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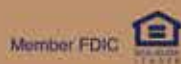
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INSPIRATIONS

Harney Lane Vineyards: A Little Piece of Heaven

"Work at everything you do with all your heart." Colossians 3:23. It's the core belief of the Harney Lane Vineyards family, six generations strong, three of which are actively working the land, making wine and welcoming guests. They're also rooted in sustainability, with 120 acres Certified Green under the Lodi Rules sustainable viticulture program.



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It's finally here! The greatest gift of living in the Central Valley of California. On my drive to and from work, I have the pleasure of watching the seasonal changes in our orchards, vineyards and fields. From the grapevines being pruned in winter to cherry orchards creating gorgeous blooms in spring and strawberry stands on every corner, there are few things that bring me greater joy than picking up fresh fruits and vegetables! I will admit, I can get a little carried away with my purchases, but who can really resist those bright, juicy, red strawberries and all the varieties of perfect cherries we grow right here in our region!

This issue of *HERLIFE* Magazine, focused on agriculture, is very special to me. Our cover ladies are long-time family friends that we met when Kirsten was in the youth group at our church. The time we have spent with them has been truly special and has led to many great memories. The Lerner family has been so gracious to the community through their constant support of youth programs and cancer awareness; they have a genuine joy for life. After we got to know them, we quickly joined the wine club at Harney Lane Winery. I am a bit obsessed with their albariño. If you have not tried it, do yourself

a favor and grab a bottle. Delicious! On weekends, we like to pair it with our favorite cheeses while we watch a movie! You won't regret taking a trip out to the winery; get to know their friendly team and enjoy a little wine tasting in the outdoor seating areas under the beautiful trees.

Do you love fresh flowers? Last fall, I was approached by two Tokay High School students who are members of the school's FFA program. They asked if I would be interested in a project in which they deliver a new bouquet of flowers each month! Every four weeks, a new arrangement is waiting for me on my doorstep! These students work so hard putting beautiful fresh flowers together with some extra special touches, such as the October bouquet in which they turned white mums into spiders. It was so cute and relevant for Halloween.

This issue is full of many women doing amazing things in agriculture! Please take some time to read through each of the articles and enjoy what these ladies are doing for our community. We have some pretty amazing people around us, and it is an honor to share their efforts with you! And, speaking of sharing, after you read this issue of *HERLIFE*, please pass it along and share with a friend.

Enjoy every moment,



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PUBLISHERS AND EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Carrie Sass
carrie@herlifemagazine.com

Anna Sass
anna@herlifemagazine.com

EDITOR
Marilyn Isaminger

ART DIRECTOR
Elana Bell

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Casey Olson

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES
Carrie Sass
carrie@herlifemagazine.com

Anna Sass
anna@herlifemagazine.com

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Patty Cook, Hope E. Ferguson, Jo Ann Kirby, Mary Raffetto,
Zoe Flores Riggio, Chris Woodyard

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Hayre Photography, Ann Ishii Photography, Jo Ann Kirby,
Kelly Mantel, Helen Ripken, Tim Ulmer

CONTACT HERLIFE[®] MAGAZINE

628 Lincoln Center
Stockton, CA 95207
209-475-8896

SUBSCRIPTIONS

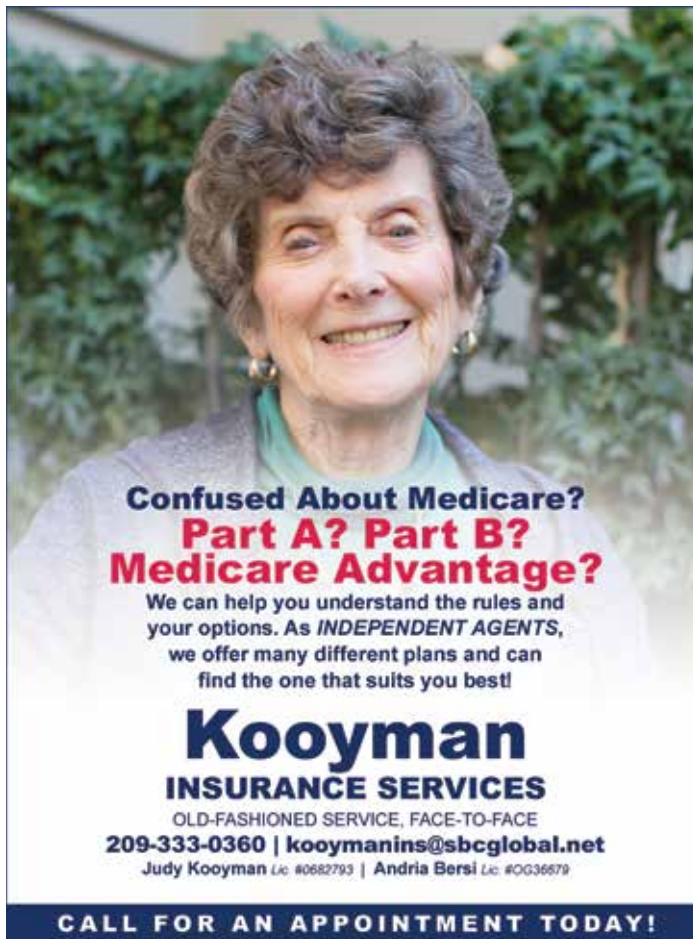
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CVINFO@HERLIFEMAGAZINE.COM

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HARNEY LANE VINEYARDS

A LITTLE PIECE OF

Heaven

BY MARY RAFFETTO
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANN ISHII
PHOTOGRAPHY

“There is a sign hanging in our workspace,” shared Kirsten Lerner, a sixth-generation member of the Harney Lane Vineyards family, “that reads ‘Positively influence the lives of all we interact with!’”



“We attract a lot of really nice people and I just love our loyal customers and club members whom I have gotten to know. We want people to have a great experience here with us, with each other, and with our wines. It’s such a serene place to be and visitors really enjoy that aspect when they are here.”

– Jorja

Photo by Kelly Mantel

The sign has been there for as long as she can remember, from her days washing glasses at age 13 to her current position as head of the Harney Lane Vineyards Wine Club. “It speaks to the heart of what we do and why we do it, our vision, our values, and it applies to the land too,” Kirsten explained. “Leaving the land better than we found it is an important goal to all of us and a driving force behind our sustainable farming practices.”

THE LEGACY

When Fred Schnaidt bought the land in 1900, it was with the intention of farming and building a legacy for future generations of his family and community. From farming produce and vineyards to planting the awesome mass of shady Deodar cedars that preside majestically over the main garden at Harney Lane, Fred and his son, Henry, quite literally sowed the seeds for the future. Today the Harney Lane Vineyards Grace and Grit® brand pays homage to the six generations, underscoring their values, history and hard work that continue to this day.

Henry’s grandson, George Mettler, spent his life faithfully carrying on the stewardship of what his father and grandfather began. When George was just a teen his father passed away; he was raised by his mother and learned farming from his grandfather, Henry Schnaidt. In 1964, at 21, George married his wife, Kathy

Mettler, who was 19. Just 18 months after they married, however, George’s grandfather Henry died too, leaving George in charge of the farm and with the responsibility of supporting his wife, mother and grandmother.

KATHY METTLER

Kathy, now 80 and the matriarch of the family, recalled those early days. “I was very naive at 19. I went from being a city girl to a country girl overnight when we moved in here to join my mother-in-law and George’s grandmother.” She added with a laugh, “My husband had it made though, with all three of us waiting on him, and his mother making cookies for him every day, and that sort of thing.”

Kathy continued humorously, “I was ‘promoted,’ if you could call it that, from housewife to driving tractors, and that included pulling outhouses.” The website blog that Jorja Lerner wrote about her mom in October recounts some of this information. “My mom always said she was just a farmer’s wife and a mom but she was really the partner in the business for years and that meant that you did whatever needed to be done, even moving equipment or Porta Potties.”

