family will be able to cherish your hardwood floors for many years to come.

Learn more at eLivingtoday.com. ★



With its rich tones and distinguished style, hardwood flooring can be a beautiful design element of your home. However, it's important to know the proper care procedures to maintain its condition for decades to come. Photo courtesy of Sunsplash



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What to Know Before You Remodel Your Home



Pay attention to recurring themes in your inspiration – such as cabinetry, flooring and fixture styles and colors – so it's easier to choose finishes when the time comes. Photo courtesy of Shutterstock

By Feature Impact

Planning a home remodel is as much about your vision as it is your preparation. With a thoughtful plan, you can refresh your living space, stay on budget and enjoy the process without feeling overwhelmed.

Consider these steps to get the process started:

Define Your Goals

Decide what you're looking to accomplish with your remodel, whether it's improved functionality, updated style, higher resale value or a combination. Make a simple list of "must-haves" and "nice-to-haves" so you can prioritize upgrades if costs start to climb too high.

Set a Realistic Budget

Determine how much you're comfortable spending then add a cushion of 10-20% for additional material costs and any surprises behind walls or under floors. Get rough price ranges for materials and labor, which allows you to adjust the scope of your project before the work begins, if neces-

sary, instead of mid-project.

Gather Ideas and Inspiration

Collect photos, paint colors and product ideas in a single place, such as a digital folder or photo album on your smartphone.

Pay attention to recurring themes in your inspiration – such as cabinetry, flooring and fixture styles and colors – so it's easier to choose finishes when the time comes.

Lay Out the Project Timeline

Think about the best time for your household to live through construction, especially if kitchens or bathrooms will be out of commission during the renovation. Talk with potential contractors about timing for each phase so you can plan for temporary living arrangements, if necessary.

Choose the Right Construction Crew

Interview a variety of potential contractors, being sure to ask for references and verify licenses and insurance. Once you've narrowed your list, request written estimates that

include labor and material costs, timelines and payment schedules so expectations are clear before choosing a service provider and signing an agreement.

Finalize Design Details and Materials

Make as many design decisions as possible before demolition, including choosing fixtures, appliances, flooring, tile, paint, hardware and other details. Ordering key items early can help avoid delays and keep the project on schedule once work begins.

Prep Your Home and Family

Before construction begins, clear areas where work will be completed of furniture and decor, covering anything that cannot be moved out of the room with plastic sheeting.

So everyone knows what to expect while your home is in transition, talk with family members about the impending noise and dust, and make necessary schedule changes to avoid interrupting work.

Visit eLivingtoday.com for more resources and home renovation guidance. ★

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Avoid a Summer Breakdown

Why Now is a Smart Time to Replace an Old HVAC System

By Feature Impact

With summer heat just around the corner, homeowners may not be aware that spring can be a perfect time to prepare for rising temperatures. An outdated heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system, for example, may not be up for the task of keeping a home cool.

In fact, it can end up costing homeowners more in the long term due to a gradual decline in efficiency and more frequent repairs. In addition to savings over time, there are multiple reasons to replace an aging system this spring.

In a recent survey, Carrier found more than one-quarter (26%) of homeowners don't know the age of their HVAC system, and a slight majority (54%) don't know the average lifespan of one. Those knowledge gaps can result in missed opportunities for long-term savings.

Aging Systems Can't Take the Heat

Many homeowners postpone purchasing a new HVAC system until their existing system fails or they find their aging system is struggling to maintain a consistent temperature. Often, upfront costs deter homeowners from purchasing a new system; however, 8 in 10 homeowners would consider a new heating and cooling system if it paid for itself in energy savings within 5-10 years. With a new energy-efficient system, those savings are possible.

A New HVAC System is a Critical Home Investment

Modern heating and cooling systems have uses beyond heating and cooling. They can improve air quality in the home by balancing humidity levels, reducing drafts and keeping a consistent climate throughout multiple rooms and stories. They also use less energy and run more quietly than older systems, making a home quieter and more cost-effective.

HVAC Basics Many Homeowners Miss

HVAC units often go unseen, yet a home's comfort depends on them running



Spring is an ideal time to invest in a new HVAC system, as contractors are generally more available to install a new system and homeowners can get ahead of the summer heat, ensuring they'll be cool all season long. Photo courtesy of Carrier

consistently. It's critical that homeowners schedule annual maintenance appointments to ensure their system is running as it should and they're aware of when it may be time to replace.

While it may seem more cost-effective to stick with an outdated system for one more season, an old system could end up prolonging issues and ultimately cost homeowners more in repairs.

Spring is an ideal time to invest in a new HVAC system, as contractors are generally more available to install a new system and

homeowners can get ahead of the summer heat, ensuring they'll be cool all season long.

Signs It's Time to Replace

Red flags that indicate it's time for a new HVAC system include: a system that's more than 10-15 years old, a system that needs noticeably more repairs, energy bills going up despite usage remaining the same, inconsistent temperatures, a system struggling to maintain the desired temperature or a system that's constantly running or seems less efficient than it used to.

Many companies offer specials during the spring and fall months, known as shoulder season.

For example, until May 31, Carrier is offering 0% APR for 60 months and up to \$2,100 in rebates so customers can get a jumpstart on a cool, comfortable home.

A new HVAC system means more than just cool temps this summer; it means added home value, cleaner air and peace of mind.

Learn more about available rebates, tax credits and financing plans at Carrier.com or by contacting a local expert. ★

Local Grower Shares Expert Tips for Home Gardens



Perennials are often inexpensive and return year after year for homeowners looking to add plants that are low maintenance yet high impact for their gardens.

Story and photos by Idaly Valencia

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - For many homeowners, spring is the season that sparks the urge to refresh a yard, add color to flower beds or finally start that vegetable garden they have been thinking about all winter.

According to Julia Oldfield, owner and grower at Big Oak Nursery (10071 Grant Line Road in Elk Grove), creating a beautiful garden does not have to mean complicated landscaping projects or high-maintenance plants. Often, she explained, a few thoughtful changes can make all the

difference.

Oldfield, whose family-owned nursery has deep roots in Elk Grove dating back to 1972, encourages resident gardeners to focus on plants that already thrive naturally in the region that benefit the local wildlife.

"Adding natives or drought-tolerant plants is a good way to start changing your garden and making it more eco-friendly to our pollinators and our friendly beneficials (insects)," Oldfield said.

One of the biggest tips she shares with beginners is to avoid filling a yard with only one type of plant. Instead,

Oldfield recommends adding a variety of flowers, shrubs and greenery to create a healthier environment for bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

"I think the wider plant population you have in your yard, instead of having a whole bunch of the same, and having many different plants in your yard really helps our beneficials," she said.

For homeowners looking to add vibrant seasonal color without taking on a lot of maintenance, Oldfield recommends drought-tolerant blooms and pollinator-friendly plants. Flowers such as Gaillardia, blanket flower and Fuchsia can



Kangaroo Paw is an example of a drought-tolerant plant that can help bring a nice change to a homeowner's garden while using an eco-friendlier approach to growing.

provide visual appeal while also helping to attract those much-needed pollinators.

"Anything that is low maintenance and drought tolerant is easy, that's what I go for," said Oldfield.

While many gardeners focus on what to plant, Oldfield said one of the most common mistakes she sees actually involves watering.

"Definitely overwatering," she said.

According to Oldfield, plants such as trees thrive with deep, infrequent watering. Rather than lightly watering every day, she recommends allowing a hose to slowly drip into the soil overnight so the water can soak deeply before letting the area dry out.

One simple trick she also recommends is using a long screwdriver or chopstick to test the moisture level underground.

