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23

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JULY

21

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AUGUST

18

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15

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- 1 Check out a new brunch spot that offers healthy choices.
- 2 Take a hike – find a local nature trail to renew your outlook, take in some vitamin D and fresh air.
- 3 Share recipes or prepare a healthy meal together.
- 4 Visit a local farm to pick flowers or fruit.
- 5 Hit the spa to freshen up. Check local retailers for special deals.
- 6 Meditate or journal together to clear your mind.
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13

INSPIRATIONS

Dianne Gini: Strength in Family Roots

Celebrating life, love, family and service are in Dianne Gini's DNA, and throughout her life she has been determined to instill those values in her family. Her dedication is reflected in the family business and their involvement in giving back to their co-workers and community.



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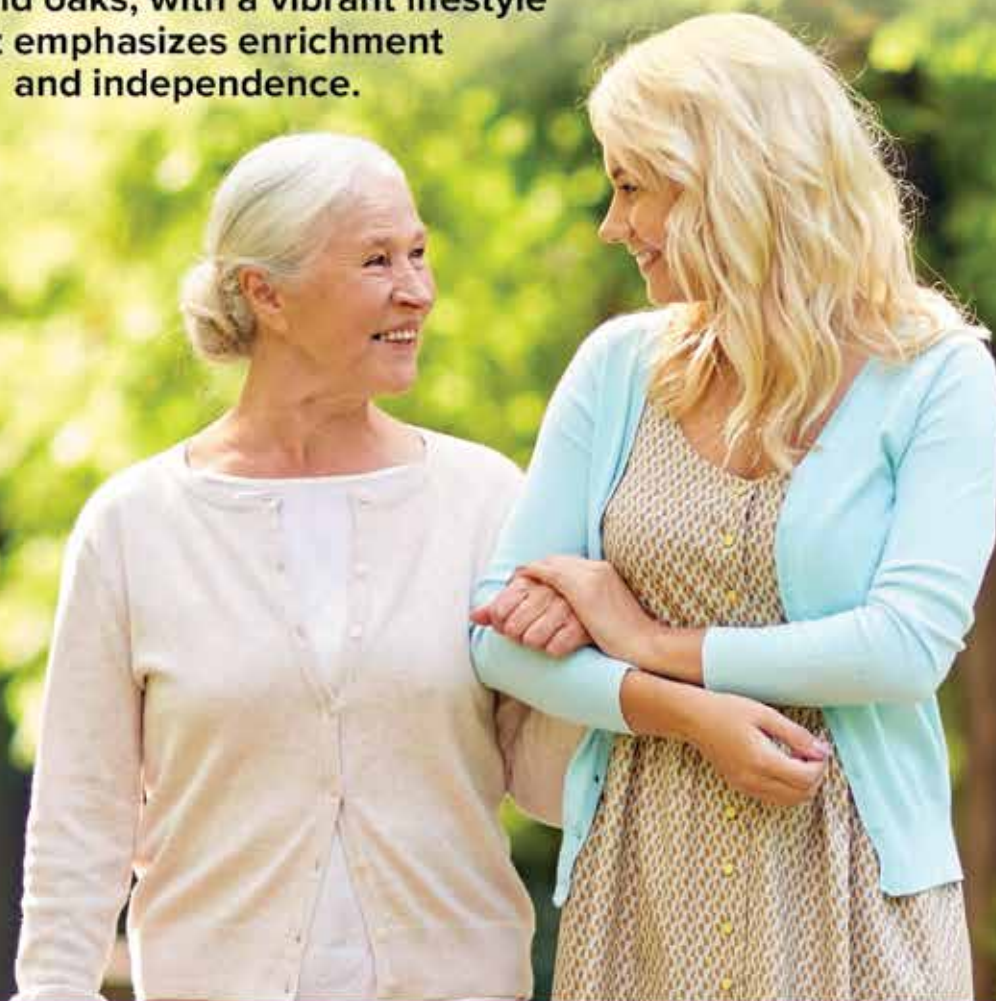
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As I look back on the past 13 years, it has become clear that for me, raising children is one of the most important and rewarding jobs I will ever have. The constant juggling of schoolwork, activities, birthday parties and the 20 million other things going on make being a mom a full-time gig. Through the hustle and bustle of day-to-day living, I have realized how essential it is to surround myself with the support of loving people. Whether it is a friend who offers to take a kid or two to piano lessons or an aunt who drives into town just to spend some time with her nephew and niece, a grandparent willing to come take care of a sick kid, these relationships are valuable for my life.

What I didn't realize is how important other women in my life would become. I have a group of girlfriends whom I can text or call about anything, and they are there! The lighthearted friend who makes me laugh; the seasoned friend who listens and reminds me that "you got this." The grandmother at church who is always ready to

give me a hug. The neighbor lady who checks in because she was thinking about me. The friend I can just sit with and cry. Some of my friends are not moms, but they are so

supportive and love my kids as if they were their own. And many of us have that special friend we haven't talked to in six months, but when we do get together, we pick right up where we left off. Oh, from those late-night laughing sessions to nights where you just cry together, these special people in my life have seen me through it all. I am so thankful for each and every one of them.

Throughout these pages we share ideas on ways to enjoy time with your mom, family and others: little retreats, yummy brunches, recipes, gardening and even bicycling through downtown Lodi! Maybe you know a friend who needs a retreat or would enjoy brunch or spending an afternoon baking and cooking together. Give them a call, encourage them, and enjoy some time just catching up.

Enjoy every moment,

Anna
ANNA SASS



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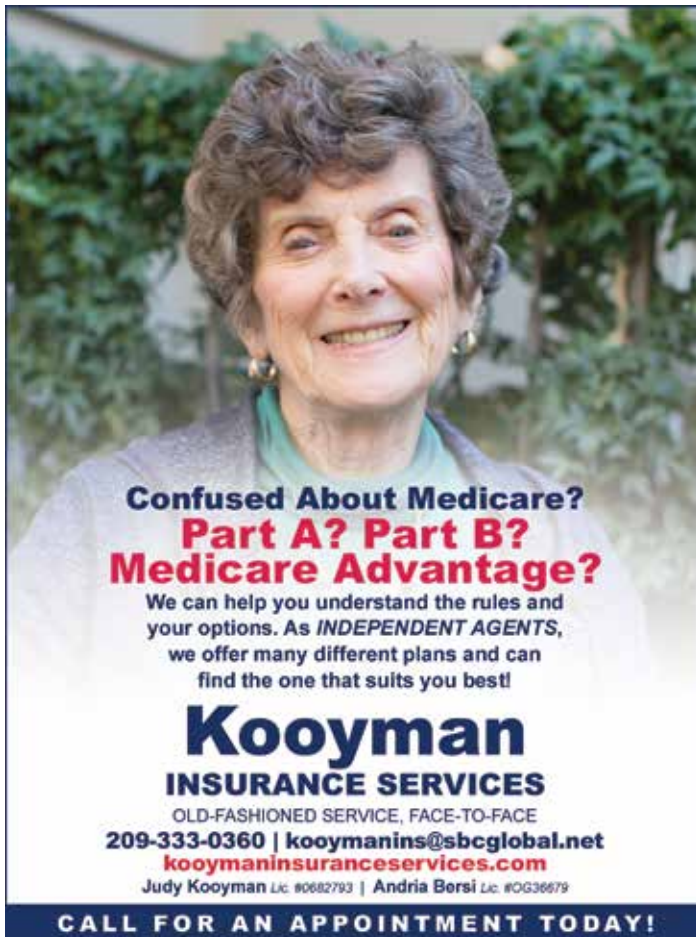
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DIANNE GINI

Strength in Family Roots





BY ANDREA BEAR | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANN ISHII

It's often said that mothers keep families grounded, and in the case of the Gini family, matriarch Dianne Gini has been the hardwire that upholds the family current. As senior vice president of Collins Electrical Company, Inc., Dianne's life has been a model that hardwiring comes not through electricity but through strength, adversity, love and humility, as well as giving back to the community. As a business owner, philanthropist, devoted wife, mother and grandmother, Dianne credits her success to her faith and to those who paved the way before her.

From the beginning, Dianne's life has been centered around family, strength and service. Raised with parents who endured the Depression era and losing her father at a young age, she developed tenacity and fortitude that would help her face other hardships down the road. Growing up on the south side of Stockton in the early 1940s and 1950s, she attend-

ed Jackson Elementary and continued to St. Agnes school. She would graduate high school from St. Mary's high school in 1957. Shortly after high school, Dianne met Eugene (Gene) Gini, who stole her heart. On August 27, 1960, they were married just a week after Dianne's 21st birthday. She playfully jokes that she waited a week to get married so she could be old enough to go to a bar.



A BIGGER ROLE AT COLLINS ELECTRICAL

Yet as her children grew and began to forge their own paths, Dianne's role in the company would develop. One year when staffing was short and a secretary had to leave for family responsibilities, Dianne stepped in to help temporarily. She quickly discovered her temporary position would remain indefinitely.

Together, Dianne and Gene worked hard at Collins Electrical, simultaneously saving their money and wisely reinvesting their wages into shares in the business. Brian recalled how much diligence and dedication his parents showed. "They pulled their bootstraps up and worked in the office together." He remembers nights they would stay till the late hours, sometimes even until midnight. But the hard work would eventually pay off. As the company and business grew, Gene would move further up the ladder and in 1990, he was named CEO of Collins Electrical. "Mom was the glue that allowed this company to grow. She did a lot of things to take care of the family; she did a lot of things in the business in Modesto," said Craig. "She allowed my father to grow the business as well. She was the part that kept it all together." Kevin and Brian later joined on as co-CEOs and Craig as the senior vice president and chief transformation officer at Collins Electrical, and they applied their parents' examples in every aspect of their careers and in their own families.

TRAGEDY BRINGS HEALING AND LOVE

While Dianne's protective nature and sure efforts centered both her family and business, it wouldn't prepare her and Gene for one of the greatest heartbreaks of their lives. Tragedy would strike the Gini family, a few years before Gene's rise to chief executive officer. In 1987, their daughter, Lisa, was coming home from her nursing job when she was killed by a drunk driver. The loss was unbearable for the family along with having to deal with the drawn-out aftermath of court hearings. It was here that the MADD organization, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, stepped in to help the family with court appearances and to navigate the difficult time.