Indeed, over the next 58 years Kathy performed nearly every kind of work needed to keep the farm running. “Back then my

husband and I really struggled for a lot of years, so to see what Harney Lane has become makes me very happy,” she said. “I love working with the kids.” By kids, she means her daughter, Jorja Lerner, and Jorja’s husband, Kyle Lerner, as well as the couple’s daughter, Kirsten, 25, and son, Ian, 23. In fact, it was Jorja and Kyle who, in 2006, developed the winery and tasting room for which the ranch has become so well-known and respected. Jorja is quick to note, however, that it’s been a team effort to get the farm, wine production and tasting room to this point.

Jorja, who is co-proprietor with her husband, Kyle, and her mother, Kathy Mettler, says that when they were presented with a number of branding options, Grace and Grit was the unanimous choice of everyone on the team. “It represented our history, the fact that we are 100 percent estate grown and produced and keeps us connected in every way to the product and the values we represent.”

Kathy recalled, “When Kyle came on board, my husband, George, was dealing with cancer so Kyle helped out a lot. He expanded the farming end of the business, doing jobs for other farmers in the area. He was very open to innovation and had a lot of skills, which George really appreciated. Our only child was Jorja, who was a physical therapist, and here we had this entire ranch and we just didn’t know how we were going to work things out. But one day Jorja and Kyle presented us with research they had done and their idea of opening a winery and tasting room. It made perfect sense to us and a huge weight was lifted from our shoulders.”

Despite all her years of hard work, Kathy reminisced, “My husband was a happy man with many hobbies, but more than anything he loved working the land and never wanted to neglect what



his grandfather had worked so hard to build.” It’s a sentiment shared by everyone in the family, especially Kyle. Affable but adamant about not losing sight of what has been entrusted to him, Kyle’s mantra is “Not on my watch.” “George talked a lot to Kyle about quality and keeping everything 100 percent estate grown and Kyle took that to heart,” Kathy shared. Kyle and Jorja are deeply committed to their agricultural principles and to keeping every step of the wine making process in house as one of their many quality control assurances.

JORJA AND KYLE LERNER

Jorja and Kyle share a “no shortcuts, no compromises” approach to producing the best wines. The couple believe doing so helps their own success as well as the other wine businesses and growers in the region. “For a long time, Lodi did not get the recognition it deserved and whatever we can do to change that, to promote local wine in general, is good for all of us,” Jorja said. “We want the region as a



“Seeing family relationships evolve, being an adult now and spending time with my parents and grandma make this really special for me. So many people don’t have that luxury. And having an amazing family makes working together easier than it should be.”

– Kirsten



Photo by Kelly Mantel

“Back then my husband and I really struggled for a lot of years, so to see what Harney Lane has become makes me very happy.”

– Kathy

whole to be recognized and successful.”

In fact, it was the overall uncertainty of the wine and farming business she’d seen growing up that made Jorja spend the first 15 years of her career as a physical therapist. But when she and Kyle saw the opportunity to build the business in a more stable way by using part of their vineyards to produce estate grown and produced wines, they knew it was something they wanted to pursue.

“In 2006 we began wine production and opened in 2008,” Jorja recounted. “Initially tastings were held on the weekends in the winery production building while the tasting room was still under construction. The first weekend we were open, we gave out plastic yellow hard hats with Harney Lane stickers on them because we were still under construction. We continued to serve guests in the winery building until the tasting room was completed in late summer 2009.”

The region’s naturally sandy soil, which promotes deep root structure and vine longevity, has always been conducive to growing grapes, especially zinfandel. Although they did not plant the Lizzy James Vineyard themselves but acquired it as a separate parcel of land more recently, that particular vineyard produces one of Harney

Lanes Vineyards’ best-selling wines, Lizzy James, a prize-winning old vine zinfandel. The family also continues to farm other varietals including albariño, petite sirah, tempranillo and chardonnay.

With a sixth sense for managing all the moving parts, Jorja is by all accounts the air traffic controller of the operation. While Kyle oversees the farming and wine making, Jorja handles everything from the financials and human resources to managing the tasting room and shipments to wine club members. “I also love collaborating with the team and watching good ideas lead to more good ideas,” she added. Jorja is thrilled that her daughter, Kirsten, has joined the business as their wine club manager. Her son, Ian, currently works for Amazon but Jorja allows that there is always the possibility he may come on board in the future.

As effective as she is behind the scenes, Jorja is also keenly engaged and connected in person. “We attract a lot of really nice people and I just love our loyal customers and club members whom I have gotten to know. We want people to have a great experience here with us, with each other, and with our wines. It’s such a serene place to be and visitors really enjoy that aspect when they are here. Kyle always says, ‘People need people’ and nothing proved that more than the COVID lockdowns. When we reopened, he added seating around the fire pit and throughout the property where people can relax and connect with one another,” she affirmed.

KIRSTEN LERNER

Kirsten grew up watching her parents work extremely hard and always admired them as a team. Both during and after college she was drawn to acting and human resources, which she points out are people oriented. After a couple of years working in human resources, Kirsten realized there were quite a few similarities between what she was doing and her family business. “I enjoy looking after people in the wine club and ensuring our members get the very best we have to offer. I can say there is a lot of common ground there so it was a natural transition,” she said.

“Seeing family relationships evolve, being an adult now and spending time with my parents and grandma make this really special for me. So many people don’t have that luxury. And having an amazing family makes working together easier than it should be,” Kirsten laughed. “The Grace and Grit rebranding was well timed and it brought a lot of positive energy. I now have a firsthand understanding of the hard work, the grit, of what it takes to do what my parents do as well as all the family members who came before them,” she elaborated.

Perhaps the most frequent comment Kirsten, Jorja, Kathy and staff hears from visitors is how much peace and calm they feel in the garden. Echoing her father’s wisdom, Kirsten said, “Even after the toughest day, people need people and connection, and wine is just the vessel that connects them. They meet, they make friends here, and they keep coming back.”

Nodding in agreement, Kirsten’s grandmother, Kathy, replied, “I remember a gentleman sitting beside the fire pit, and he said to me, ‘Sweetheart, do you realize you have a little piece of heaven here?’ Now, every time I hear someone say that kind of thing I really do stop and think how blessed I am to have so many beautiful memories out here. It’s pretty special.” ♦

9th Annual Inspirational Messages of Peace CELEBRATION OF STUDENT VOICES



WINGS OF PEACE

White butterflies rise with the dawn,
carrying whispers of battles gone.
Shadows kneel, the winds stand still,
light breaks where silence heals.
Peace lingers – not in echoes of war,
but in the wings that soar.

Emiliano Luna-Contreras, 12th Grade
Health Careers Academy, 2025
Stockton, CA, USA



Dearest Readers,

On behalf of the University Park World Peace Rose Garden, we warmly invite you to join us in celebrating our top 14 contest winners from local surrounding schools. Your presence and words of encouragement will amplify the voices of Stockton's youth and embody this year's theme of "Caring."

The caliber of this year's messages of peace are particularly outstanding, reflecting the thoughts, hopes, and talents of our youngest citizens. We hope that you will find ways to uplift and share these messages as they represent the heart of our community.

In Peace,

Kevin & Sandy Huber

April 24, 2025 at 11:30 AM
University Park World Peace Rose Garden
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TAYLOR HOLLOWAY

ADVANCING AGRICULTURE IN CENTRAL VALLEY

BY JO ANN KIRBY

*Pests don't bug Taylor Holloway. She knows just how to deal with them.
Formulating safe, effective and sustainable pest management plans is her job.*

Growing up on a 40-acre cherry orchard on the outskirts of Lodi where her parents raised three sons and two daughters, Taylor always loved the outdoors and knew a 9-to-5 desk job was not in her destiny. After graduating from Saint Mary's High School, she earned a degree in plant science from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and interned as a field checker for Helena Chemical. After passing the state of California's Pest Control Adviser exam, she was ready to launch her career.

PESTS AND NUTRIENTS

Today, Taylor is a pest control adviser and certified crop adviser for Helena Agri-Enterprises and spends her workdays outdoors. That dual certification means she also has a wealth of knowledge in crop, soil, water and nutrient management. "My days are spent out in the fields, carefully scouting for pests and diseases that could threaten the crops," she said. "I send out my written recommendations to farmers based on my findings. From there, the grower and I usually orchestrate a game plan together on when to spray and fertilize their fields in order to protect and optimize their yields."

