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Gold River Messenger

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Rail Fair Returns to Cal Expo



The 2026 International Railfair model railroad show returns to Cal Expo on Saturday, Nov. 14 and Sunday, Nov. 15, featuring 11 different operating layouts in Z, N, HO, S and G scales, vendors and several special new attractions. Photo courtesy of International Railfair

By Thomas J. Sullivan

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The 2026 International Railfair model railroad show returns to Cal Expo on Saturday, Nov. 14 and Sunday, Nov. 15, featuring 11 different operating layouts, vendors and special new attractions.

"International Railfair is especially proud to have Patricia Lollis, one of the country's first woman railroad engineers on Saturday, Nov. 14, promoting her recently published memoir, 'Woman Driver, First Woman Locomotive Engineer on the Sante Fe Valley Division,'" said Tom Campbell, event spokesperson for the International Railfair.

In 1974, Lollis was hired as an engineer trainee by the Santa Fe Railroad — one of the very first women ever to hold that position in the United States.

In 2015, through several railroad Facebook groups, Lollis reconnected with many of the people she had worked alongside on the old Santa Fe Valley Division located in Richmond, California and met other women railroaders from across the country.

"Her book is a collection of short stories with color photographs, written to preserve her memories of the unique people, conditions, and situations she encountered, and to chronicle what railroading in the U.S. was like the 1970s and 1980s," Campbell said.

Lollis will be signing hard and soft cover copies of her new book available for purchase at the West Coast Railroaders Group full-size motorcar display at the International Railfair on Saturday only.

"These motorcars are the actual motorized maintenance vehicles that railroad crews once used to travel along tracks – smaller and more accessible than a locomotive, and a genuinely different look at railroad history than most model train shows offer," Campbell said. "These

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What's Cooking in California Schools?

Farm to School Summit brings state leaders, local students and fresh ideas

By Ornella Rossi

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - California has spent five years making sure public school students can eat breakfast and lunch for free. Now, the question is what goes on their trays.

That was the focus Thursday, Oct. 15, as farmers, school nutrition workers and state leaders gathered at Soil Born Farms for the 2026 California Farm to School Summit. The summit celebrated free school meals and examined how districts can serve more fresh, locally grown food.

Local students helped bring that mission to life. Cordova Gardens Elementary School students opened the morning program with a performance of "Dirt Made My Lunch." At the farm's animal barn, designed for regenerative farming and agricultural learning, Cordova High School FFA members demonstrated how milk fat affects ice cream texture and discussed wool quality, safe animal handling, poultry and fresh egg care, rabbit care and competition preparation, and animal branding and identification.



Farmers, school nutrition workers and state leaders gathered at Soil Born Farms for the 2026 California Farm to School Summit. Photo courtesy of the California Farm to School Summit

Cordova High's FFA floral class also hosted "Big

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Defendant Sentenced to 650 Years – Life for Child Sexual Assaults

Sacramento County District Attorney's Office News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On Oct. 15, the Honorable Kenneth Brody sentenced Michael Jones to 650 years to life in state prison. On Sept. 17, Jones was convicted by a jury of 16 counts of child sexual assault. Aggravating factors of substantial sexual conduct and multiple victims were also found true.

When the first victim was 11 to 13 years old, Michael Jones committed hundreds of sexual acts against her, including intercourse and sodomy. Jones initially began by grooming the victim and quickly progressed his conduct. When the victim disclosed the abuse, Jones fled and remained hidden from law enforcement for seven years. During this time, Jones began sexually assaulting another child when she was 9 years old.

Under current California law, Jones (age 43) would have become eligible for release at an Elder Parole hearing once he turned 50 years old and served 20 years of his 650 years to life prison sentence. With the passage of AB 2727, Jones will not become eligible for release at an Elder Parole hearing until he turns 65 years old and has served 25 years of his 650 years to life prison sentence.

Also, before any parole, Jones will receive an evaluation to determine if he is a Sexually Violent Predator (SVP). If he is deemed to be an SVP, he will face an indeterminate civil commitment to a secure state hospital facility for psychiatric treatment.

Additional material on Elder Parole can be found at sacda.org. ★

WE SUPPORT OUR MILITARY

Rail Fair Returns to Cal Expo

Continued from page 1

vehicles are something the public rarely gets to see close-up."

Set against the backdrop of the 1970s and 1980s, Lollis' compelling memoir takes readers inside the world of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway at a time when cabooses still brought up the rear of every freight train, switch engines worked around the clock and station agents wrote up train orders in a trade that was built on grit, skill and tradition.

"That era is sadly long gone," Lollis said in a phone interview. Railroad consolidation, staffing cuts and more automation have now largely reduced the role of the engineer in recent years, she said.

Lollis fondly remembers the unforgettable railroaders and colorful characters she worked alongside while revealing what it was like to enter a profession that once had been closed to women.