The pain of losing her daughter never fully went away but years later Dianne wanted to give back to MADD for all they had done for her. "Lisa is missed daily," said Dianne. Wanting to do her part, she volunteered every way imaginable, from speaking at local events to visiting prisons. Dianne continued with the organization and served as the president of the San Joaquin chapter for three years until its merger with the Sacramento region. Dianne recognized that helping and serving the community was her way of giving back while honoring Lisa. "It's a rewarding feeling to be involved thinking you are helping in some way," she affirmed. "Lisa taught us how to say, 'I love you.'" Through her service and her work ethic, her sons watched their mother carry on and, the loss brought her family closer together. Craig expressed admiration for his mother's strength. "Losing a child was not easy to deal with and she did it her way regardless of what anyone else thought."

After working with MADD, Dianne continued to help other local organizations such as Hospice of San Joaquin's Butterfly Auxiliary and the American Cancer Society. She also served on the board of the Mary Graham Children's Hall and Stockton Shelter for the Homeless. "She gives of her time, talent and treasure," said Kevin. "She feels very deeply for others." Craig also commented that Dianne's actions

But it was that same tenacity that would help her as a new wife and eventually a mother. In the early years of their marriage, Gene worked at Collins Electrical, sweeping floors and doing odd jobs in the Stockton warehouses to keep their family afloat. Their beginnings were humble, but just like Dianne, Gene's hard-working spirit would eventually move him into a management position. With Dianne's support, he would run the Modesto branch for many years while she stayed home to raise their children, Lisa, Kevin, Brian and Craig. And she took her parenting very seriously. Modeling both her mother, Ruby Salvetti, and mother-in-law, Mary Gini, she wanted her children to maintain the family model of a strong work ethic.

Dianne attributed her values and bond with her children to her role as a stay-at-home mom. "Being able to be present in my children's life was important to me." Gene would refer to Dianne as having "an iron fist with a velvet glove," meaning she was a firm mother but also caring and nurturing at the same time. "When she rolled in, she ruled the roost," he added. Her son, Kevin, reminisces on his mom's firm yet loving example. "I appreciate how she scolded us and taught me to be a better parent," he said, thinking of his own family. "It showed me she cared about me and she wanted me to travel down the correct path in life."



showed him how to treat others. “I’ve learned to be compassionate for others through her example.”

LOVE AND LIFE

Unfortunately, in November 2014, Dianne suffered a stroke and much of her volunteer work and time at Collins Electrical were put on hold; even Gene stepped away from the business to care for her. Despite the change, her family believes this time has been great for both of them to slow down and spend time together. “I love and adore how they interact right now,” noted Craig. “It’s like a second honeymoon. It brings such joy to see how they respond to each other.” Her sons believe having this time, despite the stroke, has made their mother a more open and sharing person. Her years of service, honesty, loyalty and devotion have given so much to her family and community and now it’s time for her to be celebrated. “That’s the epitome of who she is,” said Gene.

Dianne has also shown her family that love is about celebrating and bringing people together. In 2018, Collins Electrical celebrated the 90th anniversary of the business with a full-blown Las Vegas-themed party. Simultaneously, two other celebrations were included, Gene’s birthday and the birthday of his mother, Mary. Dianne surprised Gene and their guests with a serenade of “Happy Birthday, Mr. President” in a Marilyn Monroe-style get-up. It was a night full of love, laughter and celebration of the hard work and growth of their business and family.

While looking through past records, the Ginis discovered that Collins Electrical Company’s, founding year was, in fact, 1924, making their 100th anniversary next year. Gene says they aren’t sure what plans they will put in place for a 100-year celebration, but one thing’s for sure—the history they’ve made so far in the company and the memories created in their family remain to keep their drive and motivation strong, and it could not have been done without their matriarch. As Brian affirmed, “We are fortunate to have that deep root of tradition that we ourselves are trying to carry forward.” ♦



“It’s a rewarding feeling to be involved thinking you are helping in some way,” Dianne affirmed. “Lisa taught us how to say, ‘I love you.’”

NINE WOMEN HONORED

The 47th Annual Susan B. Anthony Awards dinner, held in February at the Stockton Hilton, honored nine women living within San Joaquin County. The worthy recipients are Melyssa Barrett, Ann Langley, Gayle Watkins, Georgette Hunefeld, Victoria Shankel, Margarita Reyes, Kathy Hart, Angela Phillips and Elena Wong. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN



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WELLNESS AT THE RANCH

WHEN HEALING IS
Your Calling

BY MARY RAFFETTO
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANN ISHII

February 18, 2023 was a big day for Shannon Stallings, a certified integrative health practitioner and master practitioner in NLP, or neuro-linguistic programming. It was the day Shannon officially opened Wellness at The Ranch, a wellness center and passion project that she had envisioned for many years as she studied and trained in these specialties as well as the field of MER®, or mental emotional release.



Shannon, who is certified with psychologist and author Dr. Matt James and the Association for Integrative Psychology, chose to establish her healing center in the serene setting of rural Acampo, California, where her husband's family has had a ranch for more than five generations. Shannon said, of creating the center at the ranch, "It started with love and

healing, and we wanted to continue with love and healing."

HOLISTIC HEALING

Group events at The Ranch are planned carefully to assure the benefit of each participant. As an HHP, or holistic health practitioner, Shannon specializes in breath work classes, meditation and prayer sessions,

and she provides her guests a personalized plan as well as many other options to make their stay ideal and effective. No matter the modality, all approaches are customized to each visitor's unique needs. Shannon, who is trained in multiple methodologies, saw firsthand how effective these practices and tools are when she studied them with doctors, counselors and psychologists who use

these techniques with their clients. She is excited to now have the perfect setting in which to continue her work with her own clients, both old and new, where she can teach classes, work one on one and offer retreats with an emphasis on wellness, nutrition, healing and personal growth.

In addition to group events, Shannon offers individual, two- to three-day retreats with one-on-one guidance customized to the needs and goals of the guest. Retreats at The Ranch feature hiking, meditation, yoga, infrared sauna treatments, therapeutic massage and all-organic, farm-to-table dining. She explained, "A two- or three-day retreat is ideal for healing with no outside distractions."

MOVING FORWARD

Shannon's inspiration is her knowledge and experience of helping others heal from past traumas and assisting them in moving forward to achieve new goals. "I am excited to share with others who need the extra help in life to get through any struggles, and for them to feel important, loved and wanted,"



she explained. "When we are in a 'stuck' state we need integrated health practitioners and life coaches to guide us in a plan for success and true transformation. We just need the tools to get there and that is what I bring to The Ranch. Anything is possible and I can help our guests to heal and create that vision."

Having overcome her own past experiences with stress, anxiety and depression, Shannon is not only professionally equipped, but personally knowledgeable in addressing these life challenges and more. A devoted mom, wife and award-winning Top 20% Re-

altor at Keller Williams in Lodi, Shannon's heart for helping is readily apparent in all she does, as she brings that same high level of professionalism to the wellness center.

"God has opened many doors and led me to open this wellness center within my own community so I can be a guide for others," Shannon shared. "Wellness at The Ranch is truly a place of peace and healing." ♦

Contact Shannon at (209) 649-5441, wellnessattheranch.com and shannon@wellnessattheranch.com.

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BLACK AND GOLD BALL

The Black and Gold Ball, an inaugural black-tie event held in March at the Stockton Hilton and presented by the Stockton Civic Theatre, was a smash hit! Guests enjoyed wine and refreshments, a delicious dinner and the highlight of the evening, performances from Stockton Civic Theatre singers from the past and present. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MELISSA CAMPOS



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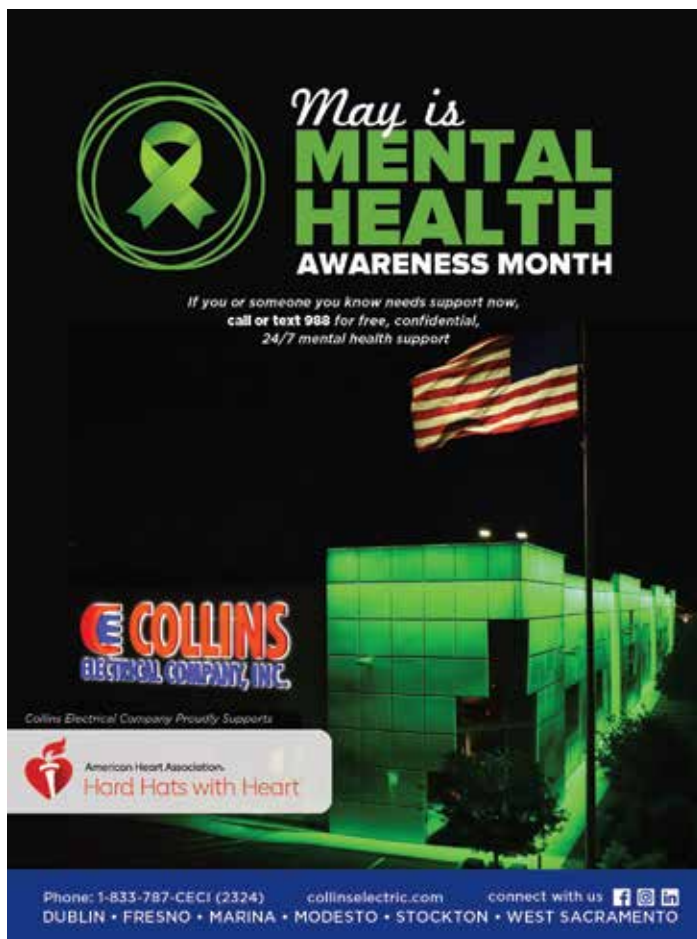
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BRINGS YOUR EVENT TO LIFE

BY LAUREN NELSON | PHOTOGRAPHY BY SYDNEY SPURGEON

"I think I should get a tank of helium and a bag of balloons, and Zac and I will deliver bouquets of joy and happiness to everyone in Lodi." That's what Kathy Cassebarth told her husband, Gregg Cassebarth, one day when their son, Zac, was only a year old.





Kathy says she may have the imagination, but she couldn't do it without Gregg, who has been by her side for 30 years of business. Gregg is the Balloons Unlimited engineer; he helps successfully set up the balloon installations. A retired contractor whose first love is wood, he creates custom backdrops for Kathy's new collection of trending lighted marquee letters and numbers, and she says it's totally in his wheelhouse.

The new four-foot-tall lighted marquees decorated with balloons add a fun and vintage look to any milestone birthday party. The six-foot-tall lighted LOVE marquee has been popular for photos at weddings and anniversary parties. Her tribe of minions was a huge hit at Lodi's Parade of Lights, as were her floppy, wearable pink flamingos at Lodi Memorial Foundation's Walk for the Health of It event.

