

RIVER VALLEY TIMES

42ND YEAR • ISSUE 17

Serving Rancho Murieta, Sloughhouse, Wilton

SEPTEMBER 11, 2026

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MAKING EVERY
BEAT COUNT



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CANDIDATES STAY
SILENT ON JOBS



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WELCOME BEN
SIMMONS



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South Gate Renovation Moves Forward



Resident Tom Shewchuk examines a display of proposed South Gate Improvement concepts following the Aug. 18 Rancho Murieta Association Board meeting.

**Story and photos
by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter**

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The long-awaited renovation of Rancho Murieta’s South Gate entrance moved closer to construction Aug. 18 as the Rancho Murieta Association Board reviewed updated design concepts and authorized staff to proceed with

portions of the project that the maintenance department can complete. Maintenance Manager Troy Schaffner said the concepts presented to the board build upon plans previously developed by Architectural Review Manager Mark Parsons. The large drawing displayed behind the directors showed both a ground-level view of the proposed entrance and an overhead view.

Schaffner said Parsons had revised the design of the archways over the traffic lanes and proposed replacing the entrance’s existing tile roofs with pergola-style structures. “The upper part of that drawing there on the back wall behind the directors is the top-down view of that,” Schaffner said. “And you can see that he’s changed the type of
Continued on page 4

Careers Take Flight at Mather

Destination Aviation gives students a hands-on look at aerospace and STEM careers



Princess Stoebe was one of four winners in the California Capital Airshow’s 2026 Destination Aviation essay contest, earning an introductory flight. Photo courtesy of Mark E. Loper Photography

By Omella Rossi

MATHER, CA (MPG) - Princess Stoebe had never flown an airplane before Saturday. By the time the Clarksville Charter School sophomore climbed out of the cockpit at Mather Airport, a long-time goal of becoming a U.S. Air Force fighter pilot had moved a little closer to reality.

Stoebe was one of four winners in the California Capital Airshow’s 2026 Destination Aviation essay contest, earning an introductory flight before a free event that brought over 300 middle and high school students to Hangar 6 on Aug. 22 to explore careers in aviation, aerospace and science, technology, engineering and math.

“I was delighted when I found out I had won,” Stoebe said. “It was my first time flying, so that was great. I’ve always wanted to get into aviation, but now it’s made me even more determined.”

Destination Aviation, part of the California Capital Airshow’s year-round youth outreach, gave students ages 12 to 18 a chance to meet industry professionals, try flight simulators, examine aircraft and vehicles, and interact with working aerospace equipment and technology prototypes.

California Capital Airshow CEO Darcy Brewer said the program is designed to show students how broad aviation and aerospace careers have become and introduce them to jobs they may not yet know exist.

“If you can’t see it, you can’t be it,” Brewer said.

Brewer said the organization has expanded its youth programming as technology has changed the industry, with students now learning about fields including drones, electric vertical takeoff aircraft, sustainable fuels, autonomous systems and artificial intelligence.

The event’s panel
Continued on page 2

A Meaningful Life, 104 Years in the Making



About 900 members and guests of Rancho Murieta Community Church watch a video interview of Betty Thomas, who celebrated her 104th birthday during the Church at the Lake outdoor worship service Aug. 23 at Lake Clementia Amphitheater. The church used the same stage and sound equipment that had been in place for the ETC concert the previous evening.

**Story and photos
by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter**

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - What does it take to live a meaningful life? On Sunday, Aug. 23, Rancho Murieta Community Church found one answer not only in the biblical book of Ecclesiastes, but in the life of Betty Fehman Thomas, whose 104th birthday happened to coincide with the church’s Church at the Lake outdoor worship service. The coincidence inspired Pastor Phil Fuller to weave her story into his sermon on Ecclesiastes. A video shown during the service chronicled



Betty Thomas, who celebrated her 104th birthday Aug. 23, has lived with her daughter, Maxine Feil, and her family in Rancho Murieta since 2009.

her 104 years, from growing up in Missouri and working as a wartime aircraft rivet inspector to a lifetime of faith that Fuller said made her “a great illustration” of the biblical message about living a meaningful life.

More than 900 people attended the lakeside service overlooking Lake Clementia, where the congregation watched the video tribute before Fuller continued his sermon.

“You know, if you want to know how to make this life meaningful, take it from somebody who’s lived over a century,” Fuller told the congregation. “Remember God, put
Continued on page 3

Careers Take Flight at Mather



Destination Aviation, part of the California Capital Airshow’s year-round youth outreach, gave students ages 12 to 18 a chance to meet industry professionals, try flight simulators, examine aircraft and vehicles, and interact with working aerospace equipment. Photo courtesy of Mark E. Loper Photography

Continued from page 1

included retired Air Force Col. Merryll Tengesdal, the first and only Black woman to pilot the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft; Skye Carapetyan of Siemens; Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory research scientist Michael Zelinski; and Sacramento City College Dean of Technology and Innovation Paul Estabrook.

Throughout the discussion, panelists emphasized that technical knowledge is only part of preparing for a career in aviation or STEM. They encouraged students to strengthen communication and interpersonal skills, maintain a positive attitude, arrive on time and build a foundation in subjects such as math and physics.

Panelists also urged students to begin building

connections and gaining experience now by joining clubs or organizations with others who share their interests, attending events such as Destination Aviation and reaching out to professionals in fields they hope to pursue. They encouraged students not to be afraid to ask questions or seek help as they work toward their goals.

Sacramento County Supervisor Rosario Rodriguez told students that seeing those careers firsthand can turn curiosity into a goal.

“It is one thing to watch an aircraft fly overhead,” Rodriguez said. “It is another to stand beside it. Meet the people who fly it and maintain it and begin to imagine yourself doing the same thing.”

Beyond the panel, students moved through exhibits featuring aircraft,

simulators, equipment and technology while speaking directly with professionals about training, education and career opportunities.

For Stoebe’s father, Alexander Stoebe, watching his daughter take her first flight demonstrated the value of giving students that exposure.

“I’m very proud of her,” he said. “It gives the kids the opportunity to start, get a feeling for it.”

The California Capital Airshow has offered youth programs since 2010. Brewer said the free programs range from activities for elementary school students to internships and scholarships for older students.