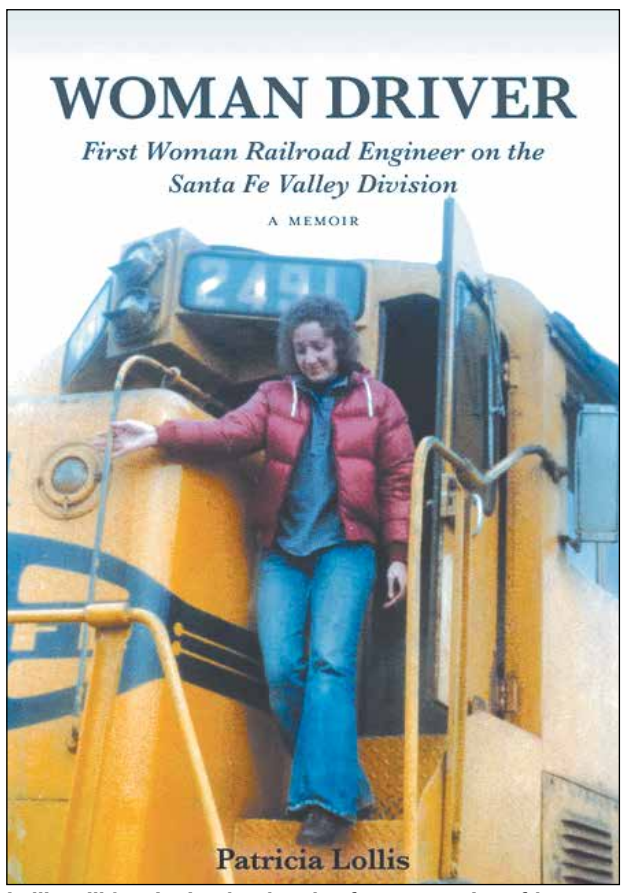
She encourages International Railfair guests to stop by her table to learn more about her remarkable professional journey.

"The IRF show is a locally run not-for-profit train show run by members of the Sacramento Modular Railroaders, the Sacramento chapter of the European Train Enthusiasts, Roseville Roundhouse Model Railroad Association and the Sierra Division of the Pacific Coast Region of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) for over 40 years," said Campbell.

"Buildings C and D at Cal Expo on 1600 Exposition Blvd. in Sacramento will feature 28,000 square feet of model railroad layouts, vendor tables and full-size railroad equipment," Campbell said.

The popular annual event is a decidedly relaxed, inexpensive November weekend activity ideal for seasoned model railroad enthusiasts, yet perfect for families with train-obsessed kids, and for adults who are simply curious about reconnecting with a childhood hobby from their past.

"The two-day show is called 'International Railfair' because one of our participating sponsor clubs, European Train Enthusiasts (ETE) specializes in building and operating European model railroads," Campbell said.



Lollis will be signing hard and soft cover copies of her new book "Woman Driver, First Woman Locomotive Engineer on the Sante Fe Valley Division" which will be available for purchase at the West Coast Railroaders Group full-size motorcar display at the International Railfair on Saturday only. Photo courtesy of Patricia Lollis



This year's International Railfair welcomes Patricia Lollis, one of the country's first woman railroad engineers, on Saturday, Nov. 14, promoting her recently published memoir, "Woman Driver, First Woman Locomotive Engineer on the Sante Fe Valley Division." Photo courtesy of Patricia Lollis

The annual model railroad show covers four popular scales: Z, N, HO and G. For anyone new to the hobby, those letters correspond to the size of the equipment – Z is the smallest (roughly 1:220 scale), N is slightly larger, HO is the most common scale among hobbyists worldwide and G scale is large enough to run in a garden.

Each of the fully operating layouts on display offer a close up look into a realistic, highly detailed world in miniature.

Vendor tables full of equipment, parts, kits and collectibles are well worth a look – even if you're not buying.

"We display operating model railroads to the public and educate the public about model railroading, railroad history and prototypical railroad operations," Campbell said.

One of the most popular family-friendly returning features of the International Railfair is an actual operating children's model train layout where children can run their own train and qualify as a Junior Engineer. Coloring tables with free souvenir International Railfair-themed crayon sets are also set up throughout the weekend while supplies last.

"We want to share the best family hobby in the world with you and your family," Campbell said.

The 2026 International Railfair will be held Saturday, Nov. 14, and Sunday, Nov. 15, in Buildings C and D at Cal Expo, 1600 Exposition Blvd., Sacramento.

Advance tickets can be purchased at: https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/63710069/international-railfair-sacramento-cal-expo-events

Ticket prices at the gate on Saturday, Nov. 14 are $15, and $12 on Sunday, but can be purchased for a reduced price with a processing fee if bought online in advance.

Advance online tickets are $12 for Saturday and $10 for Sunday. Children ages 12 and under are free.

