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East Sacramento News

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SACRAMENTO MAN'S KINDNESS RECOGNIZED



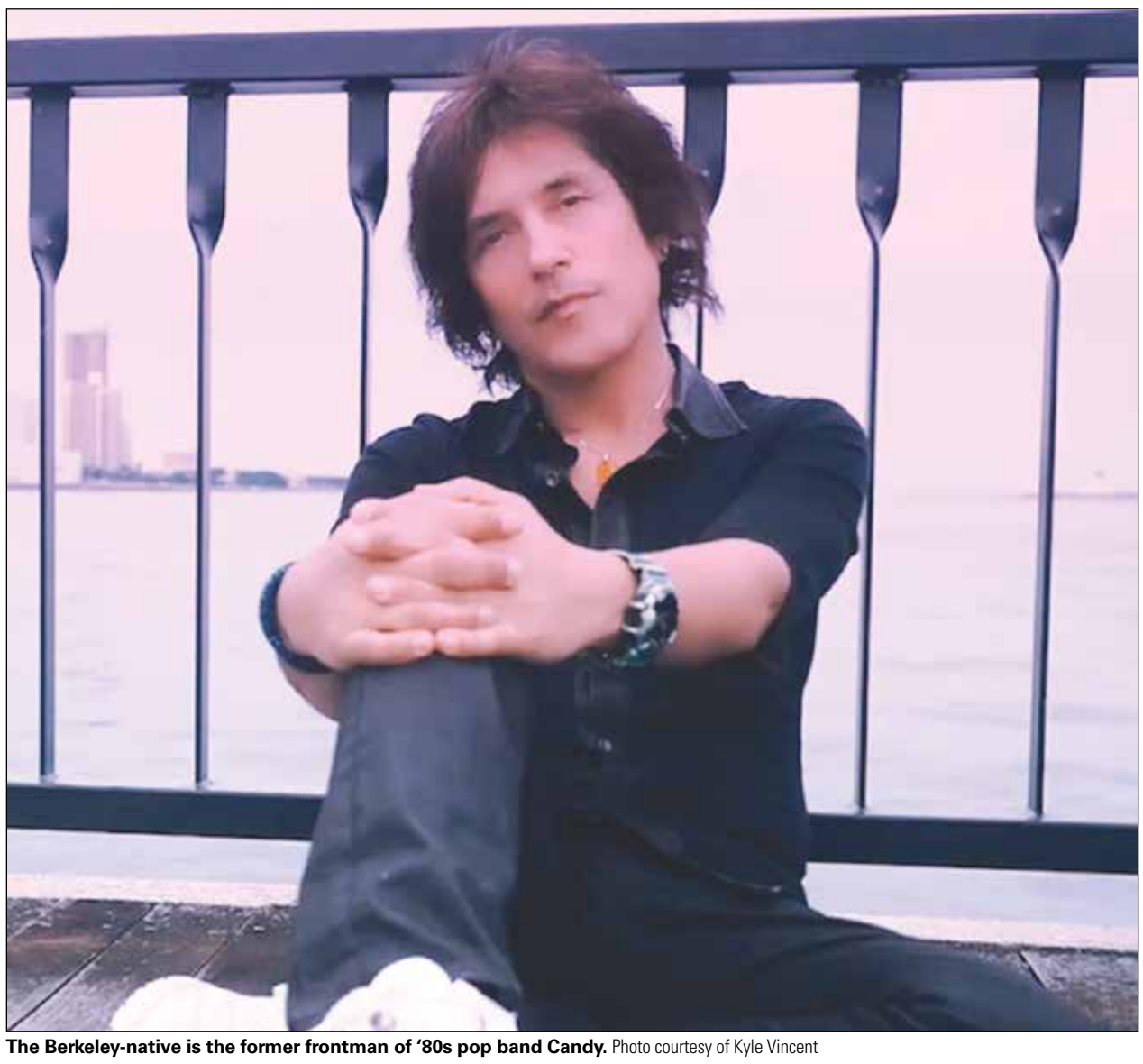
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Going Back to the '80s

Singer-songwriter Kyle Vincent comes to town Dec. 5



The Berkeley-native is the former frontman of '80s pop band Candy. Photo courtesy of Kyle Vincent

By Abbey Wicks

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Kyle Vincent has traded the noise of Los Angeles' glam and punk rock scene for the quiet of a wooded acre in New England.

"It's just woods and nature and quiet," he said during a phone interview. "It is lovely."

But the musician, who once spent his nights playing Sunset Strip clubs and befriending future rock stars, hasn't lost his appetite for the stage. On Dec. 5, he'll bring his songs to the Ooley Theatre, a 35-capacity theater in Midtown.

Vincent was born on Feb. 12, 1968, in Berkeley, Calif. as the youngest of four siblings. He credits the diversity of the city, the first to desegregate its public schools using two-way busing, in exposing him to a wide variety of cultures, ideas and especially music.

"There was a cross contamination (of music)," he said.

At a young age, Vincent fell in love with listening to the radio, where he would hear anything from Van Halen to Earth Wind and Fire to Barry Manilow.

"Everything was music in my brain

Continued on page 3

Camp Okizu Aiming to Rebuild

Story and photos by Keith Burbank

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (MPG) - Leaders and staff of Camp Okizu – a camp for children with cancer and their families – opened the gates Nov. 7 to a new location in Valley Springs.

Valley Springs is about 30 miles east of Galt in Calaveras County and will be home to a new camp following the destruction of the previous one by the Bear Fire in September 2020. No one at the camp, which was in Butte County, was hurt in that fire.

Camp Okizu is still offering camps since the fire, but at rented locations. The Valley Springs property is owned by Camp Okizu following a purchase about two years ago.

Okizu, a word from the Sioux language, means "unity, to come together, to heal from a hurt, to make whole," according to the organization's website. Camp Okizu serves children from Northern California with "peer support, respite and community" at no charge, the website says.



Board Chair Ana Brubaker (left) and Executive Director Suzie Randall stand in front of a pond at Camp Okizu's new property in Valley Springs on Nov. 7.

"We need to raise the funds that it will take to build the camp," said Okizu Board Chair Ana Brubaker, which she and

Continued on page 2

County Sandbag Locations Open

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Department of Water Resources (DWR) has opened three sandbag locations for residents in the unincorporated areas. County DWR continues its annual winter operation to help residents Be Aware and Be Prepared in the event of flooding in their neighborhoods.

Due to the growing concern of what El Nino may bring to the area, residents who believe their property will be in danger of potential flooding are encouraged to get sandbags now before rain falls.

As in previous years, three main locations are now open including Branch Center, 3847 Branch Center Rd.; Orangevale Community Center, 6826 Hazel Ave.; Sacramento Metropolitan Fire Station #116, 7995 Elwyn Ave.

Last year, 308 tons of sand were scooped up and placed into 23,000 bags by Sacramento County residents between the various sandbag locations. During a storm event, if the conditions worsen and flooding become a larger concern, the department can deliver sand to six more sandbag locations that are on standby around the unincorporated parts of the County.

Do you have old sandbags from last winter? Get rid of them and get new bags. The older ones have deteriorated due to sitting out in the summer sun and won't provide the best protection. Get new bags to make sure you are prepared this winter.

Before the rain falls, residents are also encouraged to clear storm drains of trash and debris to reduce the chance of street flooding. During the storm, residents living near creeks and streams can use the County ALERT system to monitor rising streams in the unincorporated areas.

County DWR supplies the sand and bags, paid for by stormwater utility fees, but residents will need to bring a shovel. There is a 20-bag limit per visit. Residents not living in the unincorporated areas of the County will need to check with their cities for sandbag information. The public can visit www.stormready.org for more information on locations and other flood related topics. ★



Camp Okizu Aiming to Rebuild

Continued from page 1

Executive Director Suzie Randall estimate will cost tens of millions of dollars.

The new location has existing cabins that will need to be modified, buildings that need to be torn down and buildings, such as a lodge, that need to be built.

"We have some price estimators," Randall said.

And a contractor joined the team recently who might be able to provide a cost for construction that can be used for planning purposes for Phase I, she said.

Phase I will include the lodge, health center, swimming pool and amphitheater where campers can gather for campfires, Randall added.

"Unless we can find a very generous donor" who can "give us tens of millions of dollars," Brubaker said, chuckling but serious, too.