That was 30 years ago, and now, Kathy's business, Balloons Unlimited, is the creative expression literally elevating Lodi- and Stockton-area events, from parties to showers, fairs to festivals, grand openings to corporate events. Her colorful balloon installations transform her clients' events with aesthetics from quirky to elegant in ways many can't imagine until they experience it.

And it all started with a wild imagination.

After stumbling across a home-based balloon business in the classified section of the *Lodi News-Sentinel* and purchasing it, Kathy found a collection of magazines published by Qualatex, the leading manufacturer of balloons. She pored through every issue, devouring every article and photo, realizing what was possible with balloons. Online inspiration hubs such as Instagram and Pinterest had yet to be invented then, so she found inspiration in these pages' photographs and articles with instructions, guides and tips.

She got to work, starting with popular balloon deliveries for birthdays and special occasions, and quickly jumped into decorating jobs, starting with center court for all the holidays and special events at Weberstown Mall and Sherwood Mall.

Those who don't yet know Kathy likely know her work. Her company has mastered the art of the organic garland. "It's the hot new trend that everyone is gaga about," Kathy said. They are the popular clusters of multi-sized balloons, often boho-chic in style and trending color palettes, that often frame photo backdrops or gift-opening chairs at showers. But classic décor such as spiral arches and columns is making a strong comeback, though Kathy says their popularity never really waned because she's done hundreds over the years.

Local organizations trust Kathy and Balloons Unlimited with their guests' first impressions. Her white, lime green and dark green spiral archway greeted first-time visitors at Stockton's Sprouts Market at its opening earlier this year. Her signature beautiful balloons in silver and white with blue light cascading down stood tall like art sculptures at Woodbridge by Robert Mondavi for their Employee Appreciation Dinner at Hutchins Street Square in Lodi. A tiger peered down from a cluster of purple and gold balloons to greet students at Tokay High School's eighth grade orientation.



One of her favorite and extra-festive balloon installations was Hoopla at the Stockton Arena, where Balloons Unlimited took over the popular tunnel and completely circled the tunnel in lime green, orange and white balloons with specialty lighting effects. By the time the guests got to the floor, they were energized, excited and ready to celebrate.

Balloons Unlimited and Kathy Cassebarth have come a long way. She and her team, which includes Gregg, their daughter-in-law, Kate, and Kate's sister, Joscelyn, are looking forward to the next generation of Balloons Unlimited. "We've been in the business long enough now that we have generations of happy customers," she said. "One of the best parts is working with families and businesses for decades, spreading joy with colorful orbs."

Balloons Unlimited creates experiences for families, organizations and party planners looking to elevate—literally—the experience of any event. To have Kathy help bring your event to life, contact Kathy at Balloons Unlimited to get started planning—the sooner, the better, as they do book up. ♦

For more information, call 209-368-6401, email info@balloonslodi.com or visit Instagram: [BalloonsUnlimitedLodi](https://www.instagram.com/BalloonsUnlimitedLodi).





May 8, 1915, illustration in *The Stockton Record*, announcing the upcoming Mother's Day, featuring an illustration of Anna Jarvis



Advertisement in *The Record*, May 8, 1948.



1919 Advertisement for A Mother's Day Sale at the Stockton Floral Gardens

AN EARLY HISTORY OF MOTHER'S DAY IN SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

BY PHILLIP MERLO
PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE STOCKTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mother's Day is a modern holiday. Conceived of in 1905 by Anna Jarvis in Grafton, West Virginia, the first Mother's Day was held in 1907 as a worship service at the Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church in Grafton. Her mother, Ann Reeves Jarvis, had organized women's brigades during the Civil War, and later in 1868 she had organized a Mothers Friendship Day to promote peace between former Union and Confederate families. After her passing in 1905 and inspired by a reading of Julia Ward Howe's "Mother's Day Proclamation of 1870," Ann's daughter Anna resolved to create an official memorial day to honor mothers. She received help from a Philadelphia store owner and began to

promote the idea; she made major headway by 1908.

The concept spread quickly across the U.S. The first Mother's Day in San Joaquin County was celebrated on May 9, 1909. The Christian Church of Stockton, a nondenominational church, was the first to adopt the holiday. Social organizations of the city arranged for white carnations and white flowers as the chief features of service decorations. At the Christian Church, Miss Etta Hoerl sang the solo "Tell Mother I'll Be There." While many churches participated, others were slow on the uptake. U.S. Congress was notably slow to adopt the day of celebration, with a rejected resolution for adoption in 1908. Members of Congress reportedly

joked that they would also have to proclaim Mother-in-Law's Day. Closer to home, numerous churches in Stockton chose to give sermons that day on "Christian Manhood." A worthy topic, perhaps, though local reporters noted the choice as conspicuous considering the Mother's Day movement.

Between 1909 and 1912, considerable organizing led to Mother's Day being firmly established in local life. In 1909, Methodist and Presbyterian churches across the county began to hold sermons with a focus on appreciation for motherhood. Stockton, Lodi and Manteca churches followed suit. That year also saw the first Mother's Day Sale advertised at The Arcade, a local department store in Stockton. Newspaper reports suggest



Ms. Etta Hoerl, pictured in the June 26, 1909, edition of *The Stockton Record*, would perform the first songs in honor of Mother's Day on May 9, 1909, at the Christian Church of Stockton.

that the sale was a wild success, and it was followed up by an even larger sale in 1910. By 1912, influential reporter, Philomathean, suffragette and first elected woman in San Joaquin County history, L. Clare Davis, formerly a skeptic of the event, was openly endorsing the holiday in the pages of *The Stockton Record*. The City of Stockton adopted the

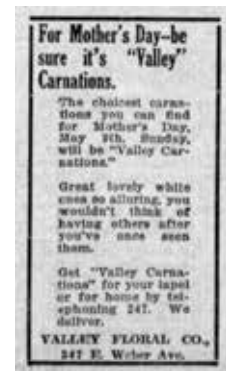


L. Clare Davis, San Joaquin County's first woman to be elected to office and a famous local newspaper reporter, whose endorsement of Mother's Day in 1912 was critical to broader adoption of the holiday. Photo taken from her obituary on August 21, 1947, in the *The Stockton Record*.

day as a local holiday that year. The federal government also caught on, and President Woodrow Wilson formally named the day a national holiday in 1914, and the celebration of motherhood became mainstream.

As the holiday became accepted, it was promptly commercialized. In 1915, no less than seven sale advertisements were published in *The Stockton Record* the day before Mother's Day, and by 1919 they were everywhere, prompting a backlash from many of the religious institutions that had fought for the day to be recognized. Founder Anna Jarvis went so far as to advocate for the President to repeal the day! Despite the backlash, the holiday gained momentum and was firmly established. Many pointed to those protesting the day's commercialization as "out of touch." After all, what mother doesn't want to be celebrated and honored?

Mother's Day would evolve into the major celebration that we know today, leading to widespread displays of gratitude for our mothers and for motherhood. It's worth taking time to remember the origins and evolution of this time-honored tradition. ♦



1915 ad for "Valley Carnations" to be purchased on Mother's Day.



Anna M. Jarvis, founder of Mother's Day, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

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COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARDS

Community members gathered for a spectacular evening at the Central Valley Asian Chamber of Commerce 2023 Community Recognition Awards Dinner. The annual event was held on March 23 and honored individuals and businesses throughout the region. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN



CATHY GHAN

BY HERLIFE STAFF

Cathy Ghan, banking/lending, executive vice president, Commercial Real Estate Group at Oak Valley Community Bank, sat down with HERLIFE Magazine recently to share her dedication to family and community.



Left to Right:
Cathy's sister, Vanessa,
Mom and Cathy

HLM: *How long have you lived here? What do you love most?*

CG: I have deep roots in Stockton. My grandfather settled here and I grew up here. What I love most are the decades-old friendships, the neighborhood where I've lived for almost 30 years, and the strong sense of community that celebrates the range of cultures that make up Stockton.

HLM: *How is your heart inspired to serve the community?*

CG: I gravitate towards youth-related causes where I can lend wisdom and experiences to positively impact a young person's perspective. Investing my time and resources is an important investment in the future of our community. I have volunteered for a variety of causes and have had the pleasure of serving on numerous boards here in Stockton, and I currently serve on the board of the Children's Home of Stockton.

HLM: *What sparks joy for you?*

CG: Spontaneous trips; gotta love a road trip or vacation in Maui. Watching my 90-year-old mother eagerly working her stock picks using (all at one time) her iPads (yes, that's plural), iPhone and listening to morning stock updates on TV. Her brain is going a mile a minute; she's quick with the numbers and calculations. Snuggling with Molly, our doggie daughter. On-the-course golf lessons, by Gary Ghan; he's so patient.

HLM: *Top three bucket list goals?*

CG: Take pottery lessons; volunteer as a hospital baby cuddler; keep a gratitude journal.

HLM: *What accomplishment are you most proud of?*

CG: Raising two amazing principle-centered daughters.

HLM: *What's the best skill you learned from your mom?*

CG: Besides the life lessons, my mom taught me a stick-to-it, you-can-do-it attitude. On the crafty side, she's an expert seamstress and knitter. She taught me both, all with attention to detail and perfection (not always healthy).

HLM: *What do you love most about being a mom?*

CG: Teaching my daughters important life lessons, supporting their endeavors, watching them come into their own and learning about myself through their lens.

HLM: *What's the greatest life lesson you learned from your mom?*

CG: Family first. Maintain traditions. Be resourceful. Treat important relationships like a long-term investment. Be a mentor.

HLM: *Can you describe a key event that had an impact on your life?*

CG: Two key events are first and foremost, meeting my husband, Gary. In my 30s I started and left a very successful business in pursuit of work-life balance.

HLM: *Outside work, how is your time best spent?*

CG: Enjoying time with family and close friends; tinkering around the house; experimenting in the kitchen and garden; DIY projects, sewing projects, shopping trips to SF or Walnut Creek with the girls; leisurely morning walks; planning/hosting dinner parties; golfing, weather permitting, I'm a fair-weather golfer.

HLM: *Do you have a favorite quote?*

CG: Newest favorite, a sign posted at Dad's Hot Dogs: "Good People Bring Out the Good In People."

HLM: *What are you currently reading?*

CG: *Outlander*, the first book in the series by Diana Galbaldon, and *Bourdain; The Definitive Oral Biography* by Laurie Woolever

HLM: *Favorite food or dessert?*

CG: Comfort foods and my childhood favorite, steamed rice with Chinese sausage, a fried egg on top and a dab of soy sauce. I bake my favorite dessert, three-layer vanilla whipped cream cake with fresh bananas and strawberries. ♦

Reflections



Lisa Pijl

Retired from St. Mary's High School

Q: What's the greatest life lesson you learned from your mom?