Active and retired military receive $2 off ticket price with ID at the gate (only). Parking on the Cal Expo fairgrounds is $10, payable by cash or card. The venue's clear bag policy and unaccompanied minors' policy also apply; visit calexpo.com for more information. ★



Patricia Lollis seen at the cab controls of a Santa Fe locomotive remembers the unforgettable railroaders and colorful characters she worked alongside while revealing what it was like to enter a profession that once had been closed to women. Photo courtesy of Patricia Lollis



Members of the West Coast Railroaders Group will showcase examples of full-size motorcar maintenance vehicles which that railroad crews across the nation once used to travel miles of railroad track for inspection and service. Photo courtesy of International Railfair



Buildings C and D at Cal Expo on 1600 Exposition Blvd in Sacramento will feature 28,000 square feet of model railroad layouts, vendor tables and full-size railroad equipment. Photo courtesy of International Railfair



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What's Cooking in California Schools?

Continued from page 1

Smiles and Little Blooms," showing visitors how to arrange flowers and discussing the benefits of floral design for mental well-being. Both schools are part of Folsom Cordova Unified School District, which partners with Soil Born Farms to provide hands-on agricultural education.

The local involvement was one piece of a statewide effort. In 2021, California became the first state to adopt free breakfast and lunch for all public school students, regardless of family income. Schools have since served approximately 3.5 billion free meals, according to summit organizers.



The summit included California Food for California Kids Leadership and Innovation Awards honoring 10 school nutrition leaders statewide. Photo courtesy of the California Farm to School Summit

California has also invested $86 million in its Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, supporting 375 projects benefiting 4.2 million students. The grants help schools buy from local growers, improve menus and teach students where their food comes from.

"What we have achieved in school meals and farm to school is something that many did not think was possible five years ago," said Abby Halperin, senior policy and evaluation manager at the Center for Ecoliteracy, opening the first panel.

The discussion, "Farm to School in Policy: California as a Model for the Nation," brought together farmer Anna Nakamura Knight of Old Grove Orange, Tahoe Truckee Unified School District nutrition director Kat Soltanmorad and Food Insight Group co-founder Beth Katz.

Soltanmorad said free school meals have helped remove the divide between students whose families could afford lunch and those who could not.

"There was no difference when you came through the line," Soltanmorad said. Her district has also expanded scratch cooking and purchasing from regional farms.

For Knight, the partnerships make a difference at the other end of the food chain.

"For us, farm to school is what helps small farm families like mine keep farming forever," she said.

Knight described how selling directly to school districts gives her family farm steadier income and opportunities to host student field trips.

But getting fresh food onto the lunch tray is not as simple as changing a menu.

A second morning panel, "Farm to School in the Kitchen: From Ultraprocessed to Fresh School Meals," focused on staffing, equipment and the practical work behind healthier meals. Panelists included Ambrosia Allen, nutrition services director for Elk Grove Unified School District; Stella Ndahura of Azusa Unified; and Sunny Baker of the National Farm to School Network.

When asked about priorities Allen said districts need realistic timelines, equipment and training to buy and prepare more local food. Ndahura described a problem many smaller districts face: "Kitchens are old and dated. We need refrigeration space."

The discussion comes as California prepares to implement Assembly Bill 1264, a 2025 law requiring certain ultraprocessed foods to be phased out of school meals. Allen said school nutrition staff need a clearer definition before they can plan menu changes.



The 2026 California Farm to School Summit took place at Soil Born Farms, a 55-acre Rancho Cordova urban farm and education center. Photo courtesy of the California Farm to School Summit

"But first, tell me what ultraprocessed is. If I don't know, I can't move away from that," Allen said.

Baker warned against replacing restricted products with newly formulated versions of the same foods. "We can't have reformulation stand in for real food. Kids know the difference," she said.

A California Department of Public Health representative told attendees the agency is working with the Department of Education to gather input from food service directors about what districts can realistically prepare and serve. A public survey on the new definitions is open through Nov. 15, and a separate survey for school nutrition directors is expected early next year.

The afternoon program examined how schools can create dependable markets for farmers in "Farm to School in the Field: Climate-Smart, California-Grown School Food," with representatives from Esperanza Community Farms, the Yurok Tribe Food Sovereignty program and Los Angeles Unified School District. The session examined how hands-on learning about food production helps students better understand the food system and encourages curiosity about trying new foods.

"Since coming to Cordova, I have gained more experience and knowledge of production, process, and the specific sciences behind plant and animal production through opportunities at Soil Born Farms," Rubio Shared.

A later panel, "Farm to School in the Classroom: Hands-on Food Education" featured Cordova High student and FFA chapter president Victoria Rubio alongside educators from the Agricultural Institute of Marin and Rio School District, discussing learning through gardens, farms and cafeterias.