A public campaign to raise the necessary money has yet to start. Three million dollars is what is required to provide the camps each year, Brubaker said.

It is unclear when the Valley Springs camp will open to campers. Permits from the county must be obtained and buildings designed.

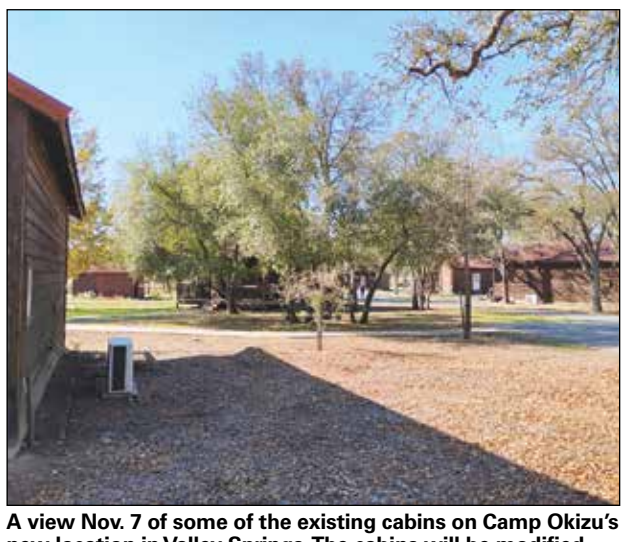
"We're sort of at the mercy of that schedule," Randall said.

One reason for choosing the Valley Springs location is the ability to get off the property in an emergency, she said.

Camp Okizu serves children 7 to 17 years old. And the camp offers weekends for families when parents and children of any age can participate. Another program offers a camp for teen adults and adults in their 20s.



A view Nov. 7 of part of Camp Okizu's new location in Valley Springs.



A view Nov. 7 of some of the existing cabins on Camp Okizu's new location in Valley Springs. The cabins will be modified.

Camp Okizu has served children with cancer and their families for more than 40 years.

"We serve all kinds of kids," said Brubaker.

Even the sickest children can come to camp here, she said.

"Accessibility is a big part of what we do," she added. "We want to make sure that the most vulnerable can come."

Camp Okizu hosts camps for siblings, too.

"As you can imagine, being in a family where one of the kids is sick, there's a lot going on," Brubaker said. "Those kids have a lot of feelings, scared that their brother or sister is sick, jealous that they're not getting their parents' attention, and a lot of conflicting feelings."

Few services exist to help siblings, she said.

Even children who had cancer and lived through it can come to camp, Brubaker said, which many teenagers do.

"But that actually creates a very nice thing for our campers," she added, "because it's this hope that somebody who has the same disease can look at someone older that went through it and are on the other side and are healthy and doing well." ★

Training Dogs for Vets

Story and photo by Keith Burbank



U.S. Army veteran Steven Barnett speaks to members of Ray Clark Chapter 35 of the Disabled American Veterans on Nov. 5 in Carmichael. Barnett told veterans about his nonprofit Service Dogs 4 All Disabilities.

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - A local veteran has turned to dogs to help himself and other heroes.

U.S. Army veteran Steven Barnett co-operates Service Dogs 4 All Disabilities, a nonprofit, that helps veterans and first responders train dogs as service animals at no charge for those who qualify.

"We are teaching them to be dog trainers," Barnett said of veterans and first responders.

Service Dogs 4 All Disabilities can help heroes with another dog if they lose the first, Barnett said, but if they move away, they can train their own dog.

He spoke Nov. 5 to veterans at Ray Clark Chapter 35 of the Disabled American Veterans on Grant Avenue in Carmichael.

Training takes place in three phases, Barnett said. They include basic manners training, the beginnings of task work and training that teaches tasks specific for each hero, Barnett said.

Basic manners include sitting. Task work includes fetching and placing an object in the hero's hand while specific tasks might include leading a veteran with PTSD to an open area if the person is suffering from a living nightmare, for example.

And a dog can be trained to latch on to the scent of its owner's car 4 miles away, Barnett said, and lead them to it.

Once a dog is trained, additional tasks can be added to the animal's repertoire, Barnett said. Training takes about 18 months and can be extended if needed.

Service Dogs 4 All Disabilities offers times for alumni to socialize and further train their dog, too, Barnett said. He has been training dogs for 10 years and his partner has the same amount of experience. They started Service Dogs 4 All Disabilities in 2025.

The aim of the nonprofit is to give heroes the ability to live life, rather than sit at home.

But training the dog, Barnett said, is 10% dog and 90% person. That means training requires the owner to change.

Dick Brink, a retired Air Force chief master sergeant, heard Barnett's presentation Nov. 5 and thought it was great.

"Dogs are real important to GIs," Brink, 88, said. "They need the friendship and the partnership between the dog and the veteran."

Brink is a past commander of Ray Clark Chapter 35 and a past adjutant, having served 14 years in that role.

Brigt Skjerpe, a Marine Corps veteran and a national service officer with the Disabled American Veterans, thought Barnett's presentation was good, too.

"It doesn't just help the veterans," Skjerpe said. "It ends up helping the families as well." ★

Going Back to the '80s

Continued from page 1

all the time," he said "It was my solace. It was my friend. It was everything."

At eight years old, Vincent enrolled in an experimental jazz program for youth through Berkeley Unified School District. By the age of nine, he was learning jazz improvisation on saxophone.

"Without that program, not a chance I'd become a musician, a professional musician," he said.

Eventually, the young musician got "jazzed out," temporarily retiring his saxophone and enrolling in vocal lessons, during which he discovered his ability to sing.

"It was a brilliant decision on my part," Vincent said with a chuckle.

Singing took Vincent to Los Angeles, where he co-founded pop band Candy, of which he was the lead singer. The band released their first and only album "Whatever Happened to Fun..." in 1985.

"You don't realize the historical significance when you're in it," Vincent said of his Candy days, when most nights consisted of playing a rotation of nightclubs along the Sunset Strip. "You don't appreciate it when you don't understand it. And it's the same with LA."

He became immerged in the scene, while also questioning if his heart and soul were truly in it.

"It was an extremely exciting time," Vincent said. "I do sometimes wonder if that was the right road, because it really wasn't what was inside of me music-wise."

Following Candy's disbandment, Vincent honed his songwriting craft as he embarked on his solo career, eventually becoming scouted by Barry Manilow's manager, landing him a record deal and a spot as an opening act on Manilow's "Greatest Hits and Then Some" tour.



The album cover of Vincent's latest album, "Sunshine Soul." Photo courtesy of Kyle Vincent

Manilow would coach Vincent as a performer, as he continued to hone the skill.

In one teaching moment, Manilow advised Vincent on microphone placement when playing a large arena.

"I never forgot it," Vincent said. "He says, 'You're covering your face with the microphone. They can't see your pretty face. Put the mic down.' And I never thought of that before."

In addition to Manilow, Vincent credits artists like the Bee Gees and Gilbert O'Sullivan as inspirations. But just like in his youth, Vincent continues to find new artists and songs that inspire him.



Singer-songwriter and former frontman Kyle Vincent. Photo courtesy of Kyle Vincent

"I'll be running around and hear something, and I'll Shazam it on my phone," he said. "I'm like, 'Man, that's a good song."

Vincent released his latest album, "Sunshine Soul," in 2024, which features 10 original tracks.



Kyle Vincent will play The Ooley Theatre in Sacramento on Dec. 5. Photo courtesy of Kyle Vincent

His setlists usually consist of a mix of hit songs like "Wake Me Up (When the World's Worth Waking Up For)" and new songs or personal favorites. When performing the hits, he tries to stay as close to the original track as possible, he said.

"I'm also a music fan, and when I go see one of my favorite artists, I want to hear the song…I actually do want to hear the song like I know it," he said.

Vincent is no stranger to playing intimate, living room-style shows like the one he'll play in Sacramento.

When it comes to playing a small show, his mindset as a performer doesn't differ too much from playing larger theaters and arenas, he said.

"The songs themselves that I write and sing are kind of intimate, heart on my sleeve, honest songs," said the songwriter. "So you're kind of immediately naked as soon as you walk out there anyway."

Vincent describes his shows as theatrical, which lends well to performing in a theatre setting.

"I don't just go up there as a brooding songwriter," he joked. "'Here's the next song about when she left me,' you know?"

At a Kyle Vincent show, audience members can expect to hear not only songs, but stories, too.

