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Celebrate!

Who doesn't love a great, well-deserved celebration? There are plenty of reasons to throw a good party in San Joaquin County these days.

Probably one of the most significant celebrations has been the San Joaquin County "175 Years of Growing Greatness" tour that began in early 2025. This included community celebrations, in which relationship building and an overview of our history were shared in every city within San Joaquin County. And the events just kept coming. A beautiful gala was held at the Haggin Museum with more than 450 guests in attendance. The finale, The State of the County, was held in October and was the final stop of the San Joaquin County "175 Years of Growing Greatness" tour. It took place on the campus of UOP and included an overview of our rich history as told by Phillip Merlo, executive director of the San Joaquin County Historical Museum. To get further information about San Joaquin County's history, *Stocktonia News* recently released a beautiful print publication about the history of Stockton and San Joaquin County. You can check their website at stocktonia.org.

On November 13, the SJC Historical Museum's Annual Century Business Dinner will honor eight businesses that have made San Joaquin County their home for 100 years! These businesses provide much-needed jobs and economic stability and that is certainly worthy of a toast!

But there's more. Our talented Stockton Symphony is poised to celebrate their 100th anniversary during their 2026 season. The Symphony is truly a cultural icon and how momentous to mark 100 years of making beautiful music for our community. We are so ex-



cited about this anniversary, we wanted to get the conversation started now so that the community can celebrate this momentous occasion throughout 2026! Writer Rachel Fenton captured the symphony's rich history. Local community leader Francesca Vera, the niece of the symphony's founder, makes this history even more relevant. From the stories of the early years shared by Francesca, Rachel walked us through the decades of our treasured Stockton Symphony as it continues to fill our souls with beautiful music. Many of the symphony's long-time supporters—or should I say champions—are planning a celebration to mark this significant milestone. Reach out and see how you can support our precious symphony through season tickets, financial contributions, sponsorships and volunteerism.

This month we also honor our veterans. Bobby Page, owner of Vil-

lage Barber Shop in Stockton's Lincoln Center, is hosting his annual celebration of our veterans and first responders from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on November 1 in Lincoln Center. Bobby has been hosting this event for more than 30 years!

As Thanksgiving approaches, I am reminded how grateful I am for life, and I am especially grateful for all of you! When Anna and I bought *HERLIFE* we had no idea that our days would be so blessed through the wonderful people we have met! Our advertisers keep us going every month, as we certainly couldn't publish these wonderful stories without them. And the stories that we get to tell, oh, from the cover stories that highlight accomplished women and men to the talented, selfless kids featured in Spark Joy, it brings us pure joy, kind of like listening to the Stockton Symphony every day.

Blessings.

Carrie



CHECK IN

with Dr. Ruby Gill

LET'S CHECK UP ON: THE SILENT CHRONIC DISEASE THAT COULD CHANGE YOUR LIFE

By Dr. Ruby Gill, MD, ABOIM, ABFM
Double Board-Certified in Family & Integrative Medicine
Menopause Society Certified | Fellowship-Trained in Aesthetics

"Prediabetes isn't a warning sign—it's a diagnosis of opportunity."

When I developed gestational diabetes during pregnancy—despite being 115 pounds my entire life—I experienced firsthand how quickly insulin resistance can emerge and how little women are told about long-term risk after delivery. That experience changed how I practice medicine. It reminded me that prediabetes is not a distant threat—it's an early signal that the body's metabolism needs attention now.

Every week, I see women and men who want to lower their risk for heart disease, weight gain, or fatigue. They're told their A1C is "a little high" and to "just diet and exercise." Yet many already are. The missing link in these cases is insulin resistance—the gradual loss of sensitivity to insulin, the hormone that helps glucose enter your cells.

Traditional medicine rarely measures insulin resistance. Instead, we rely on hemoglobin A1C, which reflects the average blood sugar over three months. A value of 6.5% or higher meets the criteria for diabetes, but by then, silent damage may have begun—to arteries, nerves, kidneys, and even the brain.