Her job is vital in California's global economy, where the agriculture industry is the largest in the nation. According to the San Joaquin County Farm Bureau, the Golden State produces more than 400 different agricultural commodities and supplies a whopping 45 percent of the nation's fruits, vegetables and nuts. And our local growers play a huge role. According to Karen Ross, secretary

of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, San Joaquin County produces over \$3 billion in agriculture annually. The number soars to over \$4 billion when agriculture-adjacent industries are factored into the equation, according to the 2023 San Joaquin County Farm Crop Report.

Looking for smart solutions that result in bumper crops is incredibly rewarding to Taylor. She finds that witnessing the journey from seedlings to the grocery is even more meaningful knowing that she has an important role in the process. As a pest control adviser, not only does she help to ensure a plentiful, high-quality crop at harvest time, but she has to continually keep abreast of the latest pest management tools and techniques as they are developed.

ROOM FOR GROWTH

Taylor is thriving in a male-dominated industry and truly loves her career. It's a job that many young women might not even know existed. In fact, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in a report published in January 2024, women make up only 5.1 percent of employees in the entire pest management field. The California Association of Pest Control Advisers, in a 2020 survey, found that women hold 12 percent of PCA positions among its membership. It's an occupation that has room for women, as the labor board projects job growth in the industry.

Taylor's interest in the field was sparked by a well-known local grower. "During high school, my good friend's fa-

ther, Eddie Zuckerman, introduced me to the idea. The thought stuck with me, so I tailored my first college internships to gain hands-on experience," she said.

Garrett Mussi, a third-generation farmer, took a chance on the young woman and helped her land an internship with her current boss. "That opportunity opened the door to a career I truly love," she said.

CREATING REPRESENTATION

Having a sharp wit has helped her navigate the challenges of working in a male-dominated field, where she has earned the respect and trust of her colleagues and clients by proving her credibility. "In agriculture, experience and knowledge speak volumes," she said, adding that sometimes she's had to work twice as hard to establish herself. "Early on, I encountered skepticism, but I quickly learned that confidence, expertise and a strong work ethic can break down barriers."

Taylor's a working mom; she and her husband have an adorable son who turns one this month. She has a passion for horseback riding, something she's enjoyed since high school. She also enjoys hunting. And she even has her own garden, where her ag knowledge comes in handy along with a green thumb.

Taylor wants young women to know that seeing themselves as different in the ag world only creates self-imposed obstacles. "Never undervalue the importance of hard work and determination," she asserted. "It speaks for itself." ♦



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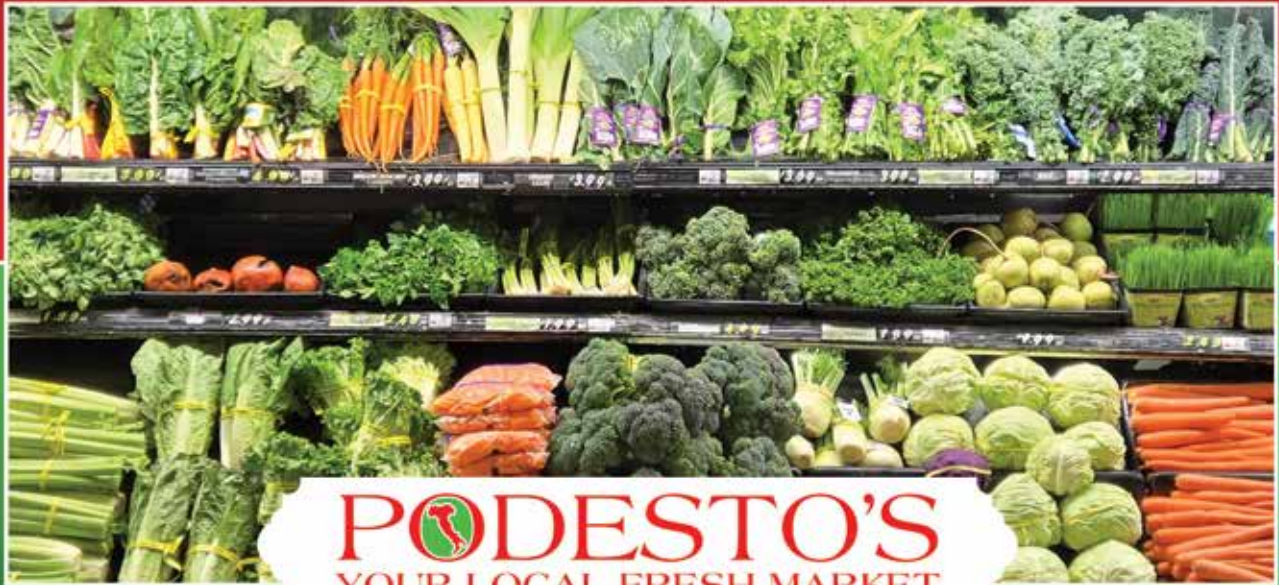
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KATIE PATTERSON

A PARTNER IN THE FUTURE OF SJC ENERGY

BY MARY RAFFETTO

Water is life, especially in agriculturally rich regions like San Joaquin County. Helping to supply growers and residents with the water they need, Katie Patterson has worked with the South San Joaquin Irrigation District since November 2021 in a dual role as their public and government relations manager, sharing information with the public and managing community outreach while also managing special projects and legislative state engagement.



"Many people are surprised to learn that our system is 115 years old," Katie said. "It was built with the technology of the day using mules and shovels, and it remains a highly effective, gravity-fed system from Goodwin Dam, east of Knights Ferry all the way across our district to its western boundary of Airport Road in Manteca. Today, we have a 30-year capital program that includes rehabilitating pipelining across the district and will result in significant savings and will extend the longevity of our system for our customers." This ongoing progress is only part of the good news for residents and businesses in the area.

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Katie observed that with regard to both water and energy, there's a lot to look forward to. "At SSJID, we have several great projects in the works. On the water side, we are working to fortify our head-works of our irrigation system from growing risks of rock failure in the Stanislaus River Canyon. Our project will create a safer, new point of diversion that is protected, and will bypass our existing canal with a new two-mile tunnel to ensure drinking water for 215,000 south San Joaquin County residents; irrigation customers for South San Joaquin Irrigation District and Oakdale Irrigation District are protected for the continued production of food and fiber," she said.

She also reported, "On the energy side, we are committed to becoming a public retail electric utility, to replacing PG&E, and we are committed to 15 percent savings for customers in our district, in and around Ripon, Escalon and Manteca. This project would bring immense savings to the local families and businesses with safe, reliable and affordable power. In 2016, estimates indicate the region would save \$15.5 million annually with our project.

"We are a partner with Oakdale Irrigation District in the Tri-Dam Project that generates 125 megawatts through three dams, Donnels, Beardsley and Tulloch, which were built in the 1950s and support our districts through the sales of clean carbon-free power," she added.

RATE RELIEF

That's not to say there are no challenges. "While our retail electric project is exciting, it has been 20 years in the making, with more process still ahead. We are currently awaiting our eminent domain, or right to take, and valuation trials, in addition to having a Section 851 review under the California Public Utilities Commission. Every day we are delayed, our community fails to see rate relief. So, we are motivat-

ed to get results that will make a difference for our community," she elaborated. Other threats are simpler, Katie said. "Ongoing droughts would lead to constrained resources for our customers. Thankfully, our district has excellent pre-1914 water rights that help us to smooth out drought impacts if and when they occur."

Katie graduated from California State University, Fresno, with a bachelor of science degree in agricultural business. Her range of career experience includes a number of highlights, notably her role as program director for the San Joaquin County Farm Bureau, serving as deputy county administrator for San Joaquin County, and working as the California State policy manager for the American Farmland Trust before taking on her current position with SSJID. Katie is also a Farm Bureau Leadership Program graduate, a volunteer with CA Farmland Trust and a volunteer with Second Harvest of the Greater Valley Board of Directors, where she serves as secretary.