A: I was so very blessed to have my mother in my life for 99½ years. I grew up in the '50s and '60s and I was very lucky to have a stay-at-home mom. She cooked every meal and taught us to eat healthy and to always stay active. My parents enjoyed playing tennis, golf and swimming in their spare time and shared the love of sport and outside activities with our family. In turn, I have passed that along to my children and grandchildren. We enjoyed a simple lifestyle and may not have had that much, but we always had each other and never went without. If I had to pick the one life lesson that my mother was very passionate about and passed on to me, it was the importance of always putting God first and having a personal relationship with God before anything else in my life.

Q: What do you love most about being a mom?

A: Becoming a mother was the greatest gift that God ever bestowed on me and experiencing unconditional love for and from your child has been the best blessing. Every stage of their lives was an adventure and a comedy of errors. I found myself learning from my many mistakes and giving myself some grace along the way! From mothering an infant to preschooler to adolescent was a wonderful rollercoaster, but nothing can beat the relationship you enjoy with your adult children. I have four children that I now call my best friends and I look forward to all my new adventures with their families and my ten grandchildren, which by the way is really the ultimate gift. I hope one day if my children are asked, "What was the one great life lesson that your mother taught you?" they would reply, "That your home is where each of you lives for the other and all live for God." ♦



Christa Griffith

Office Manager and Volunteer Program
Manager for Visit Stockton

Q: What's the greatest life lesson you learned from your mom?

A: My mother can make a friend in an elevator. Her ability to gravitate towards others, start a conversation with a stranger, give unconditionally and show kindness are what make my mother one of the purest people you will ever meet. Her life lesson isn't something that is taught or said, but it is who she is and what she embodies as a person. My mom never comes to your house empty-handed. I laugh because her gift bags often come with things like fruit, a few rolls of toilet paper, toothpaste, Cliff Bars, new shoes, leftovers and an envelope with cash in it just cause, and I'll have just ran out of toothpaste. How did she know? Her smile is contagious, and her energy fills the room with

fun. She's taught me tough love, loyalty and even though you love your kids, it's okay to not like them sometimes.

Q: What's the best skill you learned from your mom?

A: My mother is a woman of many skills. She was raised by two very hard-working parents who cut wood and farmed all their lives. She's a little busy bee who rarely sits and is always on the go. I am certain my work ethic comes from my mother and my professional drive to succeed and make money from my father. If she's not taking care of my daughter while I work, she's helping Grandma on the farm. She's a very selfless person. If rooting for the underdog and seeing the best in people, even when they don't deserve it, is a skill, then my mom has mastered it. I've learned how to enjoy a glass of wine and a good meal from my mother and how to make a dollar stretch at a thrift store. You don't always get a mother like mine and I am blessed to have her.

Q: What do you love most about being a mom?

A: I became "a mother" when I was 27. I raised three little girls during the most formative years of my adult life. They taught me to put others in front of myself and love a child that wasn't mine. Having my daughter at 32 was a gift. I gave myself time to travel the world, enjoy the theater, and build a career. I love watching her grow into who she is. Seeing her creativity, sass and boldness mature as she ages. Boy, do I have a mini me and boy, am I in for it. She comes to my board meetings at SCT, she attends my Leadership and Visit Stockton events, and she's my date to the theater and symphony. I am planting a seed. We all have our days when we think we could have handled a situation differently as a mother and I love having days when I know I've hit the mark. ♦

Jovanna Vialdores

Contracts Analyst at First 5 San Joaquin

Q: What's the greatest life lesson you learned from your mom?

A: My mom is the most resilient person I know. She defines resilience. Being raised in a household and community experiencing deep poverty and growing up during a time and in a culture marked by segregation and racism, she learned how to bend without breaking. How to remain faithful to God while dealing with life's challenges. How to be grateful while experiencing lack. How to do hard things with a smile. And her life over the years has been an incredible example of those things to her five children. And now that I've come into motherhood, I'm learning how valuable the legacy of resilience is that she's left for me. It's a gift, really. I have so many memories and conversations and moments with my mom that fill up my motherhood well. And I draw from it whenever I need a reminder that I, too, am resilient.

Q: What do you love most about being a mom?

A: As a mom to a toddler and a bonus mom to adult children, it can be tough to live up to all the many expectations that our culture places on



mom's. So, I've learned to embrace the joyful ride that motherhood can be, all the ups and downs. And I absolutely love the gift that motherhood has been. I love that it teaches me how to extend and receive grace. I love that it gives me the opportunity to influence someone else in a way that can positively impact generations to come. I love the early morning snuggles and evening dance parties. And I love that being a mom has expanded my purpose in life. "To whom much is given, much is required." And while I embrace the "much," I also accept the great responsibility and privilege of mommyhood. ♦

Shauna Buzunis-Jacob

Director of Marketing and Development,
Child Abuse Prevention Council



Q: What's the greatest life lesson you learned from your mom?

A: Life goes much quicker than you think. I got married and had my children a bit later in life. I was well into career mode and trying to raise three girls. "Slow down" has always been her mantra to me; enjoy it, stay home and cuddle those babies when they are sick, show up at all the school events, and take the extra vacation. Work will be there when you get back. Being raised in the '80s when women were trying to do it all and have it all, she reminded me that it was okay to really pick a career, a job where I could put my family first. She was preaching work-life balance before it was a thing.

Q: What's the best skill you learned from your mom?

A: Well, it was not cooking! We both are not very good at that. The best skill I learned from my mother is how to raise strong daughters! My mother was raised in the poor South, with no running water, no bathroom, the oldest of six, money was tight all the time. She often speaks of the opportunities she didn't even know she was missing. She talks about marriage being a way out of her circumstances. The skill of hard work and perseverance was what she instilled in my sister and me. My mother taught me the importance of education and

the power that independence would bring me. The skill is to incorporate that message into a way of life for our children. Never be reliant on someone else for your happiness (or your distress); that is a powerful message that I try to instill in my girls every day.

Q: What do you love most about being a mom?

A: I think what you love most about being a mom often changes depending on your children's age. My 24-year-old is getting married, and she's telling her sibling to listen to me, that I actually know what I am talking about. I love that, just had to put that in print! As she navigates her relationship with her fiancé and career, I get excited to see her use or reflect on our family values and foundations. My 17-year-old is graduating from high school; it has been my pleasure to watch her grow into a very strong young woman, always questioning her path and often mine. So proud of her independence and ability to be her own person no matter the consequence. My 15-year-old is in high school and playing competitive volleyball, with lots of travel and opportunities to really bond. I love the long trips, the conversation and the little moment that will create her memories. ♦

*Photo of roses at the home of Sherry Letty Glines,
March 2023 HERLIFE Inspiration Feature*



ANDREA ANDRADE

BY HERLIFE STAFF

Andrea Andrade, vice president, community manager at JPMorgan Chase, sat down with HERLIFE Magazine recently to share her dedication to family and community.

HLM: *How long have you lived here? What do you love most?*

AA: I have lived in Stockton for 37 years. I love the diversity, food and, most importantly, the people.

HLM: *How is your heart inspired to serve the community?*

AA: I grew up in south Stockton and learned very young the importance of giving back and how one person's giving spirit can change lives. I myself had many opportunities throughout my journey to connect with amazing people who saw something special in me and invested their time. I want to make sure that I do the same.

HLM: *What sparks joy for you?*

AA: My children, husband and hobbies like drawing, gardening and bird watching.

HLM: *What's the greatest life lesson you learned from your mom?*

AA: Every mom should give themselves some

grace. Raising children can be beautiful and rewarding but it can also be challenging. Allowing room for mistakes and growth is important.

HLM: *What's the best skill learned from your mom?*

AA: Cooking. My mom is a great cook and I learned how to cook at a young age. I am thankful for what she taught me because I continue her cooking traditions in my own household.

HLM: *What do you love most about being a mom?*

AA: I love that all three of my kids are very different and that teaches me something new every day.

HLM: *Top three bucket list goals?*

AA: To leave the world better than I found it; to help build generational wealth within my family; to visit different parts of the world.

HLM: *What accomplishment are you most proud of?*

AA: Homeownership.

HLM: *Can you describe a key event that had an impact on your life?*

AA: Getting an acceptance letter to attend the University of the Pacific. I was the first in my family to attend college and I knew at that moment that my life would never be the same.

HLM: *Do you have a favorite quote?*

AA: "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"
~Martin Luther King Jr.

HLM: *What are you currently reading?*

AA: I am currently reading the book *Gut: The Inside Story of Our Body's Most Underrated Organ* by Giulia Enders.

HLM: *Favorite food or dessert?*

AA: Carne asada tacos, cheesecake ♦

Spinning Memories

BY LINDA PHILIPP

If you're a fan of TV game shows, you have probably fantasized about playing the game on the actual show. Over the years, I have dreamed about being on *Password*, *\$10,000 Pyramid*, *Family Feud* and *The Price is Right*. The ultimate, however, was always *Wheel of Fortune*, in part because I am drawn to word games, the prizes are terrific, and it looks like so much fun! And how cool would it be to meet Pat Sajak and Vanna White in person?!

Since I do believe that intention creates reality, I decided to put some effort into making this dream come true. Before COVID, the *Wheel Mobile* would make appearances in different cities so that potential contestants could try out. It came to Sacramento a few times and even Stockton once, but work obligations prevented me from attending. One of the unexpected benefits of the pandemic, however, has been the emergence of meeting via Zoom and using the internet to communicate. When I saw that you could apply to be on *Wheel of Fortune* by sending in a video of yourself, I thought, "Aha! Here's my shot." So, I uploaded a video that I took myself and sent it off with fingers crossed. That was almost a year ago; we moved in the meantime, and I honestly sort of forgot about it.

Much to my surprise, I recently received an email inviting me to interview for WOF. What?!? I was ecstatic! The appointment was set for a Zoom interview and I couldn't wait. Of course, that day I logged on early, but when the Casting Associate Producer appeared, she couldn't hear me. My computer audio wasn't working. Fortunately, the interview was rescheduled, my computer issue was resolved



and we tried again. Success! The lovely woman who interviewed me was delightful and especially interested in the fact that my husband Larry and I have 11 grandchildren. She asked if I might have a grandchild between the ages of 13 and 25 who, if I was selected to appear, might want to join me as they were planning to have a special Grandparent/Grandchild Week. I said absolutely and immediately reached out to our oldest grandchild, Riley, who is a senior at UCLA. Fortunately,

she accepted my invitation and we officially threw our hats in the ring for this special opportunity.

