



AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

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INSIDE**

**THINGS TO DO
IN FAIR OAKS**



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OV CALLS ON
COMMUNITY TO
LEND A HAND**



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Get Ready to Bawk!

What to Look Forward to at the 2026 Fair Oaks Chicken Festival



The feathers will be flying when the 21st Annual Fair Oaks Chicken Festival returns to Fair Oaks Park on Saturday, Sept. 19, from noon to 6 p.m. Photo courtesy of Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District

Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District News Release

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - The feathers will be flying when the 21st Annual Fair Oaks Chicken Festival returns to Fair Oaks Park on Saturday, Sept. 19, from noon to 6 p.m. This free community celebration brings together live music, great food, shopping, family fun, friendly competition and plenty of reasons to get egg-cited!

New for 2026, take your shot at the Egg Drop Competition, a fundraiser benefiting Fair Oaks Preschool, or test your skills in the Disc Golf Putting Competition, hosted by the Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce. Festival favorites also return, including the legendary Cluck n' Crow Contest, Great Chicken Decorating Contest and Cornhole Tournament, which also raises funds for the Fair Oaks Chamber.

Live entertainment will fill two stages throughout the day. Catch All Hat No Cattle Band and Sunset River Band on the Main Stage, while the Kid's Park Stage features teen bands, Rocky's Meet & Greet, storytime, Rocky's Dance Party and more.

Come hungry! The Feed Court, hosted by SactoMoFo, will serve up a variety of food truck favorites, including special chicken-inspired creations made just for the festival. Adults can stop by the Watering Hole, hosted by the Rotary Club of Fair Oaks as a fundraiser, for beer and wine.

Families can enjoy the free Community Kid's Zone with activity booths, carnival games, a petting farm, coloring wall and entertainment. Looking for more adventure? The Adventure Zone features inflatables, EuroBungee and Waterballerz.

Continued on page 2



For kids looking for a little more adventure, the Adventure Zone will feature inflatables, EuroBungee and Waterballerz. Inflation wristband sales also help raise funds for the Bella Vista Band Boosters and their student music program. Photo courtesy of Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District.

FORPD Board Approves Fee Updates, Final Budget

By Shaunna Boyd

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - At the Aug. 19 meeting, the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District (FORPD) Board of Directors swore in Manuel Lavalle, who was appointed to fill the seat vacated by director John O'Farrell on his retirement.

During public comments, Kristin Martin spoke on behalf of the American River Girls Softball organization to oppose a proposed fee increase of more than 100 percent for softball field rentals. She said increased fees should come with improved facilities, but there have been no improvements to the existing La Vista fields where the girls play. Martin added that an increase of this magnitude would mean raising registration fees for the players, which would impact access, equity and the value placed on girls' sports.

The Board heard a presentation on proposed updates to the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Recreation Fee Schedule, which aims to recover the actual costs of providing services.

Update highlights included new special events fees, and fees for new rental areas at Fair Oaks Park, Plaza Park and Village Park.

Some of the largest fee increases were for the multipurpose field rentals, increasing from \$150 per month to as much as \$350 (a 133% increase), and the baseball and softball field rentals, increasing from \$150 up to \$400 at the highest range (a possible 166% increase).

Chair Raymond James Irwin asked for an explanation of the cost recovery and how it impacts the updates to fees. Staff explained that in the case of the fields, the fees cover the cost of maintenance, including field irrigation and mowing, as well as staff and administrative costs.

District Administrator Aaron Robertson said fees have not been updated in six years, which is why some of the increases are more significant, since the district's actual costs have increased dramatically during that time.

Director Ralph Carhart said community partners provide vital recreational opportunities within the district, and he values the district's commitment to providing discounted rates to those partners. Carhart acknowledged the importance of cost recovery, but said, "If we put these

Continued on page 12

Salsa, Music and Community Spice Up Fifth Annual Cook-Off



Helping Hands OV Salsa Cook-off winners. Photo courtesy of Cathy Kurtz Photography

Helping Hands OV News Release

ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG) - Orangevale brought the

heat Saturday, Aug. 15, as Helping Hands OV hosted its fifth annual Salsa Cook-Off, serving up a flavorful afternoon of food, music,

dancing, art and plenty of community spirit.

More than 45 salsas were tasted as local salsa makers competed for bragging

rights in five categories: blended, chunky, mild, hot and community choice. From cool and mellow to

Continued on page 12

Get Ready to Bawk!



Adults can stop by the Watering Hole for beer and wine, hosted by the Rotary Club of Fair Oaks as a fundraiser supporting its work and service projects in the community. Photo courtesy of Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District.

Continued from page 1
with inflatable wristband sales benefiting the Bella Vista Band Boosters and their student music program.