The nonprofit’s annual California Capital Airshow is scheduled for Oct. 10-11, with proceeds helping support its youth programs. ★

Correction for Aug. 21 Issue

Wells Items	Task	Status	Owner	Next Action
Wells #5	WSC Final Report	Received	WSC	n/a
Wells #8	Schneider's Free Water	Agreed Not to Pursue	Staff	n/a
Wells #1 & Other #4/#8/#13	Water / Wells Assumptions / Strategy	WIP	IWG / WWWG	Gated by Attorney
Wells #2	Recharge / Banking	Not Started	WWWG	Gated by Attorney
Wells #7	Dunn Geo-Physics Proposal	Not Approved	Board	Additional Info ???
Wells #3/#10 & Other #14	Potable & Non-Potable Wells Site Summary	30% Done	WWWG	Gated by Wells #7
Wells #4	Wells Bid Package	Not Started	Staff	Gated by Wells #3/#10
Other #5/#9/#11	Test / Production Well Agreements	Not Started	Legal	Gated by Attorney
Wells #6	Wells Plan & Bids to IC	Not Started	WWWG / Staff	Gated by Wells #3/#10 & #4
Wells #9	Wells Site Acquisition	Not Started	Legal	Gated by Wells #6
Clementia Items	Task	Status	Owner	Next Action
Clementia #1/#5	Re-permitting Strategy	Not Started	WWWG	Gated by Attorney
Clementia #2	Testing Strategy	Not Started	Staff	Gated by Clementia #1/#5
Clementia #3A	Re-permitting Plan	Not Started	WWWG	Gated by Clementia #1/#5
Clementia #3B	Testing Plan	Not Started	Staff	Gated by Clementia #2
Clementia #4	Cost Estimates	Not Started	Staff	Gated by Clementia #3A/#3B
Clementia #6	Decision Matrix to IC	Not Started	WWWG / Staff	Gated by all above
Other Items	Task	Status	Owner	Next Action
Other #2	Water Partnerships	Don't Recommend	n/a	n/a
Other #10	Secure Water Attorney	Done	Board	n/a
Other #15/#16	WWWG Charter / Matrix	Done	WWWG	Board Affirmation
Other #11	IWMP Data Agreement	70% Complete?	IWG	WIP
Other #6	UWMP Bid Package	Not Started	Staff	Gated by Other #11
Other #7	Water Use Audit	20% Complete	WWWG	Gated by Staff
Other #1	New Recycled Water Usage	Not Started	WWWG	Gated by Other #7
Other #3	Drought Contingency Plan	Not Started	TBD	Gated by Many Items

By MPG Staff

The Aug. 3 River Valley Times attached the wrong graphic showing a Water Vision Working Group matrix in a story about Rancho Murieta Community Services District’s Improvement Committee meeting. The matrix assigns who or what has responsibility for the district’s major water projects. The River Valley

Times regrets the error.

The correct matrix graphic, above, was the group’s final reworking of the staff’s version. The staff version ran in the Aug. 21 issue. The main difference was a description of Well 7, a proposal from Dunn Engineering to explore for new well sites using developer fees to pay for it. The board rejected the proposal 3:2 earlier this year.

Board members also

voted 3:2 to disband the Water Vision Working Group at its Aug. 26 meeting. The matrix was left in limbo. More details from the board meeting can be found online at therivervalleytimes.com. The 3:2 vote at both meetings comprised Board President John Merchant and Directors Linda Butler and Bill Gere voting yes, with Directors Randy Jenco and Tim Maybee voting no. ★



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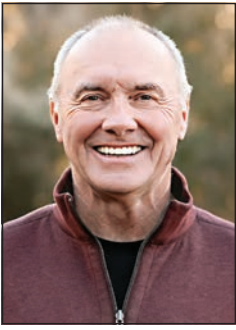
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Continued from page 1

Him first in your life, keep your eyes and your heart focused on Him.”

Her story began Aug. 23, 1922, in Garden City, Missouri. Raised in a Christian home, Thomas recalled that her mother made sure the family never missed church. As a teenager, she was baptized at First Baptist Church in Garden City, an experience she credits with shaping the decisions she made throughout her life.

"I think doing that when I was a teenager, I knew when to say no or when to say yes," she said in the video. "I think that kept me out of a lot of trouble."

A self-described tomboy, Thomas preferred climbing trees with her brother to learning to cook or sew with her mother and sister. Her daughter, Maxine Feil, said the family later moved through Arizona before settling in California, where Thomas graduated from Phoenix Union High School.

One of the video's most memorable stories centered on her courtship with her future husband, Charlie.

The two met at a Valentine's party at a Baptist church in Prescott, Arizona. At first, Thomas wasn't interested.

"I was still a cowboy," she recalled with a smile.

When Charlie asked to drive her home, she refused to ride alone with him, insisting that a girlfriend come along. Later, when he proudly offered to pick her up in a friend's car, she again declined because she hardly knew him. Instead, the two walked across town together, and he came

back to see her every night
after that.

World War II interrupted their romance. Charlie entered the Army expecting to serve one year, but remained in the South Pacific for nearly four years. When he finally returned unexpectedly, Thomas was at her mother's home in California, wearing hair curlers.

"I couldn't look any worse," she laughed. "But he still loved me."

Three days later, on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945, they were married.

During World War II, Thomas worked as a rivet inspector on Lockheed P-38 fighter planes, making sure every rivet on the aircraft wings met exacting standards before the planes left the factory. After the war, she built a 31-year career with Bank of America, advancing from teller to branch manager in Orange County.

Thomas and her husband raised daughters Karen and Maxine in Santa Ana, where they were active members of Bristol Street Southern Baptist Church, volunteering in the nursery and with young adults. After Charlie died in 1976, Thomas moved to Las Vegas to live with her sister before joining Maxine in Rancho Murieta in 2009. Until failing eyesight slowed her down, she enjoyed gardening, mowing the lawn and pruning roses. She remains active in church Bible studies and treasures time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Throughout the video, however, Thomas repeatedly returned to the role



Pastor Phil Fuller preaches from the biblical book of Ecclesiastes during the Church at the Lake outdoor worship service on Aug. 23 at Lake Clementia Amphitheater.

faith has played throughout her life.

“Prayer is very, very important,” she said. “I talk with God. He’s on my mind all the time. Everything I do, I think, ‘Well, God, would You approve of this? Would You approve of that?’ It’s just normal.”

She said she ends each day by reciting the Lord's Prayer.

"It just seems necessary to wrap it up for the evening," she said.

Fuller said he had planned to preach on Ecclesiastes Chapter 12, which urges believers to remember their Creator throughout life. When he realized the service would fall on her 104th birthday, he believed her life beautifully illustrated the message.

Rather than a private birthday party, Feil said her mother wanted to celebrate by sharing the day with the congregation.

"This was her party," Feil wrote. "She was



Betty Thomas and her daughter, Maxine Feil, pose with family members following the Church at the Lake service. From left are great-grandson Caden Metoyer, grandson Brandon Feil, great-granddaughter Ava Morgado and granddaughter-in-law April Feil.

glad to be at 'Church at the Lake' and share with everybody. It was a perfect day being with friends and

For Thomas, the measure of a meaningful life did not come in years

alone.
“I’ve had a very meaningful life,” she said. “I’m very, very happy.” ★

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South Gate Renovation Moves Forward

Continued from page 1

archway entrance that there would be for traffic, along with the type of roof that’s being proposed, changing, frankly, the existing tile that’s there now to this pergola style.”

