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AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

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Yada Thai Opens in Fair Oaks



From left, owners of the Yada Thai restaurant in Fair Oaks area are Teelapon, Tami and Patchariya Sawangwan.

**Story and photos
by Thomas J. Sullivan**

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - Savor the authentic flavors of Yada Thai, a new family-owned restaurant which recently celebrated its soft July opening in the Fair Oaks Square Shopping Center.

Owners Tami Sawangwan, her father Teelapon and mom Patchariya, all of Sacramento serve up a very distinctive menu cooked from their own traditional family recipes offering a variety of flavorful entre choices, including barbecue, stir fry, curries and soups, many of which are not typically seen on a Thai restaurant menu.



A luncheon dish of Pad Thai noodles with generous portions of tofu and bean sprouts was plenty for two.

Yada Thai at 8116 Madison Ave. replaces Silver Dragon, a popular Chinese restaurant which closed due to a fire in 2024. The interior is fully refreshed, and bright temporary exterior signage

announces the new restaurant until permanent signage is installed, Tami Sawangwan said.

Yada Thai Cuisine is open for lunch and dinner on Tuesdays to Sundays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The restaurant is closed on Mondays to take care of the necessary preparation which its diverse menu of dishes requires, she said.

"Monday allows Mom and Dad to carefully prepare all of the fresh ingredients, vegetables, meats and sauces which are a part of our dishes," she said.

Recent customer reviews convey a special dining experience and a passion for authentic Thai flavors which are present in each dish the family artfully prepares.

The kitchen mixes familiar plates such as barbecue, curries and fried rice with lesser-seen noodle soups

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Affordability Issues Keep New Home Sales at Pre-Pandemic Levels

**North State Building
Industry Association
News Release**

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - New home sales in July continued to reflect a return to post-pandemic levels, the North State Building Industry Association reported.

During the month, BIA members reported selling 403 new homes, which was 13% higher than June but 16% lower than July 2025. The monthly total was just slightly below the average July in the region (412) and one more sale than the 402 sold in July 2019 before the pandemic began.

BIA President & CEO Tim Murphy said affordability factors continue to put a damper on sales.

"Mortgage interest rates have edged upward to their highest level in about a year as uncertainty about the world's oil supply continues due to the conflict between the U.S. and Iran," Murphy said.

"In addition, local government red tape continues to keep production low and their high fees — averaging over \$100,000 per home in the region — drive costs far higher than in many parts of the country."

Murphy added, however, that prospective buyers should remember that builders are working harder than ever to make it possible to purchase the new home of their dreams.

"Through mortgage rate buy-downs, downpayment assistance and other incentives, new homes today are often more affordable than you'd think. Families considering relocating should talk to builders about what options they have available," he said.

In July, Roseville saw the most new homes sold (72), followed closely by Sacramento (69). Rancho Cordova was third with 49, followed by Elk Grove (46) and Natomas and Galt, which tied for fifth with 33 each. More statistical information is available below.

Sales were reported for 204 communities in Amador, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties. ★

'Get Cheeky' and Stay Sweet

By Thomas J. Sullivan

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - My cheeks were flushed. It started as an ordinary day, just an ordinary news assignment.

I was to meet a representative of the Get Cheeky Police Department and meet with a representative of the Organized Crumbs Division. The alleged crimes: "felony snack and run, aggravated craving, premeditated dessert consumption and organized crumb distribution."

I read the witness statement.

"At approximately 7:42 pm, witnesses reported a fresh batch emerging from the oven. Within minutes, multiple victims admitted they 'only planned to eat one.' The suspects vanished shortly thereafter."

The case was filed by C. Bakewell.

I accepted a black



Lisa Gschweng is the "top cookie" at Get Cheeky, a new home-based bakery in Orangevale where new suspects arrive weekly, and some don't stick around for long. Photo by Thomas J. Sullivan

rectangular box from the a confidential dossier case "Syndicate," complete with file inside and soon began

my investigation.

At 5 inches and weighing in at more than eight ounces, I was told that Get Cheeky cookies don't tend to stay in custody for very long before they're gobbled up and then disappear.

The dossier file was filled with six "Red Flag" known troublemakers, elements of the chocolate gang which I was warned to approach with extreme caution.

I was told by my source that the box contains "pure chaos, unreal flavor, zero self-control and a reason to smile."

I also kept a close eye on six "Sweet Talkers" who were exceptionally smooth operators.

And I couldn't ignore the "Usual Suspects," six classic cookie flavors with long rap sheets.

Would I be tripped up by six "Scene Stealers" who

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**WE SUPPORT
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Yada Thai Opens in Fair Oaks

Continued from page 1
and street-food snacks. Portion sizes are especially generous.

Tami Sawangwan and her family immigrated to Sacramento 16 years ago from Thailand. Owning restaurants has been a family tradition given Sawangwan's grandmother owned multiple restaurants in the Bay Area, she said.

Behind the scenes, Tami Sawangwan's father, Teelapon specializes in the menu's barbecue and stir fry dishes while her mother Patchariya specializes in curry dishes using long-time family recipes, Tami Sawangwan said.

Up front, Tami Sawangwan offers helpful advice to each customer on how to build their own lunch or dinner to suit their preference – from appetizer to dessert - and to dial in just the right spice level which meets their preference.

Customers readily familiar with Thai cuisine are certain to spot their favorite among 11 different appetizer choices offered.

Openers include Moo Ping, marinated grilled pork skewers with spicy tamarind sauce and Tod Mun Pla, deep fried fish pancakes served with sweet chili cucumber sauce.

Veggie egg rolls and traditional Gai Satay, marinated chicken skewers served with cucumber salad and peanut sauce are a favorite choice, she said. Chicken curry puffs, puff pastries with chicken, potato and yellow curry filling served with a cucumber salad is a light choice.

Yada Thai also offers three different freshly made soups with choices of chicken, shrimp or seafood added by customer preference.

Lighter fare includes four different salad choices including a laab salad featuring a choice of ground chicken, pork, beef, tofu with lettuce, red onion and mint in chili lime fish sauce.



Yada Thai at 8116 Madison Ave. replaces Silver Dragon, a popular Chinese restaurant which closed due to a fire in 2024.

A hearty and refreshing Papaya salad – served Thai or Lao style, includes green papaya, tomatoes and Thai green beans with a peanut garnish.

Additional salad choices include Yum Nua (Thai beef salad) with sliced grilled steak with cucumber, tomatoes, red onion and mint in chili lime fish sauce.

Thai barbecue is a house specialty with Crying Tiger (Sua Rong Hai), a famous Isaan (northeastern Thai) dish featuring grilled, marinated beef sliced into thin strips and served with a fiery, tangy dipping sauce.

Customers can also choose from a grilled, marinated half-chicken served with sweet chili sauce and a portion of grilled marinated pork served with spicy tamarind sauce. Both dishes are served with sticky rice.

When a large bowl of hearty, hot Thai soup is a first choice,



An entrée of red pumpkin curry offered plentiful portions of pumpkin, chicken, large prawns, artfully cut carrots, bell pepper and basil.

Yada Thai offers three with a choice of protein that might catch your eye on the menu.

Tom Kha, a traditional hot and sour coconut soup with mushroom, tomato, red onion, lemongrass, galanga and kaffir leaves is rich, creamy and tangy.

A fiery, clear Thai hot and sour seafood soup, known as Poh Taek features lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves, Thai basil and fresh chili.

My choice of red pumpkin curry with no extra spice offered plentiful portions of pumpkin, chicken, large prawns, artfully

cut carrots, bell pepper and basil. Other popular familiar curries include red, green and Panang varieties.

Eight different stir fry main dish options are offered providing plenty of tantalizing dishes to share. These include spicy eggplant with bell pepper, white onion and basil in red chili paste and mixed vegetables served with broccoli, cabbage, carrots, baby corn and mushrooms in a white garlic sauce.

My guest and I also chose a main dish of my favorite Pad Thai noodles with generous portions of tofu and bean sprouts for my lunch. Yada Thai's extensive noodle menu merits further exploration on a return dinner visit.