When we were invited to audition via Zoom, we were thrilled. She was in Los Angeles and I was in Stockton, but thanks to Zoom and several prior texts and FaceTime calls, we were ready. When it was our turn to play the game during the audition, we both did our best and crossed our fingers. Then we waited to hear the outcome.

Thank goodness they didn't make us wait too long. The following day I received an email with instructions for us to appear as contestants. Taping would occur in about ten days, so we were off to the races!

I mean, what could be better than being given a chance to appear on *Wheel of Fortune* with your granddaughter? Travel arrangements and accommodations were made and the following week we headed to LA for the experience of a lifetime. We checked into our hotel on a Wednesday, screened for COVID on Thursday, and went to bed early Thursday night so that we'd be ready to go early Friday morning.

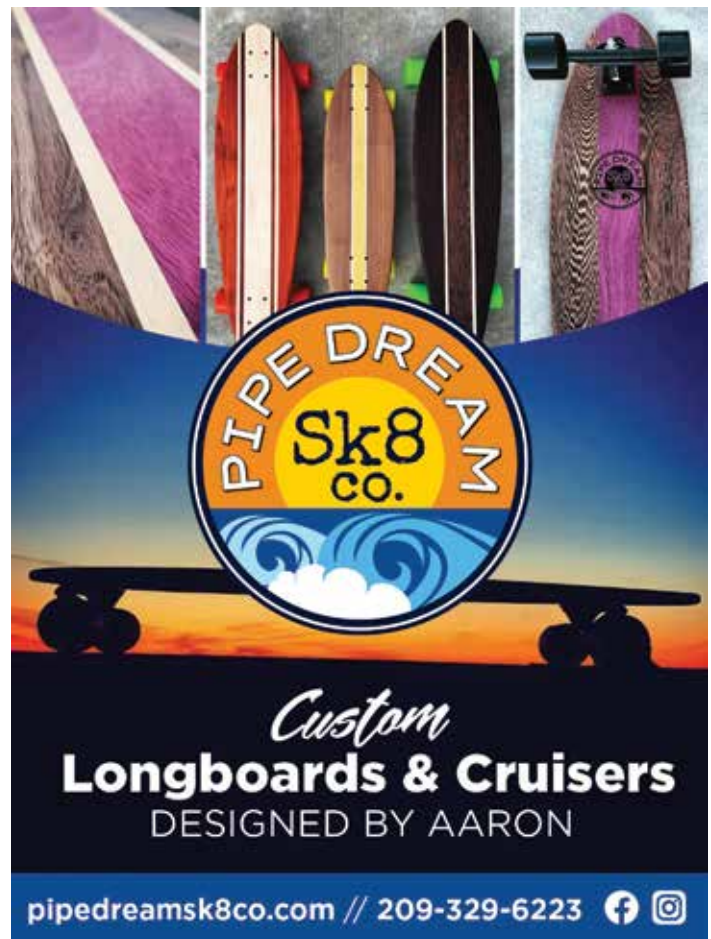
Riley picked me up at the hotel Friday at 5:45 a.m. as we wanted to be sure we arrived on time. The morning was spent preparing for the big event; we were briefed, signed forms, learned the basics of the game, met other contestants, practiced spinning the wheel and playing the game. We were treated to hair and makeup touchups and recorded a TV promo that will hopefully be played prior to the episode airing on our local Channel 13.

Then came show time! Riley and I were in the first group to be taped. Pat and Vanna walked on set and we were off. Playing the game was so exciting and fun. We cheered on the other contestants and had a blast. The producers told us this would be the fastest 22 minutes of our lives and it was! It seemed like the time just flew by and we were done.

After taping, we were invited to tape potential social media promos and were surprised and delighted to meet Maggie Sajak, Pat's daughter, who, like Pat and Vanna, couldn't have been more amiable or welcoming. Afterwards, we sat in the audience to watch another taping before leaving so Riley could prepare for her college graduate entrance exams the next morning.



As grandparents we strive to connect with our grandchildren in what we hope will be meaningful ways. One thing I know for sure is that Riley and I did just that; we will always remember our chance to spin the wheel!

We cannot reveal how we fared on the show but invite you to tune in to watch us play together on Monday, May 22, on KOVR Channel 13 at 7:30 p.m. ♦



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BEET, GOAT CHEESE AND EGG SALAD

PHOTO AND RECIPE BY ACQUIESCE WINERY

The sweet beets, salty almonds and tart goat cheese are a great pairing for Acquiesce Winery's Viognier.



INGREDIENTS

1½ pounds beets, peels on, greens removed, scrubbed clean
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup toasted almonds, roughly chopped
1 tablespoon agave syrup or honey
2 tablespoons champagne vinegar
1 tablespoon finely minced shallot (about 1 small)
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 small white onions, finely sliced (about 1/2 cup)
1/2 cup pomegranate seeds
4 ounces goat cheese
2 to 3 hard-boiled eggs, quartered
2 small baby gem lettuces

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 375°F. Fold a 12- by 24-inch sheet of aluminum foil in half to form a square. Crimp two edges to form a pouch. Toss beets, vegetable oil and salt and pepper to taste in a medium bowl until coated. Add to pouch and crimp remaining edge to seal. Place on a rimmed baking sheet and place in oven. Roast until beets are completely tender and a toothpick or cake tester inserted into beet through foil shows little to no resistance, about an hour and a half. Remove from oven and allow to cool. Combine almonds, agave syrup, vinegar and shallots in a medium bowl. Whisking constant-



ly, slowly drizzle in olive oil. Season dressing to taste with salt and pepper. When beets are cool enough to handle, peel by gently rubbing skin under cold running water. Cut beets into 1½-inch chunks. Toss lettuce, pomegranate, onion and dressing together in a large bowl. Transfer to a plate. Garnish with beets, goat cheese and boiled eggs. *Serve immediately. Serves 4 - 6.* ♦



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MIKE DUNNE
Acclaimed Writer & Wine Judge

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~ and ~
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WINERY & VINEYARDS



SEA BASS FILLETS WITH ROASTED GRAPES AND FENNEL

RECIPE BY MARY RAFFETTO

We have famed chef and restaurateur Yotam Ottolenghi to thank for this absurdly easy, flavorful topping of red grapes roasted with fennel seeds. Try these beauties in salads, atop fish, pork or chicken. Experiment by adding other flavors such as minced ginger or top with shredded fresh basil; it's a very flexible recipe.

Our suggested pairing is St. Jorge Winery's Vinho Cor De Rosa, Lodi, California.

FISH

2 sea bass fillets
Sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
½ cup flour
2 to 4 tbsp. butter
2–4 tbsp. olive oil

ROASTED RED GRAPES

4 cups seedless red grapes
2½ tsp. fennel seeds, crushed slightly
2 tsp. soft dark brown sugar
Flaked sea salt and black pepper
2 tbsp. water

GREEN SALAD

5 cups romaine lettuce, chopped
1 cup fennel bulb, very thinly sliced
Avocado, sliced (optional)

DRESSING

Good quality olive oil
Lemon juice
Salt
Pepper
Optional garnish: toasted pine nuts or almonds, chopped fennel fronds

Heat the oven to 285° F. You can roast the grapes in a toaster oven or, for larger batches, a full-sized oven. Line a baking tray with baking parchment or use a nonstick tray. Put the grapes in a medium-sized bowl with the fennel seeds, sugar, a quarter teaspoon salt and two tablespoons water. Toss to coat the grapes in the mix and then spread them out on the prepared baking tray. Roast for approximately one hour until the grapes are shriveled and soft. Sprinkle them lightly with black pepper and let them cool. Try not to eat them all before dinner.

Combine the romaine lettuce, either chopped or torn into bite-sized pieces, with the thinly sliced fennel bulb and sliced avocado in a large bowl and set aside or refrigerate until serving. If you're serving it right away, go ahead and dress it with the olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper.

Cook the fish last, as you'll want to serve it while it is still nice and warm. Season the fillets with salt and pepper, then coat them with flour. Over medium-high heat, warm the olive oil in the pan and put the fish in as soon as it's hot, followed by the butter. Be sure to reduce the heat if you see the oil and butter begin to smoke. Turn the fish over once it is golden on one side, about 5 minutes per side. Take it off the heat as soon as it's done; you don't want to overcook it.

To serve, drizzle the salad lightly with lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper to taste. Toss and place a serving on each plate, then top the salad with the seared fish and finished with a generous scoop of roasted grapes. Garnish with toasted nuts and chopped fennel fronds, both optional but very tasty. ♦



Mary Raffetto is a writer, thinker, floral designer and all-around creative soul. With an aesthetic inspired by her Italian family background, she specializes in gardening, cooking, organizing and decorating, and she thrives on making everything more beautiful for others to enjoy. A graduate of the University of the Pacific, she is a longtime resident of San Joaquin County, where she raised her family and has written extensively about local events, people, businesses, food and restaurants.



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SOUPER SUPPER

A community favorite, Art Expression of San Joaquin held their popular Souper Supper at the Stockton Hilton in February. Guests chose their artistically glazed soup bowl and enjoyed tasting the selection of appetizing and flavorful soups prepared by six celebrity and VIP chefs. The evening included delectable desserts, a live auction and entertainment. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN





SOUPER SUPPER-SIZED MINISTRONE

RECIPE BY PAULA SHEIL

INGREDIENTS

5 tbsp. vegetable oil
 10 garlic cloves, finely chopped (a jar of minced garlic makes it easy)
 5 medium onions, chopped (2 1/2 cups)
 20 cups vegetable broth
 20 cups tomato juice (or three jars of Stanislaus Food's al Dente! Pasta Sauce and water)
 5 cups dry red wine (1 bottle of a good Lodi red will do!)
 5 tablespoons dried basil leaves
 5 teaspoons salt
 2 1/2 tsp. dried oregano leaves
 1 1/4 teaspoon pepper
 1/2 medium green cabbage, chopped (4 cups)
 8 small zucchini, chopped (4 cups)
 8 medium carrots, sliced (4 cups)
 6 stalks celery, chopped (4 cups)
 6 (32-oz. cans) diced tomatoes, undrained
 5 (15-oz.) cans cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
 36 ounces frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed to drain
 1 lb. box elbow macaroni
 Serve with 2 pounds grated Parmesan Reggiano cheese from Genova Bakery

DIRECTIONS

Heat oil in 8-quart Dutch oven over medium heat. Cook garlic and onion in oil for about 2 minutes, stirring occasionally, until onion is tender. Stir in remaining ingredients except cheese. Heat to boiling; reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 3 hours. Serve with cheese.