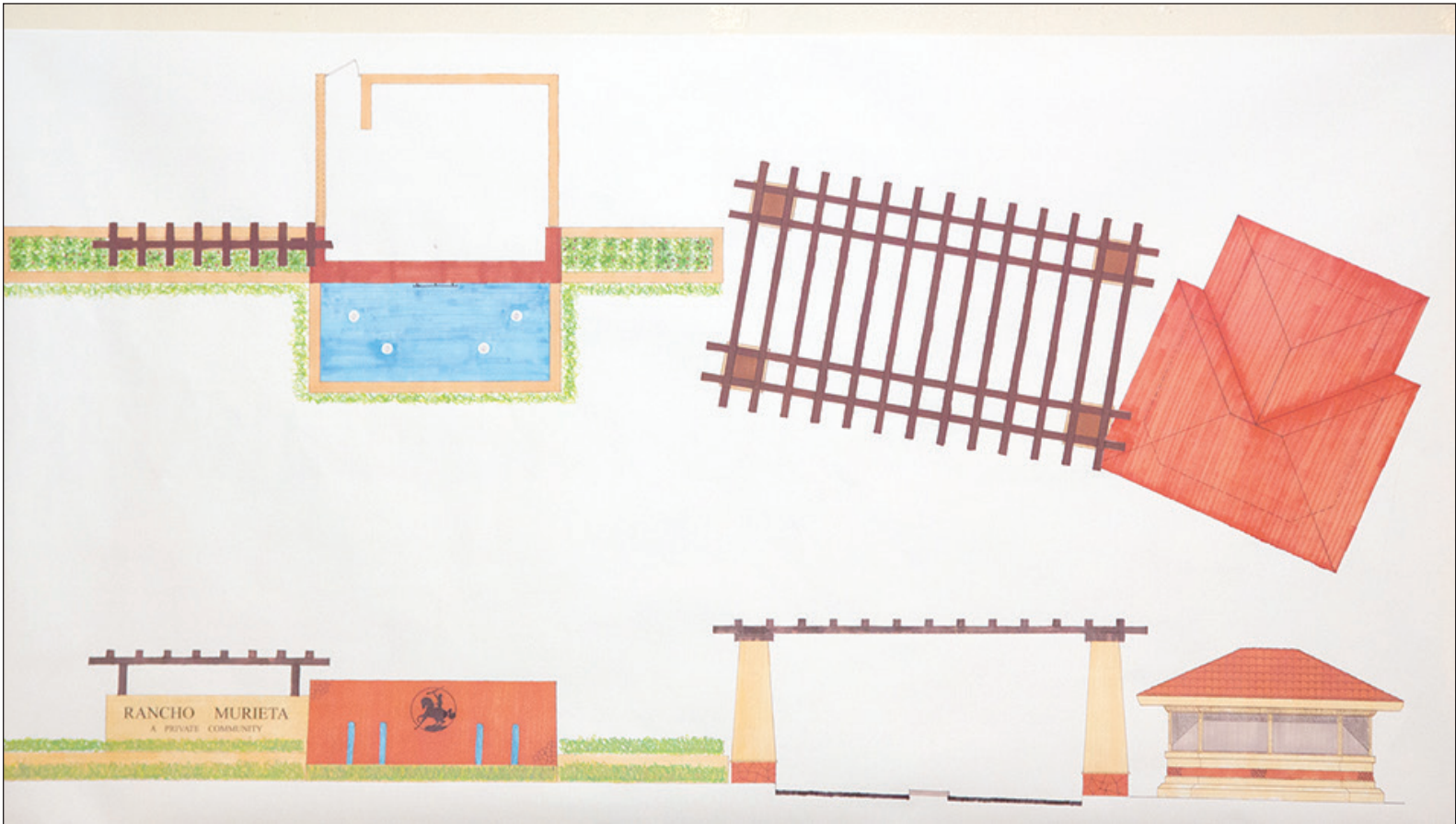
The project would update the entrance’s architecture and landscaping while reducing water use. The earlier concept reviewed by the board in May called for removing turf, installing shrubs and perennial plants, resurfacing the entrance walls with stucco, incorporating stacked stone and adding a smaller water feature. The color palette and stonework were intended to create greater visual consistency between the North and South gates.

During the members’ open forum, resident Tom Shewchuk questioned whether a water feature should remain in the design.

“A water feature when this community is worried about water might not be the right message to send to the community,” he said. Shewchuk also asked whether the redesigned entrance would use recycled water to irrigate the new landscaping, as was done at the North Gate.

Schaffner said staff would like to move ahead during the current budget year with demolition and other work that could be performed before the complete design is constructed. That work includes underground electrical improvements and irrigation connections.

“We would like to try to move forward with



A conceptual drawing presented to the Rancho Murieta Association Board on Aug. 18 shows overhead and ground-level views of proposed South Gate improvements.

some of the other aspects of working on that, which would be part of our budget for this year,” Schaffner said. “All those demolition-type things and some of the electrical underground installation aspects of it, some of the irrigation connections that would still fit into this year’s budget.”

Several images were presented to help directors and residents visualize the possibilities. The first showed the South Gate as it appears today. The second was a more realistic rendering of Parsons’ architectural drawing. Another version added proposed lighting and landscaping.

The final image offered a variation that would retain the general shape of the

existing wall rather than reconstructing it in a substantially different form.

Schaffner said that alternative would involve resurfacing the wall with the stucco proposed by Parsons and adding the proposed roof treatment, stonework and updated lighting.

Landscaping would consist primarily of native plants, with possible participation from community groups interested in helping with the project.

“The final image there that I’m talking about now would continue the current shape, but it would be refaced and would be brought more up to date and have some more up-to-date lighting included,”

Schaffner said.

That option, he added, “would possibly be a little bit cheaper and maybe possibly faster to put together for us.”

Schaffner said all of the concepts were being presented for the board’s consideration and did not indicate that a final design had been selected.

Board President Patrick O’Hern emphasized that staff had already performed extensive site preparation, although residents driving through the entrance might not recognize how much had been accomplished.

“Some people have gone by and said, ‘When are you going to start that?’” O’Hern said. “And actually, that’s been done and

it’s leveled off so it would look halfway decent when you pull in. Some people don’t realize that they did weeks and weeks and weeks of work to try and get that to where it is right now.”

The board unanimously authorized the maintenance department to proceed with portions of the project it can complete, including demolition and site preparation; concrete, wall and planter work; electrical and irrigation improvements; landscape preparation; and the installation of plants, decorative rock, bark and related materials.

North Gate Repairs

In a separate action, the board unanimously

approved sending a proposal from CRBR for repairs to the North Gate entrance to RMA’s insurance carrier for review.

The entrance was damaged when a vehicle struck the structure shortly before midnight May 17. Schaffner said CRBR’s proposal was significantly less expensive than a second proposal and that a structural engineer had prepared the scope of work.