Customers choosing a specialty rice dish with their meal have the option of Thai Fried Rice with egg, white onion, green onion and tomato; pineapple fried rice with shrimp, chicken, egg, white onion, green onion, pineapple, cashew nut, carrot, raisin and peas; or crab fried rice – crab meat, egg, carrot and green onion. Smaller sides of white, brown and sticky rice are also available.

Do make room for dessert and treat yourself to one of three ice cream choices including, Thai tea, coconut or mango.

My guest and I found it difficult to choose from mango sticky rice served with choice of mango or coconut ice cream, or a fried banana – drizzled with honey and powdered sugar.

We each promised ourselves a dessert of Bua Loi, traditional chewy colorful dumplings with Ginkgo nuts and coconut meats in warm sweet coconut milk on our next visit.

Beverages include a choice of Thai teas, soft drinks and beer.

The restaurant offers take-out and delivery options. For more information, call 279-444-2722.★

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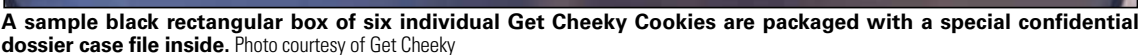
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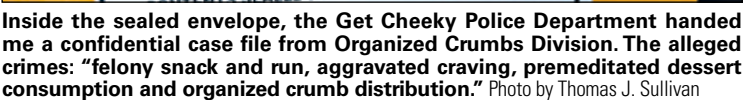
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One by one, each suspect cookie recipe which was developed in Gschweng's home kitchen and added to Get Cheeky's



Cookies can be ordered in groups of two, four and six. Delivery is free within 15 miles of Orangevale.



I'm lucky my suspect today wasn't just "Hot and Bothered," especially known for raising temperatures everywhere it goes.

From Iceland to Italy, and all over the U.S., San Francisco-based band Dirty Cello brings the world a high energy and unique spin on blues, rock, and Americana. Photo courtesy of Dirty Cello

Dirty Cello currently performs all over the world from Iceland to Italy ensuring the audience wherever they are that they are having a memorable night with live music getting their hearts pounding and toes tapping to their beat.

UK-based publication, *Aldora Magazine*, described Dirty Cello's combination of genres as "an utterly irresistible sonic cocktail, converting listeners in their droves, a fanbase that

Don't miss out on this fun performance and come out to experience Dirty Cello's sound in beautiful and lively Fair Oaks. You might even have a new favorite band by the end of the night. ★



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Back-to-School Season Brings More Young Riders to Local Trails

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - As students gear up for back-to-school season, Sacramento County expects to see an increase in kids and teens riding bicycles and e-bikes. Whether they're commuting to school, meeting up with friends or enjoying the American River Parkway, now is a great time for young riders and their parents to review the rules of the road and the trails.

The message is simple, ride smart. ride safe. ride free. Know your ride, know your classification, know the rules and make smart choices that help you enjoy the freedom of riding.

First, know what you're riding. Not every electric two-wheeler is an e-bike. California recognizes three classes of electric bicycles, and knowing the difference is especially important when riding on trails.

Class 1 e-bikes provide electric assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and have a maximum assisted speed of 20 mph. Class 2 e-bikes have a throttle that can propel the bike without pedaling, and have a maximum assisted speed of 20 mph. Class 3 e-bikes provide electric assistance only while the rider is pedaling and can assist up to 28 mph.

Class 3 e-bikes are not permitted in Regional Parks facilities, including the American River Parkway and Dry Creek Parkway trails. Riders must be at least 16 years old to operate a Class 3 e-bike.

State law requires anyone under 18 to wear a properly fitted and fastened bicycle helmet when riding on public roads, bikeways or public bicycle paths and trails.

E-motorcycles, sometimes called e-Motos, are different from e-bikes altogether. A qualifying e-Moto is an electric motorcycle, with two wheels, handlebars,



The message is simple, ride smart. ride safe. ride free. Know your ride, know your classification, know the rules and make smart choices that help you enjoy the freedom of riding. Photo courtesy Sacramento County

a straddle seat and no pedals. These vehicles are subject to additional licensing and registration requirements and are not permitted on the Parkway trail.

A simple rule of thumb: If it doesn't have fully operable pedals, it's not an e-bike.

Parents can help by looking at their child's bike before they head out and making sure they know what type of e-bike they are riding, how fast it can go and where it can legally be ridden.

The Jedediah Smith Memorial Multi-use Trail along the American River Parkway is a popular destination for cyclists, pedestrians, runners, skaters and equestrians. With many different types of users sharing the trail, knowing and following the rules helps keep everyone safe.

For cyclists riding on the parkway follow the 15 mph speed limit. The trail is designed to accommodate many types of users, so riders should slow down and be prepared for changing conditions and other trail users. Pass on the left. Give a verbal warning, such as

“On your left,” before passing another cyclist or trail user. Ride single file. Leave space between riders and allow others to pass safely.

Stay alert. Keep your eyes on the trail and watch for pedestrians, other cyclists, animals and vehicles crossing the trail. Pull completely off the trail when stopping. Stopping in the middle of the trail can create a hazard for others. Stay on permitted trails. Outside of the designated off-paved cycling areas, bicycles are not permitted on non-paved trails on the parkway.

Wear a helmet, California law requires riders under 18 to wear a properly fitted helmet when riding on public roads, bikeways and public bicycle paths and trails. Helmets are recommended for riders of all ages and always use lights when riding after dark. Riders should make sure their bicycles are properly equipped and visible to others.

The Parkway's 15 mph speed limit applies to all riders, regardless of how quickly their bike is capable of traveling. For

example, a Class 1 or Class 2 e-bike may be capable of reaching 20 mph, but riders must not exceed the Parkway's 15 mph trail speed limit, the same goes for traditional bicycles.

Class 3 e-bikes and other motorized vehicles, including e-motorcycles, are prohibited in all Sacramento County Regional Parks trails and park facilities.

A safe ride starts before you ever get on the bike. Riders should wear a properly fitted helmet, stay aware of their surroundings and follow the posted speed limit. On a busy multi-use trail, a few extra seconds of caution can make a big difference.

Parents can help by taking a few minutes before the school year begins to review their child's bike, make sure it is properly equipped and talk about where and how they can safely ride.

“E-bikes can be a great way for young people to get around and enjoy the outdoors, but with that freedom comes responsibility,” said Sacramento County Regional Parks Director, Liz Bellas. “We want young riders

and their families to enjoy our trails while making smart choices that keep themselves and everyone around them safe.”

For many young people, riding a bike or e-bike is about more than getting from one place to another. It's a way to spend time with friends, get outside, explore the parkway and enjoy a little independence.

Smart and safe riding helps make that freedom possible. When riders know their bikes, understand where they can ride and follow the rules, they can ride with confidence and enjoy the freedom to keep exploring.

So before you head out this school year, remember ride smart, ride safe, ride free. Know your ride, know the rules, make safe choices and have fun.

For more information about multi-use trail rules and regulations, visit Sacramento County Regional Parks' multi-use trail rules and regulations. For tips on safely riding bicycles on roads, bike lanes and sidewalks, visit Sacramento County's active transportation webpage. ★

More Than a Crown

Reesa Artz Advocates for Families, Students and Community

By MPG Staff

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On most weekday mornings, Reesa Artz can be found in a school health office, taking a temperature, refilling an inhaler, advocating for a student during an IEP meeting, or sitting with a student who just needs a quiet minute. On weekends, she might be at a food literacy event, teaching childbirth education, behind a microphone at a community fundraiser or on a video call with tribal health partners.

This year, she is doing all of it wearing a crown.

Artz was recently named National American Miss California Elite 2026, a competitive statewide title she earned after a consecutive decade with the organization. National American Miss is a personal development and community service program that emphasizes public speaking, volunteerism and leadership for young women, and Artz has grown up inside it, competing, mentoring and returning year after year to a program she credits with teaching her how to walk into a room and advocate for something bigger than herself.

“That stage taught me how to think on my feet, hold a room, and trust that I belonged in it,” Artz said. “I use those skills every single day.”