"I guess I feel a little more comfortable telling stories in front of a smaller audience because you do you feel like you're surrounded by family."

Each of the artist's shows is a unique performance, he said. Except for rare occasions, he generally discourages the use of recording on cell phones. "I really want this to be a one-time, special moment."

"My job as a performer is – it amazes me how some performers don't understand this – I only have one job, and that is to make you leave the show feeling better than when you walked in," Vincent said.

As of press time, tickets are still available at $32.50 apiece. To purchase, visit: kylevincent.com.

You can find Kyle Vincent on his YouTube channel: KyleVincent Videos and his music on Spotify and Apple Music. ★

Holiday Artisan Market Coming



Visitors check out one of the fine crafts at the 2025 Crocker Holiday Artisan Market. Photo courtesy of Crocker Art Museum

Crocker Art Museum News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - More than 100 regional artists will welcome visitors to the 20th annual Crocker Holiday Artisan Market, a three-day art and fine craft market on Thanksgiving weekend to benefit artists, the Crocker Art Museum and the Creative Arts League of Sacramento community arts outreach.

This all-volunteer annual event welcomes more than 4,000 guests and is held at the centrally located Scottish Rite Center in East Sacramento.

"These original and varied works of art have been juried into this event to provide a unique one-stop shopping experience for everyone on your list... including yourself!" says Crocker Holiday Artisan Market Co-Chair, Connie Spickelmier. "This event will include 24 dynamic new artists along with our favorite returning artists who enjoy sharing their work, the process and their inspiration."

Market visitors enter to find nearly every inch of the building covered in sparkling decorations, delightful volunteer musicians and performers, and a variety of family-friendly activities in addition to the local vendor shopping.

Visitors can browse selections of fine and functional art works including glass, fiber and textiles, wood, ceramics, paper, photography, painting, sculpture, jewelry, and even artisan chocolates, all offered at a variety of price points.

Each of the participating artists will be available to greet visitors, answer questions, and share details of their artistic journeys and process.

This all-volunteer market helps fund Creative Arts League of Sacramento outreach programs including Crocker Art Museum, Stanford Settlement Neighborhood Center, and Mills Station Arts & Culture Center.

The event includes live musical performances by singers, harpists, flutists and classical guitarists; free candid photo opportunities with Victorian Santa and Mrs. Claus; free face-painting, balloons and general merriment with Pixie Tribe Entertainment Elves; an art giveaway treasure hunt called Passport to Treasure with stamping stations located throughout the venue for an opportunity to win from dozens of art prizes donated by the artists; and culinary delights to enjoy at Bennett's Casual Fare at the Market pop-up café.

The market will be held Nov. 27, 28 and 29 at the Scottish Rite Center, 6151 H Street, Sacramento. Hours of operation are 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday.

Tickets are $20 for all three days, $15 for admission to both Saturday and Sunday and $10 for Sunday only. Children 12 and younger are admitted free. Tickets are available online and at the door. Parking is free.

More details can be found at www.crockerholidayartisanmarket.com. ★

Recruitment for the 2027-28 Sac County Civil Grand Jury Opens Soon

Sacramento County Grand Jury News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Civil Grand Jury is appointed to provide oversight of Sacramento County, its cities, public schools, including community colleges and special district agencies and operations. The Grand Jury also investigates complaints submitted by the public and issues reports of its findings. Past Grand Jury reports and government responses can be found online at https://sacgrandjury.org/reports.aspx.

The Civil Grand Jury is also authorized to hear criminal indictments as needed, and is tasked with visiting regional detention facilities, along with the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office Crime Lab and the Sacramento County Coroner's Office. Nineteen Sacramento County residents and 11 alternates will be selected from among qualified applicants. The one-year term for volunteer jurors runs from July 1, 2027, to June 30, 2028.

"Serving on the Grand Jury has been a fantastic experience. It gives you, as a County resident, an opportunity to review and investigate your local government, school and special district operations, and then provide recommendations to improve their service to your community," Dave Comerchero, Foreperson, 2026-27 County of Sacramento Grand Jury.

To serve on the Grand Jury, you must be a U.S. citizen 18 years of age or older, a resident of Sacramento County for at least one year and available for 20 to 30 hours a week. Applicants must also be able to speak, read and write the English language.

The application period opens Nov. 20 and the deadline to apply is Dec. 31 to be considered. The 2026-27 Grand Jury will be empaneled in June 2027. Grand Jurors receive a small stipend for their volunteer work.

For more information about the Sacramento County Grand Jury, applicant criteria and how to apply, visit https://sacgrandjury.org/apply.aspx. ★

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Giles Named Offensive Player of the Year

Five Hornets Listed on Men's Soccer Honor Roll

Sacramento State Athletics News Release



Sacramento State senior Zac Giles was named The Big West Offensive Player of the Year. Photo courtesy of Sacramento State

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento State senior Zac Giles was named The Big West Offensive Player of the Year and earned a spot on the first team while four other Hornet players were named to the league's postseason honor roll as voted on by the head coaches and announced on Nov. 6.

Giles becomes the first-ever Sacramento State men's soccer student-athlete to be named the top offensive player in The Big West and joins Midfielder of the Year Paul Geyer (2017) and Freshman of the Year Benji Kikanovic (2018) as major award winners in the league since the Hornets joined the conference in 2012.

The Lincoln, Calif., native is also the first Sacramento State player to be named player of the year in any conference since Ernesto Carranza took home the award in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation in 2009.

In also earning a spot in the all-conference first team, Giles became only the seventh Hornet to earn that honor in the program's Big West era, joining Donovan Sessoms (2024), Austin Wehner (2022), Cylus Sandoval (2017), Geyer (2017), Chimdum Mez (2014) and Matt Linenberger (2012).

Joining Giles on the honor roll is junior midfielder Hiroshi Yang on the second team, Sean Battistessa and Nick Strangio on the honorable mention team, and newcomer Adrian Alvarenga on the league's all-rookie team. The group represents the most All-Big West honorees for the program since Sacramento State placed five on the all-conference team and had three more on what was then known as the all-freshman team.

Enjoying a storybook senior season, Giles finished with 11 goals and five assists for 27 points, putting 39 of his school single-season record 72 shots on goal. A three-time Big West Offensive Player of the Week and two-time National Team of the Week selection by Top Drawer Soccer, Giles finished the regular season atop The Big West in shots, shots per match (4.24), shots on goal, shots on goal per match (2.29), goals, points, and points per match (1.59), while finishing tied for fifth in assists.

He set a school Division I era single-match record with four goals in a 5-1 win at CSUN on Oct. 24 for his first career hat trick, while his eight points in that contest were tied for the most in a single match in school history. Giles wrapped up the year ranked tied for eighth on the single-season list in goals and tied for seventh in points while adding school single-season records in points per match (1.59) and shots.

Yang finished third on the team with 12 points thanks to four goals and four assists, ranking second on the team with 39 shots and 17 on goal. He netted his first goal of the season — and the first for the team in 2026 — in the season-opening win over UC Davis, then added a brace against UC Riverside (Sept. 23) and the team's opener against Cal State Bakersfield (Oct. 3).

Two of his assists came in a 4-2 victory over Pacific and added helpers against UC San Diego (Oct. 14) and CSUN (Oct. 24). One of his two goals in the win over the Highlanders was selected as the No. 9 play of the day in ESPN SportsCenter Top 10 plays.

Battistessa finished second on the team with 14 points on six goals and two assists, staring 16 of the team's 17 matches. The Fair Oaks, Calif., native also scored in the regular season opener against UC Davis and added a three-point performance in a win over UC San Diego (Oct. 14). He also scored against San Jose State (Sept. 6), Pacific (Sept. 17), UC Santa Barbara (Sept. 30) and Cal State Bakersfield (Oct. 3).

Strangio was a mainstay on the back line for the Hornets in 15 starts while adding a pair of goals against Saint Mary's and CSUN, while Alvarenga joined him in his rookie season, collecting a pair of assists in the process against UC Santa Barbara and Gonzaga.

All four all-conference honors were the first of their respective careers, while Alvarenga gave the Hornets a representative on the league's all-rookie team for the third consecutive season and became the 17th Hornet freshman to be recognized overall. ★

Memo Rodriguez and Lee Desmond Named to USL Championship All-League Teams

Sacramento Republic FC News Release



Midfielder Memo Rodriguez earned a spot on the All-League First Team and defender Lee Desmond was named to the All-League Second Team on Nov. 10. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Republic FC

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Nov. 10, USL Championship announced the 2026 All-League Teams. Republic FC was represented twice among the top players from the season, with midfielder Memo Rodriguez earning a spot on the All-League First Team and defender Lee Desmond named to the All-League Second Team.