The summit also included California Food for California Kids Leadership and Innovation Awards honoring 10 school nutrition leaders statewide. Elk Grove Unified's Michelle Drake received the Food Access and Equity Award for expanding nutrition education, farm visits and hands-on learning opportunities.

"These leaders are proving that fresh and local school food is possible at scale," said Center for Ecoliteracy Executive Director Alexa Norstad in a statement.

A full list of recipients is available at cafarmtoschoolsummit.com/awards.

At Soil Born Farms, a 55-acre Rancho Cordova urban farm and education center, those ideas came together. Founder and co-director Shawn Harrison encouraged visitors to see how gardens, kitchens and farm experiences work together.

"When you bring them together, magical stuff starts to happen," Harrison told attendees. ★



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APA Sacramento Valley Section Honors Urban Planners

Awards event celebrates regional innovation across Sacramento Valley



The Sacramento Valley Section (SVS) of the American Planning Association (APA) convened on the evening of Oct. 15 to honor those who have outstanding achievements in city planning.

Story and photo by Khushi Salgia

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Urban planning informs how a city grows, develops and what kinds of resources are available to its residents. To honor those driving local innovation and community development, the American Planning Association (APA) Sacramento Valley Section (SVS) hosted their annual awards show on the Oct. 15. The SVS is the largest APA section in the region with a 23-member board.

"It provides us with networking and educational opportunities," said Paula Danelouk, APA member.

Selected by a five-member jury panel led by APA Awards Director Nikki Zanchetta, this year's award recipients demonstrated creative problem-solving and visionary thinking to tackle complex planning challenges.

Among the evening's top honors, the Transportation Planning Award of Excellence went to the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) Regional Mobility Hubs Design Guidance. This project aimed to figure out how transportation could be improved to reduce mileage.

"The mission is to create accessible transportation hubs," said Chelsey Norton, a representative from SACOG. "We want to create environments where people are able to move freely and efficiently."

The Comprehensive Plan Award was awarded to Marysville 2050: General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan.

"[This plan] addresses housing, multimodal transportation and historic preservation," said JT Lee, an APA board member who presented the award.

Marysville, a town north of Sacramento, is landlocked due to levees and therefore hasn't been able to grow or expand outwards. In addition, there are two major highways that bisect the city, which makes mobility restricted.

"It's a snapshot in time," Lee said.

The core vision establishes a framework for a diverse and economically sustainable community with active downtown spaces, minimized vacancies, affordable housing options and expanded park and recreation access. This is the first time a plan to grow Marysville has been updated since 1985.

The Planning Excellence Award went to the SACOG 2050 Blueprint. What makes this plan special is that it gathered data and input from over 6,000 residents, which is more data than a typical plan would collect.

"Our success depends on planning and acting together," said Lisa Lind, blueprint manager at SACOG.

The next award presented was the Planning Agency Award of Merit, which recognizes an agency that shows both innovation and implementation in city planning. This was awarded to the Citrus Heights Community Development Department (CHCDD) for their commitment to translating long-term goals to meaningful actions.

"Never underestimate the power of a bold vision," said Casey Kempenaar, community development director at CHCDD.

Afterwards followed the Planning Agency Award of Excellence which went to the Sacramento County Planning and Environmental Review. Next was the Planning Firm Award of Excellence which went to Mintier Harnish.

Another Planet Entertainment (APE) and SKK Developments received the Local Vision Award. This award, which honors projects with out-of-the-box thinking or an unconventional vision, was given to them for their Channel 24 project. This project turned an industrial warehouse into a concert venue because many touring musicians have to skip Sacramento due to there not being an appropriately-sized venue for them to play.

"APE wanted an opportunity to bring live music to Sacramento," said Sarah Ellis, the architect who designed the venue.

The Emerging Planner Awards were awarded to Nikki Zanchetta and Hannah Woolsey of Mintier Harnish for their promising contributions early in their planning careers.

The highest individual honor was the SVS Legacy Award, which is for "honoring an SVS professional showing exemplary commitment to the planning and practice [of urban design]." This award went to Kacey Lizon of SACOG.

"Kacey is a competent and warm leader," said Bernadette Austin, CEO of CivicWell who presented the award to Lizon.

In her speech, Lizon reflected on the honor and the inspiration provided by her peers across the Sacramento region.

"My heart is full tonight," said. "It makes me want to step up my game." ★

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Assistance League Gives Back to the Community

How This Unique Nonprofit Strives to Make Sacramento a Better Place



The Assistance League of Sacramento (ALS) is an entirely volunteer-run nonprofit. Photo courtesy of the Assistance League of Sacramento



ALS prepares "Welcome Baskets" to give to those who have aged out of the foster care system, or anyone who needs a little support launching their independent life. These baskets contain household essentials such as towels, dish soap and curtains to name a few. Photo by Khushi Salgia



As part of the "Bears" program, the ALS gives out teddy bears to those who have undergone trauma such as kids in hospitals or seniors with Alzheimer's, which has been proven to provide comfort. Photo by Khushi Salgia

By Khushi Salgia

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - When it comes to the systems in place the keep the city running, the ones that we might take for granted, it's not only structured paid roles and jobs that result in meaningful work in the community.