BACKGROUND IN AG

Outside of her professional life, Katie's relationship with agriculture extends in some fun and unique ways. "My family grows Atlantic Giant pumpkins as a hobby and we take them to compete at the Elk Grove Pumpkin Festival in October. Last year, our pumpkin was 1,534 lbs., taking fourth place." Growing up, Katie raised a registered flock of Suffolk sheep. "I learned so many great values and hard work from that part of my life, from moving irrigation pipes to stacking hay, to staying up late in the barn for lambing season. In 2000, I won Grand Champion market lamb at the Sacramento County Fair," she recalled.

Katie's husband is a teacher. He has taught welding and fabrication as an FFA instructor and now teaches welding at Modesto

Junior College. Her daughter McKinley, 11, has started to take an interest in riding horses, and her son Jack, 8, enjoys rock climbing and growing jalapenos in the garden. Even with her busy schedule, Katie loves cooking and baking from scratch and has taken on the process of making jam when local fruits are at their peak. "Our valley provides so much bounty that we have to catch that lightning in a jar. I didn't grow up knowing how to do this, so I have had to be brave enough to try new things," she shared.

Katie is thankful for the guidance she received over the years from role models and people committed to making a difference in her life. "My path was made possible by several mentors who have taken an interest in me, both women and men. I am eternally grateful for their showing me the possibilities that exist, and to be entrusted to support and represent my agricultural communities," she shared. ♦



CELEBRATION IN THE COUNTRY

Hats off to the San Joaquin California Women for Agriculture, who held their 28th annual Celebration in the Country at the Roberts-Union Farm Center in Stockton. While enjoying the beautifully decorated tablescapes, those who attended dined on a delicious lunch from Blodgett Catering. Each table had a unique theme that was displayed from the table settings to the centerpieces. The San Joaquin chapter also hosts monthly potlucks. More information on membership can be found at sanjoaquinwca.com. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM ULMER





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GREENLEAF FRUIT RANCH

BY JO ANN KIRBY | PHOTOS BY JO ANN KIRBY
AND GREENLEAF FRUIT RANCH

Greenleaf Fruit Ranch beckons visitors who have a hankering for ripe, juicy fruit with a colorful sign and a neon cherry leaf light.

The red wood fruit stand hasn't yet opened for the season; that won't be until the cherries decide they are ripe, perhaps on Mother's Day. However, Lori Podesta is eager to show a visitor how a single vintage conveyor belt helps her and her crew sort fresh varieties into wooden baskets to sell. Greenleaf grows six types of cherries on its 100 acres of cherry trees; varieties include Bing, Brooke, Coral Champagne and Rainier. And don't forget the walnut trees, with their nuts harvested each fall.

WALNUT FOUNDATION

"We try to do everything the old-fashioned way," Lori said as she explained how cherries are divided by color and packed into cute little baskets. "I made it my mission that if you buy a basket of cherries from us, you'll be able to eat every last one of those

cherries and want more.”

Greenleaf Fruit Ranch is located east of Linden, California, on Highway 26. Lori’s aunt had originally operated a fruit stand in the same location in the 1950s and 1960s. After Lori and her husband, Bob, took over the ranch from Lori’s mom, Lori saw an opportunity to go into business. “You wouldn’t believe this, but we were cleaning this out and unpacking. Everything was wrapped in newspapers and there was a 1964 *San Francisco Chronicle* where columnist Herb Caen called The Beatles just a fad,” Bob said. Indeed, the farm stand is full of old treasures.

The couple unpacked everything, set up tables and displays and spruced up the old red fruit stand into a cheery and welcoming place. There is a vintage Pepsi cooler, old wooden cherry boxes that they “just don’t make like that anymore” and a unique feature that you might not see anywhere else. That’s right; inside the fruit stand are two massive walnut tree trunks that are rooted firmly in the ground and shoot up through the roof. The stand was built around the sturdy old trees!

LONGEVITY AND HEART

“After 13 seasons, I’ve built a family of my customers,” Lori said. “You get to know what’s going on in their lives. Who moved, who got a new job, how their dogs are doing, what their kids or grandkids are up to, all kinds of things.”

Lori’s fondest memories are of her mother coming down to the fruit stand daily until she passed away in 2020. She has a video of her mom, her daughter and herself doing a little boogie to music as they sort cherries on the belt.

The fruit stand is staffed by family and friends who are like family. “The first year I was open, my sister helped me. For the next

ten years, a friend that I’ve known since fifth grade was my partner. But mainly it’s become a family affair,” she said. “My daughter, a teacher, and son-in-law help at the stand. He is a policeman by day and a candle and soap maker by night; he supplies us with soaps and candles. My son does all the orchard work, and my daughter-in-law, a teacher also, helps at the fruit stand on her time off.”

Husband Bob is the repairman and their cute little granddaughter, Cora, is a big help and the real boss. “I’ve also recruited a group of women, all special to my life, who rotate in helping me at busy times,” Lori said. “It has become sort of a woman’s club that has helped me make my dream come true.”

THE GOOD STUFF

In the spring, Greenleaf Fruit Ranch sells cherries and, in the fall, walnuts. “We also

carry homemade jams, homemade candles and soaps, Greenleaf trail mix, local honey, persimmons, antiques and collectibles plus any item that falls our way and I feel would be a good addition to our mix,” she said. “We raise 99 percent of what we sell. The rest is locally sourced.”

Last year, they sold apricots that were harvested by a neighbor. In the past, laven-

der bunches, loquats, succulents and lemons were featured. “But of course, people come for the cherries and walnuts, which are the vast majority of our sales,” she said. “Customers definitely have their opinion of what variety of cherries they like.” But if Lori can persuade a customer to taste one they aren’t familiar with, she can usually win them over.

Greenleaf Fruit Ranch is located at 20999 E. Highway 26 in Linden. During cherry season in May, it’s open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. In the fall, walnut season from the end of October through the second week of December, it’s open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. “We get great reviews from our customers. The fact that we have customers who come to us year after year speaks for itself, I think,” Lori concluded. ♦

Visit facebook.com/cherriesandwalnuts/ or email glfruitranch@gmail.com to learn more.

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A PEST-FREE GARDEN

BY HOPE E. FERGUSON

The beginning of spring planting season was disappointing at my house. My tulip bed was almost bare, my early daffodils were missing their blooms and I needed to plant new Oriental and Asiatic lilies to replace those that had barely come up last year. Whether the nearly absent winter or common garden pests, both insect and animal, were to blame was up in the air.

Most gardeners realize that creepy critters can play havoc with their best-laid garden plans. Yet, according to gardener and contributor to the Vegetable Garden blog Greg Holdsworth, there are pesticide-free ways to get rid of insect pests. He writes that there are flowers that have characteristics that naturally deter insects. Decreasing the use of pesticides also draws beneficial insects such as ladybugs and the natural pollinators, the many kinds of bees.

Some of his favorites are the herb borage, which repels certain destructive worms, and chrysanthemums, which can be used to create tea that works as a natural pesticide to repel nematodes and Japanese beetles. Colorful



dahlias also repel nematodes, he said, “making them both beautiful and useful in the vegetable garden.”

Popular for their height and big yellow heads are sunflowers, which both encourage beneficial pollinators and deter aphids. Simple and inexpensive petunias are an overall helper that repels asparagus beetles, leafhoppers, aphids and tomato hornworms.

Certain flowers with a strong fragrance (several sources listed lavender) were noted for keeping pests such as fleas, moths and mosquitos

out of the garden. In the technique of companion planting, gardeners plant both for what they would like to attract and to keep away. Using this method, certain plants are situated in close proximity because

they are mutually beneficial. Borage, a ground cover characterized by small green leaves with star-shaped pink flowers, can be planted at the perimeter of your garden, creating a barrier that wards off cabbage worms and aphids. Marigolds, with their rich orange and gold blooms, are an inexpensive way to deter pests. The scented variety, such as French marigold, drives away whiteflies from tomatoes and protects the garden's soil.

Repelling and controlling the mosquito population is of real concern for those who enjoy gardening and spending time outdoors. The Zika virus may not be in your neighborhood today, but the CDC's predictions are that it will be soon enough. Plants that repel mosquitoes effectively are citronella, lavender, lemon verbena, rosemary, lemon basil, Peruvian basil and lemon-scented geranium. Ageratum, or floss flower, is a low-growing annual with pretty blue, pink or white flowers. It secretes coumarin, which is offensive to mosquitoes and is used as an ingredient in mosquito repellents. Pyrethrum daisy keeps mosquitoes away through compounds known as pyrethrins, which act on the mosquitoes' nervous systems.