"Memo and Lee have been invaluable to our success this year – both on and off the pitch – and we're incredibly proud to see them deservedly recognized as All-League players," said Republic FC President and General Manager Tim Holt. "Both play an important role in setting the standard for our club, and their leadership remains key as we continue our postseason push."

Rodriguez led the league's midfielder corps with 16 goal contributions and played a key role in Sacramento's stellar form in the second half of the campaign. After suffering an injury early in the season, he worked his way back into form and scored his first goal for Republic FC on July 25. A week later, he recorded three assists in a 5-0 win over Sporting Club Jacksonville.

In Week 30, Memo led the Indomitable Club past New Mexico United with a two-goal, one-assist performance that earned him Player of the Week honors. He then went on to play a massive part in Republic FC's 13-game undefeated streak to close out the regular season, posting nine goal contributions in the final six matches. He earned recognition consistently throughout the year as a six-time Team of the Week honoree and finalist for October Player of the Month.

Team Captain Desmond has earned his first selection to the All-League Second Team after posting his best single-season performance since joining Republic FC in 2022. The 31-year-old centerback was on the pitch for all but 45 minutes of the regular season and led the team with 150 clearances and 159 duels won, while maintaining an 84% passing accuracy. With Desmond anchoring the backline, Sacramento posted double-digit clean sheets for the fifth consecutive year and conceded just 28 goals to lead the Western Conference. He also contributed on the other end of the pitch with two goals, including one in his monumental 400th career appearance on Aug. 1. ★

Kamaria Charlo Named Hawk of the Week

Consumnes River College News Release



Women's basketball student-athlete Kamaria Charlo has been named the CRC Athletics Hawk of the Week following an impressive two-game stretch that helped the Hawks extend their season-opening winning streak to 4-0. Photo courtesy of Consumnes River College

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Cosumnes River College women's basketball student-athlete Kamaria Charlo has been named the CRC Athletics Hawk of the Week following an impressive two-game stretch that helped the Hawks extend their season-opening winning streak to 4-0.

Charlo delivered a standout offensive performance throughout the week, totaling 42 points, six rebounds, five assists and seven steals across wins over Feather River College and College of San Mateo.

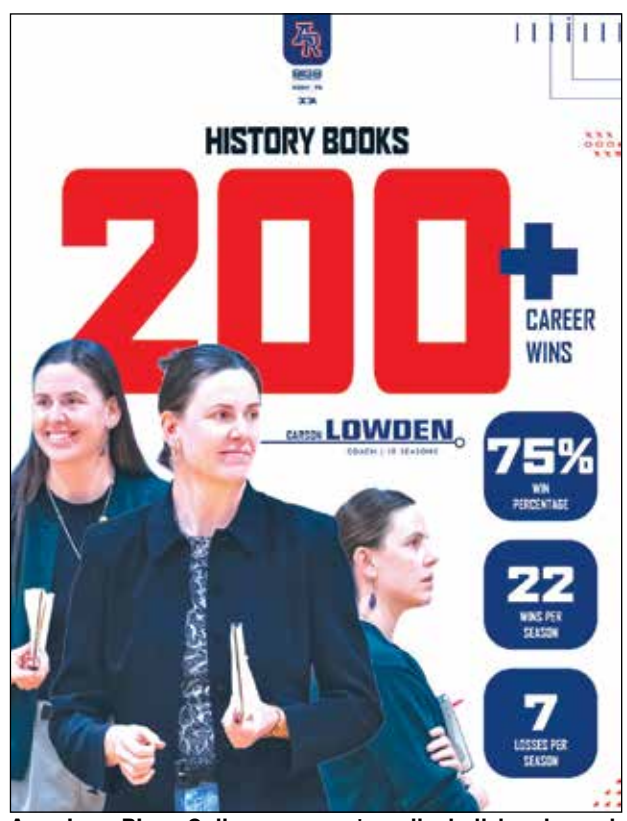
In the Hawks' 60-44 home victory over Feather River on November 5, Charlo finished with 11 points, five rebounds, three assists and three steals, contributing on both ends of the floor as Cosumnes River earned the win at Clark Court.

She followed that performance with a career-best offensive showing against College of San Mateo on November 7, pouring in 31 points to help the Hawks secure a convincing 79-53 road victory. Charlo shot 12-of-23 from the field, including an impressive 6-of-12 from beyond the arc, while adding four steals and two assists.

Her six three-pointers and 31-point performance highlighted a dominant road effort as the Hawks closed out the week with consecutive victories, remaining undefeated at 4-0 to open the season. ★

Lowden Secures Historic 200th Career Win as Beavers Dominate

American River College News Release



American River College women's volleyball head coach Carson Lowden secured her 200th career victory in a win over Diablo Valley. Photo courtesy of American River College

PLESANT HILL, CA (MPG) - American River College women's volleyball head coach Carson Lowden secured her 200th career victory in spectacular fashion, leading the Beavers to a commanding 3-0 sweep on the road against Diablo Valley College.

The historic milestone underscores Lowden's elite tenure at American River College, where she has built the Beavers into a perennial powerhouse. Her squad left no room for doubt on the Vikings' home court, executing a flawless game plan to earn the sweep in straight sets.

The Beavers asserted their dominance from the opening serve, controlling the tempo and keeping Diablo Valley out of system. ARC took the first set 25-17 before putting on a masterclass in the second and third frames, capturing them 25-10 and 25-9 respectively. ★

SacRT Awarded State Funding for Transit Improvements

Sacramento Regional Transit News Release



The $87.6 million project represents a major investment in cleaner transportation, improved transit service and infrastructure modernization. Photo courtesy of SacRT

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) has been selected to receive approximately $57.7 million in state funding through the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) Cycle 8 awards to advance its Northern Sacramento and Yolo I-80 Intercity Zero Emission and Transformative Project.

The $87.6 million project represents a major investment in cleaner transportation, improved transit service and infrastructure modernization. The funding will support the purchase of 21 zero-emission hydrogen fuel cell buses, upgrades to SacRT's McClellan Bus Maintenance Facility, construction of a hydrogen fueling station and additional transit improvements designed to enhance the rider experience. The remaining $29.8 million will come from other state and regional funding sources, including Senate Bill 125 Zero-Emission Transit Capital Program, California Clean Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project, SACOG State Transportation Improvement Program, California Energy Commission EnergIIZE Transit Set-Aside and Sacramento Metropolitan Air District Low Emission Vehicle and Infrastructure Program.

The 21 hydrogen fuel cell buses will support expanded zero-emission service on three key corridors, bus routes 30, 81 and 138. The Causeway Connection (Route 138), which connects UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento with UC Davis in Davis. As well as bus routes 30 (J Street) and 81 (Florin Road) provide access to employment, educational and medical destinations throughout the region.

These improvements will strengthen regional connections to Sacramento Valley Station, California's third-busiest train station and the region's busiest station, providing important connections to Capitol Corridor, Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) and Caltrain services.

The project includes several additional improvements designed to make bus service more reliable, accessible and comfortable. Cloud-based transit signal priority will be deployed at 30 intersections along bus routes 30 and 81 to help buses move more efficiently through traffic and reduce delays.

To improve connections between transportation modes, 10 BikeLink smart bike parking stations will be installed at UC Davis and four at SacRT's University/65th Street Station. Two heat-resilient bus shelters will also be installed at UC Davis Medical Center along bus routes 137 and 138, providing passengers with greater comfort and protection during extreme heat.

A major component of the project is transforming SacRT's 14-acre McClellan Bus Maintenance Facility (BMF-2) into a state-of-the-art zero-emission bus operations and maintenance hub. The project includes a hydrogen fueling station with potential public access.

The hydrogen fueling station will include a 25,000-gallon liquid hydrogen storage system with the capacity to fuel up to 100 hydrogen fuel cell buses. These investments will provide the infrastructure needed to support the long-term expansion of SacRT's zero-emission fleet and strengthen operational reliability throughout the northern service area.

The project also includes a workforce development partnership with American River College to train, place and retain individuals from underrepresented communities in careers supporting zero-emission vehicle operations and maintenance. The Center for Transportation and the Environment will provide technical assistance and project implementation support.