The value of the kindness and willingness to help from people who care cannot be overstated. One of these groups is the Assistance League of Sacramento (ALS), a nonprofit that serves the Greater Sacramento area that many people might not know about, but many people do benefit from.

"We quietly serve the community," said Charlotte Stott, vice president of marketing and communications.

Assistance League, the first ever nonprofit, nonpolitical and nonsectarian organization founded in the West, originally started in the mid-1890s by Anne Banning and Ada Edwards Laughlin. In the 1960s, a group of Sacramento women harnessed this vision to start their own chapter, launching initiatives such as serving seniors in hospitals and starting a thrift shop.

Over the past six decades, the nonprofit has expanded to involve a variety of programs depending on what the community needs most, and now the Sacramento chapter is the largest one in Northern California. From women and children to the unhoused and those who just aged out of the foster care system, the ALS prioritizes the groups of people who tend to be the most vulnerable.

In addition to donations and grants, the main way the nonprofit makes money is through their upscale thrift store, Fabulous Finds on Fulton, which is the only nonprofit thrift store in Sacramento, and has been voted as one of the top thrift scores by the Carmichael Chamber of Commerce.



Each item donated to the thrift store, Fabulous Finds on Fulton, undergoes a thorough screening and inspection process before it is stocked. Photo by Khushi Salgia

This store, which is entirely run by volunteers, stocks high-quality donated goods from clothes to shoes to home decor. In addition to being a great place for unique thrift finds, its profits contribute to 80 percent of the ALS budget which allows them to keep their various programs up and running.

It's not just the store that is volunteer run, but the whole nonprofit, and that also helps them get grants and funding.

"They want to do something meaningful and give back," Stott said. "Assistance League is like a family."

There is no executive director, and they aim to keep costs as low as possible to give back as much as they can to the community. For example, they try not to waste or throw anything away, and if an item isn't of use, they try to find another home for it or donate it to other nonprofits who might need it.

"[The organization is] run predominantly by women," said Becky Granroth, ALS President. "Lots of naysayers said we couldn't pull it off."

One of their programs is Operation School Bell, which launched in 1995, and is available to both elementary and middle school students at Title I schools, public schools that receive financial assistance through the Department of Education when at least 40 percent of their students come from low-income families. Due to the parents being overworked trying to make ends meet, they don't always have the time or resources to ensure their kid is able to get the most out of their education.

"Sometimes, there are children going to school unwashed," Stott said.

Operation School Bell, which has the largest budget allocation – about $200,000 a year – provides children with new school clothing each year such as shirts, pants, jackets, underwear, shoes and socks. According to the ALS website, "For many children, this may be the first time to get new clothes or shoes." Having clean and quality clothing can be the difference between poor and regular attendance at school. Their behavior improves and they also pay more attention in class.

"A child loses two hours of learning worrying about being cold on the playground," Stott said. "Now he can go to school, and he's not picked on at the playground."

Another educational program at ALS is their scholarship for students enrolled in community college who have a financial barrier getting in the way of them completing their education. In addition to paying for the tuition itself, the scholarship money can go to anything that would allow a student to get their degree such as tutoring, getting their car repaired or paying for childcare.

"We're kind of like the PTA," Granroth said.

Stott and Granroth shared a story about a young man who went from living in his car, being estranged from his family and struggling with addiction to completing his Ph.D. in chemical engineering and creating patented medicine and was able to do so as a result of the scholarship.

"The teachers he had growing up never believed in or challenged him and thought he was a misfit," Granroth said.

When it comes to a scholarship, it's not just about the money itself. The fact that someone cares about you fulfilling your potential and is willing to show their support for it can increase psychological wellbeing and a sense of community that can bring out the best in people.

"It's the fact that we believe in them," Stott said. ★

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Informing, Empowering & Engaging Readers With Their Community



Policy Not Partisan 2: Finding Common Ground Without Losing Our Principle

By Patsy McGavock

In interview, Assemblymember Josh Hoover told me about a recent press conference with colleagues from across the aisle celebrating a bill they'd co-authored. "It was just really cool to see, and to feel the accomplishment of doing something with buy-in from all sides."

He brought his teenagers along to see the collaboration firsthand.

"My son was asking me questions, like, 'So you do work with Democrats sometimes?'"

Yes, they do work together. Perhaps more often than we realize.

Last time, I shared the moment my understanding of politics changed. I began seeing politics as policy about people, and how we may be limiting ourselves by associating politics primarily with partisan division.