Don't forget to explore dozens of craft, business and nonprofit vendors, and keep an eye out for Rocky the Rooster strutting his stuff throughout the festival!

A special thank you to our Title Sponsor, Fair Oaks Arborist and Event Sponsors SMUD, Zwierzynski Law, Community Health Centers of America, Sacramento Credit Union, Orcutt Family Dentistry, Raley's, Cagwin & Dorward, Community West Bank, House to Home Moving and Rollingwood YMCA. Their support helps make this community tradition possible!

The 21st Annual Fair Oaks Chicken Festival takes place Saturday, Sept.



Between activities, festival-goers can stroll through dozens of craft, business and nonprofit vendors. Photo courtesy of Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District.

19 from noon to 6 p.m. at Fair Oaks Park, 11549 Fair Oaks Boulevard. Admission and general parking are free.

For complete details,

visit www.forpd.org/chickenfest.

Come hungry. Come ready to play. And most importantly, come ready to bawk! ★



Roger's Review

By State Senator Roger Niello

Permanent Daylight Saving Time Is Not the Bright Idea Congress Thinks It Is

By Senator Roger Niello

As the saying goes, "Those who do not learn the lessons of history are doomed to relive them." One lesson we may soon be reliving: the adoption of permanent daylight saving time.

Let's fall back more than just an hour and revisit the early 1970s. The United States was in the middle of an energy crisis. Keeping the country on permanent daylight saving time was pitched to help conserve energy. Congress passed legislation to try it from January 1974 to April 1975. The experiment did not go well. In fact, it was so disliked by the American people that the change only lasted until October 1974...not even a full year.

People quickly learned that the lack of morning sun was fundamentally at odds with their circadian rhythm. It negatively impacted their mood, cognition, and overall wellbeing. Also, children's safety was compromised when there were reports of children being struck by vehicles as they went to school in the dark.

Advocates for the federal Sunshine Protection Act seem to be more focused on having extra daylight in the evenings, but the fact is the summer months would still have plenty of daylight under permanent standard time. For instance, in July, it would still be light until almost 7:40 p.m., versus 8:40pm on Pacific Daylight Time.

Then there's this: Permanent daylight saving time in the winter means the sun wouldn't rise until about 8:30 a.m. Does putting your kids to bed while the sun's still out and having them go to school in the dark make sense?

In California, we pushed back school start times because of the scientific benefits of sleep on students' performance, physical, and mental health. And just this year, my resolution to acknowledge the health benefits of permanent standard time was approved by our state legislature.

Good sleep is already hard to come by, with one-third of Californians struggling to get enough. If we adopt Congress' route, those without flexibility in their work schedules will be disproportionately affected. Shift workers and essential workers will have to wake up in the dark many more months each year. This goes against our biological needs and light-sensitive brains.

The benefits of quality sleep cannot be understated. It improves focus and concentration. It lowers the risk of heart attacks, strokes, abnormal heart rhythms, and obesity. Better sleep means better drivers on our roads, decreasing the risk of crashes.

Most Americans agree it's time to ditch the switch, but standard time is not the switch to ditch. Instead, Congress should be ditching daylight saving time.

Standard time is the safer, simpler, and healthier choice to keep. That is why the California Medical Association, the California Sleep Society and the National Safety Council endorse permanent standard time. In addition, it's worked out well for Arizona, Hawaii, and Mexico where residents sing its praises.

While the U.S. House recently rushed forward the Sunshine Protection Act, it remains to be seen if it will be approved in the U.S. Senate. Regardless, I will continue to help my colleagues see the light and convince them that adopting permanent standard time is the right choice to make. Otherwise, they should prepare to face the ire of their constituents just as was done in the 1970's.

Americans are both physically and mentally tired from the twice a year time change, which is why I've carried legislation to "ditch the switch" the healthy way in the state legislature multiple times. Backed by science, I've advocated keeping California on permanent standard time.

Permanent "summer time" may sound promising, but permanent standard time is a much brighter idea. ★



Fair Oaks CHICKEN FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 19, 2026

12PM - 6PM | FAIR OAKS PARK

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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

community gathering. It is also a reminder of how a tragedy that devastated the city more than half a century ago led to lasting action, from improved specialized burn care to decades of support for survivors and their families.

As the Sac-Town Rodeo returns next month, it offers a timely opportunity to honor that history, celebrate the resilience of burn survivors and recognize the firefighters and community members who have carried the Firefighters Burn Institute’s mission forward for generations. ★

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A photograph of a woman with long dark hair hugging a young girl with dark hair. They are both smiling. In the background, a man is working in a kitchen. There is a tray of food on the counter.