As for furry pests such as moles, voles, mice and deer, which are getting more plentiful in populated areas, there are many remedies.

At my house, I never mind the deer eating apples that drop from the trees in September, but you don't want your gardens ruined by them. The Old Farmer's Almanac suggests planting the most delectable flowers, such as tulips, in the center of a flower bed and then surrounding the bed with a flower with a strong scent such as lavender. The almanac also noted that rabbits don't like chrysanthemums, columbines, four o'clocks, foxglove, gladiolas, hollyhocks, impatiens, iris, snapdragons, morning glories, sweet peas and verbena. That's a pretty extensive list of some of the most popular garden flowers. This should spur me to finally plant some lovely gladiolas, one of my favorite flowers.

The almanac notes that deer steer clear of chrysanthemums, columbines, foxglove, iris and lavender as well, but they also don't care for begonias, salvia, Shasta daisies, verbena and zinnias.

Have you ever considered "planting" a rock garden? Although it features a judicious amount of plantings, this can be a way to bring the focus to the artful arrangement of multi-size rocks and stones, which obviously are not a tempting target for pests.

Other gardeners recommended physical barriers such as green coated chicken wire to surround a raised bed, saying it's not as much of an eyesore as it sounds, or cracked eggshells and coffee grounds to deter slugs. One gardener on Houzz recommended using pepper and cinnamon, claiming, "It's been keeping all the critters away. I've got some vegetables growing out back. I hear the deer at night. They have not touched them."

For rabbit control, Better Homes and Gardens recommends some favorites such as veronica, a one- to two-foot flower whose blue, pink and white blooms flower all year, Siberian iris, which blooms later than the more common bearded iris, salvia, daylilies and the luscious peony.

But, Better Homes and Gardens cautions that some of these popular foils do not work all the time. Rabbits, like people, will eat just about anything when they're hungry enough! ♦

SOURCES: *almanac.com, bhg.com, houzz.com, hubpages.com, organicauthority.com and wikipedia.com.*

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DEBBIE COSTA

PROMOTING THE BEEF INDUSTRY

BY CHRIS WOODYARD | COURTESY OF STOCKTONIA

Debbie Costa really is at home on the range—or at least on her family's 60-acre ranch in Lodi, where she lords over scores of Black Angus cows and their calves.

Debbie is the new president of the California CattleWomen, an 1,800-member organization that promotes the beef industry and offers programs, internships and scholarships to encourage young people to consider careers in farming and ranching.

Debbie comes from a long line of cattle ranchers. Her family has been involved in agriculture for five generations. She loves the outdoors and riding horses. To her, there's a certain magic to the cattle business.

"Once a year, we have a bunch of baby calves, and they're playing and jumping around," she said. "I think that's my favorite time

of year."

It's the kind of business where everyone pitches in. At daybreak every morning, she partners with her 90-year-old father, Frank Costa, to feed hungry cows. He drives the tractor, while she unloads bales of hay.

During busy times, she can still reach out for help from her two grown children or sister and brother-in-law. The family's spread includes the main ranch, where she has her home, and several hundred acres nearby.

Like her cattle business, joining California CattleWomen was a family affair for Debbie as well. Both her mother and mother-in-law were members. "It was just sort of a natural thing, I guess," she said.

She has been active in the organization's San Joaquin-Stanislaus unit, one of 31 around the state, since 1992. Over the years, she's

served in a number of roles: committee chair, secretary, treasurer and president of her unit. In 2004, she was CowBelle of the Year. In addition to her work with the San Joaquin County unit, Debbie has long been involved in efforts at the state level, where she also has held a number of posts. As president of the California CattleWomen, she will serve two years.

She gives the group credit for playing an important role in teaching city folks about what goes into producing the meat they put on the dinner table. "People are so removed from agriculture and the land. We help them understand it," she said. "Everybody's working together for a common goal to educate the public."

That education includes school programs where students are introduced to things that could get them interested in ranching, such as branding irons or cow ear tags. Members also offer advice to those new to the cattle business, including information about access to water or dealing with predators. "You get people who want to do it for the first time. You get people who are coming back to it from when they were kids," she said. Or, for that matter, people like herself who grew up around the cattle business.

"There's quite a variety of different stories," Debbie said. ♦

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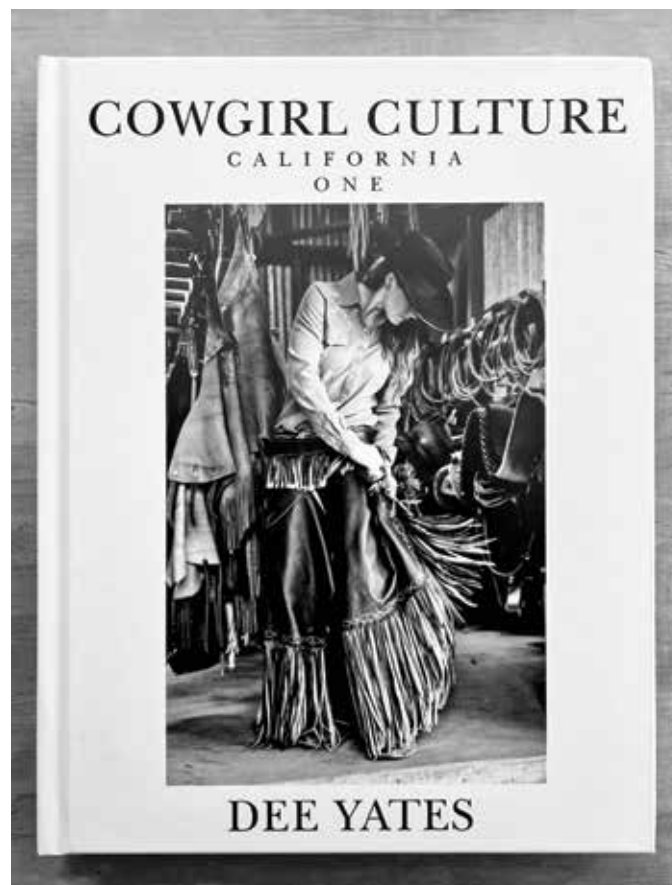
BY JO ANN KIRBY

Dee Yates' new 270-page hardcover coffee table book, Cowgirl Culture: California One, is a gorgeous collection of stunning photographs paired with poetry and inspirational quotes that reflect a celebration of the great American West in California. The author, photographer and publisher is a rodeo mother who honors the culture of cowgirl spirit by saluting its Western style and traditions. Whether it's a sun-weathered elder who reflects grit, wisdom and classic beauty or a youthful dewy-faced young woman looking toward the future, the book showcases cowgirls who span the generations.

Yates, who resides in Valley Springs, carefully curated this collection to showcase what she calls “the style, equipment, horsemanship, horses, traditions and the indispensable role these women have within the families that shaped the West. Each photo and accompanying text highlights the unshakable spirit and connection to the land and the animals they cherish.”

Extraordinary photographs, whether in black and white or vibrant color, make the subjects spring alive as the reader turns each page. The subjects are photographed in a stunning backdrop of Western iconic imagery, whether it's acres of wildflowers, a barn with stalls and saddles or a glistening stream of river rock.

Of course, there couldn't be a cowgirl without a costume that's both functional, authentic and eye-catching. Think fringed chaps, woven ponchos, shirts with mother-of-pearl buttons, leather vests, elaborate belt buckles, embroidered jeans, turquoise and silver jewelry and oh, the hats! Equally captivating are the photos that depict the love and respect between the cowgirl and her trusty steed.



“As you navigate through this book, I hope you find inspiration, joy and a deeper appreciation for the Western heritage and the contemporary journey of the cowgirl. This is more than a collection; it is a tribute to a way of life that continues to inspire and captivate those who are drawn to the beauty of the West,” the author says.