General Manager Vicky Lentz said the proposal was somewhat higher than the insurance carrier’s initial estimate. She said RMA’s carrier would pursue reimbursement from the responsible party through subrogation. ★

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Making Every Beat Count

Metro Fire strengthens the chain of survival with HeartSafe Community initiative



Since October, Metro Fire has trained nearly 1,600 people in hands-only CPR, compared with about 100 people annually in previous years. Photos courtesy of Sacramento Metro Fire District

By Omella Rossi

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - When every second counts, Sacramento Metro Fire wants more neighbors ready to answer the call. A 19-year-old heard an alert on his phone, jumped on his e-bike and raced to a nearby park. Someone was in cardiac arrest. Before paramedics arrived, he began CPR.

For Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District officials, that response represents exactly what they hope to build across the region: a community where ordinary residents are prepared to help save a life.

Through its HeartSafe Community initiative and Citizen Responders Project, Sacramento Metro Fire is working to improve survival rates from sudden cardiac arrest by expanding access to automated external defibrillators, or AEDs, increasing CPR training and encouraging residents to use the PulsePoint AED app.

“Before any professional

is actually helping, that is when the majority of people are dying,” said Capt. James Ellis, who helps lead the initiative. “The biggest bang for our buck, the thing that you can do to save most lives, is that time period from the incident until we get on scene.”

The effort officially launched in 2025, but Ellis said the idea began years earlier after his cousin survived a cardiac arrest while working as a white-water rafting guide on the American River.

“He recognized something was wrong, grabbed an AED from his raft and collapsed moments later. Crew members performed CPR and used the device to restart his heart,” said Ellis.

The experience led Ellis to explore why AEDs were often locked inside buildings and unavailable when parks and public spaces were closed. As he researched solutions, he discovered the national HeartSafe Community model and realized Sacramento could

benefit from a coordinated approach.

At the same time, Metro Fire data showed cardiac arrest survival rates in the greater Sacramento region were below the national average.

Metro Fire formed a working group that includes Ellis, Community Relations Specialist April West and Director of Government Affairs Kyle Macdonald. The team presented the concept to the district’s board last fall and received strong support.

“We really do view this as an agency priority,” Macdonald said. “This is something that we’re excited to keep working on.”

One major focus is expanding public access to AEDs. In November, the Cordova Recreation & Park District and Sacramento Metro Fire celebrated the installation of the district’s first publicly accessible AED cabinet at Hagan Community Park. In May, members of Leadership



Looking ahead, Metro Fire hopes to train more residents, expand AED access in schools and residential neighborhoods.

Citrus Heights class also unveiled an AED at Rusch Park as part of their class project. Additional devices have since been installed at parks throughout the region.

Metro Fire currently knows of nine publicly accessible AED locations, most of them in parks, and expects that number to continue growing.

The district is also building an AED registry through the PulsePoint app. Residents can use the app to locate nearby AEDs, while trained users can receive alerts when a cardiac arrest occurs nearby.

“If we can drastically increase the number of people using the app, we’re going to increase the chance that people are going to survive,” Ellis said.

Education is another key

component.

Without CPR, survival chances decrease by roughly 10% every minute after a cardiac arrest. Metro Fire officials say bystander CPR can significantly improve outcomes, and combining CPR with an AED can improve survival rates even more.

Since October, Metro Fire has trained nearly 1,600 people in hands-only CPR, compared with about 100 people annually in previous years.

“We can train anybody to do hands-only CPR in 10 minutes or less,” Ellis said.

Fear is often the biggest barrier, officials said.

“People are not afraid to act. They’ve never been in that situation. They don’t know how they’re going to act,” Ellis said.

His message to hesitant

bystanders is simple: do something.

“If somebody doesn’t make that call, that person doesn’t have a chance,” he said. “Think about it if it’s your loved one or yourself. What would you want?”

Looking ahead, Metro Fire hopes to train more residents, expand AED access in schools and neighborhoods, and eventually help communities throughout the district earn HeartSafe Community recognition.

“We know we can’t do this alone,” Macdonald said. “The more we can create awareness and demystify CPR and AEDs for folks, the better. This is really about helping create a safer community.”

For more information and to get involved visit metrofire.ca.gov/citizen-responders. ★



Election Information

November 3, 2026, General Election

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OCT

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X

Oct 5

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OCT

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X

Oct 19

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Oct 24

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Oct 31

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NOV

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X

Nov 3

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Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris

Welcome Ben Simmons

By V.G. Harris

Many of you have now been Sacramento Kings fans for literally decades, and discussions of playoffs have been a topic rarely heard in the city of Sacramento.

Enter new GM Scott Perry who has been promising changes with regard to bad drafts and trades that don’t make sense.

Although Perry has made a couple of moves that I strongly disagree with, the jury is largely still out as he has begun in earnest his quote, “rebuild.”

DeAaron Fox was traded not on his watch, but make no mistake about it, the decision to bring on the first overall pick in the 2016 draft is all about Scott Perry.

Sink or swim, the acquisition of Ben Simmons, albeit for only one year and a price tag of only 3.5 million, lands entirely in the lap of Scott Perry.

Just a week ago in this column I wrote that the possibility existed that the Kings may have interest in signing Simmons, who has had a checkered past to say the least, and now the suspense is over, and Ben Simmons is now about to become a full-fledged member of the Sacramento Kings family.

I am an ardent believer that any player attempting a comeback deserves his opportunity to allow the fan base see what he has in the tank, and I for one will not root against this player that has literally been injury prone for the entirety of his 10-year NBA career.

It is rare that an organization has the opportunity to acquire a player drafted No. 1 overall, and in the case of 6-foot-10 Ben Simmons he is coming to the Kings after sitting out the entire 2025-26 season.

The prevailing problem has been related to back issues for Simmons, but according to Simmons himself, he wasn’t going to try and mount a comeback until he was “bulletproof.”

The Kings recently worked out Simmons in Sacramento, and he had a meeting with Scott Perry that obviously went well.

Simmons stats are not eyepopping, but certainly worthy of taking note. Over a 10-year career spent with three teams, Simmons had a scoring average of just over 13 points per game, seven rebounds, seven

assists and 1.5 steals.

To his credit, although most widely noted for missing games due to injury, Simmons made the all-star team one time, and in 2021 was runner up for the defensive player of the year.

Aside from the perpetual injury bug, if there is one knock on this otherwise talented big man, it is his abysmal free throw shooting.

At an astonishing low 59 percent, he brings back memories of another talented big man who couldn’t make free throws by the name of Wilt Chamberlain. Wilt shot an almost unbelievable 51 percent from the charity strip, and like Shaquille Oneal he was known for his inability to make free throws when it counted.

Sadly, Ben Simmons is coming to a team that is typically dead last in free throw shooting, so who on the Kings team is going to step up and teach this 10-year veteran how to improve in an area that he clearly knows little about?

The Kings coaching staff?

If you thought all eyes were on Darius Acuff Jr., wait till you see Ben Simmons take the floor for the Sacramento Kings.

As I said before, I refuse to root against Simmons regardless of past problems, and I don’t believe the Kings would sign him to a contract of any length if they thought he wasn’t 100 percent healthy.