Prediabetes isn't mild. It's the beginning of a chronic process that can quietly affect your body for years. Research shows that 15–30% of people with prediabetes develop type 2 diabetes within five years, but targeted changes—better sleep, movement, and balanced nutrition—can reduce that risk by over half.

"Prediabetes is like watching a car crash in slow motion—you still have time to turn the wheel."

THE OVERLOOKED LINK IN WOMEN'S HEALTH

Prediabetes deserves special attention in women's health. Conditions like polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and gestational diabetes (GDM) double or even quadruple the risk of later diabetes and heart disease, even in women with a normal BMI. Menopause can also increase insulin resistance.

Unfortunately, most care for PCOS focuses only on fertility, and GDM is often managed just during pregnancy. Few women are counseled about their long-term risk afterward. In Integrative Medicine, we use these findings to empower women—addressing nutrition, strength training, and stress to prevent progression and protect cardiovascular health.

STRESS, SLEEP, AND THE BIGGER PICTURE

Chronic stress raises cortisol, which can temporarily elevate glucose—a phenomenon known as pseudohyperglycemia. Over time, it contributes to inflammation and abdominal fat, worsening insulin resistance.

Lack of sleep, poor diet, and certain medications can add to the problem. Emerging research even links insulin resistance to early cognitive decline and possible "type 3 diabetes," the term some researchers use for insulin-related brain changes preceding Alzheimer's disease.

When we improve insulin sensitivity, we enhance brain, heart, and hormonal health—simultaneously improving quality of life.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE NOW

1. *Know your numbers.* Ask about fasting insulin, glucose, and triglyceride-to-HDL ratio in addition to A1C.
2. *Move regularly.* Aim for at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week.
3. *Eat with balance.* Choose protein and fiber-rich meals, avoid long fasting periods that slow metabolism.
4. *Manage stress and sleep.* Restorative sleep and mindfulness lower cortisol and improve glucose control.
5. *Track your progress.* Continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) are now becoming available over the counter, like Dexcom's Stelo, to help people see their real-time glucose patterns.
6. *Advocate early.* Don't wait until your numbers "cross the line." Prevention is the most powerful form of treatment.

Prediabetes is not your fate—it's your opportunity. When addressed early, it can be reversed. Each mindful step—better sleep, steady movement, improved nutrition—protects your future self.

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Baton of Manlio Silva, Conductor and Founder of the Stockton Symphony

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Stockton Symphony: "In the end, there will always be music."

"I'm so grateful for all the creative spirits out there who have struggled throughout history – composers, performers, persevering because they are so passionate about what they do," musicologist Jane Jaffe told *HERLIFE* Magazine two years ago. This month, we visit the Stockton Symphony, servants of music, giving heart and soul to their art.



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Stockton Symphony



“IN THE END, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE MUSIC.”

BY RACHEL FENTON / PHOTOS BY CAROLINE PHOTOGRAPHY AND COURTESY OF FRANCESCA VERA AND THE STOCKTON SYMPHONY

In the beginning, there was music. From the very first melodies sung around ancient campfires to the songs on today's Top 100 chart, music accompanies humanity's past, present and future. In the face of tragedy and grief, musicians play on, bringing people together and overcoming barriers. Music is a source of joy and celebration, of solace and strength.

Music is also a keystone of Stockton's history. The Stockton Symphony is California's third-oldest continuously operating professional orchestra, from its inaugural season in 1926 to the pres-

ent day. The group has continued to play through major upheavals and historical events, and in 2026, it will celebrate its 100th year. The upcoming centennial is a testament to both the symphony's caliber and its lasting impact on the local community.

Coast to Coast: Italy to California

If you happened to wander into an Italian café in the late 19th century, you might have heard music—perhaps a piccolo, a violin, or a cello—played by a small boy and his brother. Manlio Silva grew



Maestro Manlio Silva

up in Chiavari, by the sea in Genoa, Italy, and often played for the community with his younger brother, Tullio. The two of them were dedicated musicians. For Manlio and his family, music was not simply a hobby or a pastime: it was a way of life. Wherever they went, whatever they were doing, music followed them.