The book is a true passion project that offers a window into a timeless world of strong-spirited women who have embraced the cowgirl culture and turned it into a vibrant community. Dee's book can be purchased at deeyates.com and at Stella Mitchell Boutique, 116 N. School St., in Lodi.

For Dee, this certainly won't be her last book. She's continuing this labor of love with an up-

coming companion piece. She just wrapped up shooting for *Cowgirl Culture Arizona*, slated to be published in winter 2025. And there is even more to come. “I'm also embarking on a very special journey close to my heart, beginning work on *Western Elders*, a series celebrating the incredible trailblazers who shaped our western way of life. These stories will honor the legacy and wisdom of those who came before us, preserving their contributions for generations to come,” Dee said. ♦

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ASK A COOK!

BY PATTY COOK

Home cooks sometimes hit a wall when preparing a meal. Sometimes we just have to hit the sauce. No, not the liquor cabinet; some dishes just cry out for an extra something. We need a secret sauce, if you will—or dressing, or puree, or dip or seasoning.



Why? Because tasty sauces and condiments can elevate an otherwise not-so-special dish to a fancy meal. I think many people resist the idea of prepping sauces because it seems too complicated to whip up a sauce at the last minute. But if you think about it, we are trained to expect these little extras from childhood. Imagine serving a kid French fries without ketchup, chicken tenders without

honey mustard, mashed potatoes without gravy, or broccoli and cauliflower without melted cheese. Desserts are always more special if they involve sauces of chocolate, caramel or berries. In the same way, meals

are enhanced with the addition of sauces, such as béarnaise sauce with steaks, hollandaise sauce with steamed asparagus, and béchamel sauce with pasta, to name a few.

If you're not in the habit of experimenting with these culinary

extras, let's take a quick look at how they can take your meals from everyday to extra-special fare.

There are a few basic French sauces that are worth knowing: Béchamel, velouté and hollandaise. These basic or "mother" sauces form the framework for many different "small" sauces, depending on what is added to them. First we'll look at sauces that involve a roux, which is a mixture of flour and butter, cooked and stirred long enough that the taste of raw flour is gone. How long? That depends on whether you want a white sauce or a brown sauce.

Béchamel is a white sauce used in casseroles, such as moussaka, and pasta dishes, among others. It's basically warm milk mixed into a roux of flour and butter, often flavored with onions and spices such as nutmeg, and simmered until thick and creamy. If you add cheeses, such as Gruyère and parmesan, you've got Mornay sauce, used for vegetable, egg and fish dishes. Or add prepared mustard to create mustard sauce for eggs or chicken. In place of butter, use shrimp or crayfish butter to make Nantua sauce for fish and seafood.

Velouté, the French word for velvet, is similar to Béchamel; it also requires a roux, but substitutes a white stock made of chicken, veal or fish for the milk. Add white wine, hot paprika and onions for a Hungarian sauce over chicken, or tarragon, chives and parsley for an herbed fish sauce.

Hollandaise stands out as it requires clarified butter and egg yolks, with a dash of cayenne pepper. Clarified butter is added to warm egg yolks to emulsify the sauce; the water and milk solids in regular butter can "break" the sauce, making it clump. Add tarragon, shallots and black pepper to make Béarnaise sauce, which is terrific dolloped into little scooped-out tomatoes and served alongside sliced grilled steak.

A more rare sauce with English origins is superb with wild game, ham and goose—Cumberland sauce. It's made from simmered zest of lemon and orange, with red currant jelly, port, dry mustard and ginger added to it. Unlike French sauces, this is meant to be served on the thin side, rather than thickened.

Let's move away from sauces now and look at ways to use pureed vegetables and fruit. Most of us hate the fact that we throw away food every week; we paid for it at the grocery store only to send it to a landfill. The next time you're faced with a few leftover veggies, rather than toss them out, consider blending them to stash in the freezer. Why take the time to do this? The next time you make a soup or a stew, grab some pureed carrots, onions, beans or potatoes and toss them in the soup for extra nutrition, flavor and thickening. If you have an avocado going to waste, puree it with a tablespoon of lemon or lime juice to use later in guacamole or as a sandwich spread. Berries that are going to waste can be pureed, then thawed and mixed with a bit of jelly or jam to top off a serving of fruit or ice cream.

Last but not least, there are countless herbs and spices that enhance vegetables, grilled meats, and dips such as hummus. One example is North African harissa, a blend of chilies, garlic, caraway, coriander, cumin, mint and lemon. Indian garam masala also uses chilies and coriander, adding cumin, cardamom, cloves, nutmeg and cinnamon.

Are you in a culinary rut? If so, pull out your favorite cookbook and look in the index for Sauces. What you learn, or try for the first time, may become a favorite recipe that you use time and again. ♦

SOURCES: culinaryarts.about.com, deliaonline.com and luckypeach.com.

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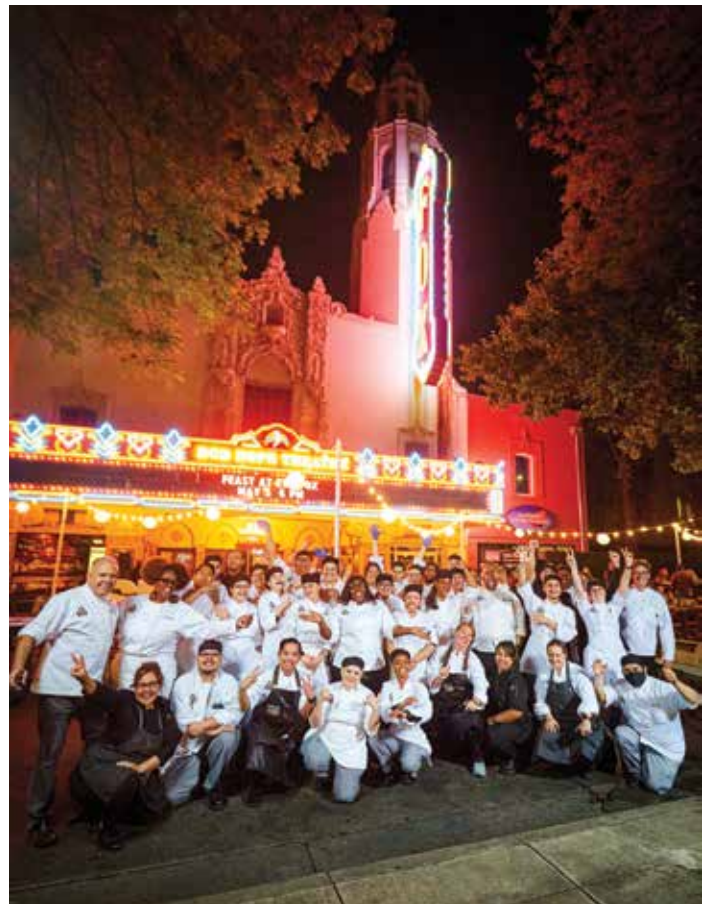
FEAST AT THE FOX

A CELEBRATION OF LOCAL FLAVOR AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION

STORY AND PHOTOS BY VISIT STOCKTON

Stockton's premier farm-to-table dining experience, Feast at the Fox, will return to Main Street on Friday, September 19, 2025, bringing together culinary excellence, local agriculture and community spirit in a truly unforgettable evening. Presented by Visit Stockton in partnership with the city of Stockton, this celebrated event showcases the region's rich agricultural bounty while supporting the next generation of culinary talent.

"This event is a true reflection of Stockton's vibrant food scene and deep agricultural roots," said Robyn Camino, CEO of Visit Stockton. "Feast at the Fox not only offers an incredible dining experience but also brings the community together in a meaningful way, supporting local businesses, celebrating regional flavors and investing in future culinary professionals."



The idea for Feast at the Fox was conceived in 2017 when the City of Stockton reached out to Visit Stockton in search of a way to highlight the strong food- and agriculture-related assets in the region. This focus came directly from the city's newly completed Food and Agriculture Action Plan. Visit Stockton took on the project eagerly and established a partnership with the San Joaquin Delta College Culinary Arts Program and Mark Berkner, their program director. Through this collaboration, Feast at the Fox evolved from an idea to one of the most desirable events in the city.