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Learn more at smud.org/Community



PoppTalk

With Mary Jane Popp

Silent Killer

SUPER SIZE IT! BUFFET IT! Make it bigger, taller, pile it on! That’s our American eating mentality, and it shows in our waistlines. Obesity has become an epidemic in our country. So what we have is Heart Disease...the No.1 killer of Americans, Cancer...the No. 1 fear of Americans, and Alzheimer’s...the No. 1 concern of Americans.

And what do these devastating diseases have in common? All three have been linked to silent inflammation, a condition that occurs when the body’s natural immune response goes awry. It usually begins as a defensive reaction to invading viruses and bacteria, but this inflammatory response can misfire, sparking a chain reaction of inflammation anywhere in the body.

Fueled by obesity, it may continue unchecked for years, assaulting the heart, arteries, and even the brain. As a matter of fact, research confirms that obesity is a primary cause of silent inflammation and has been linked to today’s epidemic rise in heart disease. That is from **Dr. Barry Sears**, who is a Lipid Scientist who studies fats, and has spent his career probing the delicate body chemistry that controls our health and well being. Dr. Sears has authored the No. 1 New York Times Bestseller “**The Zone Diet**” and “**The Omega RX Zone: The Miracle of the New High-Dose Fish Oil.**” He’s written some fifteen books.

As I continued the interview with Dr. Sears on my “POPPTALK” Radio Show, I

tried to defend myself by telling the good Doc that I eat fish. So why do I need to take more fish oil? Dr Sears abruptly congratulated me on eating from the sewer of the sea! Whaaaat!???

He explained that it takes a new generation of fish oil to launch the fight against these diseases. So how is this generation of fish oil different from our old slippery friend? According to Dr. Sears, the fish oil Grandma got down our gullets, and that which is currently sold in health food stores has never been pure enough to use in the great quantities to feel its potential benefits.

“High-dose pharmaceutical-grade fish oil will radically change how medicine is practiced in the future. Once it is accepted, we will enter a new era of medical care based primarily on the food we eat, not the drugs we take,” he told me emphatically!

So the bottom line here is Dr. Sears claims that pharmaceutical grade fish oil, when taken in appropriate therapeutic doses, has the power to reverse silent inflammation in just thirty days! In his view, it may be “A true miracle cure for the twenty-first Century!” Boy, what a wake-up call this was for me. A shrimp cocktail please? Why is it that good taste is not always good for us? Darn!

If you’d like information on how to find this industrial strength fish oil, the Doc told me he has several places listed in his book “**The Omega RX Zone**” or you can log on to www.DrSears.com. Can I have a shrimp cocktail please? ★

Things to Do in Fair Oaks



By Judy Andrews,
Fair Oaks Chamber
of Commerce

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - September and October are perfect months to spend outdoors in Fair Oaks. Check out the following attractions and ways to support the community—all brought to you by local service organizations.

The **Fair Oaks Chicken Festival** is happening on Saturday, Sept. 19. Hosted by the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District, this family favorite has been going strong for 21 years. The event runs 12-6 p.m. at Fair Oaks Park (11549 Fair Oaks Blvd.) and is free to attend.

The **Rollingwood YMCA** offers more than fitness, swimming, and tennis programs. Join them for a **Community Blood Drive** on Friday, Sept. 25 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The Y will also host a special introductory session, **Aviation 101**, on Saturday, Sept. 26 from 10-11:30 a.m. This event is open to anyone interested in learning more about flying, pilot training, and aviation careers. Both events are free and open to the public and will be held at the Rollingwood YMCA (9373 Winding Oaks Drive, Fair Oaks). Call the Y at (916) 988-1727 for more information.

Meristem invites all San Juan Unified School

District (SJUSD) students, including those from local charter schools, to the **All Abilities Dance** on Saturday, Sept. 26, from 5-8 p.m. This family-friendly event benefits Special Education Advocacy PTA of SJUSD. The entry fee is just \$10 per person and can be paid at the door upon entry to the dance. Located at 9200 Fair Oaks Blvd., Meristem is a non-profit learning center and independent living program in Fair Oaks that empowers autistic and neurodiverse young adults ages 18 to 28.

Treat yourself to the final **Food Truck Mania** of the year, happening Thursday, Oct. 1, from 5-8 p.m. at Fair Oaks Park (11549 Fair Oaks Blvd.). Kids will especially enjoy trick-or-treating and ghoulish grub at the **Boo Bash**, presented in partnership with Food Truck Mania. Tickets for the Boo Bash are \$2 per child and must be purchased in advance at www.forpd.org/526/Boo-Bash-Trunk-or-Treat.

Shop nearly 60 sellers or sell your own used household items at the **Fair Oaks Community Garage Sale** happening Saturday, Oct. 3, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Fair Oaks Park (11549 Fair Oaks Blvd.). For more information and to register for booth space, please visit: www.forpd.org/615/Fall-Community-Garage-Sale.