The rooms she walks into are almost all here. Artz's roots run straight through this community: she attended Mariemont Elementary and Sierra Oaks before graduating from St. Francis High School, and she was a Girl Scout from kindergarten through high school, earning her Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards with her mother, Angela, serving as troop leader.

Those years pointed her toward a career in care. Professionally, Artz is a registered nurse with the Sacramento City Unified School District, where she serves Title 1 students, young people for whom the school nurse is often the most accessible health provider in their lives. She is also a graduate of the Duke University School of



Artz was recently named National American Miss California Elite 2026, a competitive statewide title she earned after a consecutive decade with the organization. Photo courtesy of Reesa Artz

Nursing and was selected as one of Duke's “Young and Rising” for 2026, which highlighted the top 40 young alumni making impact in their fields.

Beyond the school health office, Artz is a birth and postpartum doula, a childbirth educator and a perinatal behavioral health coach, supporting families through pregnancy, delivery and the tender months that follow.

That work has now become her scholarship. Artz is a third-year PhD candidate in Indigenous and Rural Health at Montana State University, where she holds an NIH-funded translational research training

fellowship. A Chippewa Cree tribal member from Rocky Boy Nation in Montana, she is building and piloting an Indigenous doula training curriculum in partnership with the California Rural Indian Health Board, research aimed squarely at the maternal health disparities facing Native families.

For all of that, the title year looks less like a résumé and more like a calendar. Artz is spending it doing what the sash is actually for: showing up with love and lots of heart. Farmers markets. Nature centers and neighborhood parks. Family festivals. Fundraisers and galas. Most of her days,

she says, come down to the same small thing, noticing what someone needs before they've had to ask.

She learned that at home. “Everything I know about caring for people, I learned watching my mom,” Artz said. “She showed up for me, her work, strangers, her neighbors, anyone who needed her. She never called it service, she just called it being there, and she's still the person I'm trying to be.”

Artz is just as direct about what a decade of competition gave her, and impatient with the assumption that it is about appearances. The stage taught her how to be interrupted and keep going, and how to walk into a room of strangers and make the case for something that matters. The same skills work at a bedside with a frightened family and at a table where policy gets decided.

“Every ambitious woman I know has been told at some point to take up less space,” she said. “This organization spent ten years teaching me the opposite. We all are so worthy and deserve to take up space and achieve boldly.”

In November, the decade comes full circle: Artz will represent California at the National American Miss national competition.

“I'm not walking in there alone,” she said. “Every family I've cared for, every kid in my health office, this community, my mom, I get to carry all of them with me. That's truly the honor of a lifetime.”

Whatever the result, the year ahead looks the same to her. What she wants people to take from it has nothing to do with a crown, it's the simple, stubborn belief that everyone has something a community needs, and that the only way to find out what yours is is to go looking. Dream as big as you want, she says, then find the place that needs you, and go.

Artz is available throughout her title year for community events, school visits and volunteer service, at no cost to local organizations. ★

Sacramento County Water Agency Wraps Up 10-Year Water Meter and Pipe Improvement Project

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Water Agency (SCWA) has completed its biggest construction project ever. In August, SCWA wrapped up a \$160 million project to upgrade the water system in the Arden area. The Arden Service Area Pipe and Meter Installation Project spanned 10 years, and SCWA installed approximately 38 miles of new water distribution pipelines and more than 3,000 new water meters.

Project Manager Helen Rocha guided the project since its inception, holding community meetings and speaking with residents individually to educate homeowners and businesses about the project. This section of the Arden area was the



The Arden Service Area Pipe and Meter Installation Project spanned 10 years, and SCWA installed approximately 38 miles of new water distribution pipelines and more than 3,000 new water meters. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

last section in California to not have water meters. The switch to a metered system began after the state passed Assembly Bill 2572, requiring the installation of

water meters in 2004. The Water Agency started installing the meters in 2016.

The project also replaced waterlines that have been in service for

decades. Some of the oldest pipes were nearly 85 years old, installed during World War II. Due to the aging system, the infrastructure around the Arden Service

Area was in danger of pipe material failure and leaks. The new pipes provide better water flow to homes and businesses while reducing maintenance costs for SCWA. The upgraded system also improves fire flow standards to meet state guidelines offering firefighters better water pressure from hydrants in case they're needed.

Over the years, this project, conducted in six separate phases, won various construction awards from the American Society of Civil Engineers, including the Outstanding Community Improvement Project Award in the state of California in 2022.

Beyond the improvements to the water infrastructure, the project also included partnering with the Department of Transportation to provide street repaving in each phase once the pipes were installed. ★

Will Pope Named SCOE Chief Administrator, Human Resources

Experienced Human Resources and School-Site Administrator Joins SCOE

Sacramento County Office of Education News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) has named Willard (Will) Pope, M.Ed., as its new Chief Administrator, Human Resources, effective Aug. 4.

Pope succeeds Darrien Slider-Johnson, M.Ed., who is retiring from her position as Chief Administrator, Human Resources. In his new role, Pope will lead SCOE's human resources functions and support the systems, relationships and practices needed to recruit, develop and retain a highly qualified workforce.

"Will brings a valuable combination of human resources expertise, labor-relations

experience, and school-site leadership," said Sacramento County Superintendent of Schools, David W. Gordon. "He understands that strong systems and trusted relationships are both essential to supporting employees and improving outcomes for students. We are pleased to welcome him to SCOE, and we are deeply grateful to Darrien for her leadership and service."

Pope joins SCOE from Twin Rivers Unified School District, where he most recently served as Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations. In that position, he helped direct districtwide labor and employee relations, collective bargaining, certificated and classified recruitment and retention, administrator training, workplace investigations and compliance



The Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) has named Willard (Will) Pope, M.Ed., as its new Chief Administrator, Human Resources, effective Aug. 4. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County Office of Education

with employment law, Education Code, Board policy and negotiated agreements.

He previously served as the Twin Rivers Director of Title IX and Compliance,

coordinating investigations, supportive measures, staff training, and the district's response to complaints involving students and employees.

Before entering district-level human resources administration, Pope spent 12 years as a school-site administrator, having served as principal of Ridgepoint K-8 School from 2019 to 2022 and principal of Kohler PK-8 School from 2012 to 2019. He began his administrative career as vice principal of Foothill Farms Junior High School and Foothill Ranch Middle School, where he helped lead the transition from one school program to another and supported the development of a new faculty and school culture.

"My vision is to create the conditions where people,

partnerships and systems work together to expand opportunity and improve outcomes for every learner," Pope said. "I look forward to listening, building relationships and working alongside SCOE employees to strengthen the organization's support for students, schools and communities."

Pope earned a bachelor's degree in English with a minor in organizational studies from the University of California, Davis, and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from California State University, Sacramento. He holds an Administrative Services Credential from National University and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential from Sacramento State. ★

New School Year Sees SCOE Focused on Literacy, Student Success

Training Focuses Staff on Culture and Collective Responsibility

Sacramento County Office of Education News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - To begin the new school year this August, the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) ushered in "Mission Possible 2"—building on the professional learning program introduced last year. More than 250 school site employees from SCOE's Student Programs division gathered for two days of professional learning to prepare for teaching and learning in 2026-27.

The training featured Dr. Anthony Muhammad, educator and author of "Transforming School Culture and The Will to Lead, the Skill to Teach." His work emphasizes the relationship between school culture and student achievement—and the responsibility educators share to confront barriers, maintain high expectations and ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed.

The workshop reinforced that improving literacy and advancing student success are not the responsibility of one classroom, program or division. They require educators and leaders to work collectively, examine their practices, and create environments where students feel connected, valued, challenged and supported.

That shared commitment was visible



The training featured Dr. Anthony Muhammad, educator and author of "Transforming School Culture and The Will to Lead, the Skill to Teach." Photo courtesy of Sacramento County Office of Education

throughout the event.

Staff wore shirts created by Milton 510 featuring "LI" in the fashion of the alphabet letter cards to represent Literacy. The front included the literacy-focused message, "Kinfolk, once you learn to read, you will be forever free." On the back, the words "Literacy Level Up" appeared above the names of numerous celebrated Black authors and

thinkers spanning generations.