In May 2018, 150 guests gathered at the Bob Hope (Fox) Theatre for the inaugural event, where a five-course dinner was prepared and served by students from the San Joaquin Delta College Culinary Arts Program. Appetizers, craft beer and wine were served inside the theatre lobby as light music echoed through the downtown venue. Five local chefs, including Richard Hyman and Micah Malcolm, created one course each featuring ingredients sourced from farms in and around Stockton. A course example from that meal included roasted heirloom carrots and Romanesco, asparagus, toasted local walnuts, house-made lemon shallot labneh spiced with za-atar, drizzled with olive oil and micro-beet greens. "Stockton is a culturally diverse city, stocked full of flavors from across the globe and filled with talented chefs creating delicious menus," said Robyn Camino in 2018, who was the marketing director and Feast at the Fox event manager at the time.

Over the years, Feast at the Fox has evolved but the goal remains the same: showcasing local agricultural assets while benefiting future chefs and restaurant owners. Each year, Feast at the Fox has proudly donated proceeds to the San Joaquin Delta College Culinary Arts Program and more recently has also contributed to the Child Abuse Prevention Council in appreciation for their volunteer support.

In 2024, the event was moved from May to September to take advantage of a new harvest season with a variety of different flavors. The seating capacity also expanded to accommodate the continuing overwhelming interest in the event. A new partnership with The Kitchen at StoneBrier and Chef Shane Tracewell brought about the opportunity for a local restaurant to take the lead in curating a



four-course dinner menu. Genova Bakery also joined by baking a delicious variety of breads for the event. A favorite course of many in attendance was the red-wine-braised short rib with fingerling potatoes, green beans, braising jus and crispy carrots. "Not only do we get to create an incredible meal with locally sourced ingredients, but we also get to work alongside and mentor the talented students from Delta College," Chef Tracewell said. "Their passion and dedication to the craft make this event even more special."

Feast at the Fox is a unique night of fun dining on the street next to friends and neighbors under the amazingly colorful lights of the Bob Hope (Fox) Theatre. "Evolving with every passing year, Feast at the Fox leaves its attendees in awe with new ways to curate the experience and invigorate progress through donated proceeds to Stockton's next generation of highly talented minds."

Feast at the Fox is more than just a dinner, it's a community-driven event that thrives with the support of sponsors and donors. Businesses and individuals looking to align with this prestigious event have multiple sponsorship opportunities available, each offering different promotional benefits and a chance to be part of Stockton's thriving food and hospitality culture. "This event is a perfect opportunity for local businesses to connect with the community in a meaningful way," said Robyn. "Sponsors not only gain visibility but also contribute to a cause that nurtures our local food industry and future chefs."

Tickets for Feast at the Fox include a reserved seat at the elegantly set communal



tables, a commemorative wine glass and tote bag, live entertainment, delectable appetizers and an expertly crafted four-course meal. Guests will also have the chance to participate in the silent auction, featuring exclusive experiences and specialty items.

There is limited seating and overwhelming demands, so don't miss your chance to be part of this extraordinary evening celebrating Stockton's agricultural and culinary excellence. ♦

For more information, visit FeastAtTheFox.com. For sponsorship opportunities, contact Diana Nuño at diana@visitstockton.org or 209-851-3096.

SOUPER SUPPER

Art Expressions of San Joaquin's Souper Supper was held February 21 at the Hilton Hotel in Stockton, where the ladles of celebrity chefs including Andrew San, Misaki Sushi & Bar; Rich Ibarra, KCRA Channel 3; Phonxay Keokham, San Joaquin County treasurer; and others filled ceramic bowls for diners. The bowls were works of art made by 23C Ceramics Studio, Delta College, Tara Heinzen, Kathy White and Julianne Pin. Paula Sheil emceed the event, which included entertainment, dessert, a live auction and raffle. Art Expressions promotes local artists and provides a rich and diverse cultural experience for the local community. Check out the organization at artexpressions.org ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN





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Growing Students, Growing Business

BY HERLIFE STAFF

As a senior in high school, Anabel Quintana is already an experienced florist with her own business. She's been able to launch her career thanks to a combination of creativity, business savvy and the education she's received for the past three years.

"From this class, I have started my own floral business called AQ Florall. I offer floral services for events and individuals and market my business on social media," Anabel said. She's so invested in her fledgling floral career that she is a state finalist for CA FFA Ag Sales Proficiency and has earned her state FFA degree for her work. She is also considered something of an expert among her peers as she serves as a member of the Tokay FFA Floral Judging Team and recently won 1st High Team at the Gridley Field Day.

The floral design students at Tokay High School aren't just learning how to arrange beautiful blooms; they are running a business. Their clients include the high school, of course, but they've also had orders for all of life's major events, whether for a baptism, prom, wedding or funeral. Their work is proudly displayed on their Instagram page @tokayfloral.

Becky Freeman is the instructor for Tokay's FFA Floral program, which has been operating since 2011. "We have three courses in the floral design pathway," she said. "We offer a monthly subscription service."



We also offer wedding and large event services as well as small occasions. We also do most of the floral needs for the school such as prom, graduation and sports senior nights.” Becky teaches students all about the floral industry, how to care for and handle flowers, the principles and history of floral design as well as the business aspects of operating a florist shop.

Anabel produces lovely arrangements and bouquets. “Some of them are very challenging and others are simple,” she said. “I specialize in rose bouquets.” The budding florist does all the purchasing for her business through wholesalers and online vendors. What was once a hobby has become an investment in her future. Now that she has the education and the experience, she plans to continue to grow her business. “I truly enjoy working my business and making people happy with flowers,” she said. Her work can be found on Instagram @aqflorall.

But first, Anabel plans to further her education after high school graduation. She will attend California State University at Chico, where she plans to major in ag business and plant and social science. ♦



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THE LOCKEFORD GRANGE

Family Focused, Youth Based

BY ZOE FLORES RIGGIO | PHOTOS COURTESY OF SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Since 1935, the Lockeford Grange has been a vital part of Lockeford, California, serving as a local chapter of the National Grange, a community service organization dedicated to supporting agriculture and rural life. Over the decades, it has become a trusted gathering place, bringing neighbors of all ages together through fundraisers, shared meals, youth program activities and other events that foster connection and strengthen the rural community.

In its early days, the Lockeford Grange met in rented spaces before establishing the Lockeford Grange Hall at 19727 Cotton Street in Lockeford. By 1937, it had already become a popular gathering place. Events such as public card parties, plays and discussions on agriculture and homemaking brought people together. The Kitchen Orchestra Band provided entertainment at its annual booster nights and whist parties. In addition to planning the many card parties and making homemade ravioli for dinners, the Home Economics Club arranged educational programming, such as lectures on first aid.

With time, the Grange quickly established itself as a leader in local initiatives. For instance, in 1950, the Lockeford Grange





Hall hosted blood donation drives for the San Joaquin Mobile Blood Unit. The Grange also prioritized giving back, hosting events such as a polio benefit show in 1951. It also raised funds for equipment like a projector for its youth group, which contributed to local organizations with activities such as creating scrapbooks for a Stockton children's home.

In the 2000s, the Lockeford Grange continued its efforts by seeking out new mem-

bers. Membership drives in 2002 emphasized the importance of neighborly connections, with funds supporting programs such as STARS, the Lockeford School's computer program, and the Mokelumne Fire Department. By 2011, the Grange faced the challenge of maintaining its historic 75-year-old hall. A spaghetti dinner fundraiser rallied the community, raising substantial funds with the help of over 100 attendees and do-

nations from groups like the Lockeford-Clements Lions Club. Most recently, the Grange hosted a holiday boutique and decorated a Christmas tree for the San Joaquin County Historical Museum.