The **Orangevale-Fair Oaks Community Foundation** is hosting a free **Aging Well Symposium Resource Fair** on Saturday, Oct. 3, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Orangevale

Community Center (6826 Hazel Ave., Orangevale). This event is designed to help seniors and caregivers access the resources needed to support aging loved ones.

The **Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank’s 6th Annual Farm-to-Fork Dinner** is Saturday, Oct. 3, from 6-9 p.m. at the Food Bank Farm (6401 Main Ave., Orangevale). Seating is limited and will sell out in advance. Get your tickets soon at www.foodbank.farm/farm-dinner.

Get ready for the **7th Annual Community Food Drive** on Saturday, Oct. 17. Food items will be accepted from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the Divine Savior Catholic Church parking lot. Volunteers are also needed! All proceeds benefit the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank. For a complete list of acceptable food items or to volunteer, please visit www.ovfocf.org.

The **Fair Oaks Farmers Market** is the place to pick up locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables and meet local farming families. The market is open rain or shine every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Fair Oaks Park (11549 Fair Oaks Blvd.). Enjoy the many crafts and food vendors offering hummus, yogurt, dips, salsa, fish, meat, eggs, honey, bread, desserts, and much more.

See you in Fair Oaks! ★





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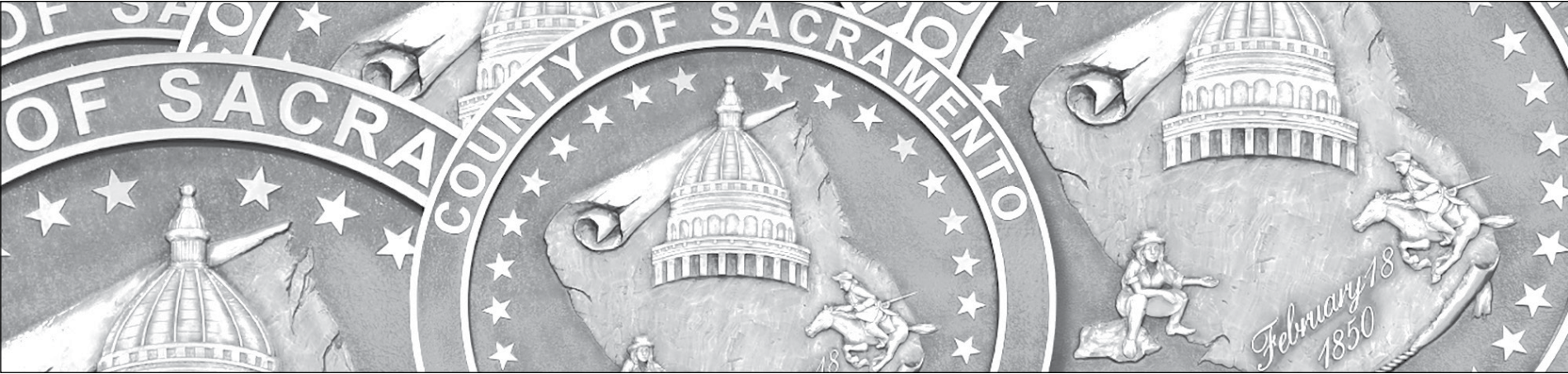
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Fiscal Year 2026-27 Revised Recommended Budget Available



The FY 2026-27 Revised Recommended Budget includes \$9.2 billion in total appropriations. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors will begin Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27 Revised Recommended Budget hearings on Tuesday, Sept. 8, at 9:30 a.m. in Board Chambers in the Sacramento County Administration building, located at 700 H Street, Sacramento, 95814. If necessary, hearings will continue on Sept. 9, 10 and 11 at the same time and location.

The hearing schedule begins with the IHSS public authority budget deliberation and approval, the presentation of the FY 2026-27 revised recommended budget, then follows with public comment and ends with the board deliberation and approval of revisions to the approved recommended budget and capital improvement plan and approval of adopted budget resolutions

The Board of Supervisors approved the FY 2026-27

recommended budget on June 10. This year’s \$9 billion spending plan consists of \$3.2 billion in enterprise and special revenue funds (utility rates, fees and other dedicated revenue), \$4 billion in general fund (funded with \$1 billion in discretionary revenue, \$1.7 billion in reimbursements from restricted funds, and \$1.3 billion in federal, state and fee revenue dedicated to specific purposes), and \$1.7 billion in restricted funds (amounts transferred to the general fund to reimburse eligible expenditures in general fund departments).