Final tips: For the first hour the soup will taste sweet. Counter this with 1 cup of white vinegar. Flavors will blend the longer it simmers. Make sure to stir frequently from the bottom up.

Buona mangiata! ♦

Classic minestrone is one of Italy's première exports (Michelangelo notwithstanding!). Veggies and pasta star in this hearty soup. I had the great pleasure of cooking up minestrone for 50 for Souper Supper 2023, a "fun" raiser for Art Expressions. It's a vegan staple if you serve Parmesan cheese on the side.

I started with a recipe from Food.com, which credited another recipe from Betty Crock Creative Recipes #133. The recipe was for 10, but a handy calculator retotaled the ingredients for 50. Of course, I made quite a few changes along the way.

The fun starts with a large stockpot. I purchased mine long ago from El Dorado Market for tamale steaming and crab boiling. The directions call for heating up the onions and garlic in olive oil and then adding everything else. That means get your prep on and have everything chopped, measured, and ready!

Mother's Day Brunches

ELEGANT OFFERINGS, FINE WINES, SIGNATURE COCKTAILS

BY MARY RAFFETTO

This year Mother's Day falls on Sunday, May 14, and whether you celebrate at home or plan to go out, it's always fun to peek at what others are serving. Here's the scoop from four local restaurants known for their great brunches.



THE KITCHEN AT STONEBRIER

From appetizers such as Calamari Fritti and seasonal bruschetta to an authentic Monte Cristo and a wide selection of exquisite entrees, The Kitchen at Stonebrier's brunch has you covered! In addition to delicious choices such as the Chicken Caprese Sandwich and Huevos Rancheros, the chef has expanded the menu to include Braised Short Rib Benedict, Lemon Ricotta Pancakes and fresh Strawberry Tart, to name just a few of the special Mother's Day offerings. With a focus on fresh and seasonal local flavors, this elegant restaurant has a full bar, fine wines and specialty cocktails made with fresh juices and herbs. Arrangements can be made for parties, catering and private groups of various sizes with attention to every detail. You are guaranteed to enjoy an exceptional meal and a memorable Mother's Day at The Kitchen at Stonebrier. Brunch will be served from 9:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.



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BUD'S SEAFOOD GRILLE

Whether it's dinner, lunch or brunch, Bud's Seafood Grille has been pleasing patrons for many years with their always reliable and delicious menu. Their brunch features Quiche of the Day—"Best Quiche You've Ever Tasted!" says the menu—omelets, scrambles, French toast, crab cakes, salads, seafood cocktails, sandwiches, pasta and more. Favorites abound such as Bud's Beef, Sandab Filets, Chicken Marsala, and Friday Night Cioppino. Whatever you select, be sure to try a side of their New England Clam Chowder, available by the cup or bowl.

Established in 1993, Bud's Seafood Grille is celebrating 30 years as a longtime favorite not just for its food but also for its bar, which is always a great spot to meet friends for drinks and socializing. The restaurant has patio dining and a banquet room, and it offers both drop-off and pickup-style catering. The team at Bud's is proud to have been voted Best Seafood Restaurant in San Joaquin County every year since 1994. Bud's Sunday brunch is served from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

314 Lincoln Center
Stockton, CA 95207
209-956-0270
budsseafood.com



WINE AND ROSES TOWNE HOUSE RESTAURANT OR GARDEN BALLROOM BUFFET

Wine and Roses offers two ways to enjoy a Mother's Day brunch. The Towne House Restaurant will be serving from the current menu, which is known and loved by their regular customers. Be sure to check out their irresistible fried chicken

and waffle entree or their all-made-in-house croque monsieur; even the bread is homemade.

Or, to celebrate in truly over-the-top, grand style, opt for the Wine & Roses Mother's Day Brunch Buffet in the Garden Ballroom. The buffet menu will be highlighted by champagne service, formal carving stations featuring the finest meats, numerous gourmet salads, sides and glorious desserts of all kinds. Call ahead or visit their website to reserve your spot at this sumptuous feast.

2505 W. Turner Road
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MEZZO RESTAURANT

If signature cocktails, house-made pastas and stunningly delicious entrees are your thing, then you'll want to get right over to Mezzo at your earliest convenience. Chef Ruby and her team do not take shortcuts at this quaint Italian restaurant where they make everything by hand; that

includes their ever-changing specials as well as their desserts. Think pan-seared fish with luxurious broths and sauces, melting beef short ribs and succulent rack of lamb, each with all the special touches. Mezzo's extraordinary meals paired with fine local wines will leave you wanting to return again and again. Although Mezzo is not normally open on Sundays, they are making an exception for their special Mother's Day brunch. Here are some of the items that will be offered: Vegetarian Frittata served with a mixed green salad, Dutch Baby Pancake with fresh fruit, Smoked Salmon on Toasted Rustic Bread and Prawn Louie.

Mezzo will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Mother's Day, May 14. Call for reservations at 209-473-7300 or make reservations on Open Table.

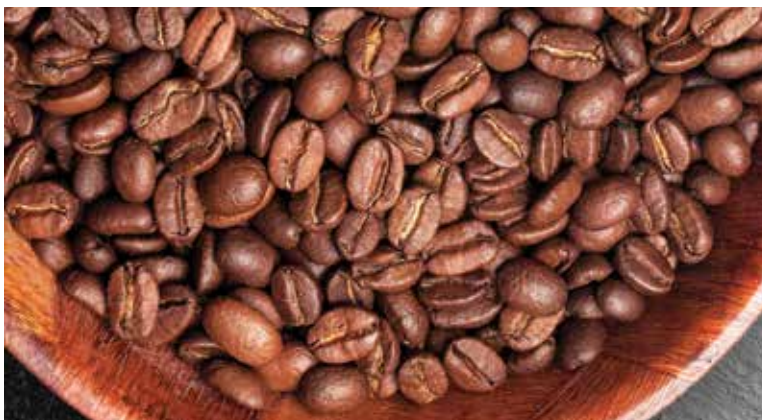
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COFFEE OR TEA? THE BATTLE OF THE BEVERAGES

BY LISA BUTLER

It's not the Superbowl or the World Series or even the presidential election, but on any given day, the battle of the beverages can be heard around the world. While water is a necessity and milk is popular, coffee and tea seem to percolate the most debate.

These common pick-me-ups are two of the most widely consumed beverages in the world. But when it comes to health and wellness, is one better than the other? The robust deliberation continues here. See how your favorite drink fares with this fun comparison.



SPILLING THE BEANS ON COFFEE

Coffee is a quintessential part of daily American life. According to a study by Statista, 88 percent of Americans drink between one and five cups of coffee a day. And America isn't the only country loving the likes of lattes. Most of the world's ten leading coffee-consuming countries are in Europe, but Brazil tops the list. This should come as no surprise for coffee connoisseurs since it is also the biggest coffee-producing country in the world. Of course, the U.S. is the largest coffee importer; we need all those beans to supply some of the biggest coffee chains in the world.

While there's nothing like a steaming cup of coffee to give you instant energy in the morning, or the stamina to pull an all-nighter, coffee is scientifically linked to a long list of possible health benefits, giving us another reason to make it a venti.

BENEFITS OF COFFEE

- Excellent source of antioxidants that may play a role in preventing several chronic and acute conditions.
- Enhances energy levels.
- Reduces risk of Type 2 diabetes.
- Promotes more physical movement.
- Enhances heart health.
- Reduces risk of liver disease, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.
- Promotes healthier skin and decreased body fat.

TEA

Around the world, tea takes the cake for being the most popular beverage, after water, of course. Globally, almost 6.8 billion kilograms of tea are consumed per year, and with over 3,000 tea varieties, people are filling their cups again and again. The vast popularity of tea is driven by its distinct taste

and increased awareness of its numerous health benefits.

BENEFITS OF TEA

- Research has shown a reduced risk of heart disease in people who drink green or black tea regularly.
- Helps keep blood sugar in check, reducing the risk for developing Type 2 diabetes.
- Offers several antioxidants with green tea providing an extra punch.

SOME CONS OF COFFEE AND TEA

Along with benefits of these stimulating beverages comes possible risks, mostly from drinking too much. Caffeine overload can cause nervousness, restlessness and poor sleep. Some people may also experience loose stools and other gastrointestinal issues from too many cups of joe or tea. Nausea, abdominal pain, heartburn, dizziness and muscle pain are also potential side effects.

Overconsuming coffee and tea may also interact with certain medications, increasing their effects in the body. Most doctors recommend not exceeding a total daily intake of 400 milligrams of caffeine, which is about four cups of brewed coffee or eight cups of green tea.

THE FUTURE OF YOUR FAVORITE

Whether you side with coffee or tea, or partake in both, the making of these beverages and the way they are served continues to evolve with the wants of the world. This year, coffee trends are

geared toward our busy lives, with cold coffee reigning supreme as an easy on-the-go drink. And while frothy milk is a popular topper, look for cold foam to take the lead. Social media is also presenting some creative ideas with food-topped coffees. Think dried strawberries crumbled on a strawberry latte or sprinkles of apple pie atop an oatmeal milk cappuccino. Coffee shops are also pursuing sustainability in their practices; look for more discounts for customers using their own mugs.

Teas are progressing, too. Health-conscious consumers are giving a nod to moringa tea. Made from the leaves of the moringa plant, this tea is said to offer nutritional benefits including vitamins A, C and B6 as well as beta-carotene and amino acids. On-trend tea shops may also offer Pu-erh tea, a higher-caffeinated version closer to the jolts of coffee, and honeybush tea, an herbal infusion from South Africa known for its honey-like flavor.

PICK YOUR PASSION

Trends come and go, but our love of coffee and tea is continuous. While more research is needed to identify all the benefits, both tea and coffee can be part of a healthy diet. Whatever your pick of liquid potion, you are sure to be a winner with either of these two popular everyday drinks. A good cup of our best-loved beverage can make us feel better, give us clarity and even extend our life if paired with a healthy lifestyle. When it comes to the battle of the beverages, between coffee and tea, your choice wins the contest. ♦

SOURCES: webrestaurantstore.com, eatright.org and webmd.com.