Educators and administrators united around a simple but consequential message: literacy opens doors to learning, independence, opportunity and freedom. The shirts helped build team spirit, but their message went much deeper. They connected literacy to history, identity, representation and possibility. The shirts were sponsored by SCOE and its partners:

MENTOR California, Improve Your Tomorrow, Inc. and the Roberts Family Development Center.

Mission Possible 2 brings to life SCOE's countywide back-to-school message:

"Success starts with being present, connecting, and creating conditions where every student is ready to learn."

For 2026-27, literacy will remain central to creating those conditions. Students must be present and engaged. They must experience meaningful connections with educators, peers, families, cultures and ideas. They must also have access to strong instruction, relevant texts, individualized support and adults who believe deeply in their capacity to learn.

The work will continue well beyond the two-day training. Throughout the year, SCOE will strengthen literacy practices, examine outcomes, elevate student voice and work with families and community partners to, among several student programs and services, turn the findings of its Landscape Analysis: Understanding the School Experiences of Black Students in Sacramento County into sustained action through its Freedom to Flourish initiative.

The message for the new school year is clear: It is time to level up literacy and make success possible for every learner. ★

Sacramento Superior Court Judges Accept Challenge to Connect with Students

Sacramento Superior Court News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County teachers who are interested in bringing civics to their K-12 classrooms this school year are invited to connect with the Sacramento Superior Court.

As California marks the nation's 250th anniversary, judges from the Sacramento Superior Court are readying for an outreach challenge

sponsored by Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero's Power of Democracy Civic Learning Initiative.

Beginning in August, the court pledges to connect with at least 250 K-12 public school students by the end of 2026.

"Participating in this statewide challenge is a wonderful opportunity for the court to connect with schools and students who may not yet be familiar with our educational outreach efforts, while also

celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence," said Court Executive Officer Kelly Sullivan. "It's a meaningful way to engage young people in learning about the important role the courts play in our democracy."

To help judges meet the challenge, the court is placing emphasis on September, when the judicial branch celebrates "Constitution Month." Judges are available for classroom visits, and the court is open to

hosting students for courthouse field trips. Teachers are encouraged to submit their requests early.

The challenge is supported by the Power of Democracy's "Judges in the Classroom" program. This program offers year-round interactive lessons, including mock trials, age-appropriate discussions of constitutional rights and Q&A sessions where students can learn firsthand about a judge's role.

"By bringing judges into

classrooms and inviting students into the courthouse, we show them that the law and Constitution are not just ideas they learn about—they are at work in their community every day," Sullivan said.

Teachers can sign up to support the challenge by choosing from the activities listed at <https://www.powerofdemocracy.org/pod250> or contact the court directly at CourtVisits@saccourt.ca.gov. ★

Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris

Culture

By V.G. Harris

Well, Kings fans, while the NFL is already in preseason mode and only weeks away from regular season games, the NBA is not far behind.

In less than 60 days your own Sacramento Kings will once again be gracing the hardwood, and many are asking what can they expect?

Ask any 10 people and you'll get 10 different answers.

That would not be true of many organizations that have developed expectations based on recent successes and possibly on additions that were made to the team during the off season.

The Sacramento Kings made the post season just four years ago and appeared to be on a roll. So, what happened that brought them to a paltry 22 wins last year?

Injuries certainly played a critical role, but it is much more than that.

I took a look at the most storied franchise in the NBA with a total of 18 championship rings.

The Boston Celtics were once almost invincible, putting together eight straight championships, and sending a message that you may compete with us, but don't expect to win.

What made the Celtics such a dynasty? One word describes how Boston got there. Culture.

The Celtics developed a culture that didn't just spell team, it defined it.

Led by legendary Red Auerbach, the Celtics coach developed a team culture that many have tried to emulate but few have been successful. Perhaps the San Antonio Spurs may break into the conversation, as Gregg Popovich led the Spurs to five championships spanning a 29-year run.

Gregg Popovich simply had a modality that much like Red Auerbach, not only grasped the attention of his team, but transformed it.

So, what you ask, is the culture of the Sacramento Kings?

If I had that answer or even a good guess, I would certainly venture it.

What I can tell you is that denigrating players and constantly discussing their lack of ability as it relates to defense, or some other basketball related issue, is not something that will ever build a lasting relationship and is conducive to anything related to culture.

The Sacramento franchise while extolling

their past two drafts, have become cataleptic in their approach to anything resembling a culture.

Whether the national media can see it or not, the Kings have an abundance of talent on the current team, but a culture is badly needed. Something that isn't just lip service but shows up and supports the players in a way that builds confidence and a trust.

Domantas Sabonis has bought into what the Sacramento Kings have preached every season he's been here and has been the epitome of a leader literally from the day he arrived.

Domantas had to overcome the many fans that were crushed by the loss of Tyrese Haliburton, and all he did was cover his ears and lead the entire league in rebounding three years in a row.

Imagine breaking a thumb and playing through the pain to lead the league in rebounding and double-doubles.

Not lost in his stellar play has been the attitude of a true leader. Always the first player to help his teammate with his feet, a constant source of encouragement, Sabonis has been the poster boy for what an NBA teammate should look like.

But Sabonis isn't the only player to be shopped for a trade and criticized for his perceived lack of defense.

Zack Lavine has had to endure constant dialogue about the over inflated salary he is receiving and how he is keeping the Kings from moving forward because of his price tag and lack of defensive skill.

After these two have been trashed will no restraint, let's encourage them to be team leaders and approach the upcoming season will renewed enthusiasm.

Earth to the Kings. This is not how team culture is taught and developed.

Both Sabonis and Lavine have been former NBA all-stars, and contrary to popular opinion they both hit the hardwood with the same acumen that made them all-stars.

Let's start but extolling the virtues and building a culture that the glass is half full and not the opposite.

I know leaders when I see them, and Domantas Sabonis and Zach Lavine fit the description to a tee.

I'm showing up to see them play and I hope you will too!

All the best!

Interested in How California Pays for State Government? Here's Where to Find the Data



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

The state budget is an obvious source for anyone interested in how California finances its programs.

However the budget, including the latest version enacted in June, is only a rough outline, a collection of suppositions and guesses, some educated, others politically motivated.

An obvious example is what happened four years ago when Gov. Gavin Newsom declared that California had a \$97.5 billion surplus, bragging "no other state in American history has ever experienced a surplus as large as this."

That number never appeared in the budget, but legislators immediately pumped up spending. The surplus turned out to be a mirage based on what officials later acknowledged was a \$165 billion error in revenue estimates.

However, the spending increases were already in effect, leading to chronic, multibillion-dollar deficits ever since. Moreover, one piece of increased spending, the extension of health care coverage to undocumented immigrants, cost \$6.2 billion more than assumed in the budget, resulting in cutbacks of coverage.

While the budget itself is an imprecise source of financial information, its addenda provide troves of useful

data for those savvy enough to find them. They reveal such statistics as how many employee positions the state has (482,088), a list of the state's outstanding bond debts (\$73 billion) and how much the state collects from dozens of specific taxes and fees (\$328.4 billion).

One particularly interesting chart provides details on revenues and spending year-by-year, dating back to 1975. It reveals that income, outgo and the size of the state payroll remained stable relative to the growth in California's population and personal income, until Newsom became governor in 2019.

Since then, the state has added about 100,000 positions to its payroll, increasing it by one-third, relative to population. State general fund spending rose from 7.9% of total personal income in 2019-20 to 9.58% in 2023-24, the highest ever recorded since 1975. It now stands at 9.42%.

Those numbers are why Newsom will be leaving his successor a very unbalanced budget — no matter what he claims. In fact, one addendum projects shortfalls lasting through the next governor's first term, even if general fund spending remains virtually static, which it will not.

Those seeking an even deeper understanding of the state government's financial position have another source: The 372-page "Annual Comprehensive Financial Report" that the state controller's office files with the federal government. Its numbers are rock solid because they have to be and are backed up by audits.