"This significant investment is an important step forward in modernizing public transportation and creating a cleaner, more efficient transit system for our region," said SacRT General Manager/CEO Henry Li. "With the support of the State of California, we can continue investing in zero-emission technology, improving service frequency and reliability, and building the infrastructure and workforce needed to support the future of public transportation."

"This award represents an exciting opportunity to make meaningful improvements for SacRT riders and the communities we serve," said SacRT Board Chair and Elk Grove Mayor Bobbie Singh-Allen. "From more frequent bus service and improved regional connections to investments in zero-emission technology and modernized facilities, this project reflects our commitment to building a more accessible, reliable and sustainable transit system."

The improvements are projected to increase ridership by approximately 1.8 million passenger trips and deliver substantial environmental benefits. Benefits include reducing greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 116,037 metric tons, displacing more than 91.4 million passenger vehicle miles traveled, reducing fossil fuel consumption by approximately 10.1 million gallons and preventing an estimated 43,677 pounds of nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions and 7,477 pounds of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) emissions.

These investments create an integrated transportation strategy that improves transit performance, expands access to sustainable transportation options and advances California's climate and clean air goals. Project completion is expected by 2030. ★

Sacramento County Mapping a Clearer Path to Behavioral Health Support for Youth and Families

Sacramento County News Release



Sacramento County is launching a new program in hopes of making that process easier. ATLAS (Access, Treatment, Linkage and Stabilization) brings services together to create clear direction and help families find the support they need before challenges become a crisis. Photo designed by Magnific

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - When a child is experiencing behavioral health challenges, parents, caregivers and loved ones may find themselves trapped in a maze as they navigate different systems, programs and providers OR buried under a pile of information unsure of where to start. That's why Sacramento County is launching a new program in hopes of making that process easier. ATLAS (Access, Treatment, Linkage and Stabilization) brings services together to create clear direction and help families find the support they need before challenges become a crisis.

ATLAS connects five children's behavioral health service components under one coordinated system. Rather than requiring families to figure out which program to contact, ATLAS is designed to create a clearer path from early support and outreach to mental health treatment and stabilization services, including support for children and youth experiencing co-occurring mental health and substance use concerns.

"Families shouldn't have to know how the behavioral health system works to get their child the help they need," said Jessica Stockton, Sacramento County Behavioral Health Program planner. "ATLAS brings services together so we can better connect families with the right support, make it easier to navigate available resources and help children get care earlier."

The five core components in ATLAS include:

Children's Outpatient Specialty Mental Health Services: Provides behavioral health assessments, counseling and other specialty mental health treatment, including support for youth with co-occurring mental health and substance use concerns.

Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS): Provides individualized behavioral support to help children and youth develop skills and address challenging behaviors.

Outreach and Engagement: Connects with children, youth and families to help them understand available services and get connected to care.

Early Intervention: Provides early support and helps connect children, youth and families to appropriate behavioral health services and resources when concerns first emerge, before needs become more serious.

Flexible Stabilization Supports: Offers support to help children and families maintain stability and overcome barriers to care, including those related to homelessness and housing instability.

ATLAS will bring these services together through 10 selected community-based providers sited throughout the county. This will help children and families access appropriate services and receive continued support as their needs change. The County estimates ATLAS will serve approximately 9,200 children and youth through June 2027.

ATLAS will also focus on improving access in communities with greater identified needs. The County used multiple data sources to identify ZIP codes where additional attention and coordinated services can make a difference. This approach helps bring support closer to the families who may benefit most while allowing the County to monitor referrals, provider capacity and service use as the program gets underway.

Families may be connected to ATLAS through schools, community-based organizations, other behavioral health providers, child welfare and probation partners, community outreach activities or Sacramento County behavioral health access points. Families may also be able to refer themselves.

To learn more about ATLAS and find out whether the services may be right for your family, visit the Sacramento County Behavioral Health website. ★

Statewide Testing Confirms High Safety Levels in California Produce



Nearly 97% of fresh fruits and vegetables tested in California either contained no pesticide residues or had levels below federal limits set to protect human health. Photo designed by Magnific

California Department of Pesticide Regulation

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Nearly 97% of fresh fruits and vegetables tested in California either contained no pesticide residues or had levels below federal limits set to protect human health, according to the latest annual pesticide residue monitoring report released today by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), underscoring the state's continued commitment to ensuring a safe food supply.

In 2024, DPR collected and tested 3,032 produce samples for more than 500 types of pesticides and breakdown products.

The results consisted of 1,195 (39.4%) - Zero residues detected; 1,740 (57.4%) - Residues within the legal pesticide residue tolerances set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; and 97 (3.2%) - Illegal residues detected.

These findings reflect consistent trends over the past decade, with the vast majority of residue levels within safe limits.

"Californians should feel confident in eating the fruits and vegetables both grown and sold in the state," DPR Director Karen Morrison said. "Our rigorous requirements, statewide monitoring program and follow-up enforcement on violators keep the food families eat safe."

For the full report, please visit our website. ★

Police Launch Blue Envelope Program

By MPG Staff

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Police Department has launched a new program aimed at improving communication between officers and people with disabilities or other conditions that may require additional support during law enforcement interactions.

The Blue Envelope Program provides participants with a visible way to alert officers and other public safety personnel that they may benefit from additional understanding, communication or accommodations.

The program may assist people with autism spectrum disorder, dementia, anxiety and other conditions that can affect communication during interactions with law enforcement.

"The Blue Envelope Program is another way we can help make interactions with law enforcement more comfortable and effective for everyone," Sacramento Police Sgt. Justin Boyd said. "Our goal is to give officers and community members an additional tool to communicate clearly and better understand individual needs."

Participation is voluntary, free and does not require registration.

Participants can carry a blue envelope containing documents such as identification, vehicle registration, proof of insurance and emergency contact information. The envelope can be presented to public safety officials during an interaction.

The department is also offering Blue Envelope-branded lanyards, keychains, bracelets and stickers that participants may choose to display.

The program does not create a registry of participants, and individuals decide for themselves whether and when to use the materials.



Participants can carry a blue envelope containing documents such as identification, vehicle registration, proof of insurance and emergency contact information. Photo courtesy of the City of Sacramento

Blue Envelope materials are available at Sacramento Police Department Headquarters, 5770 Freeport Blvd. Residents may also obtain materials from the Richards Police Facility, 300 Richards Blvd., by calling 916-808-4500 in advance to arrange pickup with a community service representative.

The department said the program is intended to give both officers and community members another tool for reducing confusion and helping communicate individual needs during public safety encounters.

More information about the Blue Envelope Program is available through the Sacramento Police Department's website. Visit https://www.cityofsacramento.gov/police. ★

Season's First Flu Death

Sacramento County News Release, edited for publication

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County Public Health on Nov. 4 confirmed the first flu-related death of the 2026-27 flu season. The death involved a woman in her 50s with underlying chronic medical conditions who was not vaccinated against the flu.

"This is a stark reminder that the flu can cause serious illness and even death, but vaccination remains our best defense," said Sacramento County Public Health Officer Dr. Phuong Luu. "Everyone aged 6 months and older should get vaccinated for influenza now, especially with flu circulating very high in California currently."

The woman developed respiratory symptoms in mid-October and was diagnosed with Influenza A (Flu A). She was hospitalized a few days later and died shortly after.

This season's report of the first flu-related death comes about a month earlier than last year's, which was reported in late November 2025.

Sacramento County Public Health encourages all residents to protect themselves by getting vaccinated this fall. Vaccines are key in preventing and protecting against respiratory viruses including flu, Covid-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

People can get vaccinated by dropping into one of the SCPH 2026-2027 free flu vaccine clinics. Use the HealthMap Vaccine Finder to find a clinic nearby. Contact the SCPH Immunization Assistance Program for more information.

An annual flu shot is recommended for everyone six months of age and older who is able to get vaccinated safely. It takes two weeks for the body to build up protection after getting the vaccine, so early vaccination is advised.

Dr. Luu recommends getting vaccinated for the flu now, as flu is circulating high in our community and will continue to increase as we enter the holiday season and families start to gather together indoors.

Covid-19 vaccines are available for everyone age 6 months and older and RSV vaccines are recommended for specific high-risk groups.

SCPH offers the following tips to stay healthy.

Encourage a person to stay at home if the person is sick. If a person has symptoms of respiratory illness, staying home helps prevent the spread of viruses.