Today, I'm clarifying something else about collaboration: Consensus isn't unanimous agreement. It's finding a direction people can support, even when differences remain.

That's a harder part of healing our division. An essential part. An essential part.

Hoover described the bipartisan California Problem Solvers Caucus. Members join to seek solutions across party lines, but political expectations can make that difficult in general assembly.

Democratic Assemblymember David Alvarez acknowledged that when colleagues and supporters expect a clear party line, working across the aisle can be perceived as giving something up.

How many possible solutions go unexplored when someone doesn't feel free to explore beyond their party's preferred approach.

While discomfort is expected when we challenge our thinking, meaningful collaboration requires room to disagree without pressure to surrender our principles.

Democratic Assemblymember Anamarie Ávila Farías, offered a refreshing perspective. She hasn't experienced that pressure within the caucus.

"I don't lean in starting with a label. I dissect the problem and engineer outward," she explained.

She described Democrats as "fifty shades of blue," with similar differences among Republicans. Why limit ourselves to one shade when a problem may require ideas from many?

The caucus, she said, provides a "sandbox" where members can explore different solutions without being judged by their particular shade – or color.

Consider immigration.

Last year, members of the caucus developed shared principles on this deeply divided issue. They identified areas of agreement on immigration's economic importance, border security, due process and possible paths toward legal status.

They didn't settle every disagreement. They identified common concerns and a starting point for policy discussions.

Ávila Farías described the significance of agreeing on the problem to solve before debating solutions. If we can't even agree on what problem we're trying to solve, how can we work together to solve it?

Alvarez likewise distinguishes between negotiating the methods of reaching a goal, but not abandoning the purpose behind it.

Compromise needn't mean surrendering principle. Consensus shouldn't mean pressured – or uncomfortably silent – agreement. It takes all voices.

The process can be the beginning of a better solution.

I've been thinking about this as I learn to chair meetings myself. Consensus isn't simply getting everyone to say yes, nor is it settling for a watered-down middle ground.

We want a path people can genuinely support.

How? Identifying the problem and shared outcome. Invite differing perspectives, including quieter voices. Separate principles from preferences. Test alternatives together. Ask whether people can support the direction, even with reservations. And make room for an honest no.

Being heard doesn't mean every preference will prevail. It means having a genuine opportunity to influence the outcome while retaining our integrity. Hopefully shaping something better than any one voice might have developed alone.

It takes bravery to enter an unfamiliar space. Bravery we often find when something is more important than our present discomfort.

Avila Farias emphasized all representatives need to hear from us, including officials outside our own party – she is only one of 80. Encourage them. Let them know we value thoughtful collaboration – solution-based policy - not just agreement with us.

My neighbor Dotty Hayes, 85, recently shared some wisdom from a less divided decade: If we open our hearts and our minds and not take everything so personally - we will grow tremendously. "And besides, it's so fun to learn from each other."

Perhaps healing division is less about eliminating disagreement than learning what we can build together despite it.

Be the collaboration in the room.

Next time, we'll explore how we can carry those relationships into effective advocacy for problem solving for our own communities.

Reach Patsy McGavock at PatsyMcGavock.JustServe@gmail.com.. ★



Popp Talk

With Mary Jane Popp

Men are Like a Pair of Shoes

Have you been looking for Mr. Right in all the wrong places? Are you seeking your soul mate, but it seems like you're having a devil of a time? **Jeff Carta** found his main goal in writing **"Men Are Like A Pair Of Shoes"**… A Single Woman's Guide To Finding The Right Pair, was to encourage women to realize and exercise the power they have in selecting a mate. He believes some women simply accept flawed relationships. "Women do have power in their relationships," he says, "While men ask, women choose." But Carta made this book lighthearted in order to help with the emotional turmoil and fear of rejection women have in their shaky self-esteem.

Carta says when people wind up in unhappy relationships, it's frequently because they haven't seriously considered what they want in a mate. Too often, women let fears, insecurities, or social pressures shoehorn them into an improper fit. So, he asks the question every woman has had to face…would you be willing to walk in painfully ill-fitting shoes 24/7 for the rest of your life? Or would you complain about the many hurts your shoes are causing, only to protest you can't part with them because the shoes hold so much potential. You'd toss them out in a heartbeat says the man. "What you really want are comfortable fitting shoes that are durable enough to last a lifetime," **Carta** explains. You bethca'! In my humble opinion, you don't have to settle and you don't have to think he will change after the "I do" is done.

So there has to be Tips for Improving Your Shopping Style like Improper Fit, Health Risks or Disappointments, such as promiscuous buying and looking for shoes in the wrong places. "You have to shop with a Smart Heart," says **Carta.** It gets to the heart of dating behavior, and that includes knowing the Right Stores for You, Buying Shoes Over The Internet, The discount Bin, Questions To Ask As You Shop, and If The Shoes Fit, Wear Them. There is a Shopping List for a Soul Mate which includes cleaning out your closet, knowing what type of shoes you are looking for, creating your Shopping List, and Wearing Comfortable Shoes vs Finding the Ideal Pair. And don't forget, Making The Good Fit Last with Tips on Shoe Care, and even Talking To Your Shoes.