State Controller Malia Cohen issued the 2024-25 report in May, two months after the federal government's deadline — but that

was an accomplishment. The state hadn't issued a timely report since 2018 because it was struggling with a new financial reporting tool, the Financial Information System of California, dubbed FISCal, that was years overdue, many millions of dollars over budget and incapable of generating accurate data.

The financial report covers a much broader array of state agencies (201) and programs than the budget, and therefore a much larger financial spread: \$595.5 billion in revenue and \$582.5 in spending — 66% larger than the \$351.7 billion current state budget.

Among its revelations is that the state has \$176.5 billion in unfunded liabilities for state employee pensions and retiree benefits, primarily healthcare. The report also contains detailed data about taxable sales, personal income and other economic sectors from which the state derives income.

One chart is especially timely, given the current debate over Proposition 40, a ballot measure that would impose a tax on the wealth of California's approximately 200 billionaires. Opponents of the wealth tax argue it could impel one-percenters to leave the state if it passes.

A chart on page 322 hints at the ramifications, supporting the oft-quoted assertion that California's top 1% of taxpayers by income — about 175,000 people — generate nearly half its income tax revenues.

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

I Worked for my Ex-husband but Wasn't Paid and now have little Social Security; What are my options?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: Sadly, I was in business with my ex-husband. I'm a nurse and he was a chiropractor. He refused to pay me "on the books" and now, at age 73, after divorcing him due to his financial irresponsibility (I don't want to burden you with the thefts that he perpetrated), I am stuck with a small \$773 Social Security payment each month. At age 73 I am now faced with having to go back into the workforce. Is there anything I can do to prove that I worked 40 years for my husband but wasn't paid? **Signed: Distressed Divorcee**

Dear Distressed: We are so sorry to hear of your unfortunate circumstances. Assuming your ex-husband is now collecting Social Security retirement benefits (or is at least eligible to if you are divorced at least 2 years), you should be able to collect an ex-spouse benefit as his former wife. In that case, you would be entitled to receive 50% of the Social Security benefit he was entitled to at his own full retirement age (because he and you were married

for over 10 years).

The way that will work is that you would continue to receive your personally-earned \$773 monthly Social Security retirement amount earned from other employment, but you would also be entitled to a supplemental "spousal boost" to bring your payment up to half of the SS payment amount your ex-husband is entitled to at his SS full retirement age. In other words, because you were married to your ex for more than 10 years, you are entitled to the same Social Security benefits as though you were still married. That is true, even if he has remarried and his new wife is also getting a spouse benefit from his record. You will still be entitled to an ex-spouse benefit from your ex-husband as his former wife. And if he dies before you, as a surviving ex-spouse you will get the same Social Security benefit he was receiving at his death, instead of the smaller amount your will get while you are both living.

Regarding rejoining the workforce, while you can certainly go back to work at age 73 without it negatively affecting your Social Security benefits, if you are struggling financially, I suggest you visit this website sponsored by the National Council on Aging: www.benefitscheckup.org. At this website, you can enter your zip code and find much information about other supplemental

assistance you may be entitled to where you live, including healthcare and medication assistance, housing, nutritional assistance, etc.

Regarding your question: "Is there anything I can do to prove that I worked 40 years and wasn't paid?" Social Security determines benefits based solely on your personal earnings as reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which is, in turn, dependent on how your joint income taxes were filed over the years you worked in your husband's business. Social Security is unable to assist you with IRS matters. I'm afraid yours is more of a legal matter you would need to pursue by discussing your situation directly with the IRS or engaging an attorney for assistance.

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



During the 1979-1980 hostage crisis, a defiant Iran starkly demonstrated the limits of American power. Forty-five years later, it is doing the same thing, although in vastly different circumstances. Back then, when the post-Vietnam military was at a low ebb, we didn't strike Iran, and a long-shot rescue operation ended in abject failure.

Now, with the U.S. military at its most proficient and professional in history, we have inflicted punishing blows against the regime but still haven't been able to impose our will, in part because we are running low on the munitions necessary to prosecute the war. Not only is this embarrassing, it is dangerous.

If Operation Midnight Hammer -- last year's lightning strike against Iranian nuclear facilities -- demonstrated the prowess of the U.S. military and sent a useful deterrent message to our enemies, the Iran War is now doing the opposite. We're running low on missiles and interceptors in a months-long conflict with a beleaguered second-rate power. What would happen in a drawn-out war with a major adversary?

President Trump has posted a thunderous denunciation of leaks to the media about our depleted weapons stocks, and the leaks are indeed irresponsible. But this problem is a matter of public record and has been tracked by outside organizations.

A Foreseeable and Dire Munitions Crisis

At the end of July, the Center for Strategic and International Studies estimated that, out of an arsenal of 2,330 Patriot interceptors before the Iran war, we had roughly 800 remaining. We were down to roughly 250 THAAD interceptors from 450 at the start of the war.

On top of this, news organizations are reporting that we are almost out of ATACMS -- a ground-launched precision-strike missile -- and Precision Strike Missiles, the newer, longer-range successor to ATACMS.

This isn't comforting at a time when a war with China could be in the offing. Even before Operation Epic Fury, a war game involving a conflict in the Taiwan Strait conducted by CSIS had the U.S. running out of key munitions in days or weeks.

What happened? This is a crisis a long time in the making. As defense analyst Mackenzie Eaglen of the American Enterprise Institute has warned for years, skimping on the acquisition of munitions was an easy way to meet constrained Pentagon budgets, and we relied on optimistic scenarios about potential wars to justify chronically insufficient production.

For some understandable reasons, we also emphasized sophisticated missiles and interceptors over "good enough" systems. This led to Iran, for instance, forcing us to use highly expensive, difficult-to-replace interceptors against cheap, bulk threats from drones. All this means that we've expended ordnance that it will take us years to build

again. According to media reports, we've used about half our supply of Tomahawk cruise missiles, when we've been manufacturing fewer than 100 a year.

We need to put missile production on a wartime footing, and leverage hungry new defense firms to produce cheaper precision missiles and interceptors at scale. In World War II terms, it's the difference between the easy-to-maintain and mass-produced Sherman tank and the exquisite and powerful, but ultimately impractical Tiger. Whatever advantages the Tiger had in armor and punch, you'd still rather be the U.S. with 50,000 Shermans than the Germans with 1,500 Tigers.

The Trump administration has been talking the right game, and there have been encouraging moves. It has signed agreements to acquire 10,000 cruise missiles over three years at a cost of a few hundred thousand dollars each, far less than a Tomahawk at more than \$2 million.

Wars always bring surprises. It should have been a shock to no one, though, that contemporary military conflict is largely missile warfare, or that we'd have trouble sustaining prolonged hostilities given that we started out with inadequate stocks. The American way of warfare is often to mess it up before adjusting and getting it right. The course correction here should be considered the most urgent priority of U.S. national security.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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PoppTalk

With Mary Jane Popp

Purpose and Passion

Tina Weiss is a visionary. From companies she started in Fashion, Textiles, Skin-care, and others, **Tina** is the definition of entrepreneur for over thirty years. And she still made room for philanthropy. But now she shares her message of resilience, self-discovery, and faith through her story in **“Fear to Faith”** that was inspired by her incredible life journey and her desire for us to know the greatest setbacks can become the greatest comebacks. She really wants us to discover strength, reclaim confidence, and find purpose through adversity. She had a rocky road, but with that experience she wants us to find our purpose and passion. She told me on POPPTALK that purpose begins with self-awareness. Here are key principles for finding YOUR purpose and passion, and so begins your journey! Look for the joy it can bring.

1. STOP LIVING FOR EVERY-ONE ELSE’S EXPECTATIONS. Many people spend years seeking approval instead of honoring their own path. Your purpose is discovered when you choose authenticity over people-pleasing.
2. YOUR GREATEST CHALLENGES OFTEN REVEAL YOUR GREATEST STRENGTHS. Difficult seasons can become powerful teachers, helping you uncover resilience, compassion, and gifts you never realized you had.
3. TRUST YOUR INTUITION. Your inner voice is often your best guide. Learning to listen to it builds confidence and helps you make decisions that align with your purpose.
4. CREATE HEALTHY BOUNDARIES. Saying “no” isn’t selfish. It’s an act of respect. Protecting your time and energy allows you to focus on what truly matters.