I want to close my eyes and imagine what a healthy Ben Simmons looks like playing alongside Domantas Sabonis, with a talented rookie point guard distributing the ball, and two capable three-point shooters on the wings in Zach Lavine and Keegan Murray.

Does this new lineup have potential? Absolutely it does, and once again it boils down to staying away from injuries and allowing a group of very talented players to develop chemistry and do what they do.

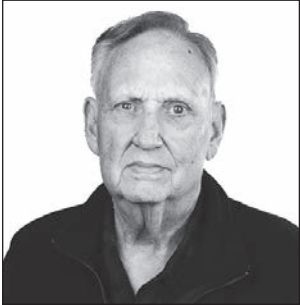
If you’re an ardent Kings fan it’s almost impossible not to get excited.

Look for an opening night that Sacramento hasn’t seen in years, and all of a sudden ticket sales just went up!

Stay tuned Kings fans because there is more to come.

All the best! ★

California’s Political Hopefuls Remain Silent on State’s Job Losses, Unemployment



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

In two months California voters will elect a governor, fill several other statewide offices and choose a new class of state legislators and members of Congress.

The aspirants for those positions are making all sorts of promises to win voters’ approval. But few, if any, have mentioned a slow-motion menace affecting a fundamental facet of life: jobs.

The state has never fully recovered from the virtual shutdown of the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic. It still has more than a million unemployed workers. Its unemployment rate continues to be the highest, or nearly so, of any state. And its signature economic sectors, such as high tech and film production, have been shedding jobs for several years.

As ominous as those data points sound, a deeper dive into employment data reveals an even darker reality.

“California’s labor market is holding up, but its foundations remain troublingly narrow,” Justin Niakamal, research manager at Beacon Economics, said in a recent overview of the state’s economy. Healthcare is the only sector with strong employment gains, he noted.

While healthcare jobs are welcome, they are highly dependent on spending by

U-6 for New York City and Los Angeles County because their populations are larger than many states. New York’s rate was 10.2% while Los Angeles’ was 12.1%.

Those are high numbers but may still understate what’s happening — or not — in California’s job market.

The Ludwig Institute for Shared Economic Prosperity takes the U-6 underemployment calculation even further. It discounts jobs, even full-time work, that pay less than a living wage, which it pegs at \$26,000 a year. It calls its number the “true rate of unemployment,” saying it measures “functional unemployment.”

As one might suspect, Ludwig’s calculations for California — reported by major metropolitan area — are very high, especially in rural communities where agriculture is a primary source of jobs.

California’s highest “true unemployment” rate, according to Ludwig, is in Redding (67.4%). Other rural or semi-rural communities fall into the 50%-65% range. But some urban regions see high rates as well, such as 53.8% in the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim metropolitan area.

Only a few regions are under 50%.

Given these numbers, one might expect that California’s officeholders and office seekers would be telling us how they will respond. They are not.

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

Why change Social Security now? It’s a working “Ponzi



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: Maybe everybody has the same reaction that I do to Social Security insolvency. I do not understand a system that has been basically run like a Ponzi Scam since its Inception; why have you decided (in 2026-2027) that now is the time to change a perfectly good Ponzi Scam. In all reality, this began with Babylon. I’m sure that if you searched the meaning of the words “Babylonian money magic,” you would understand what I’m talking about. If this is as good as the Earth has, why would you mess with a perfectly rotten thing. Why would you decide to change currencies to some sort of fragile digital currency? **Signed: Skeptical Senior**

Dear Skeptical Senior: You touch on an item that the AMAC Foundation has dealt with many times over the years, specifically the notion that Social Security has the characteristics of a Ponzi Scheme. Our position in response to that notion is that Social Security was created and operated with full transparency, with its financial

status, formulas, and long-term deficits completely and publicly documented, and reported to the President and Congress annually. Unlike the infamous Charles Ponzi, the government has a permanent pool of contributors through mandatory FICA and SECA (self-employment) payroll taxes and is designed to remain in operation infinitely as long as there’s a taxpaying workforce. Moreover, the Social Security system is overseen by Congress, specifically the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee, and the Government Accountability Office (GAO). The Social Security Administration is subject to routine hearings by these congressional overseers and maintains an independent Office of the Inspector General to ensure the integrity of its financial operations.

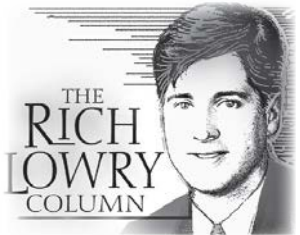
Contrary to Ponzi victims, all participants retiring from the workforce (and their dependents) recover their Social Security contributions via benefit payments, some more than others based on their level of participation in the system. Also, contrary to Ponzi Schemes, Social Security was designed as a social insurance system and has operated successfully in that mode for over nine decades.

What raises the notion of a Ponzi Scheme comparison these days is the looming insolvency facing Social Security just six

years from now. This financial problem, however, has nothing to do with fraud. Rather, it is a function of workforce demographics and the fact that Congress has long deferred corrective action on a problem that has been known for the past four decades. We sometimes hear well intended (but sometimes uninformed) comments from some Washington politicians invoking the Ponzi Scheme reference, but we believe that Congress is finally waking up to the urgency. And we also believe Congress is now starting to move seriously to set a course for correction in time to ward off the impact of insolvency. AMAC is proud to be a part of the collective thinking currently surfacing, and our Social Security Guarantee is in play as a plan to be considered.

We invite you to review our SS reform plan (at <https://amac.us/social-security-guarantee>) and likewise to stay tuned to our Social Security Report website (<https://socialsecurityreport.org/>) where we post regular updates on a variety of matters pertaining to Social Security and retirement.

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). ★



President Trump’s tariffs aren’t popular, but he’s found a way to make them even less so -- a trade war with America’s most inoffensive ally.

When one thinks of countries that deserve to be subjected to a steady stream of insults (it’s Lake America now, not Lake Ontario) and a punishing regime of tariffs, Canada is far down the list.

Ottawa has been a loyal, if occasionally annoying, friend of the United States for nearly 100 years. The presence of a well-meaning country with similar values along the 5,000-mile border to our north is a gigantic geostrategic blessing, although one that is apparently lost on President Trump.

Both sides deserve blame for the breakdown in negotiations, but news reports suggest it was the U.S. that made additional demands at the 11th hour. Now both sides are imposing new duties on the other, and Trump is threatening 50% tariffs on all Canadian cars, trucks and parts beginning in the new year.

It is certainly true that we can impose more pain on the Canadians than they can on us and grind them down economically. We can also land the 101st Airborne in Nova Scotia. But why would we want to do it?

The contention with Canada is characteristic of Trump’s economically

A Foolhardy Conflict with an Inoffensive Ally

senseless, legally dubious and politically harmful push to tariff everything and everyone he can.

Trump’s imposition of all these duties -- often relying on strained interpretations of U.S. statutes -- has run directly counter to his promise in the 2024 campaign to reduce prices, a pledge central to his victory. Although the administration maintains that the cost of tariffs isn’t passed on to U.S. consumers -- instead borne by foreign countries and producers -- its actions implicitly concede the opposite.