"You can kind of dig down in the soil without having to use a shovel," Oldfield said. "If the chopstick comes up wet, then you know it's still moist down there. If it's completely bone dry, then it's time to water again."

For newly planted trees, Oldfield added that gardeners

can use a creative irrigation method using a PVC pipe. By drilling holes into a three-foot section of pipe and placing it vertically into the soil near the tree, homeowners can direct water deeper underground where roots need it most.

When designing flower beds or container arrangements to make a garden more cohesive and visually appealing, Oldfield follows what she calls the "thriller, filler and spiller" method.

The "thriller" is the tall, eye-catching plant that creates height. The "filler" is a medium-sized plant that fills empty spaces, while the "spiller" trails outward or hangs over the edge of containers to soften the overall look.

This approach helps gardens feel balanced without requiring professional landscaping experience.

For residents gardening on a budget, Oldfield said there are still plenty of affordable ways to create an attractive outdoor space. Perennials are often inexpensive and return year after year, while vegetable gardening offers both beauty and practicality.

"A four-inch tomato plant is like \$3," she said. "It's a pretty inexpensive way to get your hands dirty and enjoy the



Big Oak Nursery owner and grower Julia Oldfield shares a variety of plants during an Elk Grove Garden Club meeting, offering tips and inspiration to help gardeners refresh and enhance their gardens.

fruits of your labor."

Beyond affordability, Oldfield said vegetable gardening can also feel especially rewarding for beginners.

"With a tomato, you're like, 'I did that. I got fruit!'" she said.

Even homeowners with limited outdoor space can still create thriving gardens. Oldfield said patios, porches and small yards can benefit from potted plants, hanging baskets and trellises that allow greenery to grow vertically instead of spreading outward.

Compact vegetable varieties designed specifically for small spaces are also becoming increasingly popular. One example Oldfield highlighted was the "patio tomato," a compact tomato plant that still produces full-sized fruit.

Herbs such as mint, oregano or thyme are another ideal option for smaller gardens because they require little room and can continue producing throughout the season with regular trimming.

To keep gardens visually appealing year-round, Oldfield encourages homeowners to think beyond spring blooms and plan for all four seasons.

"If you have a lot of spring blooms, then maybe you want something that's a summer bloomer or a fall bloomer or a winter bloomer," she said. "That adds interest in the off seasons."

At Big Oak Nursery, Oldfield said many of the plants are grown directly on-site rather than shipped in from other climates. Because the plants are already acclimated to Elk Grove's weather conditions, they are often better prepared for the region's hot summers and cooler winters. She noted that the nursery offers a variety of lower-cost plants for gardeners to grow.

The nursery also offers more than just plants, including eggs, honey, jam and locally raised beef.

"We're very local," Oldfield said. "Everyone we have working here is local and grew up here. We try to keep it Elk Grove-centered."

For homeowners looking to refresh their gardens this spring, Oldfield said the key is to start simple, experiment with different plants and create spaces that are both enjoyable and sustainable.

A How-To Guide for Deep Cleaning Your Grill

By Feature Impact

A clean grill can enhance the flavor of your food, making regular grill maintenance an essential part of your outdoor cooking routine.

Grills, especially those exposed to the elements, can accumulate dirt, rust and food residue that can affect performance and safety. Plus, residual char and grease can impart unwanted flavors and even lead to flare-ups.

Once you've gathered the right tools – a sturdy grill brush with stainless steel bristles, a scraper, a bucket of soapy water, microfiber cloths and grill cleaner or degreaser – consult this step-by-step guide to keep your grill in pristine condition, ensuring delicious meals every time.

1. Preheat the grill for 15 minutes to loosen any stuck-on residue then turn it off and let it cool slightly.

2. Ensure the gas supply is turned off before cleaning.

3. Remove the grates and scrub them thoroughly with a grill brush and warm, soapy water. Rinse and let dry.

4. Clean burners by wiping them with a damp cloth.

5. Scrape the inside of the grill to remove any debris and use a vacuum to collect loose dirt and ash.

6. Wipe down the exterior of the grill with a microfiber cloth and grill cleaner.

7. Reassemble the grill once all parts are dry and give it a final wipe down.

In between deep cleanings, remember to clean your grill grates immediately after cooking while they are still warm to remove food particles and grease. Find more tips for the grill and beyond at eLiving-today.com.



Grills, especially those exposed to the elements, can accumulate dirt, rust and food residue that can affect performance and safety. Photo courtesy of Shutterstock



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Budget-Friendly Ideas to Boost Curb Appeal



A fresh coat of paint can instantly update your home's facade. Go bold or stick with a classic hue – it's all up to you. Photo courtesy of Unsplash

By Feature Impact

Your home's first big impression is its curb appeal, so if your place is in need of some sprucing up, you may wonder how you can make some updates without breaking the bank.

These 10 ideas are easy on budgets, but they can also make a big impact on your home's exterior image.

1. Paint your front door. As long as your front door is in good condition, there's no need to replace it completely. A fresh coat of paint can instantly update your home's facade. Go bold or stick with a classic hue – it's all up to you.

2. Dress up the windows. Add character and charm by enhancing your front windows. You might add wooden shutters, window-box planters or both. Also look at the trim around the windows. If it's chipped and peeling, adding a fresh coat of paint doesn't just look nice; it can protect your windows from damage, too.

3. Clean up flower beds. An unkempt flower bed can drag down an otherwise stunning home. Keep beds tidy and veg-

etation trimmed, even during the offseason. Watch for weeds and replenish mulch or rock ground cover as needed to keep the beds looking healthy and inviting.

4. Install new lighting. Replacing outdated light fixtures can give your exterior an instant upgrade. There's no right or wrong style; just choose a color and look that matches the rest of your design.

5. Replace worn welcome mats. A cheerful mat at your front door can be an inviting sight for visitors, but those mats inevitably wear with time, and what was once bright and charming becomes dingy and dull. A new mat can help bring back that cheery entry you once cherished.

6. Pressure wash the drive and walk. Over time, driveways and sidewalks collect an incredible amount of grime. Pressure washing not only eliminates the filth, but the clean surfaces also add to your home's visual appeal.

7. Add new vegetation. Landscaping is a relatively inexpensive way to introduce more personality to a yard. Aim for a mix of pretty and practical, such as some low flowering bush-

es and some trees or bushes that offer privacy and shade.

8. Keep up with basic maintenance. When your home is in poor repair, it shows. Pay attention to bent or rusting gutters, imperfections in the roof and other maintenance matters that aren't just aesthetic; left unrepaired, they can also result in major damage.

9. Pay attention to details. Functional items like the mailbox might not seem like much of a design element, but these small details can be a big distraction if they're not in good condition. Update or replace as needed to keep your aesthetic in sync.

10. Add seasonal decor. There's no need to go all out for every occasion, but some timely decorations that celebrate the holiday or season can make your entry fun and festive. Coordinate wreaths, planters, signs and other accent pieces for a cohesive look that says, "come on in."

Find more affordable ideas for upgrading your home and garden at elivingtoday.com.



Five Garage Safety Tips



Ensure any poisonous materials, such as paint, garden pesticides, cleaners and automotive fluids, are safely stored out of reach of pets and children that may have increased access to the garage during warmer months. Photo courtesy of Unsplash

By Feature Impact

When you throw open the windows, you'll likely be spending more time with the garage door open, too. Make access to your outdoor equipment safer with these tips to get your garage ready for the warmer months.

Organizing clutter is part of the process, but warmer weather can also serve as a reminder to make sure your garage equipment and features are secure and functioning properly.