The numbers in the budget change between June and September when the County receives new information, including the impact of the state budget and updated fund balance and revenue totals. Because of that new information, the revised recommended budget comes back to the board for review and adoption in September.

The FY 2026-27 revised recommended budget includes \$9.2 billion

in total appropriations.

Ok, that was a lot of numbers! You may be wondering, “what services does the county offer that I use and what programs do they run that I care about” – fair question! Let’s play a game of did you know?

Did you know? The County runs Sacramento International Airport (SMF) – which is growing year over year. SMF serves award winning food and beverage options, has a vast offering of non-stop flights to new and exciting destinations, and will be opening a brand-new parking garage in time for the holiday rush this year.

The County maintains 23-miles of the American River Parkway – a beautiful greenbelt full of wildlife with breathtaking views of the American River and multiple river access points, and a multi-use recreation trail that runs from Folsom to downtown.

The County maintains thousands of miles of roads, dozens of beautiful parks and four golf courses.

The County collects garbage and provides recycling and organics collection services for more than 165,000 residential customers, collects used mattresses and Christmas trees and runs the Kiefer landfill.

The County provides building permits, and information on land use and ownership, and brings new business opportunities to the region, helping to grow the economy and tax base and helping local small business to thrive.

The County is the connection to general assistance, cash assistance, mental health resources, substance use services and homeless services and manages our youth foster system, child support services and child protective services.

The County also inspects restaurants for food safety and public pools and spas for safety compliance, manages testing and containment on communicable disease and helps people exposed quarantine to limit the spread – potentially saving thousands of

people from exposure.

The County has a robust public safety and justice system – running the multifaceted jail system, including a youth correctional facility, probation, public defender unit and district attorney and law enforcement that all work together to keep our community safe.

The County runs a large, open-intake municipal animal shelter and animal regulation and enforcement operation, caring for tens of thousands of lost and neglected animals a year, facilitating adoptions for thousands of amazing animals back into the community, rescuing abused and neglected animals from abusers, and prosecuting them to the fullest extent of the law.

So – how many did you know? Members of the public may attend the hearings and be heard on any item in the budget, either publicly or through written comments. The budget hearings will also be telecast live on Metro Cable 14 and on the web. ★

State Treasurer Fiona Ma Announces Results of Bond Sale for Sutter Health

Financing will support major health care expansion projects, including new medical campuses across Northern California and refinancing of existing debt



Fiona Ma
California State Treasurer’s Office News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - California State Treasurer Fiona Ma, CPA, announced the results

of a \$1.407 billion bond sale for Sutter Health providing financing to support major capital investments in health care facilities across Northern California and refinance existing debt.

“This financing will help Sutter Health make significant investments in health care capacity and facilities in communities across Northern California,” said Treasurer Ma. “These investments will support expanded access to care, modernize health care infrastructure and help ensure that Californians can receive high-quality services close to home. I am pleased that the California Health Facilities Financing Authority was able to facilitate this

financing and help Sutter move forward with projects that will serve patients for years to come.”

The bond-financed capital projects include improvements at health care facilities throughout the Bay Area and the Central Valley. Projects include expansion of intensive care and inpatient capacity; acquisition of land

and medical buildings; laboratory facilities; and improvements to neuroscience and cancer care facilities.

Project locations in the Bay Area include San Francisco, San Mateo, Castro Valley, Pleasanton and Dublin. Two of the largest planned projects include a 1.3 million square foot campus in Emeryville called Emery Yards,

and an 850,000 square foot campus in Santa Clara that will also include a 1-million-square foot additional development nearby. Project locations in the Central Valley include facilities in Sacramento, Roseville, Folsom, Elk Grove and Modesto.

Proceeds were also used to refund Sutter’s outstanding 2016B bonds, which generated approximately \$25.7 million in net present-value savings, or approximately 6.7 percent over the life of the bonds.

The original financing request approved by CHFFA authorized up to \$1.6 billion in aggregate principal amount. The final sale amount was \$1,407,070,000. ★





Election Information

November 3, 2026, General Election

Vote Early and Vote by Mail

OCT

SMTWTFS

X

Oct 5

Ballots begin to arrive by mail. Official Ballot Drop Boxes are now open.

OCT

SMTWTFS

X

Oct 19

Close of registration. Register today!

OCT

SMTWTFS

X

Oct 24

11-Day Vote Centers open through Election Day.

OCT

SMTWTFS

X

Oct 31

All Vote Centers open through Election Day.

NOV

SMTWTFS

X

Nov 3

Election Day! Last day to turn in your ballot.

Vote Early! Don't wait for Election Day.

Take advantage of early voting and avoid the lines! You can return your ballot in the mail, at any Official Ballot Drop Box, or at any Vote Center. No postage is necessary.

Track your Ballot!