The administration excluded an array of consumer electronics from new reciprocal tariffs on China to avoid unpopular price increases, and it lifted tariffs on a long list of foodstuffs late last year. Twice this year, including about a week ago, the administration widened exceptions for beef imports. If tariffs were genuinely cost-free, none of this would have been deemed necessary by the most protectionist administration since that of Herbert Hoover.

A chief argument for tariffs is that they will revive American manufacturing. Even if this is true, it’s a long-term play, whereas the disruption from tariffs is experienced immediately. It’s also a questionable proposition; increasing the price of imported goods used in manufacturing, which is the effect of the scattershot tariffs, doesn’t do U.S. producers any favors. It is telling that the National Association of Manufacturers opposes the sweeping tariffs.

Polling consistently

finds that the duties are unpopular. Majorities oppose Trump’s handling of the issue, and the public believes that the tariffs have increased prices and should be lowered. The trade war with Canada in particular fares poorly. A YouGov survey found that 62% of people oppose the imposition of 50% tariffs on many Canadian imports.

At the end of the day, Trump has chosen a long-standing ideological goal and his legacy over his short-term political standing. He has advocated for major tariffs for decades and has finally gotten them. They are likely to endure, even if they hurt now. His most probable Republican successor, J.D. Vance, presumably wouldn’t roll them back, and the Democratic candidate in 2028 might be equally protectionist. Regardless, it’s going to be difficult for future presidents to give up the revenue generated by the duties.

And so a president who campaigned on lowering prices has embraced a policy that, at the margins, increases them. Unless things are smoothed over with our Friendly Neighbor to the North, there will be more where that came from -- in a dispute with a country that no one considers an economic threat to the United States.

If the midterms end up sending a broad message of discontent, the tariffs will surely be a reason why.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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Emissions Reduction Plan Approved by California Air Resources Board

Sacramento Metropolitan Air News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has approved the South Sacramento Florin Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP), marking a major milestone in the Sac Metro Air District’s ongoing partnership with the community to reduce exposure to air pollution and improve public health.

The CERP was developed through the Air District’s Community Air Protection Program, established by Assembly Bill 617 (C. Garcia, 2017), which focuses additional air quality resources and strategies in communities disproportionately impacted by air pollution. South Sacramento-Florin was selected by CARB for development of a CERP in 2024.

Over the past two years, the Air District has worked closely with the South Sacramento-Florin Community Steering Committee to identify local air quality concerns, establish priorities and develop strategies to reduce emissions and exposure. The resulting CERP



CARB’s approval moves the CERP from planning into implementation, allowing the Air District, community members and partner agencies to advance the strategies identified through the community planning process.
Photo courtesy of Sacramento Metropolitan Air

reflects community input and establishes a roadmap for actions addressing sources of air pollution affecting neighborhoods throughout South Sacramento-Florin.

“CARB’s approval demonstrates what is possible when state and local partners come together with a shared commitment to cleaner air,” said Eric Guerra, CARB Board member, Sac Metro Air District director and City of Sacramento mayor pro tem. “This plan gives us a clear framework for moving from identifying

problems to delivering solutions. We have a responsibility to make sure the commitments in this plan are backed by sustained resources, strong partnerships and clear results.”

CARB’s approval moves the CERP from planning into implementation, allowing the Air District, community members and partner agencies to advance the strategies identified through the community planning process.

“This approval marks a pivotal moment in our ability to serve the South Sacramento-Florin community,” said Sarah Aquino, Sac Metro Air District Board chair and Folsom City Councilmember. “The CERP gives us a community-driven roadmap for addressing local air quality concerns. We now have an opportunity to deliver tangible air quality improvements that respond directly to the priorities residents have identified. With CARB’s approval and continued state funding, our focus now turns to implementation and working together to translate community priorities into measurable actions that reduce emissions, improve air

quality and protect public health.”

Implementation will require continued coordination among the Air District, CARB, local and regional agencies, community organizations, businesses and residents. Continued state funding also will be necessary to achieve all elements of the plan.

“I’m proud to see a plan shaped by the voices of South Sacramento-Florin residents move forward,” said Patrick Kennedy, Sac Metro Air District Director and County of Sacramento supervisor. “People in this community have been telling us for years what they need to breathe cleaner air and live in healthier neighborhoods. This is an opportunity to listen, invest and act—and to make sure the benefits of this work are felt in the neighborhoods that have carried the greatest burden of pollution.”

CERP strategies are categorized in four areas: urban planning and mobile sources, residential sources, commercial sources, and outreach. Implementation will be phased and run through 2031. More information at AirQuality.org/CAP. ★

SECURITY LOGS

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

Aug. 19
3 p.m., North Gate reported a golf cart collision with the middle resident lane gate arm. The golf cart struck the gate arm, knocking it from its bracket, and continued into Murieta North without stopping.

Patrol responded and repositioned the gate arm. Multiple attempts to reset the gate were unsuccessful, and the lane was blocked pending further inspection or repair.

At approximately 3:20 p.m., the golf cart owner contacted Dispatch and advised that the driver became scared after the collision and continued to the residence.

Patrol contacted the driver, who reported no injuries or damage to the golf cart.

Aug. 20
3:02 p.m., Report of an opossum pup that had

fallen into a pool and was unable to get out. Patrol responded and safely removed the animal from the pool, placing it near the other pups in the area. Sacramento County Animal Control was notified and was en route to trap and relocate the animals.

6:38 p.m., Report of door-to-door solicitation in the area of Trinidad Drive and Guadalupe Drive. Upon arrival, Patrol located the subject soliciting at Camino Del Sol. Subject described as a WMA with black hair, black-framed glasses, black polo, and blue shorts.

RMCSd contacted the subject and advised him of the No Soliciting regulation. Subject initially attempted to identify himself as a resident. Subject was issued a trespass warning and directed to leave the community.

Subject complied without incident. Patrol escorted the subject out of the community as he traveled by hoverboard. At approximately 6:40 p.m., the subject exited into the Bel Air parking lot.

7:56 p.m., Report of door solicitor in Murieta

South. South Gate Officer observed a male adult entering the community on a hoverboard. The subject matched the description of the individual involved in the earlier solicitation incident. Patrol located a black Nissan Versa, believed to be associated with the subject, parked at the RMCSd Administration Building.

Patrol subsequently located the subject attempting to solicit in the 15000 block of Reynosa Drive. The subject was confirmed to be the same individual from the earlier incident. Patrol escorted the subject out of the community and contacted him near his vehicle at the RMCSd Administration Building. The subject was issued a verbal criminal trespass warning and advised not to return to the community. Subject stated he understood the warning, entered his vehicle, and departed westbound on Jackson Road.

8:17 p.m., Report of a tree service vendor performing work after permitted work hours. Upon arrival at Via Del Cerrito, Patrol contacted the vendor, advised them of permitted work hours, and requested that all work

cease. Vendor complied, cleaned the work site and departed the community.