1. Your garage floor tends to capture grime and grit from the outdoors, especially where your car sits. Take time to thoroughly sweep and mop, but also take stock of the floor's condition for any chips or other damage that may grow worse over time and pose a risk for tripping or other safety issues.

2. Check your garage door performance. Ensure doors are rolling smoothly with no hitches. If you do happen to notice any abnormalities, it's a good time to investigate. In some cases, a little grease or a minor

adjustment is all you need to get things back on track.

3. Don't forget to check your garage door sensors, too. Warmer weather means animals and children (and their toys) are more likely to find themselves in an automated door's path when it begins to lower. Ensure sensors are operating properly to prevent injury or property damage.

4. Verify all outlets, lights and other electrical features are in proper operating condition and all wires are intact and free of

damage or fraying.

5. Ensure any poisonous materials, such as paint, garden pesticides, cleaners and automotive fluids, are safely stored out of reach of pets and children that may have increased access to the garage during warmer months. Also check for spills or leaks of any potentially hazardous or flammable materials.

Taking time to safety-proof your garage can provide your family months of stress-free use. Find more tips for getting your garage in order at eLivingtoday.com. ★

Your Plants Can Tell You More Than Any Calendar Can



Red Norland potatoes, planted about 10 weeks ago, are indicating by their yellowing leaf color that harvest time is approaching. Kathy Morrison/Sacramento Digs Gardening

By Kathy Morrison
Sacramento Digs Gardening

Some advice I received as a new parent (many years ago) has been remarkably useful with my garden as well:

“No one knows your own (child/garden) as well as you do.”

In other words, a person may be new to parenting, but no one has observed and responded to that particular baby quite as much and quite as closely as the parent has.

By the same token, a new gardener still has the best information on their own garden, even if it’s “I was given a second-hand planter, filled it with XYZ potting soil and Genovese basil seeds, and set it on the south-facing patio. I water it every other day.”

There’s knowledge already in that statement. But for gardening success, the knowl-

edge must grow, and that means paying attention to what’s going on. Even 5 minutes of observation every morning – to check whether those basil seeds are germinating, need more water, getting too much sun – builds a body of experience.

Experimenting builds the knowledge, too. Having grown Genovese basil, the gardener might try Purple Ruffles basil or Cardinal basil or African blue basil. Eventually, the gardener becomes an expert on their micro-micro-climate and crop. Such as “Basil does great in containers on the patio, but should be planted by early May.”

The next step is applying skepticism to planting charts and calendars (which are based on averages, after all) and responding to the plants themselves. This will be based on the earlier knowledge, plus experience with local weather and other conditions. “Hmm, the Genovese is flowering sooner

than usual. I wonder if it’s heat-stressed and needs a different location?”

A friend who is an expert at growing garlic recently noted that one of his two varieties is already near harvest time: The leaves are turning yellow and are starting to collapse. He’s not going to ignore that just because the calendar says it’s too early. (June typically is harvest time for garlic planted in October.) For whatever reason, that garlic wants to be ready now.

The Red Norland potatoes I planted the first week of March are another case in point. They are in two large cloth grow bags of identical color, with identical soil and the same watering schedule, and the bags are just a few feet apart in the backyard. Neither one has flowered. Yet plants in one of the bags are turning yellow, indicating potato harvest time is soon. The other has no yellow leaves. At all. But there’s no reason to wait

until the second bag is ready to harvest everything.

Tomatoes amaze me every year at how they respond to the weather and the slight changes in planting location. I typically start my plants from seed. One year Lemon Boy is the star, producing twice as many fruit as any of the others, and the next year it’s just OK. I don’t always know why, but I enjoy observing the season play out. And I make notes for next year.

As a side note, I recommend that gardeners – of edible plants, especially – keep a notebook or journal of some kind, to record events in the garden. Knowing next year that the Red Norlands were early in 2025 might convince me to plant them earlier or later, or plant another variety altogether. All part of being a gardener and citizen scientist!

For more, visit @sacdigs Gardening on Instagram.

What Locksmiths Say Homeowners Get Wrong About Security



Assess all home entry points, including secondary points like sliding doors, garage entries and basement doors. Photo courtesy of KeyMe Locksmiths

By Feature Impact

You have locks on your doors and windows, and you make sure they're secure before you leave the house or head to bed each night. You may even have a security system with an alarm or cameras to protect your home. Some locksmiths say that may not be enough.

Bryan McCabe, director of locksmith operations with KeyMe Locksmiths, the nation's leading provider of local locksmith services and No. 1 provider of key duplication kiosks, said homeowners should be mindful of common security vulnerabilities, many of which go unnoticed until it's too late.

A thief who wants to gain access to your home may do so by any means possible, including breaking windows or kicking in doors. However, those methods are loud and may attract attention. Instead, thieves will look to find the easiest house to enter. Consider these small changes you can make to deter thieves from your home.

Close the Garage

Leaving your garage door open may seem harmless, but it can signal easy access to thieves. An open garage suggests relaxed security habits and can make burglars assume doors

or windows might also be unlocked. Keeping it closed is a simple step that instantly makes your home more secure.

Make Your Home Look Lived-In

Burglars often target homes that appear empty. Dark houses – especially after nightfall – can stand out as easy opportunities. Leaving a light or two on helps create the impression someone is home. If you want to level up, use light timers or smart bulbs to automatically turn lights on and off, even when you're away.

Keep Your Home Visible from the Street

Thieves prefer to work unnoticed. Overgrown trees, tall bushes, or dense landscaping near entrances can provide cover for someone trying to break in. Trimming greenery and maintaining clear sightlines from the street makes your home less appealing and more exposed – exactly what burglars want to avoid.

Upgrade Entry Points to Improve Security

Some relatively minor updates can make a big impact toward protecting your home. Start by assessing all home entry points, including secondary points like sliding doors, garage entries and basement doors. In addition to checking door frames, homeowners should examine strike plates, hinge

security and whether existing locks are outdated.

Add Eyes to Your Front Door with a Doorbell Camera

Doorbell cameras are an affordable way to boost your home's security. Visible cameras can stop many would-be thieves as they don't want to be seen or recorded. Beyond deterrence, doorbell cameras let you see who's at your door, receive alerts and check on your home anytime, whether you're home or away.

Install Smart Locks for Control and Peace of Mind

Smart locks are another smart investment in home safety. They allow you to track who enters your home and when by assigning unique access codes. You can even lock (or unlock) the door remotely from your phone. With the ability to monitor, control and limit access, smart locks offer convenience and security. A local locksmith can help you choose the right option and handle installation, making the upgrade simple and stress-free.

Find more advice to help protect your home and belongings, and a locksmith or kiosk near you, by visiting key.me. ★

Refresh Your Home: A Room-by-Room Spring Cleaning Checklist



Washing windows inside and out is part of a whole-home cleaning plan. Photo courtesy of Shutterstock

By Feature Impact

After months of winter, spring cleaning isn't just about dusting and vacuuming; it's about inviting sunlight and fresh air into your space through the open windows and giving yourself a fresh start for the longer days ahead.

It's also a perfect opportunity to clear out the old and make room for new experiences, memories and energy. Whether you're tackling deep cleaning for the first time or you have seasonal rituals for tidying up your home, this room-by-room guide can help you plan and conquer seasonal chores.