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Bedroom Design

Tips and Inspiration
for a Soothing Retreat

BY KATHLEEN JENNISON
PHOTOS BY CAROLINE'S
PHOTOGRAPHY



Think about it; your bedroom plays a pivotal role in your daily routine. Whether it's early mornings preparing for the day or winding down with your favorite book before getting quality sleep, creating a comfortable and soothing atmosphere is essential to achieve ultimate wellness and relaxation.

SOFT, AIRY AND LUXURIOUS RETREAT

Pay close attention to color, as the color palette in your bedroom can profoundly affect your mood. Opt for hues that soothe you, such as soft blues and greens, neutral accents of ivory, mauve or gray, or even some saturated yet moody colors, if they speak to you. Of course, white and ivory sheets are always a must. They are classic and coordinate with any bedding, making the entire room feel clean and crisp.

You may have already noticed that the beautiful wallpaper is the stand-out feature in this bedroom. The subtle, neutral pattern elevates a sense of luxury while perfectly complementing the colors of the bedding and rug, making it feel light and airy.

Have you ever noticed that bedrooms are typically the last rooms homeowners will furnish? While it may feel natural

to focus primarily on the rooms in which you entertain guests, such as your kitchen or living room, the bedroom should be higher on your priority list.



NATURE-INSPIRED HAVEN

Soothing blues and pops of deep teal perfectly contrast with the neutral tones and natural wood elements, reflecting the peace and tranquility of the outdoors. The understated luxury of the upholstered headboard is effortlessly casual and timeless, making it the perfect focal point for this cozy, nature-inspired bedroom. The contrasting yet complementing elements of fabric and wood infuse the space with beautiful texture and dimension.

Adding texture to your bedroom's décor can create an inviting and cozy feel. Layer different textures such as blankets, throws and pillows on top of your bedding for a more layered and multi-dimensional look. Consider incorporating a plush, soft rug under your feet to create a cozy and inviting space.



UNIQUE, MULTI-FUNCTIONAL REFUGE

Don't forget about lighting. Lighting is often overlooked in bedroom design, but it's an important element that can greatly impact your sleep quality. Creating the perfect lighting conditions can have a significant impact on your overall bedroom design. Aim for a mix of overhead lighting and lamps, and choose bulbs that emit warm, soft light rather than harsh, cool light.

If possible, allow natural light to filter in during the day, as this can make the space feel brighter and more welcoming. At night, focus on creating a layered lighting scheme that involves dimmer switches and soft lamps to create a warm and invit-

ing atmosphere. You may also want to consider blackout curtains or shades to keep light out and create a cozy, cave-like atmosphere.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR BEDROOM DESIGN

Having a room designed just for you and your own enjoyment is incredibly fulfilling. It can be a place in which you feel refreshed after a long day, a peaceful sanctuary where relaxation is effortless. By sticking to calming colors, natural materials, quality bedding, warm lighting and personal touches, you can create a space that truly feels like your own. Sweet dreams! ♦



Before becoming an interior designer, Kathleen Jennison worked as certified public accountant for a national firm. A near-fatal car accident changed her career path and life forever. She suffered serious brain injuries, and her doctors suggested she take art classes to help with her rehabilitation. With her newfound love for design, she studied at the Art Institute in Sacramento, obtaining her bachelor's degree in interior design. She is a member of the American Society of Interior Designers and has served as the director of marketing for the National Association of Remodelers for the Greater Sacramento area. In 2009, she started KTJ Design Company.

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Everything's Coming Up

Roses



STORY AND PHOTOS BY LAURIE EAGER

Do you look at the world through rose-colored lenses? In competition, do you come out smelling like a rose? Do you strive to have a rosy outlook on life? There's no shortage of expressions about roses in the English language. This queen of flowers is one of the oldest in history, likely originating in Asia about 5,000 years ago. Roses have played an important role in poetry, music, religion, art, literature, medicine, perfume, home decor, fashion and more.



Photo of roses at the home of
Sherry Letty Glines, March 2023
HERLIFE Inspiration Feature



Roses can be planted already potted or as dormant bare-root plants. Container roses are easy to plant and get established quickly. You can purchase them throughout the growing season.

Long associated with love, the rose is the first thing you think of to offer your sweetheart on Valentine's Day or to tell your mom how much she is loved and appreciated on the first Sunday of May. I clearly remember a single red rose given to me by my college boyfriend. He pilfered it from the campus rose garden! It was carefully wrapped in the tissue from a Florsheim shoe box and still had thorns on the stem. It must have made a favorable impression; we've been married for 40 years!

Roses are a star in the garden. They thrive in full sun and they like rich, well-drained soil. They need regular water and fertilizer and an annual pruning. We prune roses, traditionally around the first of the year, to force them into dormancy during the winter months. This allows the plant to store up energy in its roots to put forth the spectacular first flush of blooms in springtime, often in time to coincide with Mother's Day.

There are seemingly endless varieties of roses, but did you know that over 80 percent of our nation's roses are grown here in California? The majority of these are grafted on a single variety rootstock known as Dr. Huey, chosen for its adaptability and ease of propagation. Visit the town of Wasco in Kern County to see rose cultivation up close. This small town is a nationwide hub for rose bush production.

Roses can be planted already potted or as dormant bare-root plants. Container roses are easy to plant and get established quickly. You can purchase them throughout the growing season. Bare-root roses generally offer a greater selection of varieties but require a little more care to thrive. You will need to soak the roots overnight before planting and keep the plant moist for the first few months. All roses are best planted in the spring after the last frost, or in the fall well before the first frost. Space them at least three feet apart to allow ample room for growth. If pesky insects such as aphids come to feed on your roses, you can usually control them with a blast of water from the hose in the morning or a treatment with insecticidal soap.

Share the beauty of your roses! Using sharp garden pruners, cut roses when they are just beginning to open and while they are dewy fresh in the morning. Recut them again at a 45-degree angle before placing them in a vase, stripping off all foliage that falls below the water line. Whether it's a single bud or a bountiful bouquet, roses you cut from your garden are the perfect way to say I love you. ♦

THE SENTIMENTS OF ROSE COLORS

Red: Passion, Romance, True Love

White: Purity, Loyalty, Innocence, New Start, Eternal Love

Yellow: Friendship, Joy, Caring

Pink: Appreciation, Admiration, Grace, Sweetness

Peach: Sincerity, Gratitude



Laurie Eager is the author and illustrator of *In Papa's Garden*. A seeker of beauty every day, she works part time as an interior designer, loves adventure travel, all things French and dark chocolate. She lives in Stockton with her husband, Steve, and can be found most mornings enjoying a cup of coffee and the first rays of sunshine in their abundant vegetable garden.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

BY MARIA RILEY

While most people are aware of foster care as a concept, few are intimately involved with the children in our communities who desperately need safe and loving homes during traumatic times in their lives. Since May is National Foster Care Month, it's a great time to peek behind the curtain into what foster kids and foster families experience.

Over 400,000 kids are currently in the foster care system in the United States. Approximately 34 percent of those children are living in a kinship placement, which means they are being cared for by a family member or close family friend who had a preexisting relationship with the child. The remaining 66 percent of children in foster care live in non-kin homes, or traditional foster care homes in which the foster family did not know the foster child before placement.

After having our oldest daughter biologically, my husband and I became foster parents. The arduous licensing process involved more than 40 hours of classroom training, local and FBI background checks, multiple interviews by social workers, and a complete house inspection to verify the safety and security of our home. Though the process felt daunting and overwhelming at times, I appreciated that Child Protection Services thoroughly vetted people who were willing to take children (and the modest monthly stipend that comes with them) into their homes.

Another great benefit of the intensive classes and challenging licensing process is that it moderately prepares foster parents for the demands of fostering children. Children are placed in the foster care system because they have suffered abuse or neglect, and the impacts



that has on their behaviors and interactions vary. Because of this, most foster kids exhibit defiant or difficult behaviors as they process and adjust to their whole lives being turned upside down.

When a child is placed in the custody of Child Protection Services, the primary goal is always reunification with their family of origin. Once a judge determines the cause for the child's removal, a reunification plan is created. The county provides a myriad of services for the birth parents, including counseling, inpatient and outpatient rehab, housing support, transportation to visits and appointments, and other assistance as needed. These services support birth families who often do not have the

resources to meet their own needs and the needs of their children.

Each foster care case is as unique as the child in care. Some kids remain in foster care for just a few weeks, and some are in foster care for years. In most cases, the best possible outcome for a foster child is reunification with their biological parents. Children have a deep desire to be with their birth parents, and often, once a biological parent is given help and assistance, they can reunite with their kids. However, due to various reasons, including mental illness and addiction, sometimes reunification with birth parents isn't possible. When this is the case, the child becomes eligible for adoption. The county then search-

es for an extended family member or a close family friend who can offer permanency for the child along with a similar cultural upbringing.

When a kinship adoptive placement cannot be found for the foster child, the social worker seeks out an adoptive foster home, which is a family that is licensed to both foster and adopt children. Many foster parents become licensed for adoption at the same time as their foster licensing, just like we did. Then for us, when the children who were staying with us as foster kids became eligible for adoption, we were able to offer that continuity and permanency for kids who had lived with us for over two years.

We adopted three children from two different families of origin through foster care. Foster parenting simultaneously was the hardest and most rewarding thing I've ever done. Though our story ended in adoption for us, I strongly discourage parents who are actively seeking adoption to become foster parents. Since reunification is always the initial goal of birth parents' case plans, couples who are seeking a permanent child can easily become disillusioned by the foster care system. Throughout the process I had to remind myself that these children didn't ask for their challenging situations and don't deserve to have parents who can't take care of them. What they desperately need until their home is safe to return to is a stable, loving family to meet their physical and emotional needs. Practically every county across the United States is desperate for foster families, so if you have room in your heart and room in your home, consider changing a child's life by becoming a foster parent. ♦

SOURCES: *childwelfare.gov.*

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BY HERLIFE STAFF
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SYDNEY SPURGEON

Q: What's your full name?

A: Cosmos C. (Chewbacca) Bestolarides

Q: Tell us about yourself.

A: I am completely adorable. If I could talk, I would be your life coach. I am happy, by nature. I am energetic and will stand up on my hind legs to lick your face. I have marginal control of boundaries, but I can still cleverly use the puppy card.

Q: What's your favorite vacation spot?

A: I haven't yet physically vacationed, but as an influencer my outings are well documented on social media.

Q: And if you go along?

A: I am inherently programmed to magnetize my nose to my blue leash, when I hear "Who wants to go for a walk? Who's a good boy?" Rides in the car are exciting when I know I'm going to a fun park, like Waggers Field in Lodi.

Q: Do you have a guilty pleasure?