Aug. 24
7:10 p.m., Report of two subjects panhandling in the area of the Country Store and Bel Air Plaza. Subjects described as a male adult and female adult. Patrol located the male at Bel Air Plaza, made contact, and requested that he leave the area. Subject complied without incident. The female was located near the intersection of Jackson Road. and Murieta Drive. Both subjects subsequently departed the area in a silver Acura.

7:13 p.m., Report of a contractor working after permitted work hours over the past several days. Reporting party requested Patrol contact the contractor and advise them of the work-hours regulation. At approximately 7:05 p.m., Patrol contacted the tree service contractor working at Via Del Cerrito and advised them of permitted work hours. Contractor stated they were finished and preparing to leave. Patrol remained in the area until the contractor departed at approximately 7:15 p.m.

9:02 p.m., Report of a water leak in the front yard of Rio Oso Drive. Upon arrival, Patrol observed water slowly seeping from what appeared to be a water meter box and running into the street. Patrol was unable to determine which meter was leaking. Request made for RMCSd Water Department to respond on Aug. 25 for evaluation.

11:50 p.m., Patrol located an occupied red Honda Accord in the Lake Clementia parking lot after park hours. Vehicle was in violation of RMA Rule IX, Section 2 - Park Hours. Patrol contacted the driver and advised them of the park-hours violation. Driver agreed to leave and departed the area without further incident.

Aug. 25
5:52 p.m., South Gate Officer reported a vehicle collision with the inner resident gate arm. The vehicle continued into Murieta South without stopping. Review of traffic camera footage identified a Ford Explorer. The vehicle followed too closely behind the vehicle ahead and did not allow the gate arm to fully cycle between vehicles. The vehicle

subsequently made contact with the gate arm, knocking it out of its bracket. Patrol identified and contacted the driver at their residence.

The driver provided all required information, including driver’s license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance.

The driver reported no damage to the vehicle. The inner resident gate arm sustained no damage and remained in good working condition.

Aug. 26
10:38 a.m., Patrol responded to the area of Caretta Lane regarding a suspicious odor. Upon arrival, the odor was determined to be from a nearby BBQ smoker. No hazards were identified.

Aug. 31
5:51 p.m., Patrol observed a group of six individuals fishing along the west shore of Lake Chesbro. An individual was observed discarding an aluminum can in the grass and leaving it behind. Patrol contacted the associated resident and requested that the guest retrieve the trash. The guest complied without incident, and the group departed the area. ★



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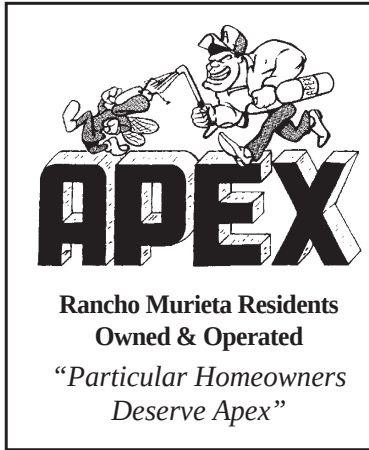


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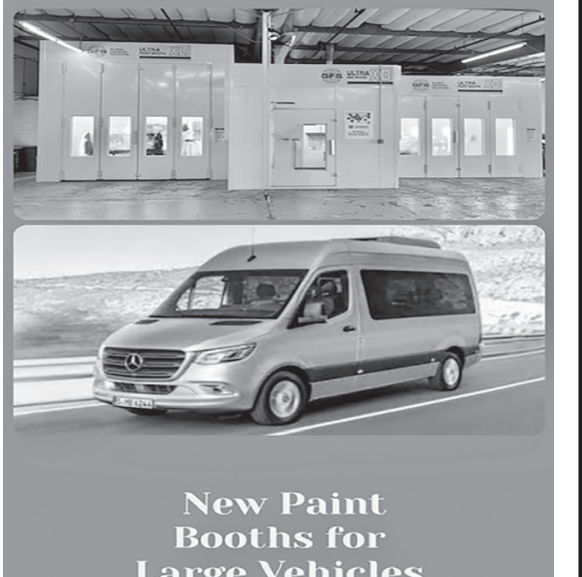
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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Farm to Fork Tickets on Sale

We hope you'll join us for the Kiwanis Farm to Fork Dinner on the Green from 4 to 8 p.m. Friday, Sept. 18 at the Rancho Murieta Country Club. This fundraiser benefits Turn Around Scholarships, which help students who have overcome significant challenges and made remarkable improvements in their academic performance but may not yet qualify for traditional scholarships to colleges, universities or trade schools.

Chef KC Brown will prepare a gourmet four-course dinner to be enjoyed with friends on the beautiful grounds of the country club. It's a wonderful opportunity to spend an enjoyable evening in a lovely setting while helping deserving young people continue their education.

Tickets are \$80 per person. Corkage is \$20 per bottle, including tax and gratuity. Tickets are available online at rmkiwanis.org. Those who would like to contribute to the festive ambiance by providing a table centerpiece may contact Carol Prinzo at

rcprinzo1962@gmail.com.

For other questions, contact Jeannette Edwards at (408) 515-2636.

Music Mike Returns to Lake Clementia

Music Mike returns Sunday, Sept. 27 to Lake Clementia Amphitheater for an evening of music and activities for children and families. Music Mike will entertain children with familiar songs while leading them in singing and movement activities.

The music begins promptly at 5 p.m. The free event is open to Rancho Murieta families and their guests and is sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta as its annual Music Mike Concert.

Bookmobile Changes Rancho Murieta Schedule

The Sacramento Public Library Mobile Services, formerly known as the Bookmobile, has changed its Rancho Murieta schedule and will now visit on the first and third Wednesdays of each month

from 10 a.m. to noon outside the Murieta Village Clubhouse. The Bookmobile will offer a Halloween Storytime at the Clubhouse at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 21.

During warmer or inclement weather, books and other materials will be available inside the Clubhouse. Residents can obtain library cards, reserve materials online and pick up books, audiobooks and DVDs for children and adults. A Seed Library featuring flower and herb seeds is also available.

Caregiver Support Group Meets Oct. 7

The Rancho Murieta Caregiver Support Group will meet at 2:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 7 at the RMA Building. The group meets on the first Wednesday of each month and offers support for those caring for loved ones.

Sometimes caregivers just need a boost to help cope with the everyday challenges of caregiving. No reservations are required, and newcomers

are welcome. For more information, call Nan at 916-354-2281.

Dillard Farmers Market on Saturdays

Dillard Farmers Market is open 8 a.m. to noon at the Wilton Community Center. Join us at our vibrant, small community farmers market, where the essence of local agriculture comes alive.

Every Saturday through Oct. 3, our market serves as a gathering place for farmers, artisans and families, fostering a sense of community and supporting sustainable practices. 9717 Colony Road, Wilton.