Whole Home

- Declutter spaces: Donate, recycle or discard what you don't need
- Wash windows inside and out
- Dust baseboards, walls, vents and ceiling fans
- Wipe down doors, knobs and light switches
- Vacuum and clean under and behind furniture

- Clean curtains and blinds
- Store seasonal items like winter clothing and decor
- Replace air filters
- Shampoo carpet

Kitchen

- Empty and wipe down refrigerator and freezer
- Clean oven, stovetop and microwave
- Scrub countertops and backsplashes
- Clean out the garbage disposal
- Sweep and mop floors
- Organize the pantry and throw away any expired items

Bathrooms

- Scrub grout and tile
- Clean mirrors and glass surfaces
- Deep clean toilets
- Wipe down cabinets and bathroom fixtures
- Wash rugs, floor mats and the shower curtain and liner
- Empty trash and clean the bin

Bedrooms and Other Living Areas

- Wash bedding, pillows and linens
- Organize closets and drawers
- Vacuum chair, couches and mattresses as well as under cushions
- Dust shelves and decor
- Clean light fixtures and lampshades

Outdoor Areas

- Power wash patios, sidewalks and driveways
- Wipe down outdoor furniture and replace textiles like pillows, cushions and umbrellas
- Clear debris from garden beds
- Prune shrubs, plants and trees
- Organize garages and sheds
- Reconnect hoses and sprinklers
- Prep lawn equipment such as mowers, weed eaters and blowers
- For more spring cleaning tips and tricks, visit eLivingtoday.com.

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM MOSQUITOES!

Inspect your yard using the following checklist and look for these mosquito breeding sources. If you suspect that mosquitoes are present, please contact us at (800) 429-1022 to schedule a residential inspection.

USE THIS CHECKLIST TO PREVENT MOSQUITO BREEDING AROUND YOUR HOME

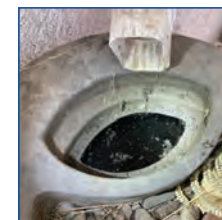
- ☐ Remove plant saucers and other containers that hold water below plants
- ☐ Redirect sprinklers so containers are not filled
- ☐ Remove or modify plants that hold water for more than 2 days, including rooting plants
- ☐ Refill and scrub out pet water dishes, bird baths, and fountains every 3 days
- ☐ Remove miscellaneous items that could hold water for longer than 3 days
- ☐ Cover bins and buckets with fitted lids or flip them over when unused
- ☐ Fill in tops of potted plants with sand
- ☐ Keep recyclables in containers that drain
- ☐ Add screens or mesh to rain barrels
- ☐ Remove old tires from yard
- ☐ Completely drain and scrub unused outdoor spas and tubs
- ☐ Keep lawn drains free from clogs and standing water



Plant Saucers



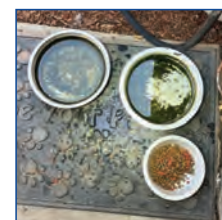
Rain Containers



Downspouts



Plant Pots and Holders



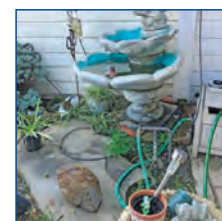
Pet Bowls



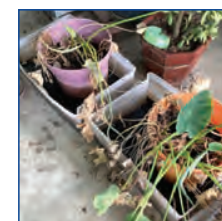
Lawn Drains



Outdoor Toys



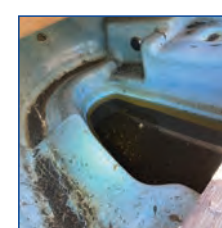
Bird Baths



Outdoor Containers



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Sacramento Suburban Kiwanis 68th Art Fiesta June 6-7

Jewelry, painting, photography, pottery, metal work, woodwork, glass and fine textiles are just some of the media you'll find on display.

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Scottish Rite Masonic Center, 6151 H St. Details at sacramentosuburbankiwanis.org/kiwanis-art-fiesta.

Area Museum Experiences

A sampling of must-see and must-do experiences and special activations offered by local museums include:

Aerospace Museum of California

– As a proud partner of Blue Star Museums, active military members along with five additional guests can

enjoy free admission through Labor Day (Sept. 7). Details at aerospacedca.org.

Sacramento History Museum – “Play Ball! Sacramento in the National Pastime.” The exhibition is filled with historical baseball uniforms, bats, balls, and gloves from different time periods, along with programs, tickets, awards and trophies, an Edmonds field base, home plate and ticket box, along with scrapbooks, news articles, photos and more. Through October. Details at sachistory-museum.org.

California Automobile Museum – Veterans’ Memorial Day Car Show, May 25. Join us for a day of classic cars, camaraderie, and honoring our veterans and military personnel who died in service to their country.

Sunday Drives: The third Sunday of every month, enjoy a free ride (with paid museum admission) in one of the museum’s many beautiful cars from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

There’s no better way to enjoy history than to experience it firsthand down the streets of downtown Sacramento. Details at calautomuseum.org.

California State Railroad Museum – The Chinese Railroad Workers’

Experience offers visitors a view of the Chinese workers who built the western portion of the nation’s first Transcontinental Railroad. Marginalized by history, the Chinese workers were more than a nameless group of laborers. Details at californiarailroad.museum.

Crocker Art Museum – “Rebels with La Causa: Royal Chicano Air Force Art and Activism, 1970-1990,” through June, explores the expansive production and creative impact of the Royal Chicano Air Force (RCAF), one of the Chicano Movement’s most prolific and impactful artist collectives.

Beginning in 1970 at Sacramento State, the group produced individual artworks and group murals, as well as posters for educational, cultural, and political activities. The RCAF’s transformation into a broader collective not only initiated an explosion of Chicano art exhibitions, literary events, performances, and community celebrations, but expanded civic and political engagement.

While RCAF posters served as announcements for these wide-ranging activities, their multicultural aesthetics, subject matter, and strategic humor redefined Chicana/o art, as well as the history

of art and activism in the United States. Details at crockerart.org.

SMUD Museum of Science and Curiosity Laser Concert Series – K-Pop Demon Hunters, Fridays and Saturdays in May. Lady Gaga, June 5-6. Beastie Boys, July 10-11. This immersive music experience, paired with spectacular full-dome lasers, is the best way to listen to your favorite artists outside of a live performance. Details at visitmosac.org.

Elks Lodge 6 Calendar of Events

Sacramento Historical Society Presentation: “Sacramento’s Elks Tower: A Downtown Architectural Landmark,” 6:30 pm. Tuesday, May 26. Presented by Peter Dannenfelser.

Classic Car Show, Saturday, July 18.

Yoga, Monday 12 p.m., Wednesday 3:30 p.m. Lodge members free.

Karaoke Nights, Thursdays and Saturdays, 7 p.m.

Martial Arts, Monday 5 p.m.

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Wednesday Night Dinner, 5:30 to 7 p.m. See elks6.net for weekly menu. ★

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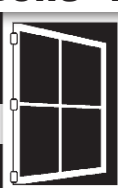


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A Battle Beyond the Bite

Lyme Disease Awareness Month Sparks Advocacy and Awareness

By Ornella Rossi

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - As the months of unanswered symptoms stretched into years, Lyme Fight Foundation founder and CEO Melissa Moya began to wonder whether anyone would ever believe her.

Doctors tested her for breast cancer, multiple sclerosis, brain tumors and heart disease. She endured MRIs, spinal taps, heart procedures and endless specialist appointments while debilitating pain, fatigue and neurological symptoms worsened. At one point, she said, a doctor suggested the illness was “all in my head.”

Then, in November 2019, after years without answers, Moya finally received the diagnosis that would change her life: Lyme disease.

“I spent the rest of the day crying in bed praying he was wrong,” Moya said. “For some reason I had been ready for MS, not Lyme. I knew nothing about Lyme.”

Now, during Lyme Disease Awareness Month, Moya is using her experience to help others navigate what she calls an often invisible and misunderstood illness.