Test for COVID-19 and flu if symptoms occur. Contact a healthcare provider promptly if the test is positive, especially if someone is at high risk for severe illness.

Practice good hygiene. Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always cover coughs and sneezes. Use a tissue to cover the mouth and nose or the upper sleeve of a shirt if a tissue is unavailable.

Ventilate indoor spaces. Ensure good airflow by opening windows and doors when possible.

Consider wearing a mask. Wearing a high-quality mask in crowded or indoor spaces can reduce transmission, especially if someone is feeling unwell or has a preexisting illness that affects the body's immune system. ★

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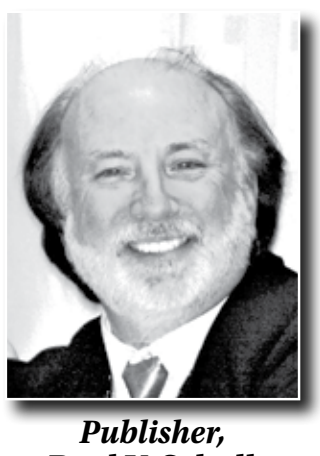
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Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris

Three Things

By V.G. Harris

Do the Sacramento Kings fans want to see a winning team? Of course they do, but most think that this season is already a lost one. That is not true and if the Kings can cure three things expect a turnaround.

Number one: A change in leadership and culture has to happen as soon as possible. The offense is old and predicable and opposing teams are taking advantage of it every night. The players are putting forth a diligent effort, but the mission is not one everyone understands, and that is essential to having a winning team.

Number two: The 3-point shot is a miscarriage of justice on both ends of the court. On offense the Kings don't get nearly enough open looks and as a result don't shoot as many 3's as the competition on a nightly basis. On the defensive end the Kings simply don't know how to guard the 3-point line and the combination of these two glaring faults is a recipe for disaster.

Number three: Sacramento must develop a culture of winning, or they are in jeopardy of mishandling Darius Acuff Jr.'s rookie season. Yes, Darius is doing well in most respects, but when asked by reporters about the difference between college and NBA ball, Darius replied it was the losing. He has been used to a culture of winning from the time he was in high school, and for the first time he's faced with something he doesn't know how to fix.

Coach Christie has had a preseason and a dozen games to find a combination of FIVE players that can work as a team and compliment each other, and all the Sacramento fans see are different lineups every night. Combine that with lack of a culture or a collective effort in how to plant the flag, and it's no wonder the Kings have managed one win to date.

It's obvious to everyone in the arena that something has to change, and in witnessing last nights contest against the mighty Oklahoma City Thunder, it was hard to watch a normally controlled Domantas Sabonis losing his composure and nearly getting a technical foul for language. I can't remember a time that I've seen Domantas so upset, and it's a direct result of the constant losing.

Many pundits and fans alike have said the Kings don't have the horses, but there is more than enough talent on this team to get the job done.

Do they need to add more talent? Of course they do, and I have no doubt that GM Scott Perry will do exactly that.

In the meantime, is it possible for the organization to not broadcast to the entire world what they are trying to do. By now the NBA has clearly got the message that due to expensive contracts the Kings would like to move both Domantas Sabonis and Zach Lavine. Stop it!

Successful trades happen when you play your cards close to the vest, and that is not something that the Kings are good at doing.

How about celebrating the virtues of Domantas and Zach and picturing them for the leaders and all-stars that they are. Both are playing well and are legitimate leaders on this team.

Zach was out in Sunday's game against the Thunder due to an illness, but his 3-point shooting has been an asset, and he is expected back soon.

Sunday's game saw Nique Clifford on the floor but not in a Sacramento Kings uniform. Traded to the Thunder just days ago for two second round draft choices, the Kings brought an end to a project that never took off.

Sadly, the 24th pick in the 2025 draft never gave the Sacramento Kings what they were looking for, and I give Scott Perry recognition for finally realizing that and making room for players with a future on this team.

Maxime Renauld will be back from injury soon, but with the acquisition of seven-foot Mason Plumlee, it is likely his playing time will be impacted. Like Nique Clifford, Renauld has had a tepid impact overall, and his future lies in all probability in a back up role, whether on the Kings roster or elsewhere.

Pay attention Kings fans to the three things the Kings need to accomplish and post your thoughts on my website at thekingskorner.com.

All the best! ★

By Emptying Death Row, Newsom Broke a Promise and Disregarded the Will of Voters



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

Gov. Gavin Newsom's decision to commute the death sentences of 548 inmates just weeks before he leaves office is the latest episode in California's 70-year-long political, legal and philosophical debate over capital punishment.

It also adds complexity, because Newsom's unilateral efforts to stop executions violate promises he made while running for governor to honor voters' support of the death penalty.

While Newsom's actions might bolster his standing among center-left Democratic voters in a potential presidential campaign, a Pew Research Center poll in August found 68% of Americans see the death penalty as justified for those who commit murder. That's 6 percentage points higher than the support in a 2021 poll.

A little history: California adopted capital punishment about when it became a state in 1850, but initially executions were done by counties. The state took over in 1893, and since then 514 people have been put to death, according to state records.

Serious efforts to abolish California's death penalty date from the 1950s, when Caryl Chessman, dubbed the "Red Light Bandit," faced execution for a series of robberies and sexual assaults — but no murders — in the 1940s and became a symbol for death penalty opponents.

Chessman's fate finally landed with Democratic Gov. Pat Brown, who personally opposed capital punishment. In 1960, on the eve of Chessman's execution, Brown's 21-year-old son, Jerry, pleaded for a reprieve and urged him to seek legislative repeal. The elder Brown agreed but the Legislature balked, and Chessman was executed on May 2, 1960.

During the 1970s, California's death penalty underwent a dizzying series of legal and political moves — sometimes in effect, sometimes not, depending on the latest decree from the state Supreme Court, action by the Legislature or ballot measure.

Voters had the last word in a 1978 pro-death-penalty ballot measure. However, Jerry Brown, who had become governor, appointed several members of the Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Rose Bird, who consistently rejected death sentences. Voters ousted Bird and two other justices in 1986.

Executions resumed in the 1990s, and there have been 13 since. The last was triple murderer Clarence Ray Allen in 2006.

In 2012 and again in 2016, voters rejected ballot measures to repeal the death penalty while passing a 2016 measure aimed at speeding up capital punishment appeals.

Enter Newsom, who was elected lieutenant governor in 2010 and obviously wanted to become governor. In 2016, when asked about the death penalty by the Modesto Bee, Newsom said he would "be accountable to the will of the voters" if elected governor.

"I would not get my personal opinions in the way of the public's right to make a determination of where they want to take us," he said.

While campaigning in 2018, Newsom said he didn't "want to get ahead of the will of the voters" and wanted to "give the voters a chance to reconsider."

However, shortly after inauguration in 2019, Newsom issued a moratorium on executions but ducked questions about asking voters to repeal capital punishment, which would have been the honorable way to proceed. Instead he waited until the final weeks of his governorship to commute death sentences, subject to state Supreme Court ratification of some cases.

"I take this action because I firmly believe that state-sanctioned killing is incompatible with California's values, undermines the foundation of our legal system, and diminishes each of us," Newsom said in an open letter. "I know we cannot execute people in our imperfect legal system and remain true to our core values, first among them justice and human decency."

Newsom insists he respects voters, "but the constitution also gave every governor clemency authority, and that power exists for moments when law as applied cannot be squared with justice. For me, this is that moment."

The authority he cites was aimed at righting perceived injustices on a case-by-case basis.

Newsom's blanket clemency distorts that process, thumbs his nose at California voters and dishonors victims of horrendous crimes and their grieving families.

We'll learn whether it also impacts his presumed presidential ambitions.

Dan Walters is one of the most decorated and widely syndicated columnists in California history, authoring a column four times a week that offers his view and analysis of the state's political, economic, social and demographic trends. ★

Social Security Matters

I Got an Overpayment Notice from Social Security; What Should I Do?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I received a letter from Social Security saying they overpaid me $12,703 in SS benefits. The letter said "We reduce Social Security benefits if you receive a government pension. We reduce benefits by two-thirds of the amount of your pension. Your benefit is less than two-thirds of the pension. For this reason, we cannot pay you."