Manlio graduated from the Conservatory of Chiavari and in 1909, he immigrated with his brother to the United States to attend pharmacy school in San Francisco, trading the Mediterranean coasts for the rocky beaches of the bay area. As he studied, the cosmopolitan music scene of San Francisco fueled Manlio's love of music, inspiring him with its world-renowned symphonic and operatic performances. He made friends with local musicians and continued to practice his own instruments, violin and piccolo, while preparing to launch his career as a pharmacist.

In 1915, Manlio opened the Genova Pharmacy in Stockton, California, with Tullio as his partner. But even as he established his career, music remained essential to his way of life. To Manlio, being a pharmacist and being a musician were two sides to the same coin; one provided medicine for the body, the other provided medicine for the soul. Slowly, he began to gather local musicians together in the hope of beginning an ensemble. And so, through the passion and perseverance of a hard-working Italian immigrant, the Stockton Symphony was created.

The Stockton Symphony gave its first performance in May 1926 with Manlio Silva at the

conductor's podium and launched its inaugural season in October of the same year at the California Theater on Main Street. Francesca Vera, Tullio's daughter and Manlio's niece, speaks fondly of her childhood during the early days of the Stockton Symphony. "I would walk with him to the Stockton high school auditorium where the symphonies were held on Monday nights, and I would put the music on the stands." Music was an extended family affair. Tullio played cello for the symphony and Francesca's cousin, Carmen, played the piano for certain performances or played one-off instruments such as the triangle. Musicians would come from Oakland, San Francisco and even New York to play with the symphony, and the revelry continued beyond the performances. "After the symphonies they had dinner parties at the house. It was a fabulous time," Francesca said.

Manlio poured his soul into the Stockton Symphony, often paying the musicians or covering unmet expenses with his own money. "It was his dream," Francesca said, and he did everything he could to ensure that dream would endure to bless the community for years to come. Not only did Manlio focus on preserving the classical music he'd grown up playing, but he also ensured modern musicians and compositions were given time on the stage. Francesca said, "Manlio did a lot for new musicians, new music. He was very futuristic too."

Dedicated to his beloved symphony until the very end, Manlio Silva died on the opening night of the symphony's season in October



Francesca Vera (c), and her mother Carlotta (l) with uncle Manlio Silva (r)



1958. His legacy lives on in the community to this day, from the enduring presence of the Stockton Symphony to the local elementary school that bears his name and boasts a flourishing music program.

Furthering Manlio's Legacy

After Manlio's passing, Horice I. Brown stepped into the role of conductor and was followed by Fritz Berens, Ralph Matesky and Warren van Bronkhorst, who remained with the symphony for 17 years. In 1967, a new director joined the Stockton Symphony, Kyung-Soo Won, a prestigious musician and conductor with degrees from Seoul National University, Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and Indiana University. The Stockton Symphony flourished under Won's tutelage. During his tenure, as their website proudly states, "the Symphony morphed from a community ensemble to a fully professional orchestra of 'metropolitan' status as recognized by the American Symphony Orchestra League." Won also focused on bringing the symphony to the local community by playing at parks, venues and events around the Central Valley. After 27 years of dedicated service to the Stockton Symphony, Kyung-Soo Won retired in 1994 to become a professor of music at Seoul National University and conduct the Seoul Phil-

“It’s important that there be an artistic haven where people of all walks of life and all opinions can come into a concert hall and leave those opinions at the door and just bask in an inspirational and emotionally moving artistic experience.”

– Maestro Peter Jaffe

harmonic.