Founded as a response to her own medical journey, the Lyme Fight Foundation works to provide education, awareness and support for Lyme disease patients and families. The organization also advocates for prevention, education and improved medical coverage for treatment.

“Lyme Fight Foundation is my silver lining, a mission born from my pain,” Moya said. “We exist to raise awareness, promote prevention, education and support those navigating this cruel disease.”

Lyme disease is a tick-borne



Treatment brought a new set of challenges. Moya said Lyme care is often not covered by insurance, leaving many patients responsible for enormous out-of-pocket costs. Photo courtesy of Melissa Moya

illness caused by bacteria transmitted through infected tick bites. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 476,000 Americans are diagnosed and treated for Lyme disease each year. Symptoms can include persistent fatigue, joint pain, neurological issues, dizziness, heart complications and cognitive difficulties.

Moya said misconceptions about Lyme disease remain one of the greatest barriers patients face.

“There are many misconceptions surrounding Lyme disease,” she said. “People think Lyme disease does not exist in California, that everyone develops a bullseye rash or that it can always be cured with just 10 days of antibiotics.”

Moya said many patients struggle for years before receiving a diagnosis because Lyme disease can mimic dozens of other conditions. Early testing may also fail to detect infection.



“Lyme disease is a master of disguise,” she said. “Current testing misses up to 60% of acute cases.”

For Moya, the search for answers became physically and emotionally exhausting. She recalled spending years undergoing invasive procedures while balancing motherhood and chronic pain. One of the most difficult experiences, she said, came after a spinal tap caused a spinal fluid leak that left her bedridden with severe headaches.

“There really is no win,” she said. “You lose if they finally determine you have something wrong, and you lose if yet again there are no answers.”

Treatment brought a new set of challenges. Moya said Lyme care is often not covered by insurance, leaving many patients responsible for enormous out-of-pocket costs. She said doctor visits can cost hundreds of dollars per hour, while specialized testing and IV therapies add thousands more.

“I’ve spent well over \$100,000 on treatment,” she said. “Lyme treatment is brutal, mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually.”

Despite the hardships, Moya said the experience reshaped her understanding of resilience and purpose.

“It has taught me that I am stronger than I ever thought

I could be,” she said. “Life is shorter than I ever really thought it could be.”

That perspective inspired her to create the foundation and become an advocate for others facing similar battles.

The organization offers educational resources, tick-testing information, support programs and care packages for Lyme patients. It also encourages prevention, especially as summer approaches and outdoor activity increases.

Moya advises people spending time outdoors to wear light-colored clothing, use tick repellents, avoid tall grass and conduct thorough tick checks after being outside. She also recommends saving removed ticks in a sealed container for possible testing.

“Awareness can make all the difference,” Moya said.

Throughout May, the foundation is encouraging community members to participate in awareness efforts by wearing green ribbons, sharing prevention information and supporting Lyme patients and families. The organization is also partnering with the American River Parkway Foundation for parkway cleanup events in Fair Oaks later this year.

For Moya, the mission remains deeply personal.

“The greatest threat Lyme patients face isn’t just the disease, it’s the despair,” she said. “No one should go through this alone.”

Even as she continues treatment, Moya said she hopes her story encourages others to keep searching for answers and reminds the public that Lyme disease is far more serious than many realize.

“We all hope and pray one day we reach remission,” Moya said. “Until then, we keep fighting.” ★

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Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris

How About Ja Morant?

As the June 23 NBA draft approaches, what realistic possibilities are the Sacramento Kings franchise confronted with?

Everyone already knows Sacramento dropped to the 7th overall pick, and although that was disappointing it was not the negative that many Kings fans envisioned it to be. At No. 7 this draft class will have a quality player for Sacramento to add to their roster.

The real question is, will it be a guard as everyone seems to believe it will be? Not necessarily and here is why.

For some time now talk throughout the NBA is the disposition of one Ja Morant. A highly talented point guard that can do it all, but in the past has shown flashes of true immaturity, to the point that the Memphis Grizzlies have all but given up on him.

Twice suspended for his penchant of displaying firearms on social media, Ja has had to learn the hard way. First, suspended for eight games and then again when he didn't learn his lesson for 25 games the second time.

Can Memphis problem child become something the Sacramento Kings have long been looking for? The possibility is real, and if that possibility becomes reality, this 2nd overall pick in the 2019 draft could become an instant game changer in the Kings lineup.

The question is, can Sacramento satisfy the appetite of the Grizzlies, and will the Sacramento fan base come to the realization that everyone deserves a second chance. Many will say he's already gotten that chance and blown it, but he's been with only one organization, and every once in a blue moon, the grass is really greener on the other side.

What a Ja Morant would mean to the Sacramento Kings is opening the floor like never before. Trying to stop his drives to the basket is like trying to rope a whirling dervish.

Morant is almost impossible to guard one-on-one, and that means when other teams double team him, someone is wide open.

Players like Zach Lavine, Keegan Murray and DeMar DeRozan should be licking their lips with the possibilities.

We haven't even talked about the future hall-of-famer Russell Westbrook who might just be the mentor Ja Morant could benefit from.

There are few point guards in the NBA that can give DeAaron Fox a run for his money when it comes to pure speed, but Ja Morant is right there with him.

How would Domantas Sabonis benefit from this speedster one should ask? Another player with excellent mentoring skills, Domantas, is a nightly example of how to play the game, and if anything, I see his scoring average go up if Morant joins this team.

So. Is this pie in the sky or does this troubled 26-year-old stand a chance at joining the Kings organization? It's real if Scott Perry wants it to be real, and as they say, the proofs in the pudding.

Currently, the kings have an abundance of point guards, and with the exception of an aging Russell Westbrook, Sacramento does not have an NBA quality starting point guard.

That is not to disparage Nique Clifford or Devin Carter who have shown flashes, but the Kings need a floor leader now, and not a point guard project.

Ja Morant, if through with his prior nonsense, could be the comeback player of the year, and be a reclamation project for the Kings that says, we finally got it right!

I don't expect every Kings fan to agree with my assessment, but I'm for accelerating what is being called a complete rebuild with a much faster version that doesn't send all of our players to parts unknown.

No question, Domantas Sabonis is high on Scott Perry's list as a candidate for trade options, and I do not want to see that happen.

Look instead to resigning Russell Westbrook for perhaps his last season is a stellar NBA career, and perhaps team him with the bad boy of the NBA in Ja Morant.

I have said many times before that this team is steeped in NBA talent, but questionable coaching and torrid injuries decimated the process last year.

Let's finally assess the talent we have and actually coach it. Maybe teach pros who to shoot free throws.

Like Rosy the Riveter said, we can do it!
*All the best Kings fans and keep the faith!**All the best!* ★

Newsom's Tightfisted Final Budget Faces a Rough Reception in the Legislature



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

Since the turn of the century, California's state budget has been plagued by a boom-and-bust syndrome rooted in its lopsided revenue system and a lack of political discipline.

The budget became increasingly dependent on taxes paid by the state's most affluent residents, whose incomes increasingly came from investments rather than salaries.

Thus state revenues would often spike upwards, only to level off or decline. But governors and legislators would make new spending commitments during the spikes that would become liabilities during the downturns.

It was dubbed "volatility" and it reached an apex four years ago when Gov. Gavin Newsom declared that the state had a \$97.5 billion surplus, having decided that a post-pandemic revenue spike would be permanent.

His administration later acknowledged a \$165 billion error in a four-year revenue projection. But in the meantime he and the Legislature had raised spending, creating deficits that totaled \$125 billion over four years, according to the Legislative Analyst Office. The deficits were papered over with a series of short-term fixes, including loans and accounting gimmicks.