So, before you Throw Out The Old Pair of Shoes and Shop for New Ones, you gotta' read this fun and timely look at looking for him. You'll find lots of shopping tips, and before you start wearing another woman's shoes or saying I Have To Have Them, you need to read **"Men are Like A Pair of Shoes."** You'll get some downright good info from **Jeff Carta**, and you'll also have a good belly laugh or two. It is just amazing how men are like a pair of shoes. By the way, I did get a good fit for 53 years. Hope you find Mr Right too! ★

Former Contractors Behind Anchored Tiny Homes Face Felony Charges

Contractors State License Board News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Following investigations by the Contractors State License Board (CSLB) and Sacramento County District Attorney's Office, two brothers behind former company Anchored Tiny Homes have been charged with 35 felony counts related to unfinished accessory dwelling unit (ADU) projects.

Colton Paulhus and Austin Paulhus each face 33 counts of diversion of construction funds, one count of conspiracy to commit a crime, and one count of employee wage theft. Their charges come after CSLB investigated more than 200 consumer complaints across 18 California counties alleging abandoned ADU projects, unpaid subcontractors, payments in advance of work performed or often not performed and funds paid by homeowners that were not used for the homeowners' projects.

A settlement conference hearing initially scheduled for last week has been continued until Jan. 12, 2027.



Colton Paulhus and Austin Paulhus each face 33 counts of diversion of construction funds, one count of conspiracy to commit a crime, and one count of employee wage theft. Photo designed by Magnific

Due to the volume and severity of the allegations, CSLB pursued a criminal investigation against Anchored Tiny Homes and took the most serious administrative enforcement action available to the Board by filing an accusation with the California Attorney General's Office seeking revocation of its contractor's license. CSLB revoked Anchored Tiny Homes' license in Nov. 2024.

After the revocation, CSLB continued to receive and investigate consumer complaints, and in collaboration with the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office, began referring cases for possible criminal charges.

CSLB remains committed to protecting consumers from financial harm and ensuring integrity within California's construction industry. The Board's investigative and enforcement efforts play a critical role in reducing and preventing unlawful activity and unprofessional conduct in California's construction industry.

Contractors building ADUs must follow home improvement payment law restrictions regarding down payment and additional payments, known as progress payments. Down payments should never exceed $1,000 or 10 percent of the project's total cost, whichever is less. Any additional payments cannot exceed the value of the work performed or material delivered. CSLB's Fast Facts: Tips for Building a Residential Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) outlines other important information about ADUs.

For ongoing information and updates, visit www.cslb.ca.gov. ★



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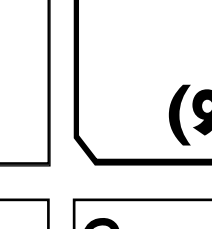
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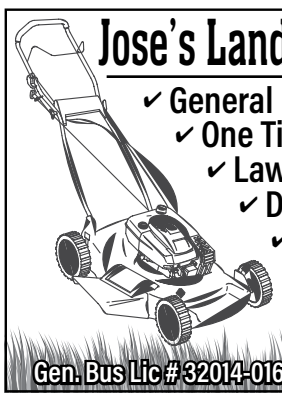
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Secured Property Tax Bills Mailed This Month



Taxpayers can obtain current-year tax bill information, direct levy information, delinquent prior-year tax information and amounts due online by searching by APN or property address.
Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County has mailed about 493,740 secured property tax bills which are payable beginning Nov. 1. These tax bills are mailed only once a year, however, property owners may pay their bills in two installment payments.

The first installment payment is due on Nov. 1. Payments will be accepted without penalty until 5 p.m. on Dec. 10. The second installment payment is due on Feb. 1. Payments will be accepted without penalty until 5 p.m. on April 12. Both installments may be paid when the first installment is due. A reminder notice will not be mailed for the second installment.

Taxpayers may sign up for online e-mail notifications for annual secured property tax bills and reminders before delinquent dates. Choose "e-Subscribe for property tax payment notifications" to receive these notifications.

Payments can be made online via credit card or electronic check. Taxpayers may print tax bill installment payment stubs to mail in with their payments. Taxpayers may also pay by credit card or electronic check over the telephone at 844-430-2823. There is a convenience fee for credit and debit cards. Electronic checks are free.

Payment can be made in person at the Sacramento County Tax Collector's Office at 700 H Street, Room 1710, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. In person payments can be paid via cash, check, credit card, debit card or money order. A convenience fee will apply for credit card and debit card transactions.