5. DON’T LET FEAR MAKE YOUR DECISIONS. Fear will always give you reasons to stay where it’s comfortable. Growth begins when you choose faith, courage, and possibility instead.
6. TURN YOUR EXPERIENCES INTO YOUR PURPOSE. Every chapter of your life, both joyful and painful, holds lessons that inspire, encourage, and serve someone else.
7. STOP COMPARING YOUR JOURNEY TO OTHERS. Everyone’s timeline is different. Focus on your own progress, celebrate your growth, and trust that your path is unfolding exactly as it should.
8. PASSION GROWS THROUGH ACTION. You don’t have to know every step before you begin. Small, consistent actions create momentum and often lead to opportunities you never expected.
9. SEEK SUPPORT FROM POSITIVE, SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE. The right people can offer guidance, encouragement, and perspective, helping you move toward a place of greater peace and purpose.
10. FORGIVE TO MOVE FORWARD. Forgiveness is not about excusing what happened, it’s about freeing yourself from the weight of resentment. When you release the past, you create space for healing, peace, and the life you were meant to live.
- Want to find out how to achieve your greatest purpose? Check out **Tina Weiss** at www.TinaWeiss.com. And she has a little gift for you too. I’m sure building strength after adversity is not easy, but seems like such great satisfaction. But you have to start somewhere and now is the sometime. **Tina** believes in you and **SO DO I!** ★

Defendant Convicted for Series of Robberies

Sacramento County District Attorney’s Office News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sandra Alvina Martinez was convicted by a jury of three counts of robbery with a use of firearm allegation found true. Allegations that Martinez has two prior strike convictions for carjacking were also found true. Between Sept. 25 and Oct. 28, 2024, Martinez robbed three victims. The first robbery occurred at a 7-eleven on Watt Avenue. Martinez was found the next day in the same vehicle with the same mask,

t-shirt and gloves used in the robbery. Martinez was also on GPS ankle monitoring, which placed him at the 7-eleven around the time of the robbery. The second robbery occurred at a donut shop on Del Paso Boulevard, where he told the victim he had a gun and demanded money. Martinez returned to the same shop and robbed the third victim while pointing a firearm at the victim. Martinez faces a maximum sentence of 85 years to life in prison. Sentencing is set for Oct. 30 at 10 a.m. in Department 13B before the Honorable Helena Gweon. ★



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Ask

DR. UNIVERSE

Dr. Universe: How does the wind move?

- *Elijah, 10, North Carolina*

Dear Elijah,

When I’m not answering science questions, you can usually find me at the river. I enjoy the cool water and tasty fish. And I really love the gentle breeze ruffling my fur.

I asked my friend Jun Meng about that wind. He’s an atmospheric scientist at Washington State University. He leads a lab that studies air quality. That includes wildfire smoke and dust that ride the wind.

He told me that wind is air on the move.

“Air moves because the sun doesn’t hit the Earth’s surface evenly,” Meng said. “Some places get warmer than others. When the air warms up, it rises. When it’s cool, it sinks.”

Air is mostly nitrogen and oxygen molecules. When they warm up, those air molecules move faster. They drift apart. Scientists say that the air expands.

Have you ever opened a car door on a super-hot day? You can feel the warm air rush out. The trapped air inside the car heated up and pushed outward. When the door opened, it flowed out.

When the air molecules are farther apart, there are fewer molecules in one space. The warm air is less dense. It rises above the cooler, heavier air.

When they’re cool, air molecules move more slowly. They crowd close together. That makes the air denser. Cooler, heavier air sinks.

“That leaves some spots with extra air piled up and other spots with less,” Meng said. “So, air just flows from where there’s

more of it to where there’s less. And that flowing air is what we feel as wind.”

It’s like blowing a bunch of air into a balloon and pinching the neck closed. If you let go, the air flows out of the small balloon—where it’s packed in tight—and into the big room.

Wind does important jobs.

Wind shifts warm air to help regulate the temperature all over the planet. It also moves moisture in the air, so it rains in different places. It can blow away smog and wildfire smoke.

Wind carries seeds, spores and pollen to new places. That helps plants spread. It pushes against young plants, encouraging them to grow stronger stems and roots.

Meng told me it even carries phosphorus-rich dust from the Sahara Desert all the way across the ocean to the Amazon rainforest.

That replaces the nutrients washed away by tropical rains in the rainforest.

It turns out the sun makes the breeze at the river, too. The land warms up faster than the water. So, air rises over the sand and sinks over the river. Then the cool air over the water flows toward the land. That’s the wind tousling my fur.

When the water is big—like an ocean—that cycle is big enough to get names. On a sunny afternoon, when the land is much warmer than the water, the wind blows from the sea toward the beach. That’s a sea breeze. At night, the land cools off faster, so the wind flips and blows back out to sea. That’s a land breeze.

It all works because air knows how to go with the flow.

Sincerely,

Dr. Universe



Scientists describe an area with air molecules packed together as high pressure. A place where they’re spread out is low pressure. So, air moves from high pressure to low pressure—like a slide called the pressure gradient. This weather map (right) shows black loops called isobars. Each loop connects places where the pressure is the same. If isobars are drawn close together, the pressure gradient is stronger. That means the wind will blow faster there. The arrows curve a little because the spinning Earth bends the wind’s path. @NOAA

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SK Hynix NAND Product Solutions Corp DBA Solidigm has an opening in Rancho Cordova, CA for Field Application Eng. Define & doc tech strtyg & long-term roadmap for accts. MS+3 yrs exp reqd. Salary: \$147,750-\$236,090. Telecom permit. To apply email resume to HRresumes@solidigm.com & ref job#10172268 (8/21/26)

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Arm is raised. 2. Poster is smaller. 3. Weight is missing. 4. Cap is reversed. 5. Line in sidewalk is moved. 6. Leg is moved.

GRIN THE BEAR IT

by Dave T. Phipps

CROSSWORD

CLUES

ACROSS

1. Invitation request, acr.

5. Workout unit

8. Prohibit

11. Affirmative response

12. Type of lure, pl.

13. Small silvery fish

15. Seed covering

16. Gumbo vegetable

17. Like Siberian winters

18. "Murder, She Wrote" amateur sleuth

20. Descartes's "therefore"

21. "Apparition investigated in a Scooby-Doo cartoon"

22. ___ Air in L.A.

23. "Arthur Conan Doyle's detective"

26. Deposit, in Paris

30. "Wheel of Fortune" purchase (2 words)

31. Always, in Rome

34. "She ___ blue velvet..."

35. From then on

37. Am is to I as ___ is to we

38. Prison-related

39. International Civil Aviation Organization

40. Window-shop

42. "He ___ and drank the precious words..."