On Thursday, Newsom unveiled a revised version of his final budget and, without saying so, indicated he had learned a hard lesson about managing volatility.

Although the state is seeing a new tax spike and his budget sees a \$16.5 billion increase in revenues over three years, Newsom's \$349.4 billion 2026-27 budget takes a cautious approach. He says it would not only erase the structural deficit of the past four years, but it would guarantee that his successor would have a balanced first year budget for 2027-28.

"We're cutting deficits but not cutting corners," Newsom said.

The \$246.6 billion general fund portion of the budget relies not only on new revenues, including a \$3.6 billion boost from several relatively minor tax increases, to be balanced, but it is indirectly helped by big reductions in federal aid for healthcare.

Newsom devoted the first minutes of his budget presentation to bragging about California's \$4-trillion-plus economy, saying "we simply have no peers."

He also trolled those with "California derangement syndrome" and denounced President Donald Trump as corrupt and incompetent.

However Trump's tightened eligibility for federally subsidized healthcare that could affect hundreds of thousands of Californians also has the effect of reducing the state's healthcare spending, thus helping Newsom draft a balanced budget.

He could have backfilled the lost federal funds, but that probably would have required him to propose a major tax increase of some kind, which, as a likely 2028 presidential candidate, he is unwilling to do.

However his attitude on healthcare and taxes places Newsom at odds with advocates for poor Californians who would be affected and their allies in the Legislature, many of whom want a tax increase.

Graham Knaus, CEO of the California State Association of Counties, immediately declared that "the governor is proposing to do to counties what he accuses the president of doing to California."

Chris Hoene, of the left-leaning California Budget & Policy Center, which has been beating the drums for tax increases, said, "The governor promoted California's economic dominance while, in the same breath, making it more difficult for Californians with low incomes to access healthcare by reinstating harmful Medi-Cal asset limits, expanding work requirements and increasing Medi-Cal premiums for certain immigrants."

With just a few months remaining in his governorship, Newsom's ability to bend the Legislature to his will is fading, so the question his new budget poses is whether legislators will go along. Or will they insist that the new holes in the state's safety net be plugged and support raising taxes to pay for it?

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

Social Security's "First Year Rule" and Withdrawing from SS



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Security benefits (e.g., before your full retirement age or "FRA," which for you is age 67). What will happen is this: when the IRS provides SSA with your 2026 earnings (in 2027), SSA will review to see if your total 2026 net earnings from self-employment exceeded the 2026 annual limit of \$24,480. If not, no further action is necessary. But if you did exceed the full year 2026 earnings limit, SSA will contact you and ask you to provide them with details about your monthly 2026 net earnings. If you have exceeded the monthly limit in any 2026 month after your SS benefit started, you will not be entitled to SS benefits for that month. Essentially, if you have exceeded the annual limit, you cannot exceed the monthly earnings limit in any remaining month during your first year of collecting. If you exceeded the annual limit, and also any monthly limit, SSA will send you an overpayment notice saying you must repay them for the benefits you were not entitled to receive because you exceeded the monthly earnings limit.

2. You can, within 12 months of applying for Social Security, ask SSA to withdraw your application for SS retirement benefits. They will do that for you, but you will also be required to repay them all SS benefits that they have already paid to (or for) you. This essentially would "wipe the slate clean" and enable your SS benefit to continue growing, allowing you to apply for a larger monthly benefit later. But if you wait longer than 12 months after you first apply for SS benefits, you can no longer withdraw your application for Social Security. Thereafter, you would be subject to the annual earnings limit (the monthly earnings limit would no longer apply).

FYI, after you reach your FRA, there is no limit on your earnings, and you could choose to suspend your benefit payments and earn Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) to get a higher monthly benefit. Also at your FRA, if SSA withheld any of your benefits because you exceeded the earnings limit before reaching your FRA, you would get time credit for the number of months your benefits were withheld. Essentially, they would advance your benefit-start month by the number of months your benefits were withheld, yielding a slightly higher monthly amount after your FRA.

Finally, it's important to know that the contributions you made to Social Security from payroll taxes (FICA/SECA) over your lifetime are not what determines your monthly SS benefit amount. Your monthly SS benefit is based on two main factors: a) your average monthly earnings (indexed for inflation) for the highest earning 35 years over your lifetime as reported to the IRS, and b) the age at which you claim your SS benefits. Your contributions to Social Security while working only provide you with eligibility to collect SS benefits; the contributions aren't put into a separate account for you and are not used to calculate your monthly SS benefit. ★

Dear Rusty: I am 63 years old, and about to apply for my Social Security benefits. I am self-employed but only working part time. I know about Social Security's annual earnings limit but recently I learned I must also be concerned about a monthly earnings limit of \$2,040. My questions are:

1) How do I find out if I will be subject to a monthly earning limit of \$2,040 per month? I thought it was only evaluated annually.

2) If I choose to cancel Social Security within the first year or after, what are the penalties? Would I have to pay them back for the whole amount for the whole time that they paid me? Which makes no sense, since I have been paid into SS since I was 13 years old.

Can you help me understand this? **Signed: Claiming Early and Still Working**

Dear Claiming Early: It can get tricky if you are still working after claiming your Social Security before your SS full retirement age (FRA), especially during your first year collecting. I'm happy to answer your specific questions:

1. There is a special rule which applies during your first year collecting early Social



Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson's Campaign Against the Supreme Court

ly, since time is of the essence. With the state's scheduled May 16 primaries rapidly approaching (now delayed), Louisiana wants to redraw its maps in keeping with the court's decision.

Jackson's dissent quotes a 2019 decision of the court in *Rucho v. Common Cause* for the proposition that courts should not "risk assuming political ... responsibility for a [partisan map-drawing] process that often produces ill will and distrust."

But this was a warning against courts involving themselves in minute questions of partisan gerrymandering. Here, the court has set out a bright-line principle that district lines can't be race-based, but otherwise said that the political authorities are welcome to gerrymander or not.

Jackson also slaps the court for creating "chaos in the State of Louisiana." This is quite rich given the history.

When Louisiana created a congressional map after the 2020 census with just one majority-minority district, it got sued for not sufficiently taking race into account; a judge ordered it to make a second minority district. When Louisiana complied by manufacturing a monstrosity of a district stretching 250 miles to randomly scoop up black voters, it got sued again -- this time, for taking race too much into account -- and the case made it to the Supreme Court.

It is a sign of how weak the Jackson dissent is that the other progressives haven't joined it, not even Sonia Sotomayor. It certainly would have been

The call is coming from inside the house. The Supreme Court's decision in *Louisiana v. Callais* has made progressives even more determined to delegitimize the Supreme Court, and Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson is among them.

In a dissent involving a post-decision procedural question, Jackson accused the majority of acting out of pure partisanship. Her opinion said that the court "unshackles itself" from all constraint and "dives into the fray" (meaning the partisan fray). In its jurisprudence, "principles give way to power." It is acting with an "abandon" that is "unwarranted and unwise."

These harsh charges occasioned a stinging and well-deserved rebuttal from Justice Samuel Alito, but, merits aside, the tenor and substance of the Jackson dissent capture the mindset of a Left that is increasingly determined to destroy the Supreme Court in order to save it.

The technical matter under dispute was whether the Supreme Court would wait 32 days to finalize its decision in *Louisiana v. Callais*. This is the usual practice under Rule 45.3 of the court; the idea is to allow the losing party time to file a petition for re-hearing. But the rule is flexible, a default "unless the court or a justice shortens or extends the time."