Sign up for “Where’s My Ballot?” with BallotTrax, a free ballot-tracking and alert system. It is available to all voters who wish to track the status of their Vote by Mail ballot from printed to accepted. Scan the QR code or visit www.wheresmyballot.com



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Visit www.elections.saccounty.gov or call toll-free (800) 762-8019



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

federal and state governments, and both have been cutting back. Moreover, while healthcare is a service industry, it does not create added-value wealth the way technology, film production and agriculture do.

Back to the data.

California’s stubbornly high unemployment rate — 5.1% in July — was second-highest among the states, behind Connecticut and Oregon, both at 5.2%. The rate is the percentage of the labor force that is not employed, even in part-time work, during the month.

The size of the labor force, as well as the unemployment figure, are important to note. Over the previous year, California’s labor force — people who are working or seeking work — declined by 286,300, according to the monthly Employment Development Department report.

To some extent, the labor force decline masks the actual decline in employment. Moreover, the widely quoted unemployment figure is simplistic: Even if someone is paid for working just a few hours in a month, he or she is counted as employed.

The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics makes several other computations of employment that are more sophisticated. One, called U-6, measures underemployment. It takes into account workers who want to work full time but can only find part-time work, as well as those who are “marginally attached” to the labor force.

California’s U-6 rate is a much more realistic measure of the job picture. It was calculated at 10.3% in June, easily the highest of any state.

The bureau also calculated

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). ★



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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COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Informing, Empowering & Engaging Readers With Their Community



By Patsy McGavock

Welcome back, readers. After a summer break, I return to how we lift our entire community — by finding ways to build the essential skills in our neighbors, and ourselves, that yield growth and success. I asked Roxanne Stellmacher, chief of operations and programs at the CA EDGE Coalition, who works at the intersection of education, workforce development, economic mobility and policy advocacy.

We discussed where policy and people meet — right in our local community — by practicing the skills of success that are even more essential as AI rapidly changes how we work. It’s surprisingly the human, not technical — human-to-human skills of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, adaptability and networking. The skills of relationship-building and reliability.

The most hopeful realization is these skills don’t require a college degree or expensive training. They do require intention and a little expectant courage to open our mouths and open our hearts to practice.

“It’s truly engaging in the everyday,” said Stellmacher, “but through the lens of: What is the skill that I can practice in this place right now that can help me get better at something that will transfer to a work space? It’s incredibly important.”

And it’s a lens we can look through in both directions — allowing skills, knowledge and opportunity to pass both ways. The mentoring mindset of open relationship-building.

Stellmacher continued, “I would say workforce development is really about opportunity development.” It’s not just about getting the next job. “When communities invest in relationship opportunities — in the individuals and employers — our entire

AI, Human Skills and the Power of Connecting for Community Success

community benefits, right? It lifts all ships.”

When we choose to see each other as lifting together, even amid the pressure of not making enough to keep up with inflation, the outcomes are personal and significant. We feel the momentum of not doing it alone, and we learn from each other’s journeys.

“We can capitalize and utilize our connections to each other, we can start lifting each other on the whole, as opposed to being a million different individuals here trying to lift ourselves independently,” summarized Stellmacher.

What does this look like?

Schools bringing community members in to talk about their work, libraries serving as hubs of connection, neighbors volunteering together, chambers of commerce connecting everything in between — especially when we seek out those we don’t already know. Finding ways to connect retirees as mentors to those new to the workforce, or youth deciding their careers.

“You don’t need a classroom or a college degree to practice meaningful conversation. But all of those face-to-face interactions create opportunities to practice your communication skills, to practice problem-solving skills, to practice networking.”

Stellmacher’s daughter was doing exactly that — having coffee with one of her mother’s colleagues to learn about her career. She might decide it’s not for her, or something might spark a passion that her mother never introduced her to. Either way, she has learned, and two more people are connected in ways they can help one another.

“That happens because of community,” Stellmacher said.

Networking can sound transactional — something we do when we need a job or want something from someone. But viewed through a

mentoring mentality, it becomes something much more communal: learning who knows what, sharing what we know, introducing people and opening doors to opportunities. That lifts everyone.

Every such conversation, or every time we introduce someone within our professional or community networks, “can be the spark that changes the trajectory of someone’s personal, professional life,” Stellmacher said.

Yet for some of our neighbors, access to these networks and opportunities is a challenge. Most take time, and financial pressures, transportation, childcare and other barriers matter, too — making it even more meaningful when we intentionally open our circles to others.

Meaningful interpersonally, and in ways that create community advocacy.

Stellmacher believes California could dramatically improve these outcomes by helping more people build these skills — leading to family-sustaining wages, greater civic participation, stronger local businesses and generational economic growth. This is the work EDGE advances through statewide advocacy.