The Lockeford Grange thrives as an active force of community engagement, with its youth program leading the way. Dedicated to shaping the next generation of leaders, the program provides invaluable real-world opportunities for young participants. In 2024 alone, the youth program achieved remarkable milestones, including hosting a competitive speech contest, earning awards at the California State Grange Youth Fair, and even showcasing their involvement on Kat Country radio. Through these activities, the youth not only demonstrated their skills but also highlighted the enduring impact of the Lockeford Grange on the next generation. For nearly a century, the Lockeford Grange has been dedicated to community service, guiding younger members and preserving agricultural traditions. Today, the Grange continues its mission to empower individuals and offer valuable support. ♦

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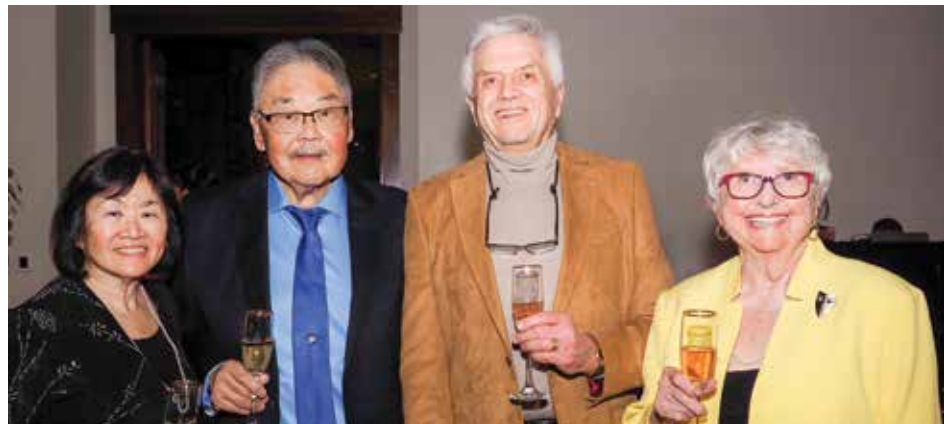
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DANCING STARS!

It was a howling good time at the second annual Dancing for the Dogs & Cats. Local stars paired up with professional dancers from the Arthur Murray Dance Studio to compete and raise support for the Animal Protection League. The event took place February 22, at the Stockton Golf & Country Club. More than 400 guests enjoyed the “furrocious” competition that included 13 dancers. Suzanne Ledbetter of Lodi took the top prize, while Toni Lundgren received the People's Choice Award. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN



BY HERLIFE STAFF
PHOTOGRAPHY BY HAYRE PHOTOGRAPHY

Q: *What's your full name?*

A: Hallo! My name is Mr. Hamilton Gibson. I am of German descent and my nickname is Mr. Piggy. Sometimes I think my mom is part pig because she squeals with excitement a lot.

Q: *Tell us about yourself.*

A: If I'm being honest, I would say I am a bit mischievous. Pig pens are the wurst! So, of course I have to break out and explore.

Q: *What's your favorite vacation spot?*

A: Anywhere in the kitchen! I guess you could say I'm a foodie.

Q: *And when you get to go along?*

A: I roam the floor rooting for any bits that were dropped by one of my many family members. I mean, there are 11 of us on any given day.

Q: *Your best play spot?*

A: When my harness comes out, I squeal with joy! I know I'm headed outside for a walk. Ja!

Q: *What's your guilty pleasure?*

A: Nibbling on toes. Who am I kidding, nibbling on everything.

Q: *Are you ever a naughty piggy?*

A: I mark my territory. Oh nein!

Q: *What's your porcine obsession?*

A: My heated blanket. That's where the saying "pigs in a blanket" comes from. It's true.

Q: *What's your favorite treat?*

A: All food. Although mom keeps me on a strict diet.

Q: *Where do you go to get pampered? What are your favorite treatments?*

A: Belly rubs at night before bed. The scratches send me quickly onto my side, eyes rolling back and into a heavenly sleep.

Q: *What else should we know about you?*

A: I get along well with my herd. Which is two hunds, a rescue dachshund from Wilson Way and a large black goldendoodle; and a katze! He's a hairless sphynx. We make a very unique team or as older sister Ava says, very boujie pets.

Q: *Where were you adopted from?*

A: AZ Micro Mini Pigs azmicrominipigs.com
Guten Tag!

Q: *Who are your human parents?*

A: Pete & Audrey Gibson and family, Ava, Sofia, Amelia, Alyse & Leo ♦

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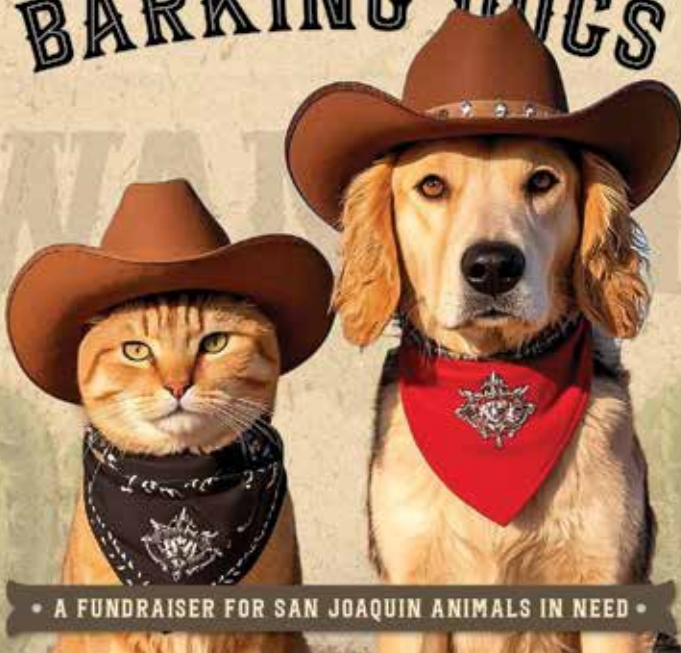
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APRIL 11-13

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Info: visitstockton.org

APRIL 26

Spring Cultural Art Exhibit

SJC Historical Museum

Info: sanjoaquinhistory.org

APRIL 5 - 6

Lodi Community Art Center Spring Show

Durst Winery

Info: lodiartcenter.org

APRIL 12

Art Hop

Veterans Park, Lodi

Info: lodiartcenter.org

APRIL 26

Shriners Children's Denim and Diamonds

Oak Farm Vineyards

Info: donate.lovetotherescue.org

APRIL 6

Be Amazing by Lodi House

First Baptist Church

Info: lodihouse.org

APRIL 12

Restore the Delta Rodeo BBQ

Delta Diamond Farm, Isleton

Info: restorethedelta.org

APRIL 27

Stockton Earth Day Festival

Victory Park

Info: earthdaystockton.com

APRIL 10

Community Philanthropy Summit

Hutchins Street Square

Info: philanthropy-summit.com

APRIL 17

State of the City

Port of Stockton

Info: stocktonchamber.org

APRIL 11

Haggin Nouveau

The Haggin Museum

Info: hagginmuseum.org

APRIL 24

Celebration of Student Voices

U.P. World Peace Rose Garden

Info: (209) 490-2652

APRIL 11-13

San Joaquin Asparagus Festival

SJC Fairgrounds

Info: sanjoaquinasparagusfestival.net

APRIL 25

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JUNE 8-14

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Info: sanjoaquinagfest.com

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Strengthening Black Maternal Health Through Collective Action and Advocacy

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Did you know...

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The disparities in Black maternal health are deeply rooted in systemic inequalities, including:

-  Inadequate access to quality care
-  Implicit bias in the healthcare system
-  Social determinants like poverty, housing instability, and limited access to prenatal services

By bridging communication gaps between new or expecting mothers, their support system, and their doctors, we can improve health outcomes for Black mothers and their children.

Health Plan is partnering to improve birth outcomes and maternal health. To deepen your understanding of this topic, attend the **Black Maternal Health Symposium** on April 15, 2025.

By working together, we can reduce disparities among people of color, including healthy babies and thriving mothers.



In support of Black Maternal Health

-  Health Plan partnered with Flourishing Families Inc. to develop San Joaquin County's first community lactation room for new mothers and their families. This effort, along with Reinvent South Stockton's community baby showers and San Joaquin County Public Health's Black Infant Health Program, is creating in-roads for learning, support and better outcomes.
-  The Birthing Tree lactation room (left) is a safe space that provides help for families to learn best birthing practices, receive perinatal education, and get support and resources including doula services, lactation professionals, and Community Health Workers (CHWs).