A: Bouncing and eating dandelions in the

long grass and stuffing my nose into a tennis shoe as I drift off for a nap.

Q: Are you ever a naughty pup?

A: First and foremost, my mom is into positive reinforcement, so if there's something in my mouth, I hear "that's not yours" and I open and drop and she tells me to go to my toy box and get something else. I did destroy a Kleenex box once, though.

Q: What's your canine obsession?

A: SOCKS, SOCKS, SOCKS! I will help you take them off, I will sneak into the laundry, I will hide them. They smell sooo good, yum yum.

Q: What's your favorite treat?

A: Banana snacks stuffed into my snackie wheel. A tail thumper for sure!

Q: Where do you go for pampering?

A: Sycamore Lane Kennels Grooming spa. I get the Teddy bear cut. I have thick, curly poodle fur from my father's side and the girls just gush over my red coloring and cuteness (it's the nose). It's such a special

place to stand tall on the pedestal indulging in compliments.

Q: What else should we know about you?

A: I have a very important job. I have my own special boy. I am very calm and understanding with him and I gently lick his hand or nudge him to show my love and respect. I would also like to thank my agent for sniffing out this opportunity. While I remain an attention hound, I do love to spread lighthearted joy, love and unequivocal positive energy to everyone, especially my boy, who laughs when I tilt my head.

Q: Where were you born?

A: The magic began in McArthur, California, at a family home called California Golden Love. Golden retrievers and goldendoodles are lovingly raised and some are placed as service dogs, companions or just the best pet ever.

Q: Who are your human parents?

A: Steve and Doreen Bestolarides ♦



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MASQUERADE BALL

Lambda Theta Phi held their inaugural Masquerade Ball on March 18 at the American Legion Hall in Lodi. It was a beautiful event with guests dressed in elegant attire; a delicious dinner was followed by dancing throughout the night! ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN





NATIONAL HONORS!

ALIYA FREEMAN RECEIVES THE GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD

BY HERLIFE STAFF | PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALIYA FREEMAN

A Stockton school is the recipient of creativity and dedication because of Girl Scout Aliya Freeman. A junior at Lodi High School, Aliya recently received the Girl Scout Gold Award. This is the highest achievement that can be earned by eligible high school students through Girl Scouts of the USA National. This prestigious award requires a Girl Scout to discover an issue in her community that she is passionate about, connect with the community to develop a plan for a sustainable solution that addresses the root cause of the problem, build a team to take action and work together to implement her project. While the minimum requirement for this project is 80 hours, Aliya worked on her project for two years.

Aliya started seeking out schools where she could implement her plan. Westwood Elementary School in Stockton had one small play structure and a few hopscotch on their playground. Aliya started brainstorming creative and possible solutions. From the beginning, she envisioned a simple sensory walk, and the ideas kept coming and the project quickly grew.

She partnered with CalFresh to help promote movement, socialization and healthy eating. Along with her team, Aliya created a bright and vibrant playground that elementary students could enjoy for many years. Along with the financial support from CalFresh, Aliya used a portion of her cookie sales profits to help fund this project. Now the students play hopscotch and foursquare in brightly painted boxes, along with a creative racetrack, all because of Aliya's vision to create a place for children to thrive.

This project came to fruition due to the many skills Aliya learned during her time with Girl Scouts. She honed skills to become a leader in her community. These skills include goal setting, money management, people skills, decision-making and business ethics. "It just goes to show that if you are persistent and do your best, you can do great things," stated Aliya. Now celebrating the accomplishment of serving the community, Aliya plans to continue helping others in creative ways. ♦



STOPS WITH MOM IN

Downtown Lodi



Are you looking for a fun and unique way to spend time as a family? Whether you plan this for Mother's Day on May 14 or find another day to get in a little extra time with Mom and the family, we have some fun things to do in Downtown Lodi! In addition to sweet little boutiques and local restaurants that are all fun to experience, we found some stops along the way to explore via rental bikes from Lodi Cyclery! You can take these little bike trips one at a time or pack them all into one day!

1. COFFEE AND A BIKE FROM LODI CYCLERY

Step into Lodi Cyclery's cool new shop and find the perfect rental bikes to cruise around downtown Lodi! Before you take off on your whirlwind cycling excursion, be sure to get energized with a nice coffee drink (maybe a go-cup) from Trail Coffee. They are now located inside Lodi Cyclery; how convenient is that? I hope they have cup holders on the handlebars!

2. WOW MUSEUM

Head north on Sacramento Street. With endless interactive science experiments and thought-provoking activities, the WOW Museum is a great first stop! The Trail Coffee has kicked in so you're alert and the bicycle ride has your heart pumping and energized! Jump back on your bike and check the list for your next stop at....

3. THE MUD MILL

Doing artwork is proven to create relaxation and the Mud Mill will help you do just that! After your trip around town, this is a perfect stop. With ceramic themes available for everyone, the Mud Mill is a great place to get creative, enjoy time talking and relaxing a bit before you head out to jump on your rental bike, start pedaling and get ready for more fun activities.

4. GINGER BUGS

Before you turn in your rental bike to Lodi Cyclery, pedal over to Ginger Bugs for some extra-special fun. The kiddos can burn any extra energy by showing off their moves and jumping skills while the folks get to sit back and relax a bit. If everyone is totally pooped out, you can simply walk your bikes across the street and return them to Lodi Cyclery.

Whoa! What a day! ♦

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GET OUT AND ENJOY COMMUNITY EVENTS

Join us for Festa Italiana On June 11th
at the Lodi Grape Festival Grounds.

MAY 5

Feast at the Fox

Bob Hope Theater, Downtown Stockton

Info: visitstockton.com

MAY 5

Modesto Go Red for Women Luncheon

Modesto Doubletree Grand Ballroom

Info: ahastockton.ejoinme.org

MAY 6

Pixie Woods Opening Day & 69th Birthday Celebration

Info: stocktonca.gov/recreation

MAY 6

Kentucky Derby West

Sargent Equestrian Center

Info: hospicesj.org

MAY 7

Lodi Street Fair

Downtown Lodi

Info: lodichamber.com

MAY 7

Cinco de Mayo Celebration

Weber Point

Info: visitstockton.org

MAY 11

Cool Cats and Barking Dogs

Villa Angelica

Benefiting the Animal Protection League

Info: sanjoaquinconf.org

MAY 11 - AUGUST 31

Lodi's Farmer's Market

Every Thursday throughout the summer

Downtown Lodi

Info: lodichamber.com

MAY 19 - MAY 21

Stockton Flavor Fest

Weber Point

Info: stocktonflavorfest.com &

visitstockton.org

MAY 19 - MAY 21

Golden State Pinball Festival

Lodi Grape Festival Grounds

Info: goldenstatepinball.org

MAY 19 & MAY 20

Lodi Row X Row

Lake Lodi

Info: info@lodiwine.com

MAY 20

Mud on the Farm Race

Dell'Osso Family Farm

Info: raceentry.com

MAY 20

Linden-Peters Cherry Festival

Downtown Linden

Info: lindenchamber.net

MAY 20 & 21

Oakdale Chocolate Festival

Downtown Oakdale

Info: oakdalechamber.com

MAY 24

Music in the Park

Hutchins Street Square

Info: (209) 333-6782

MAY 24

2nd Annual Trivia Bee

Friends of the Lodi Public Library

Lodi Public Library

Info: friendsoflodi@gmail.com

MAY 26 - MAY 28

70th Golden State Round Up Square Dance Festival

Lodi Grape Festival Fairgrounds. 2:00 - 6:00pm

Info: ncsad.com

MAY 27 - 28

BBQ and Brew Festival

Weber Point

Info: eventbrite.com



May 19-21, 2023
Lodi Grape Festival Grounds
 Visit www.GoldenStatePinball.org for all the details!

The fun never stops at the Golden State Pinball Festival with events planned all weekend to occupy your time between games while resting your flippin' fingers. With either a day pass or weekend pass, you will have access to 100's of pinball machines set to free play

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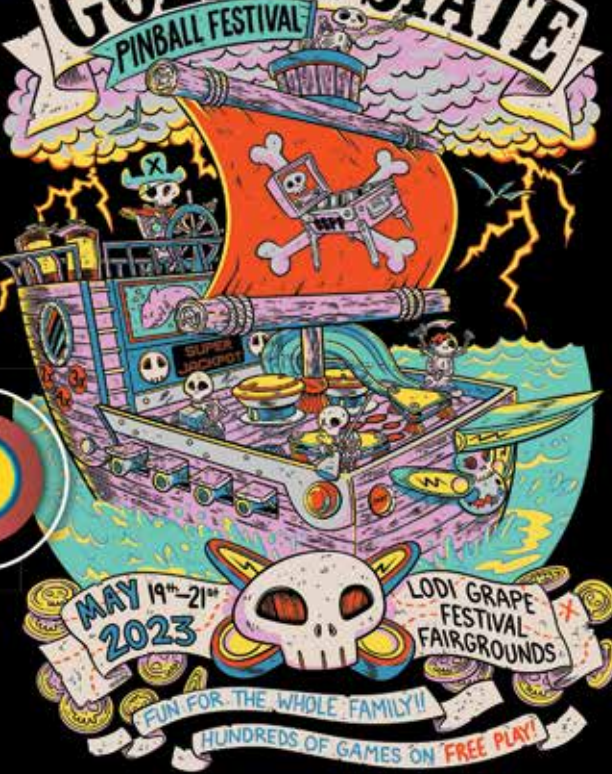
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Music in the vineyard





**SUMMER
 FEST | #38**



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lmhfoundation.org/events

THANK YOU



Thank You, Stockton Kings Community

We are truly appreciative of our loyal fans for their support as the team saw success this season on and off the court.

Led by Stockton Kings Head Coach and Sacramento Kings Legend Bobby Jackson, the team finished the regular season 25-7, marking the best record in the NBA G League and clinching the No. 1 overall seed. This was the franchise's second playoff appearance in Stockton history (2018-19) and its sixth playoff berth in franchise history.

Off the court, the team connected with over 2,500 local elementary students through our award-winning Fit Kids program, in partnership with Kaiser Permanente, to promote the importance of health, wellness and education.

In addition, the Stockton Kings relaunched the 209 Locker, focusing on support of economically challenged students, 209 Pantry providing non-perishable goods to underserved neighborhoods, and our Season of Doing Good focused on giving back during the holiday season.

We look forward to building more memories for the 209 and surrounding region in the 2023-24 season!

Stockton Kings | 888-KNGS-209 | 248 W Fremont St, Stockton, CA 95203

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