After Won's retirement, Maestro Peter Jaffe became the conductor of the Stockton Symphony and opened their season in 1995. Now, over 30 years later, Peter still stands at the podium, a commanding presence with a contagious laugh and an even more contagious passion for music. Born in New York and raised in Berkeley, Jaffe has an appreciation for the entire musical spectrum. He played in the Oakland Symphony Youth Orchestra and also was part of a garage rock band. His father was active in the folk music scene, and his mother had a deep love of ballet and the music that accompanied it, teaching her children how to read music at an early age. "They embraced everything: jazz, pop, punk, classics," Peter said with a laugh. "And that kind of rubbed off on me.

That's why I enjoy doing the whole spectrum of what we do at the Stockton Symphony."

Peter Jaffe attended Oberlin University for his undergraduate degrees, where he also met his wife, Jane, a phenomenal illustrator and musician in her own right, who holds a doctorate in musicology from the University of Chicago. Peter's resume is extensive, having received his graduate training at Stanford University and conducted orchestras in locations across the United States and be-



Maestro Peter Jaffe inspiring a young student at Family Day at the Park.

yond, including the Oberlin Conservatory, Pomona College, Stanford University, the Aspen Music Festival, the Tanglewood Music Festival and more. He speaks of his past experiences with fondness and gratitude, but the conversation always turns back homeward. “Stockton is my home base, my home allegiance. I feel privileged every time I get up there and work with the symphony. My role is more as a conduit, as a servant of the music.”

The Stockton Symphony has continued to flourish under Maestro Jaffe’s expert direction. Their variety of programs appeals to all ages and tastes, from classical performances to their Holiday Pops concerts. They also offer educational resources to local schools and host the Step-pin’ Out Children’s concerts for fourth and fifth graders, which teach students different aspects of musical notation and composition. True to his roots, Peter embraces both tradition and novelty, intentionally creating space for underrepresented artists. He has commissioned one or two world premieres every season and has focused on pieces by women composers Latino and African American composers, as well as performing classical pieces. For a traditional example, he said, “This past

spring we did Mahler’s Second Symphony. It was a real bucket list piece for me.” Mahler’s Symphony No. 2, colloquially known as the Resurrection Symphony, is a profound piece that was particularly apt for last season as many parts of the world continued to shake off the cobwebs left by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Music Outlasts

When recounting his musical history, Maestro Jaffe noted that some of the most poignant performances were shortly after turbulent historical events. Not long after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., the orchestra he played with as a child performed a program of all Black composers in the deep South. He conducted symphonies in Berlin shortly after the Berlin Wall was torn down, in New Orleans shortly after Hurricane Katrina, and our own local All-American concert the weekend after 9/11. The Stockton Symphony is another example of live music persevering despite tragedy. Founded in the shadows of World War I and the Spanish flu pandemic, enduring through World War II, the Great Depression and the rest of the 20th century, the Stockton



*Front Row: Christa Gleason; Diane Vigil; Gianna Piccaro
Back Row: Dan McCabe; Scott Watkins, CEO; and Hal Willenborg*



Symphony stands as sonorous evidence of something uniquely healing and uniquely human.

Some dismiss live music as an antiquated luxury, calling it non-essential and out of date. The recent cuts to the National Endowment for the Arts and other changes in national support of the arts seem to echo this train of thought, but in a world that is growing more and more divided, we must rally around the things that unite us and remind us of our common humanity. “It’s important that there be an artistic haven where people of all walks of life and all opinions can come into a concert hall and leave those opinions at the door and just bask in an inspirational and emotionally moving artistic experience,” Peter said emphatically. Scott Watkins, Stockton Symphony’s current executive director, agreed. “Music has the ability to bring people together and remember that we’re human. I always go back to music to remind myself why I do what I do.”

The Stockton Symphony is just such a healing presence in our local community. It’s “a gem, an incredible organization,” as John

“Music has the ability to
bring people together and
remember that we’re human.
I always go back to music to
remind myself why I do
what I do.”