Payments can be sent via mail to P.O. Box 508, Sacramento, CA 95812-0508. The Tax Collector accepts and processes payments based on the postmark date. Payments may not be credited to the tax bill for several business days dependent upon the volume of payments received, whether payments were submitted with the correct payment stubs, and/or whether envelopes were postmarked by the delinquent date.

Property tax law requires that parcels be assessed at their factored Prop 13 value, or their fair market value (as of the Jan. 1, 2026, property tax lien date), whichever is less.

A rising real estate market can cause higher than expected increases in a parcel's annual tax bill if that parcel was in Prop 8 status last year. However, the assessed value of any parcel cannot increase beyond that parcel's factored Prop 13 level. The 2% inflation cap applies only to Prop 13 assessments. It does not apply to Prop 8 assessments, which by law must track the property's market value until it reaches the Prop 13 factored value.

Find assessed values at assessor.saccounty.gov under "Assessed Value Lookup," including this year's value and the factored Prop 13 value for comparison. If a taxpayer has evidence that their assessed value as of Jan. 1 was less than that shown on this year's 2026-2027 tax bill, they should visit the Assessor's Website (assessor.saccounty.gov), call the Assessor's Office at 916- 875-0700 or email the Assessor's Office at Assessor@SacCounty.gov.

Taxpayers can obtain current-year tax bill information, direct levy information, delinquent prior-year tax information and amounts due online by searching by APN or property address. A QR code is also provided on the tax bill payment stub for convenient access to the website using a smartphone. Payments can be made online by credit card or electronic check, or taxpayers may print tax bill installment payment stubs to mail with their payments.

Payments can also be made by telephone through the 24-hour Automated Property Tax Information Line at 844-430-2823. The automated line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and provides property tax information, detailed billing and payment information, and the option to make payments by credit card or electronic check.

Tax specialists are available Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at 916-874-6622.

R&TC 2610.5 "Failure to receive a tax bill does not relieve the property owner of the liability to pay taxes in a timely manner or give the Tax Collector reason to cancel penalties imposed for late payment."

Even if your tax bill is being paid by a lending institution (mortgage company), state law requires that a copy of the tax bill be sent to the property owner; all property owners should receive either the original tax bill or an "Owner's Information Copy." It is the responsibility of the property owner to keep their mailing address current with the Assessor's Office. To update your mailing address, please contact the Assessor's Office in writing at 3636 American River Drive, Suite 200, Sacramento, CA 95864 or via email at Assessor@saccounty.gov. Please make sure you include a parcel number and phone number with all correspondence. ★



★ CALIFORNIA ★
POLICY AND ETHICS

BY JOSH F.W. COOK

College Sports Are a Big Money Mess

By Josh Cook

Alex Fulton has helped high school athletes become college athletes and get rich at the same time—something that was prohibited just 10 years ago. Now Alex finds himself leading a band of colleges from the sports fields and pitches to the field of hardball politics. He heads a political action committee pushing for answers and rules for big and small schools with sports programs.

College sports are in a strange policy spot right now. Schools are still figuring out how to pay athletes—while also compensating them in other ways. The rules keep shifting, and no one knows what they will look like in two or three years.

Louisiana State's effort to bring back NFL-drafted players for additional eligibility brought the issue into the national spotlight earlier this year. For decades, college athletes could not earn money from their own fame.

NIL stands for name, image, and likeness. It means a player can make money from ads, autographs, or social media. In 2019, California passed a law letting athletes do this, and other states quickly followed. Then, in 2021, the Supreme Court ruled against the NCAA in NCAA v. Alston. That summer, the NCAA gave in and allowed NIL deals. Almost overnight, players began signing deals with local businesses and big brands. The lawsuits have been nonstop.

The House v. NCAA settlement was supposed to bring order to the player talent market. It hasn't answered everything.

One case worth watching is Patterson v. NCAA, which challenges limits on how long athletes can play. If a player is denied an extra year, they may be able to ask for the money they would have earned if they were given that year. No court has said schools must pay. It's also unclear who would pay. Still, schools with tight budgets should pay attention, with a few $2-million-a-year contracts that could add up to real money.

Congress has a bill called the Protect College Sports Act. It could change how athletes get paid, who can play, and what schools owe their players. But the bill isn't moving. Meanwhile, many major questions remain unresolved.

That uncertainty comes at a cost. Coaches, players, and schools spend more time on lawyers, contracts, and monitoring other programs than on games and educational matters. Program and player investments aren't on solid financial footing, and to keep up, many colleges are already overextending themselves.

College sports were meant to pair competition with education. Right now, that spirit is getting lost.

Schools need to organize and engage with Congress before one faction, like big or small schools, athletic conferences, independent schools, TV channels, or labor unions, decides college sports' future for them.

Big money is here to stay in college sports. Betting on sports is a double-digit growth industry, and when colleges get money clawed back after policies change, either in court or by Congress, there will be big winners and big losers.

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