She added, “Still, it is community-level advocacy that pushes policy forward” — particularly when the human stories of our neighborhoods collectively reach those making decisions.

That is where Community Connection will be heading soon: where neighbors, community leaders and elected decision-makers meet, organize and make change for good, and how chambers of commerce build networks for all things in community growth

Patsy McGavock is a volunteer writer and community advocate “informing, empowering and engaging readers with their community.” and can be reached at PatsyMcGavock.JustServe@gmail.com. ★

Helping Hands OV Calls on Community to Lend a Hand as Need Grows



Helping Hands OV connects low-income families, seniors, veterans, individuals with disabilities and others experiencing financial hardship with volunteers who can help with small but meaningful tasks. Photo courtesy of Helping Hands OV

Helping Hands OV News Release

ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG) - A growing number of local residents are asking for a helping hand, and Helping Hands OV is calling on community members to step up.

So far in 2026, the volunteer-run nonprofit has received 86 requests for assistance with small household and outdoor projects. Volunteers have completed 49 of those requests, providing more than \$15,800 in donated services to low-income neighbors in the community.

Helping Hands OV connects low-income families, seniors, veterans, individuals with disabilities and others experiencing financial hardship with volunteers who can help with small but meaningful tasks. Projects may include light yardwork, minor home repairs, fence repairs, changing light bulbs and other household tasks that can become difficult or unaffordable for someone in need.

But with requests continuing to come in, Helping Hands OV needs more volunteers to keep up with the demand.

“We can do even more with your help,” the organization said.

Volunteering does not require a major time commitment. Community members can share their skills and choose

opportunities that fit their abilities and availability. Whether you can lend a hand for one project or volunteer regularly, your time can make a meaningful difference for a neighbor.

Helping Hands OV is also seeking local blue-collar businesses interested in partnering with the organization. Landscapers, handymen, plumbers, electricians, tree trimmers, contractors and other skilled professionals are encouraged to get involved by discounting or donating time or services to help neighbors in need.

Community members are also welcome to attend Helping Hands OV’s monthly meetup and meeting, held at 6 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month. Locations change from month to month, so those interested should check the calendar at helpinghandsov.org or visit facebook.com/HelpingHandsOV for the latest meeting location and details.

Helping Hands OV is a volunteer-driven nonprofit built around a simple mission: connecting our community one hand at a time.

To become a volunteer, explore business partnership opportunities or learn more about Helping Hands OV, visit helpinghandsov.org. Every helping hand makes it possible to serve another neighbor. ★

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by Dave T. Phipps



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Differences: 1. Hand is moved. 2. Paper on desk is missing. 3. Desk is not as wide. 4. Window is not as wide. 5. Tie is different. 6. Blinds are higher.

by BUD BLAKE



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by Dave T. Phipps



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CLUES

CROSS

1. Give benediction
6. World's oldest broadcasting company, acr.
9. Hoodwink
13. H, spelled out
14. Have a cold, e.g.
15. Dogma
16. Raja's wife
17. Shel Silverstein's constrictor
18. Extreme, prefix
19. "_____, my dear, I don't give a damn"
21. "Why so _____?"
23. "High" beverage
24. Fairytale's second word
25. "Swan Lake" step, e.g.
26. Potassium hydroxide solution, pl.
30. Nincompoop
35. Month of Purim
37. At any time
39. Coastal town in southern England
40. Flick part
41. 4 x 4 race
43. Like most Brothers Grimm stories
44. "Peer Gynt" playwright
46. Actress Campbell
47. Please do not delay, acr.
48. Experienced sailor (2 words)
50. Dispatched
52. a.k.a. Tokyo
53. Window guards
55. Beer faucet
57. "I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it _____"
61. "What we've got here is _____ to communicate"
65. Like United States Capitol
66. Food safety org.
68. Ritual basin
69. Tooth trouble
70. Husk of corn
71. Sharks' domain
72. Fence board
73. Pastrami partner
74. Paper quantities

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

- DOWN
1. Vomit
2. The one with pants on fire
3. Volcano in Sicily
4. *" can smell the of a woman... Honey oil, lavender, soap"
5. Israeli monetary unit
6. *"Hasta la vista, "
7. Life story, for short
8. Fastener
9. Hero shop
10. "Do others..."
11. Paddington Bear's homeland
12. Airport postings, acr.
15. Rutabaga cousin
20. Extra sweatshirt, e.g.
22. Long period of time
24. No-good
25. *"We'll always have "
26. Hacienda brick
27. Mexican cuisine staple
29. *"She doesn't go here"
31. Party garb?
32. Not better
38. Techno dance party
42. Busybody, in Yiddish
45. *" puts Baby in a corner"
49. Toothy fish
51. Alterations specialist
54. Mention something
56. *"There's no like home"
57. Contributors
58. Season to be jolly
59. Village People hit
60. Source of protein
61. Cab payment
62. Eye layer
63. #74 Across, sing.
64. Sea eagles
67. *"Go ahead, make my "