—Scott Watkins, Executive Director

Zieter, a lifelong supporter, said. He is evidence that non-musicians can enjoy the symphony as much as lifelong musicians: he insists that “it’s a part of my life even more because I can’t play an instrument myself.” Live performance brings people together, in the park or school or grand auditorium, playing Beethoven or the Beatles, all ages, all backgrounds, all cultures.

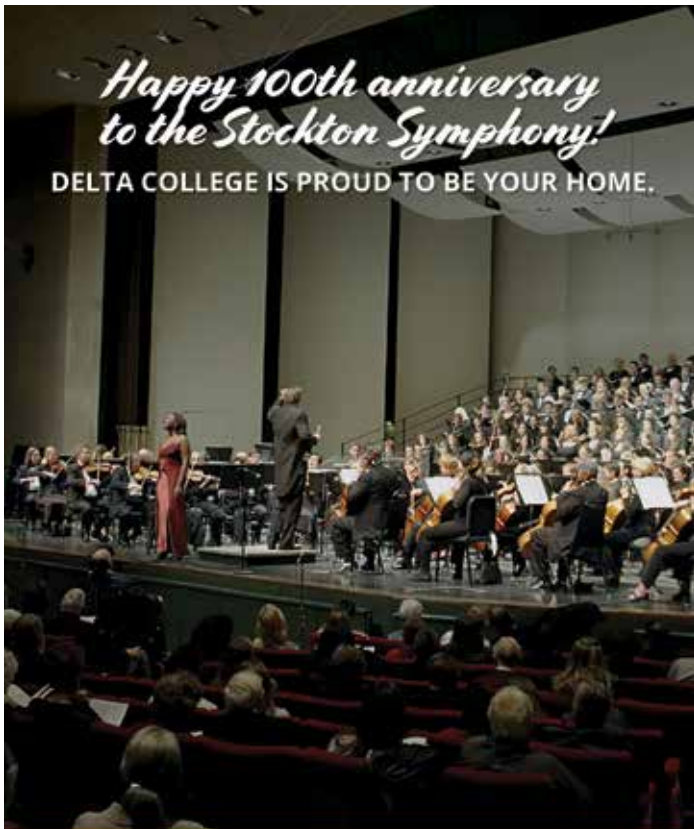

As the Stockton Symphony prepares for its centennial celebration, it also prepares for the decades to come. The future might be more tenuous than it has been in years past, but they also know a truth that Francesca Vera put in two simple words: “Music outlasts.” With the community’s support, the Stockton Symphony will be there to support the community. Whatever triumphs or tragedies might be awaiting us in the course of history, it will remind us—as Mahler’s Second Symphony so powerfully sings—that we will “rise again, yes, rise again.”

Because in the end, there will always be music. ♦


Scan QR code to see an 8-minute video on Stockton Symphony's as it approaches its centennial.



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NORMA DEPAULI

One of Stockton's Angels

BY RACHEL FENTON

Every community has its angels, people who work selflessly behind the scenes, sacrificing their time, money and energy to give back to those around them. You might not always see them but they're still present, meeting the needs of the community from the greatest to the least.

Stockton has many such angels, but one of the most notable is Norma DePauli. She has been described as a volunteer extraordinaire, spending much of her time volunteering at organizations that serve the underprivileged and give back to the local community. Whether through her work with Hospice of San Joaquin, her incredible more-than-ten-gallon blood donation record or her magical appearances as Mrs. Claus, Norma has touched thousands of lives with her hard work and gentle smile.

She was born in Stockton, and nothing stands in Norma's way when she wants to give back to the city that raised her. Even when her four daughters were still young, she found ways to be locally involved. She began by volunteering for yard duty at their nearby elementary school when they were short-staffed, bringing her infant twins in their stroller as she helped the teachers. As they grew, Norma also began to volunteer at St. Joseph's Auxiliary, despite some of those in charge trying to dissuade her because she had "too many kids at home." Determined to prove them wrong, she continued to show up twice a month, every other Tuesday for 40 years, making her the volunteer with the most years served in the hospital's history.