FYI, I do receive a pension based on work not covered by Social Security taxes. My problem is that I don't fully understand this. This could be correct, but it doesn't seem right to come back wanting money I didn't ask for. I appreciate your time in getting back and letting me know if there is anything else I could be doing, or if they are entitled to go ahead and get the SS payments back. Thanks. ***Signed: Confused about Owing Social Security***

Dear Confused: From what you have shared, it appears that Social Security has determined that you were subject to a rule called the "Government Pension Offset" (GPO). FYI, the GPO was a provision which reduced Social Security spousal and/or survivor benefits for anyone who had a "non-covered" government pension (that is, a pension earned without contributing to Social Security). It's likely that SS paid you full benefits, but that the GPO should have reduced (or eliminated) the benefits they paid, had they known about your "uncovered" government pension. And that is likely the source of the $12,300 overpayment notice you received.

However, the GPO rule was repealed in January 2025 and no longer applies. In other words, those who have a "non-covered" government pension (a pension earned without contributing to SS) are now no longer subjected to reduced benefits under the GPO. The repeal legislation also provided for retroactivity back to January 2024, so the notice you received from Social Security was probably referring to SS benefits you received prior to 2024. If that is the case, then the notice you received is likely accurate and would need to be repaid. However, if the notice is referring to spousal or survivor benefits you received after December 2023, then it would be in error.

The best way to find out would be for you to file an appeal to Social Security, e.g., a "Request for Reconsideration" (form SSA-561), which will cause an independent review within Social Security to see if you are, indeed, required to repay those SS benefits, or whether you should pay something less (or nothing at all). Just remember that when you actually received the SS benefits in question is the key factor – if you had a non-covered government pension while receiving SS spouse or survivor benefits before 2024, then the overpayment notice you received is likely valid. If not, an appeal as I described above should resolve the issue for you.

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Britain owes no one an apology

When is the Muslim world going to apologize for its slave raids in Central and Eastern Europe that made off with millions of captives? Not any time soon, we can assume, since no one is asking it to apologize, and presumably no one ever will.

The same isn't true in the U.K., where there is a hot debate over whether the country should apologize for its participation in the trans-Atlantic slave trade in what would be a stark expression of double standards and Western guilt.

Prime Minister Andy Burnham, whose contemporary Labour Party has a taste for self-abasement, wants to have "difficult conversations" over such an apology, and says that it's "the patriotic thing to do." He is "offering a structured dialogue with those affected by the trans-Atlantic slave trade," never mind that Britain abolished the trade more than two centuries ago.

It's perverse for the U.K. -- pressured by Caribbean countries within the Commonwealth -- to consider a formal apology, given that slavery was a universal phenomenon and Britain had an honored role in snuffing it out.

The ancient Egyptians embraced slavery, and so did the Greeks and Romans. Often, enslavement was the price of military defeat in the ancient world. After the fall of the Roman Empire in the West, the Byzantines, the Vikings and Central Asian societies all relied on slave labor.

They weren't alone; the institution spanned every type of society. Historian Stewart Gordon notes that Ethiopia's legal code in the mid-13th century "recognized slaves as central to the economy and defined the acquisition and holding of slaves as the natural order of things." In the 16th century, he writes, Ethiopia "was a full slave society."

The trans-Atlantic slave trade couldn't have operated without the participation of West African rulers, who took slavery for granted before European slavers showed up and continued the practice after they left.

Something that's almost never mentioned in the debate over accountability for slavery is that North African slave traders enslaved enormous numbers of white Europeans between the 16th and 18th centuries.

Also inconvenient to an anti-Western narrative is that, as James Walvin writes in his "A Short History of Slavery," "Islamic societies were characterized by the widespread and generally unchallenged use of slavery. Indeed, slavery was commonplace throughout Arabia well before the rise of Islam. But as Islam spread between the eighth and 15th centuries, and especially to black Africa, it extended and confirmed the commonplace use of slavery and slave trading."

As part of the so-called Arab slave trade, more than a million slaves were taken from East Africa in the 19th century, and the flow continued apace into the 20th century. According to Gordon, "Perhaps the last large-scale movement of East African slaves to the Middle East was in the 1920s."

As for Britain, beginning in earnest in the 17th century, it became a central cog in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, an industrial-scale enterprise of stomach-turning cruelty. Its ships transported millions of slaves, while the plantation economies of its Caribbean possessions depended on slave labor.

Then, in an extraordinary triumph of morality over unjust profit-making, William Wilberforce and his fellow abolitionists convinced British society to abolish the slave trade and eventually slavery itself. If the institution of slavery was very old, the influence of this Christian-driven attitude to human rights was new. The British went further than simply turning their back on slavery, and used their navy to suppress the slave trade and their diplomatic sway to push other countries to give up the trade as well.

At considerable cost to itself in terms of military effort and financial resources (it paid off Spain, for instance), the U.K. did much more than its share to make abolition the international norm, on top of its other outsized contributions to the creation of the modern world. Rather than contemplating a groveling apology, the attitude of the U.K. should be: "A simple 'thank you' will suffice."

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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Art, Plants and Humanity

City Hall Exhibit Explores Cultural Connections Between People and Plants

City of Sacramento News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - A new exhibit at City Hall features work by Sacramento artists exploring the roles plants play in cultural traditions, everyday life and personal memories.

Curated by the City's Emerging Curator Fellow Lorena Rodríguez, "Plantas de Poder: Kinships, Knowledges & Reclamation" is on display at the Robert T. Matsui Gallery (915 I St.) through Dec. 15.

The exhibit features ceramics, printmaking, photography, woodwork and paintings created with natural pigments and inks derived from plants. The works explore seven plants: coca, cacao, tobacco, cannabis, angel's trumpet (floripondio), tea and coffee.

Through the artwork, Rodríguez invites visitors to consider these plants beyond their commercial uses and learn about their cultural, spiritual and historical significance.

"These plants carry stories, memories, ancestral knowledge and relationships that have survived generations of displacement, extraction and criminalization," Rodríguez said. "For me, this exhibition is about remembering that we are not separate from nature. We are part of these living relationships."

The exhibit was inspired by "Siete Plantas: Historias de la Gente Sin Nombre" ("Seven Plants: Stories of the Nameless People"), a book compiling three years of research by seven women in Colombia, each studying a different plant. Rodríguez said reading the book and listening to its authors shaped her interest in exploring relationships between plants, cultural memory and ancestral knowledge.

The participating Sacramento-based artists are Jaime Lee Dempsey, Abayomi Brownfield, Esme Cabrera, Elizabeth Anne Bezark, Pablo Gomez and Rosalva Willow.

Rodríguez brought together emerging and established artists with different backgrounds, experiences and approaches to art.



A new exhibit at City Hall features work by Sacramento artists exploring the roles plants play in cultural traditions, everyday life and personal memories. Photo by Dajoune Rogers-James



The works explore seven plants: coca, cacao, tobacco, cannabis, angel's trumpet (floripondio), tea and coffee. Photo by Dajoune Rogers-James

Each artist's work reflects their relationship with plants and the natural world.

The exhibit is free to visit Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The gallery is wheelchair accessible.

About the Emerging Curators Fellowship

Administered by the City's Office of Arts and Culture, the Emerging Curators Fellowship is a year-long program designed for the selected curator to curate and present two exhibitions with the guidance of a curatorial mentor.

The Emerging Curator Program supports new and developing curators through mentorship and opportunities to organize public exhibitions in City spaces. This year's curatorial mentor is artist and curator Jazel Muñoz.

This year's fellow, Lorena Rodriguez, is a multidisciplinary artist, cultural practitioner, and peace educator whose work explores the connections between creativity, collective memory, and social transformation.

Rodríguez's earlier exhibit, "Liquid Memories: An Ode to the Waters of Sacramento," featured artists exploring their connections to the region's rivers, lakes and waterways. ★



The exhibit features ceramics, printmaking, photography, woodwork and paintings created with natural pigments and inks derived from plants. Photo by Dajoune Rogers-James

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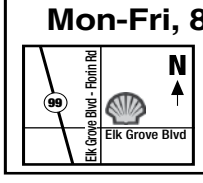
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Sacramento Man's Kindness Recognized

GoFundMe News Release



Jerry Turner of Jahri's World. Photo courtesy of Jahri's World

CALIFORNIA (MPG) - GoFundMe announced Nov. 9 that its global community has surpassed $50 billion raised to help individuals and nonprofits around the world. More than 200 million people have donated through GoFundMe, and nearly 40% have given more than once, reflecting the extraordinary scale of people showing up for one another – and continuing to come back to help.