Wilton Bingo Sept. 5

The next Wilton Bingo will be on Saturday, Sept. 5 in the Wilton Community Center. Doors open at 5 p.m. with food available for sale and Bingo starts at 6 p.m. All proceeds go to two nonprofits: the local Park Council and the Wilton History Group. 9717 Colony Road at Dillard Road, Wilton. ★

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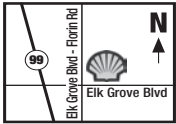
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A Morning Like No Other – Ground Zero at 25 years



An early morning skyline view from the Staten Island Ferry. This was the daily view of thousands of commuters to Manhattan before 9/11. Years later, I met with my friend, the captain of the ferry, in Sacramento for lunch. John had to leave New York because he just couldn't live another day in that memory. He stopped his ship in the middle of the harbor that 9/11 morning, as he and his entire shipload of travelers and crew watched the horror unfold.



Reflections at East River and John Finley Walk. Photo by a savior

Commentary and photos by Paul V. Scholl

After a long night of late work well into the morning, I was in a deep sleep. The repeating ring of the telephone awakened me. I received an alarming telephone call from a close friend frantically trying to get my attention. She said “just get up and turn on the TV. You won’t believe what is happening”. She was absolutely right.

As I sat there on my white leather couch in my small rental home in Roseville, tuned in as the world was tuned in, to the disaster in New York as it unfolded live for everyone to see. We were all New Yorkers that day.

I had previously lived in Manhattan. After returning to California, I traveled to New York City often to teach classes at The Learning Exchange and spiritual training centers as a part of my ministry. I also met with many clients as a spiritual life coach each visit. Through these visits I became friends with so many great people who lived in The City. I stayed at their homes, got to know their families, learned about their lives, loves, and fears. Many of them worked in the immediate area of the Twin Towers.

As I sat there watching the towers fall along with the rest of the world, I had no idea if any of those friends or members of their families were being crushed under the weight of that destruction. It was a personal anguish and horror felt by millions

simultaneously. It was a grief embedded forever. And we as a nation vowed to never forget.

Everything changed for everyone during those hours. Terrorism had come to our shores, and those whom we had charged to protect us failed miserably. We have been paying for their failures ever since.

And for those who paid the ultimate price, giving their lives to save others inside and around the Twin Towers? And for all the First Responders who witnessed the death and destruction at the end of their fingertips and right before their own eyes? What did they get from so many after only 25 years? Many forgot.

Yes, life goes on, but as individuals we do not. Our time is limited. We are here to understand life, liberty, love, and loss. We are here to understand joy and grief. These become the web that builds our evolution, our DNA that we pass on to those who follow us. If we do not teach our emotional history to our children, good and bad, they will suffer repeating our mistakes and the feeling of betrayal from us for not forewarning them.

Enter our current day Neon Nation. Have we lost our way in one generation? Does the “Shiny thing” distract us so easily because it is too hard for us to focus on the truth and explaining it to others as our society crumbles around us?

A few months after 9/11 I traveled back to New York to offer support to any of those friends who needed it. I traveled to the site while the clean-up was still underway. I saw the scorched church and cemetery. There were still many “Missing” flyers posted to walls and lampposts. I saw the many memorials around the site. When I found one memorial that listed all of the names of those lost I read every one of them. I thank God to this day that not one of my



One of the many memorial walls surrounding the Ground Zero site. Photo by Paul Scholl

friends was on that list.

The history of Ground Zero is complex and still unfolding. The more the years fall away the more important it is that we reveal as much as we can about that fateful morning and all that led up to it.

When someone kills your son or daughter, husband or wife, it doesn’t matter what political party they belong to. It doesn’t matter what religion they belong to. It doesn’t matter their motive. All that matters is your loved one is gone forever. Grief takes over. And no one can ever really fill that void. It never truly heals. You just learn how to manage it in the silent times, alone with your Creator.

All those who lost loved ones during those tragic days only asked one thing from us. Never Ever Forget.

On this remembrance weekend 25 years later, take a few moments in silence to share the grief and the weight of the losses experienced by so many on September 11, 2001. If only with that simple action, love will prevail.



Visitors reading through the many memorials and “missing” posters.



A dedication plaque honoring the fallen first responders.



A memorial sculpture remembering all the construction workers.



And then an angel appeared over the site in my camera lens.

From Tragedy to Tradition

Sac-Town Rodeo Supports a Sacramento Legacy

AMPLIFY 360 News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - When the Sac-Town Rodeo returns to Cal Expo on Sept. 12 and 13, it will bring two days of bull riding, bronc riding, Western tradition and family entertainment to Sacramento.

But beyond the arena action, the event carries a deeper purpose: supporting the Firefighters Burn Institute, an organization born from one of the darkest tragedies in Sacramento's history and one that continues to serve burn survivors, families and injured firefighters across the region.

For many Sacramento residents, the Firefighters Burn Institute is a familiar name. Its origins, however, trace back more than five decades to a devastating day in 1972.

That year, a jet attempting to take off from Sacramento Executive Airport crashed into a crowded Farrell's Ice Cream Parlor. Twenty-three people were killed, and many others suffered serious burn injuries. Among those who died were Sacramento firefighter Gene LaVine and eight members of his family.

The scale of the tragedy exposed a critical gap in the region's medical resources. At the time, Sacramento had limited access to specialized burn treatment, leaving patients and families facing a difficult and uncertain path to recovery.

Sacramento Fire Department Captain Cliff Haskell believed the community could not allow that need to go unanswered. Through his fundraising and advocacy, the Firefighters Burn Institute was established in 1973. The organization later worked with UC Davis Medical Center to help establish a regional burn



The Sept. 12-13 event at Cal Expo will bring together first responders, local businesses, rodeo fans and families from across the region for a high-energy competition and a celebration of Western culture. Photo courtesy of Sac-Town Rodeo

center, providing specialized care closer to home for burn survivors throughout Sacramento and Northern California.

More than 50 years later, the Institute's mission has expanded well beyond its founding goal.

Today, the Firefighters Burn Institute supports burn survivors and their families through recovery programs, peer support, community reintegration and camps for young burn survivors. It also provides assistance to injured firefighters and their families while advancing burn prevention, public education and

awareness throughout the region.

The work is personal for many of the firefighters, survivors and families connected to the organization. It is a mission rooted in a community's response to loss, and sustained by a belief that people recovering from burn injuries should not have to navigate that journey alone.

That is where the Sac-Town Rodeo comes in.

The Sept. 12-13 event at Cal Expo will bring together first responders, local businesses, rodeo fans and families from across the region. While

spectators can expect high-energy competition and a celebration of Western culture, the rodeo also gives the Sacramento community a chance to rally around an organization whose impact reaches far beyond the event grounds.

Proceeds from the Sac-Town Rodeo will benefit the Firefighters Burn Institute and help sustain programs serving children, adults, families and firefighters affected by burn injuries.

For Sacramento, the rodeo represents more than an annual



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