Norma's service to the community reaches far beyond St. Joseph's. For years she has also volunteered weekly at St. Mary's Dining Hall, from helping with lunches to leading classes. Her children often joined her, and they still have a yearly tradition of serving breakfast at the soup kitchen on Christmas Eve. Now the grandchildren join in too. As Norma said, "It's usually a family thing. Most about everything we do is!" She also is known for donning the role of Mrs. Claus every Christmas for both the Stockton Children's Museum and the homeless shelter, bringing holiday joy to the local youth population. But that gleam in her



eye isn't just Christmas cheer. "I like to joke around," she said, her gentle voice at odds with her mischievous smile. "A lot of people don't know how to take me at first, but I like to make things fun, whatever I do."

In 2023, Norma's daughters nominated her for the Remarkable Women award through Fox40 News. As their website states, "Remarkable Women is part of a nationwide Nexstar initiative to honor the influence that women have had on public policy, social progress and the quality of life." Norma's vast accomplishments and selfless endeavors launched her into a finalist position and earned her a Certificate of Recognition. She was thrilled, though ever humble, calling her work "just little things...tell me what to do and I'll do it."

Norma is also a steadfast volunteer with the Hospice of San Joaquin.

She joined their Butterfly Auxiliary after she lost her husband to cancer a little more than a decade ago, inspired by the difference hospice care had made in their lives during such a difficult time. She can often be found working at their events, from the small community gatherings to the galas. The list of Norma's work goes on and on, from the Italian Athletic Club and as a VIP hostess at Festa Italiana to being a lay Eucharistic minister at her church. But her most important work? Giving a listening ear to those who need it. "Everybody has a story," she said, and she listens to that story whether she's working at the homeless shelter or among the VIPs.

When asked why she's dedicated her life to service, Norma sums up her motivation in a single, simple phrase. "I love to make people happy." From a young age, she knew she wanted to help people. As a devout Catholic, giving back to others is a very important part of her faith and an integral part of how Norma approaches the world. "I used to say when I was a little girl that I'd grow up to be an angel," she said, describing the Bible's messengers of God that bring people good news and joy. She still loves angels; they decorate her life, from trinkets in the corners of her house to her stationary. And if you ask any of the many, many people Norma has touched through her years of sacrificial service, they won't hesitate to confirm that she is, indeed, an angel. ♦

GALA FOR HOSPICE OF SAN JOAQUIN

Hospice of San Joaquin's 45th Anniversary Gala on September 20 was an incredible celebration of compassion, community and care. Since 1980, Hospice of San Joaquin has served the community thanks to the dedication of their staff, the generosity of volunteers and the support of generous donors. Hospice events such as the anniversary gala ensure the nonprofit can continue providing vital programs and compassionate care through Hospice of San Joaquin and Hospice House. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN



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FAMILY LESSONS: RAISING A POLITE YET ASSERTIVE CHILD

BY CARRIE ROWLANDS JOHNSON

Big, sad puppy eyes stare out from under a thick fringe of sandy-blond bangs. As a tear falls from those sweet blue eyes, your child tells you the source of his sadness. His “friends” are teasing him and won’t give him a turn on the swings. Your instinct might be to tell him to play with something or someone else.

You don’t want your child to be bold and aggressive, right? But you also don’t want your child to be a pushover. So, what do you do? How do you teach your child to be polite and respectful while being assertive? You don’t want your son pushing his peers, but you also don’t want him being the one pushed.



child. Briefly explaining your command rather than saying, “Because I said so” will teach your child right from wrong as opposed to a long list of arbitrary rules.

When the child is old enough to play with peers, encourage her to express her desires and feelings instead of being pushed around or following a friend. Model this behavior. For example, if you

The Montessori Method teaches children “grace and courtesies,” lessons through which children learn how to interact with others in an assertive yet civilized way. These civilities start by role modeling a situation for the child. If your son feels left out because his peers won’t allow him a turn, model the correct response by telling him to say something like, “I’d like a turn when you are finished.”