SU

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

**WE SUPPORT
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Salsa, Music and Community Spice Up Fifth Annual Cook-Off

The Board voted unanimously to

The next meeting of the FORPD Board is scheduled for Sept. 16. ★

To learn more about volunteering, supporting the organization or getting involved in the community, visit helpinghands.org. There's always room for another helping hand, and maybe another batch of salsa, too! ★

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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.



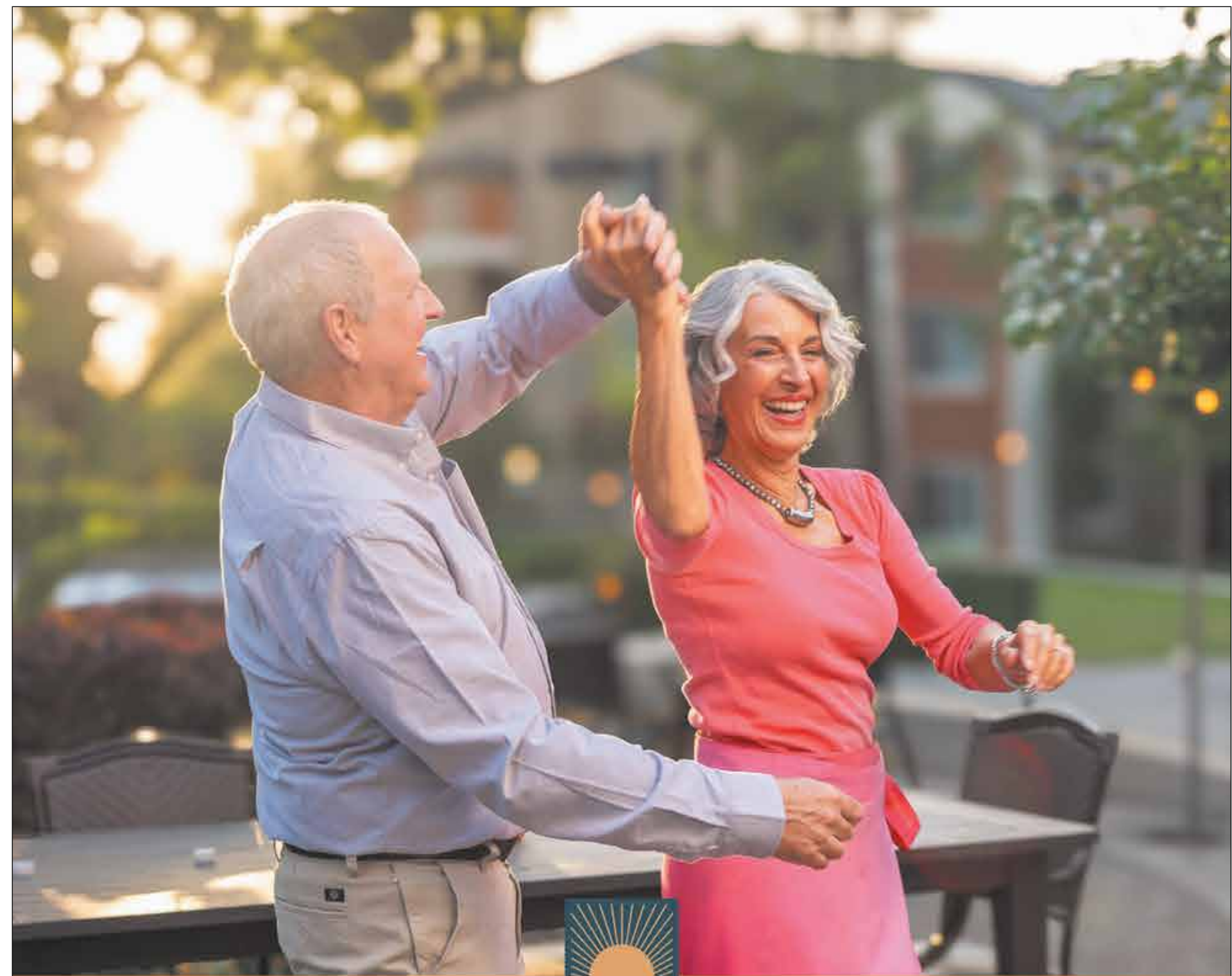
A dedication plaque honoring the fallen first responders.



A memorial sculpture remembering all the construction workers.



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



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