The winning side in the case asked to get the decision finalized quick-

much better if this case had been decided sooner, but Alito drops a suggestive footnote in his rejoinder to Jackson. He notes that the constitutional question was "argued and conferenced nearly seven months ago." This implies that the case was effectively decided right after oral arguments in October of last year, and that the dissenters slow-walked it.

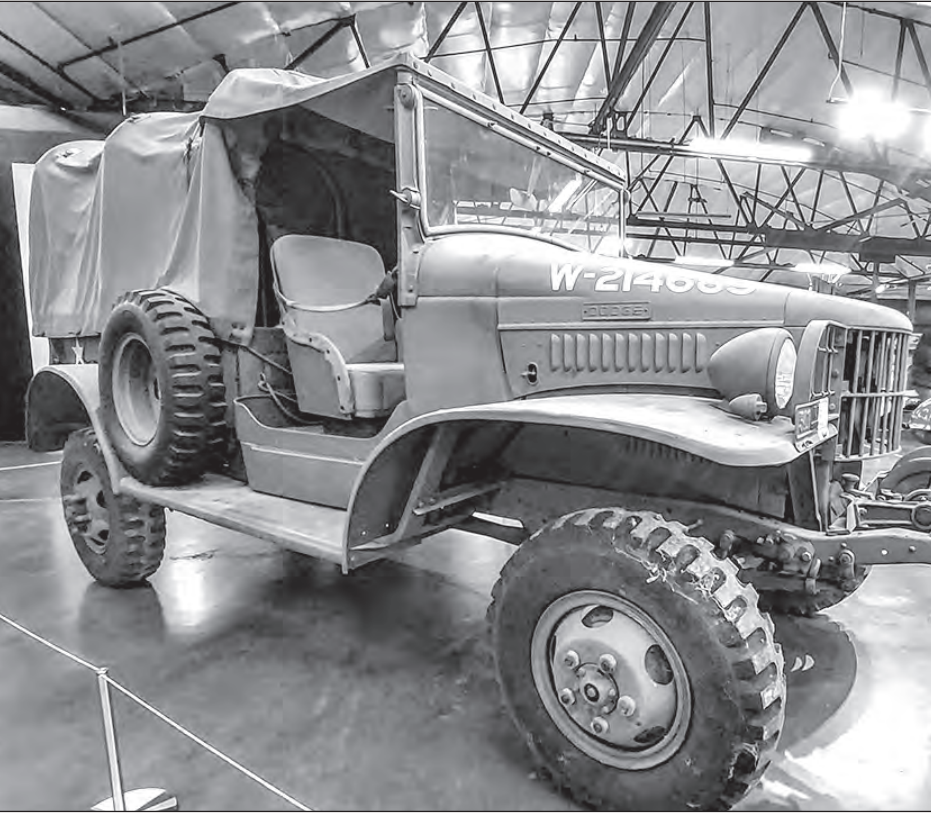
Now, Jackson wants more delay -- it serves the partisan interests of Democrats to preserve unconstitutional race-based congressional districts as long as possible.

The reaction to *Louisiana v. Callais* has been so incandescent on the Left because it believes that unless black voters have black representatives, they are disenfranchised. But this is not how representative democracy works. Were white voters in Georgia disenfranchised in the 2022 Senate race when two African-American candidates, Democrat Raphael Warnock and Republican Herschel Walker, ran against each other? Were the voting rights of Christians in New York City crimped in 2025 because a Muslim man won the mayoral election?

All indications are that a commitment to some version of court-packing will be orthodoxy among 2028 Democratic presidential candidates. They will seek to make the highly isolated and wholly unpersuasive Justice Jackson part of a new court majority imposed by political fiat.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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Local ‘Blue Star Museums’ Offer Free Admission to Military Personnel and Families



Active-duty military personnel and their families receive free admission to the California Automobile Museum and seven other museums through Labor Day. Photo courtesy of California Automobile Museum

Sacramento Area Museums News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Eight Sacramento-area museums are participating in Blue Star Museums to offer free admission to the nation’s active-duty military personnel and their families, including National Guard and Reserve, from Armed Forces Day on May 16 through Labor Day on Sept. 7, 2026.

A partnership between the National Endowment for the Arts and Blue Star Families in collaboration with the Department of Defense and museums across America, the local museums participating in the 2026 Blue Star Museums program include

the following: Aerospace Museum of California, California Automobile Museum, California Museum, Crocker Art Museum, Fairytale Town, Sacramento Children’s Museum, Sacramento History Museum and SMUD Museum of Science & Curiosity (MOSAC).

The free admission program is available for those currently serving in the United States Military: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, including Reservists, National Guardsman (regardless of status), U.S. Public Health Commissioned Corps, NOAA Commissioned Corps, and up to five family members. Qualified members must show a Geneva Convention

common access card (CAC), DD Form 1173 ID card (dependent ID), or a DD Form 1173-1 ID card for complimentary entrance into a participating Blue Star Museum.

Before planning a visit, guests are encouraged to contact the individual museums for hours of operation and note some are normally closed on Mondays and in observance of holidays such as Memorial Day and Labor Day.

For more information or a complete list of participating Blue Star museums, please visit arts.gov/initiatives/blue-star-museums.

For more about upcoming activities offered by Sacramento area museums, visit SacMuseums.org. ★

Tower Bridge Scheduled for One-Way Traffic; Daytime Delays Expected



Caltrans recently announced that motorists should expect partial daytime closures on the Tower Bridge (State Route 275) from now until November, with daily one-way intermittent traffic control in place from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Image courtesy of Caltrans

Caltrans News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Caltrans is alerting motorists that the Tower Bridge or State Route 275 (SR 275) continues a schedule for partial daytime closures for electrical and parts replacement. The bridge remains safe for travel.

This ongoing work is part of a \$3 million emergency project to make necessary upgrades to the electrical system at the bridge house.

For motorists and workers’ safety, the bridge will be under daily one-way traffic control. Caltrans contractors will be building scaffolding and rigging lines, removing old parts and installing electrical lines.

The schedule goes as follows: partial closure and daily one-way intermittent traffic control 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. through November.

To avoid delays for motorists, bridge work will not be scheduled one hour prior to and one hour after River Cats and Athletics games at Sutter Health Park.

Weather conditions could delay or cancel scheduled work. Caltrans advises motorists to “Be Work Zone Alert.”

Caltrans District 3 will issue construction updates on Twitter @CaltransDist3 and on Facebook at CaltransDistrict3. For real-time traffic, click on Caltrans’ QuickMap quickmap.dot.ca.gov or download the QuickMap app on iTunes or Google Play. ★

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This Year Student Art Exhibit

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Kiwanis

UC Davis Men's Golf Trio Earns All-Big West Recognition

UC Davis Athletics News Release

DAVIS, CA (MPG) - Three UC Davis men's golfers earned 2025-26 All-Big West recognition, the conference announced May 12. Sophomore Lequan Wang was named to the All-Big West Second Team, while juniors Curtis Da Silva and Ryan Firpo each received Honorable Mention.

Wang, a sophomore from San Mateo, CA, posted the lowest scoring average among the Aggies (71.7) across 32 rounds and closed the regular season ranked No. 362 nationally per Clippd, the highest mark on the UC Davis roster. The Aragon High School graduate recorded two top three individual finishes, taking third at the Bridgestone Collegiate Invitational at 15-under 201 (with 19 birdies, second-most in the tournament) and third at the home El Macero Classic at 4-under 212.