43. Announce

45. "Agatha Christie's Hercule"

47. Ryder Cup participant

48. Fern leaf

50. Charitable contribution

52. "The Pink Panther" Inspector

55. Diver's breathing device

56. Vietnam neighbor

57. Bald eagle's home

59. Bother

60. Highland tongue

61. Get checkmated

62. Cribbage piece

63. Like certain nurse

64. Ginger cookie

DOWN

1. Shag rug

2. Lord's worker

3. Colorado skiing destination

4. Mucus in lungs

5. Adherents of Sikhism

6. Wading bird

7. Russia's 1917 abdicator

8. Titanic's inanimate foe

9. "The Sun is ___ a Star"

10. Unknown power

12. Humorous

13. Blind followers

14. "Raymond Chandler's hardboiled detective"

19. Not those

22. Quilting gathering

23. Orthodox Judaism adherent

24. Chilled (2 words)

25. Cancer-treating machine, acr.

26. "Carolyn Keene's amateur sleuth"

27. Navigational aid

28. Inspiration for poets and musicians

29. Get a new tenant

32. Stud's companion

33. Trained instructor at a country club

36. "Peter Falk's Lieutenant"

38. Lowly workers

40. Lingerie item

41. "Nick to Nora in The Thin Man series"

44. Analyze

46. Paragons

48. Bell-bottoms bottom

49. Fowl perch

50. Skin problem

51. Miner's black one

52. Ball of yarn

53. Same as eon

54. Major one in the sky

55. Tree juice

58. Casual affirmative

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CLUES

ACROSS

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Three Aggies Named to Inaugural Mountain West Men’s Soccer Watch List



UC Davis placed sophomore defenders Nami Banks and Josh Gault and junior midfielder Rafael Matiello on the inaugural Mountain West Men's Soccer Watch List on Wednesday, Aug. 12 selected by the league's head coaches. Photo courtesy of UC Davis Athletics

UC Davis Athletics News Release

DAVIS, CA (MPG) - UC Davis placed three players on the inaugural Mountain West Men's Soccer Watch List on Wednesday, Aug. 12 with sophomore defenders Nami Banks and Josh Gault and junior midfielder Rafael Matiello selected by the league's head coaches.

UC Davis was also picked third in the Mountain West's first pre-season coaches' poll with 15 points. Grand Canyon and San José State each totaled 22 points, with the Lopes receiving four first-place votes and the Spartans

receiving two.

The announcement came one day before the Aggies took the field for the first time in 2026. UC Davis hosted Cal in an exhibition at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 13, at Aggie Soccer Field, the opening step toward its first season of Mountain West competition.

Banks made an immediate impact in his first college season, appearing in all 19 matches, starting 18 and ranking third on the team with 1,571 minutes. The Watsonville, Calif., native earned Big West All-Freshman Team honors after scoring twice on 20 shots. Both goals came in the opening 23 minutes of a 3-2 Senior Night win

over UC Riverside, a performance that also earned him Big West Freshman of the Week honors.

Gault also took on a full-season role in the back line. The Clovis, Calif., native appeared in all 19 matches, made 13 starts and logged 1,449 minutes as a freshman. He played the full 90 minutes nine times and stayed on for all 110 minutes of UC Davis' Big West Tournament quarterfinal match at Cal State Fullerton, which the Aggies won 5-4 on penalty kicks.

Matiello enters his junior season after not appearing in a match in 2025. His freshman campaign in 2024 showed the attacking

threat he can provide: three goals in 16 appearances, including a two-goal performance in a 2-1 win over Cal State Fullerton that ended the Titans' 10-match unbeaten streak. The showing earned Matiello both Big West Offensive Player of the Week and Freshman of the Week honors. He was also part of the UC Davis team that won the 2024 Big West Tournament and advanced to the NCAA Tournament.

The three watch-list selections return to a program that averaged 15.3 shots per match last season, ranking 21st nationally and second in the Big West. UC Davis went 4-3-2 in its final Big West

campaign, finished 3-0-1 at home in conference play and reached the tournament semifinals.

Head coach Dwayne Shaffer enters his 30th season at UC Davis with 269 victories as an NCAA head coach, the 17th-highest total among active Division I men's soccer coaches.

Following the Cal exhibition, the Aggies hosted Chico State at 5 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 16. UC Davis opened the regular season Aug. 20 at Sacramento State and begins Mountain West play Sept. 26 at San José State. The complete 2026 schedule is available online at ucdavisaggies.com/sports/mens-soccer/schedule/2026 ★

Sacramento Kings to Open New Official Team Store in Downtown Commons

New Retail Destination Expands Access to Exclusive Kings Apparel and Elevated Fashion Collections

Sacramento Kings News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Kings announced the opening of a new official Kings Team Store at Downtown Commons presented by Sutter Health (DOCO), creating a year-round destination for fans to shop the latest team apparel, exclusive collections and premium merchandise.

Located across from Golden 1

Center, the official Kings Team Store will deliver an expanded retail experience featuring elevated apparel collections, fashion-forward accessories and exclusive merchandise designed to showcase the Kings brand in new and distinctive ways. Open daily, the official Kings Team Store will make Kings merchandise more accessible than ever for fans and visitors throughout the year. On Sacramento Kings home game days and select arena

events, the Label K Store inside Golden 1 Center will continue to operate, providing guests with convenient access to merchandise within the arena.

“Our fans continue to embrace the Kings as both a team and a lifestyle brand, and this new official Team Store gives them a retail experience that reflects who we are today,” said Sacramento Kings President of Business Operations John Rinehart. “Located in the heart of DOCO,

just steps from Golden 1 Center, it extends the Kings experience with exclusive merchandise and apparel that celebrates our team, our city and the pride of being part of Kings basketball.”

The more than 4,000-square-foot store will feature a wide assortment of merchandise for fans of all ages and styles, including exclusive apparel, everyday fan gear, fashion-forward collections, accessories, headwear, collectibles and gifts. Designed

to make Kings merchandise more accessible than ever, the store will offer everything from classic team essentials to elevated lifestyle pieces that celebrate team pride.

The opening of the new Kings Team Store will coincide with the start of the 2026-27 NBA season. Additional details regarding the store's grand opening celebration, special promotions and exclusive merchandise will be announced in the coming weeks. ★

The Sacramento River Cats Announce Their Schedule for the 2027 Season

Sacramento River Cats News Release

WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento River Cats, proud affiliate of the San Francisco Giants, have announced their 150-game schedule for the upcoming 2027 season and are offering a limited time opportunity to be the first to secure tickets for next season. Fans who purchase tickets to remaining contests in 2026 will receive an equal number of tickets for the 2027 season. Fans can visit rivercatspromos.com/schedulelaunch27 to be eligible for this ticket promotion.

Before the 2027 regular season gets underway, the River Cats will welcome the San Francisco Giants back to West Sacramento for a preseason exhibition game on Sunday, March 21. This will be the fourth straight and sixth overall exhibition matchup between the two sides in their shared history.

The River Cats will begin the regular season on the road for the

first time since 2024 with a three-game series at Albuquerque. They will then return home for the first of 13 series hosted by the River Cats at Sutter Health Park, opening with a six-game set against the Salt Lake Bees (Los Angeles Angels) from March 30 to April 4.

Four of Sacramento's first five series at home will see teams from the Pacific Coast League West Division, as they host Salt Lake twice from March 30 to April 4 and April 27 to May 2, Tacoma (Seattle Mariners) from May 11 to 16, and Reno (Arizona Diamondbacks) from May 25-30. They will also see Round

Rock (Texas Rangers) from April 13 to 18, which will be the Express' only visit to Sutter Health Park.

The River Cats will take a two-week road trip at the beginning of June, facing Sugar Land (Houston Astros) from June 1 to 6, then traveling to face Oklahoma City (Los Angeles Dodgers) from June 8 to 13. They will then return home for

the final series of the second half against Las Vegas (Athletics).

They will kick off the second half on the road at Salt Lake from June 22 to 27.

Following the All-Star Break, the Cats will host two consecutive series at home, beginning with a three-game set vs. Oklahoma City from July 16-18, then a six-game set vs. Reno from July 20 to 25. The Comets' visit in July will be the Dodger affiliate's only trip to Sutter Health Park in 2027.

Sacramento will finish out the season at home for the fourth-straight year, facing Las Vegas from Sept. 14 to 19.

Each Pacific Coast League team will visit Sutter Health Park at least once, with Salt Lake, Tacoma, Reno and Las Vegas

each making two trips.

The River Cats will play at home on the Fourth of July for the first time in recorded franchise history. It will mark the series finale vs. El Paso, taking place from June 29 to July 4.

The only other holiday Sacramento will host is Father's Day on June 20, also marking a series finale vs. Las Vegas, occurring June 15 to 20.

The River Cats will play a total of 39 weekend home games, with 13 each on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Meanwhile, Sacramento will play 36 weekday home games with 12 games each on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Due to the six-game series format, the River Cats will not play on Mondays.