To mark the milestone, GoFundMe is introducing The Kind 50, a celebration of the internet's kindest people. The inaugural list features 50 stories of individuals and nonprofits who saw a need, showed up, and brought others together to help. The list includes a third grader named Declan who biked 300 miles in one month in support of cancer research; Candace and Diana, best friends of 50 years who inspired the country with their support for one another; Lupita Nyong'o who led a fundraising challenge and awareness campaign for fibroids research; Swifties for their repeated acts of generosity online; and the Music Man Project which brought performers with disabilities from the United Kingdom to the Broadway stage in New York this fall.

It includes, too, Jerry Turner of Sacramento.

"$50 billion is an incredible milestone. What inspires me most are the millions of people behind it," said Tim Cadogan, CEO of GoFundMe. "People have always been generous. Technology has made it easier to express their love and care in real time – to support a loved one through a difficult time, help a community rebuild after a disaster, or contribute to a nonprofit's mission. During this time of rapid change, we're innovating with tools like our smart fundraising coach to transform how people ask for help and reach others who care. As we look ahead, we are focused on harnessing new technology to help even more people help each other around the world."

New research commissioned by GoFundMe and conducted by YouGov highlights how widely help reaches and the happiness and connection people associate with giving.

More than one-third of Americans, for example, have either received support themselves through GoFundMe, or have a firsthand connection to someone who has.

Two-thirds (66%) of all survey respondents say they feel happier after financially supporting someone in need. Among those who've used GoFundMe, that jumps to more than four out of five (82%).

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of people who've used GoFundMe say donating to someone or an organization near them helps them feel more connected to their community, compared with 58% of all survey respondents.

Of those who have used GoFundMe, 93% are confident that giving through the platform can make a meaningful difference, nearly four out of five (77%) say that the platform makes it easier to help people and more than half (54%) say GoFundMe makes giving feel more personal than transactional.

Meet The Kind 50

Among them is fourth-grader Declan Levy, who cycled 300 miles in one month to raise funds for the American Cancer Society in honor of his grandmother. Reflecting on the experience, he said, "At first, I wasn't sure I could ride 300 miles, but I had a community cheering me on and helping me keep going. I wanted to help people with cancer because of my grandma. I'm proud I finished, and I hope other kids see that they can help too."

Also recognized is British ultramarathoner William Goodge, who ran 50 marathons across all 50 U.S. states in 24 days to support Stand Up To Cancer in memory of his mother. "I can't bring my mum back, but I can use her memory to do something good by raising funds and awareness to help others facing cancer," said Goodge. "I hope to show people facing loss or any struggle that they can turn those emotions into something that helps others."

Turner, who creates autism-friendly music and educational videos as Jahri's World, started a GoFundMe to launch an educational children's TV series, tour the country, and build a neurodivergent community center in Sacramento. He also hosts free birthday parties for people with autism and other unique abilities. So far, he's raised more than $32,000.

Together, these stories show the internet at its best: a place where people come together for one another. By sharing them, GoFundMe hopes to inspire more people to turn kindness into action in their own communities. ★



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Bird Flu Confirmed in Two Sacramento County Backyard Flocks



The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) confirmed the first case of bird flu on Oct. 5 and the second Oct. 23. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County Public Health (SCPH) and Sacramento County's Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures are encouraging residents who own backyard chickens and other poultry to take precautions following the confirmation of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), commonly known as bird flu, in two backyard flocks.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) confirmed the first case Oct. 5 and the second Oct. 23. All birds in the affected flocks have been culled to prevent further spread of the virus. CDFA has not placed movement restrictions on poultry in Sacramento County.

SCPH is working to contact individuals who may have been exposed to the infected birds.

The current overall public health risk for this situation is categorized as "low."

What Poultry Owners Should Know

Bird flu is a highly contagious disease that can cause severe illness and death in chickens, ducks, turkeys and other birds. Wild birds, particularly ducks and geese, are a primary source of the virus.

The virus can spread through direct contact with infected birds or through contaminated surfaces, including shoes, clothing, equipment and other materials.

Backyard poultry owners can help protect their flocks by taking a few precautions:

Limit contact with wild birds. Keep poultry in enclosed or covered areas when possible and prevent wild birds from accessing feed and water.

Keep equipment and spaces clean. Regularly clean and disinfect poultry housing, tools, feeders and other equipment.

Avoid spreading germs between flocks. Wash your hands and change or clean footwear and clothing after handling birds. Avoid sharing equipment between flocks without disinfecting it.

Monitor birds for signs of illness. Watch for sudden deaths, difficulty breathing, decreased appetite, swelling around the head or eyes, unusual discharge, stumbling or other changes in behavior.

Report sick birds. Poultry owners who notice unusual illness or deaths should contact CDFA's Sick Animal Hotline at 866-922-BIRD (2473).

For additional guidance, review CDFA's Disease Prevention Guide for Backyard and Pet Bird Owners.

What Residents Should Know

Residents should avoid touching or handling sick, injured or dead wild birds. Contact local animal control for guidance and report unusual wild bird deaths to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Anyone who has had direct contact with birds suspected or confirmed to have bird flu should avoid further exposure and contact a health care provider or public health officials if they develop symptoms.

For questions and additional resources regarding bird flu in California, contact CDFA at 916-217-7517 or cdfa.HPAIinfo@cdfa.ca.gov. ★

Make Old Sacramento Waterfront Your Holiday Destination

The historic district has something for everyone this season

Downtown Sacramento Partnership News Release



Kick off the holiday season with the annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony on Wednesday, Nov. 25, at 5:30 p.m. Photo courtesy of Downtown Sacramento Partnership

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - This year, Old Sacramento Waterfront invites visitors to make the most of the most wonderful time of the year. Guests can look forward to the return of the beloved Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony and Theatre of Lights performances, as well as the chance to be rewarded for shopping small with Small Business Spree Bingo and explore a pedestrian-friendly district during Holidays on K. There are plenty of ways to celebrate the season, with holiday traditions, unique gift finds and festive sights and sounds around every corner.

Kick off the holiday season with the annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony on Wednesday, Nov. 25, at 5:30 p.m. Enjoy performances from community groups before the district's 60-foot Holiday Tree illuminates the waterfront with nearly 24,000 lights, followed by the first Theatre of Lights performance of the season.

Produced by the Downtown Sacramento Partnership, a longtime Sacramento tradition, Theatre of Lights returns for its 18th year, transforming the historic district's balconies into a holiday stage. This free immersive performance is a family-friendly production that blends a retelling of 'Twas the Night Before Christmas with stories from Sacramento's history, narrated by Disney voice legend Bill Farmer (Goofy) and created by Stage 9 Exhibitions' Troy Carlson. Performances run Fridays and Saturdays at 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 6:30 p.m., Nov. 27 through December 20, with special performances Dec. 23 at 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 24 at 6:30 p.m.

New this year, rotating coffee partners Blueprint Coffee, Pittador Brews and Steamers will serve beverages throughout the season, adding a little extra holiday cheer. To help make the experience accessible to more visitors, American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation will also be present for the Tree Lighting Ceremony, Saturday showings, and the final show on Dec. 24.

Make a day of holiday shopping with Small Business Spree Bingo! With more than 150 small businesses throughout the district, visitors can explore unique shops, restaurants and attractions, check off their bingo squares, and play to win exciting prizes, all in one visit. Complete the bingo challenge and submit an entry to receive a guaranteed prize, with additional opportunities to win even bigger rewards. Prizes include a $100 parking voucher, a family four-pack of tickets to the Downtown Sacramento Ice Rink, a museum membership, the chance to guest star as a Mama or Papa in Theatre of Lights, and more. For participation instructions and FAQs, visit https://www.oldsacramento.com/seasonal-activity/small-business-spree-bingo/.

Enjoy a little extra holiday magic along K Street as it transforms into a pedestrian-friendly gathering place with family-friendly fun, including live music, outdoor seating and games. Come down each weekend to experience something new with events curated by the local businesses in Old Sacramento Waterfront. Holidays on K takes place Saturdays and Sundays, Nov. 28 through Dec. 20, from noon to 4:30 p.m. along K Street in Old Sacramento Waterfront.

For more information about Old Sacramento Waterfront and its holiday events, visit www.oldsacramento.com. ★

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