Wang closed fall play with a tie for fourth at the Marquette Intercollegiate after a 3-under second-round 69 and opened The Prestige in a tie for second after a 3-under 68 before the third round was canceled by high winds. He played in all 11 stroke-play events for the Aggies during the regular season after earning All-Big West Honorable Mention as a freshman in 2024-25.

Da Silva, a junior from Monterey CA, earned Honorable Mention after competing in all 11 stroke-play events and posting a 72.9 scoring average across



Sophomore Lequan Wang and juniors Curtis Da Silva and Ryan Firpo have recently earned All-Big West recognition. Photo courtesy of UC Davis Athletics

32 rounds. The Robert Louis Stevenson School graduate opened the season with his first career top 10 by finishing 10th at the Ram Masters Invitational at even-par 210, including a 4-under second-round 66 at Fort Collins Country Club. Da Silva fired 70-68-69 at the Amer Ari Invitational at Mauna Lani Resort to take a tie for 38th at 9-under 207 (the only Aggie under par for the event, with three sub-par rounds) and closed the regular season with a 14th-place finish at 1-under 215 at the 2026 Big West Men's Golf Championship at La Quinta Country Club, one of just

two Aggies under par at the conference event. He also led UC Davis on Day 1 of The Goodwin at Stanford with a 1-under 69.

Firpo, a junior from Davis, CA, received Honorable Mention in his first season at his hometown school. The Davis Senior High School graduate transferred to UC Davis from Fresno State, where he was named the 2023-24 Mountain West Freshman of the Year as a Bulldog. Firpo led the Aggies at the home El Macero Classic with a tie for 30th at 7-over 223, the same event at which he posted a sixth-place finish as a Fresno State freshman in 2024. He paced UC

Davis at the Windon Memorial Classic with a tie for 55th and an even-par 72 in the final round, opened the spring with a 6-under 66 in round one of the Amer Ari Invitational, and closed at a tie for 35th at the R.E. Lamkin Invitational with a final-round 72 across 10 starts and 28 rounds.

Long Beach State's Alejandro de Castro Piera was named the conference's Golfer of the Year and Cal Poly freshman Rafael Bobo-Lloret was tabbed Freshman of the Year. Long Beach State's Rob Murray earned Coach of the Year honors after leading the 49ers

to a record-setting Big West Championship at La Quinta Country Club. Long Beach State placed five golfers on the All-Big West First Team, joined by UC San Diego's Davis McDowell.

The trio of selections capped a 2025-26 campaign that featured the program's first individual victory since 2023, sophomore Louis Grizot's Silver Title at the Gene Miranda Falcon Invitational, and a 3.43 team GPA in the Winter 2026 academic quarter that set a UC Davis men's golf program record and stood as the highest among all UC Davis men's programs. ★

Beavers Run Out of Gas, Fall to Feather River



The 2026 season has come to a close as the American River College baseball team lost in the regional championship game to Feather Rier 19-8 on May 3 in Quincy. Photo courtesy of American River College

American River College News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The 2026 season has come to a close as the

American River College baseball team lost in the regional championship game to Feather River 19-8 on May 3 in Quincy. After putting a thumping on the Golden Eagles in the first game, then falling 4-2

in the second game, everything was on the line that morning.

The game was moved up to 10 a.m. to try and beat an incoming thunderstorm. After the Beavers failed to score in the top of the first, Feather River wasted no time jumping on freshman RHP Ayden Dringenberg (Oakmont), who had thrown three innings on Friday to secure the win over Monterey Peninsula College. The Golden Eagles got three runs in the first inning, then one in the second.

The Beavers came back with three runs in the third inning, with 2B Lance Sabatke (River City) driving in a run with a single to center. But the ARC pitchers just couldn't keep Feather River off the board, as the Golden Eagles scored in six of their eight innings at bat, with all but the second inning being multiple run innings. After ARC closed the gap to 4-3, FRC scored four in the third and two in the fourth to go up 10-3.

The Beavers answered back with a run thanks to an RBI double by Sabatke. RHP Nathan Gahn (Bear Creek) held Feather River scoreless in the fifth and the Beavers got two runs in the top of the

sixth to make the score 10-6. But Feather River just kept adding on and got the two runs back in the bottom of the sixth. In the seventh ARC clawed back, scoring a pair of runs to make the score 12-8 thanks to a sacrifice fly by 3B Luke Haney (Oak Ridge) and an RBI single by SS Bryce Sabatke (River City). The Beavers threatened in the eighth with runners at first and second with one out but 1B Jose Vega (Highlands) hit into an inning ending double play to squash the threat. It was one of two double plays the Beavers hit into on the day. With the game still within reach going into the bottom of the eighth Feather River put the game away for good, scoring seven runs to make the final score 19-8.

The American River College baseball staff would like to thank everyone who supported the team this season and we are looking forward to January and the start of the 2027 season. And a big congratulations to the players on the 2026 team for a fine season, and to the sophomores who will be moving on...thank you for your dedication and hard work. Once a Beaver, always a Beaver! ★

Murillo Sixth Addition to Men's Soccer Roster

Sacramento State Athletics News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Sacramento State head men's soccer coach Michael Linenberger added a sixth commitment for the 2026 campaign, welcoming local product James Murillo to the roster in time for the upcoming campaign.

"We are excited to add James to our roster," Linenberger said. "We work hard to keep good local talent at home, and James has had a lot of college success already. We expect him to challenge for a starting role in our back line this coming fall."

A native of Elk Grove, CA, Murillo joins the Hornets' sideline after prepping at Elk Grove HS and spending last season at nearby Folsom Lake

College as a center back for the Falcons. In his first collegiate campaign, he was named the team's Defensive Player of the Year, added Big 8 Conference First Team honors, and was selected to the California Community College Athletic Association's all-regional squad.

He appeared in 21 matches as a sophomore at Folsom Lake, helping lead the Falcons to a conference title with an 8-1-1 record (13-6-2 overall) and adding his first career goal — and game-winning score — in a 1-0 victory over Cosumnes River College on Oct. 7. That helped his case for Big 8 Conference Player of the Month honors.

As a true freshman in 2024, he started 17 matches and appeared in 1,453 minutes at Jessup

University, attempting one shot.

Prior to his time at Jessup, Murillo competed with Sacramento United SC from the U9 all the way up to the U19 level, earning a selection to the MLS NEXT All-Star game. He also competed with the Sacramento Gold semi-pro club in the NPSL and with FC Folsom in the UPSL, helping the latter to a spot in the national finals.

Murillo is the latest addition to the Sacramento State roster for 2026, joining previous commitments from defender Mateus Romualdo (Snow College), midfielder Henry Hedden (Monte Vista HS), goalkeeper AJ Bengds (UNC Asheville), forward Jakub Kozlowski (Palomar College) and defender Cameron Martino (Clovis East HS). ★

Weiss Takes Home Senior Championship



Senior Champion Jeff Weiss. Courtesy photo



Legends Championship winner Herb Jensen. Courtesy photo



Super Senior Championship winner Mark Morgan. Courtesy photo

Sacramento Golf Council News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Golf Council hosted the 53rd Sacramento County Men's Senior, Super Senior and Legends Championships at Ancil Hoffman Golf Course, Carmichael May 5-6.

The Senior Championship (ages 55-64) was won by Jeff Weiss in a four-hole playoff over Bob Niger. Both scored 141.

The Super Senior Championship (ages 65-74) was won by Mark Morgan with a score of 70-64.

The Legends Championship (ages 75 plus), Herb Jensen won with a consistent score of 72-72.

Jim Shields was the Golf Council Tournament Director. The event showcased the top senior golf talent from across the region and was sponsored by Eskaton Village Carmichael. ★