The full 150-game schedule can be viewed online. Game times for all 150 contests, 2027 membership information and a full 2027 promotions schedule are to be announced. First access to single game tickets for the 2027 season are available for a limited time. ★



Thirst Aid for Trees Helps Residents Keep Sacramento's Trees Healthy Through Summer

By Sacramento Suburban Water District Staff

CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG) - More than 50 community members attended Sacramento Suburban Water District's (SSWD) "Thirst Aid for Trees" event on July 24, where they received practical guidance on helping newly planted trees thrive during the hottest part of the year.

Held at the Garden on Eden demonstration garden in Carmichael, the free event brought together tree care experts, water conservation specialists and local partners to demonstrate proper tree watering techniques and answer questions about maintaining healthy landscapes while using water efficiently.

One of the event's highlights was a live demonstration by Master Gardener Cheryl Buckwalter of Landscape Liaisons, who showed attendees how to properly plant a young tree and use a simple five-gallon watering bucket to deliver slow, deep watering. Throughout the demonstration, Buckwalter answered questions from attendees about tree care, watering frequency, and establishing healthy root systems.

"Trees provide shade, beauty and long-term value to a property, but many homeowners may not be familiar with how to water them properly," said SSWD's Conservation and Communications Supervisor, Greg Bundesen. "Simple techniques like slow, deep watering can make a significant difference in helping trees remain healthy and resilient through Sacramento's hot, dry summers."

Representatives from the Sacramento Tree Foundation



Representatives from the Sacramento Tree Foundation joined SSWD staff throughout the event, answering questions about selecting, planting and caring for trees. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Suburban Water District

joined SSWD staff throughout the event, answering questions about selecting, planting and caring for trees. Visitors also learned about weather-based sprinkler timers, available water conservation rebates and other programs designed to help customers maintain attractive landscapes while using water wisely.

Each household received a complimentary pre-drilled tree-watering bucket, water-saving devices and educational materials to help put the techniques demonstrated during the event into practice at home.

Attendees also explored SSWD's Garden on Eden demonstration garden, where they saw examples of water-wise



Each household received a complimentary pre-drilled tree-watering bucket. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Suburban Water District



One of the event's highlights was a live demonstration by Master Gardener Cheryl Buckwalter of Landscape Liaisons, who showed attendees how to properly plant a young tree and use a simple five-gallon watering bucket to deliver slow, deep watering. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Suburban Water District

landscaping and learned how groundwater wells help provide reliable water service throughout the community.

The event attracted coverage from both KCRA 3 and CBS13, helping extend the message about proper tree care and water-efficient landscaping to a broader regional audience.

SSWD customers interested in learning more about proper tree watering, available rebates or scheduling a complimentary Water-Wise House Call can visit sswd.org. ★

Destination Aviation Takes Flight

California Capital Airshow connects local students with aviation professionals, hands-on experiences and career opportunities

California Capital Airshow News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - California Capital Airshow (CCA) will host Destination Aviation, a free youth program designed to introduce middle and high school students to career pathways across the aviation industry, on Saturday, Aug. 22 from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Mather Airport.

Destination Aviation is a curated program for students ages 12 to 18. Students will have the opportunity to engage directly with pilots,

engineers, mechanics, air traffic controllers, aerospace manufacturers, military representatives and educators, gaining a firsthand look at the range of careers available within aviation.

"A student can't pursue a career they don't know exists. Destination Aviation puts that career in front of them, in person, so they can picture themselves in it," said Darcy Brewer, CEO of California Capital Airshow. "The pathway to that career becomes real to them in a way a classroom can't replicate."

Following a Q&A panel with experts from the nation's top aerospace and defense organizations, students will move through the event space and engage directly with panelists and exhibitors representing the full spectrum of aviation careers. Students will have the opportunity to explore hands-on displays, working equipment, simulators and prototypes.

Destination Aviation is one of several year-round STEM programs CCA offers to local youth, made possible in part by proceeds from

the nonprofit's annual airshow. This year's California Capital Airshow, set for Oct. 10-11 at Mather Airport, will mark CCA's 20th anniversary alongside the nation's 250th, and feature the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds, the Canadian Forces Snowbirds and the return of the Night Show.

Destination Aviation is free to attend. Registration is open now for students eager to explore a future in aviation or aerospace at bit.ly/26DestAviat.

California Capital Airshow is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit

organization based in Sacramento, California, dedicated to honoring the military and inspiring the next generation of aviation and STEM professionals. The organization produces the annual California Capital Airshow at Mather Airport and supports year-round youth education programs funded through proceeds from the event. The 2026 California Capital Airshow will be held October 10-11 at Mather Airport and marks the organization's 20th anniversary. For more information, visit california-capitalairshow.com. ★

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Camp Winthers Expands Summer Opportunities



Campers experience a more independent style of outdoor adventure by sleeping outdoors, preparing their own meals and developing teamwork, leadership and outdoor living skills. Photo courtesy of San Juan Unified School District

San Juan Unified School District News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - This summer, even more students had the opportunity to make mountain memories at Camp Winthers through the return of two specialty camp experiences: Venture Base Camp and Music Camp.

Designed to build confidence, strengthen friendships and help students explore their interests, both programs offer unique opportunities that extend beyond the traditional Camp Winthers experience while preserving everything students love about camp.

Formerly known as Venture Camp, Venture Base Camp is designed exclusively for students ages 13 to 15. Campers experience a



Music Camp offers student musicians the chance to take their passion beyond the classroom and into the outdoors. Photo courtesy of San Juan Unified School District

more independent style of outdoor adventure by sleeping outdoors, preparing their own meals and developing teamwork, leadership and outdoor living skills.

Music Camp offers student musicians the chance to take their passion beyond the classroom and into the outdoors.

Throughout the week, students rehearse together in Camp Winthers' natural

setting, receive individualized instruction from music educators and culminate their experience with an outdoor concert for friends and family.

Together, these returning programs reflect Camp Winthers' commitment to providing meaningful experiences that help students discover new interests, develop lifelong skills and create lasting memories. ★



BY JOSH F.W. COOK

★ CALIFORNIA ★ POLICY AND ETHICS

Gay Bar Data Harvesting Cameras Mark Turning Sentiment

By Josh Cook

The last few weeks have seen some amazing instances of a growing policy problem that you face, whether you want to face it or not, just because you have a face.

The most interesting episode was the Gay tracking feature discovered at a group of San Francisco Gay bars that installed PatronScan Guard+ systems (ID scanners + cameras that photograph patrons and collect personal data like names, addresses, genders, and behavior notes).

The customers revolted. The data could be retained and shared across a network of venues using the system for blacklisting problem patrons.

In Chico, the Police Chief apologized that the Flock Camera Data had been shared with other agencies because one of the privacy settings was off.

It's not just the government. Private businesses that take pictures of your face, record what you say and where you go, all claim that the data is not shared, protected, or "encrypted." The fundamental problem is they all lie, and the data miners are getting what they want every time.

One Gay privacy advocate noted that PatronScan does allow you to have your personal information removed from their system... if you go to their website and fill out a form, and the website, yep, it tracks who visits there. It is as if no one has ever heard about what happened to

the Jews in Europe, the Native Americans, and Blacks in the 1940s when Eugenists would run for County Clerk or Commissioner of Health to add "non-white" information to their list of families that were of "mixed race". Like Christians in Iraq and Lebanon, who were put on "the list" before their houses were bulldozed.

It seems as if our history curriculum in schools has skipped over how many times the people in power make a list and then systematically eliminate the listed individuals.

The Government is prohibited by law from gathering a lot of the data that is being harvested by private industry. Then, by "accident" or by "clicking agree" to a 400-page privacy policy, all the data consolidates. It is insidious and no rational person will believe that the government will protect them while it is acting as a co-conspirator in laying the groundwork for amassing a database that can easily be turned into a "cultural" hit list.

There is a policy solution for this: make gathering consumer data and storing it for more than 60 days illegal, make the fines for "leaking" data massive, increase the amount victims of information theft can receive by lawsuit, and make government data leaking a crime with real consequences.

The jig is up; the American people are seeing every day how this data harvesting is a violation of their rights, and they no longer trust the system.

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