This applies to all rules and boundaries within a child’s life. If you are trying to teach your child not to run in the house, you would model the situation and then instruct the child to take a turn. So, when your child does run in the house, say, “Please do not run in our house; go back and walk.” After the child goes back and walks, you would switch roles. You would run and then have the child instruct you not to run in the house.

Montessori believes this method empowers children by letting them know that they can take ownership of their world, their house and their actions and deal with injustices without the interference of an adult. This way of teaching is in line with other experts who agree that children learn by example. As a parent, show your young one what it looks like to be polite yet assertive.

At the core of a well-mannered, assertive child is one who is self-confident yet sensitive. Building a child’s self-esteem will encourage assertiveness. A sensitive child will care about the feeling of others and therefore will practice good manners.

You as a parent, or even as another role model in a child’s life, such as an aunt or grandparent, can help build a child’s confidence by showering them with love and attention as infants, providing discipline and structure once they turn one year old, teaching them to speak up for themselves and then maintaining consistency.

When you are disciplining, criticize the behavior rather than the

notice the neighbor girl is consistently monopolizing all of the Polly Pockets, give her one and say, “This is for you to play with. The other girls will each have a doll to play with as well.”

Encourage your son or daughter to speak their mind rather than follow the crowd. Explain that the others will still like them, even if they have a different opinion, as long as they express it politely. For example, if you notice the neighbors have been playing soccer all day yet know your son prefers football, let him know that it’s okay to say, “I’ll play soccer for a while, but then I’d like us all to play football.”

Allow your child to make decisions for herself sometimes. For example, offer a choice of restaurants. Allow her to pick out her own clothes. This will build self-confidence and the appropriate assertiveness.

Acknowledge and include your children, even if you are in a conversation with mostly adults. Ignoring and tuning out your little ones is just asking for trouble. Without fail, when I am on the phone, my boys find any number of reasons they need me. I’ve learned that it’s better to briefly address them or they will incite World War III with each other! Of course, remind them to say “Excuse me” before addressing their concern.

Finally, if you want your child to be polite, then expect it. And use civility when you correct her. “Chewing out” your little spawn will not only damage her self-esteem but also will model an inappropriate way to address another person.

Our children are our greatest mirrors. What you see in them is most likely what they see in you. ♦

SOURCES: askdrsears.com, en.wikipedia.org, hometessorihub.com.

LODI HOUSE

How A Community's Generosity Transforms Lives

STORY AND PHOTOS COURTESY OF LODI HOUSE



For over 25 years, Lodi House has been a beacon of hope for women and children in San Joaquin County. Founded on the belief that every woman deserves the chance to rebuild her life with dignity and stability, the organization provides shelter, counseling and personalized guidance for mothers with children working toward independence. What makes Lodi House especially remarkable is that it operates almost entirely through community donations, proof of the deep compassion that defines Lodi and the surrounding area.

Among the many stories of recovery and renewal that begin at Lodi House, Jenny's journey stands out as a moving reminder of what gratitude, persistence and community support can accomplish.

In August 2023, Jenny's world was falling apart. She was living

in a tent beside a freeway, her belongings packed into a few worn bags and her days defined by addiction and survival. Her two-year-old son, Noah, was being raised by her parents. Though their relationship was strained, they shared one unbreakable bond: their love for Noah. The few hours Jenny spent with her son each week were her only anchor. "My addiction stole time from me in a deceitful way," she reflected. "I believed I was better under the influence, but the truth was—I was disappearing from the moments that mattered."

Desperate to change, Jenny reached out to Lodi House. Though she didn't meet the program's requirements yet, she wasn't turned away. Instead, she was met with kindness and a plan. Staff members encouraged her to complete a 90-day treatment program, assur-

ing her that they would be there to support her when she finished. That promise, a simple assurance that someone believed in her, was the spark she needed to begin.

On November 7, 2023, Jenny entered New Directions treatment center in Stockton and for 90 days, she focused on recovery, surrounded by others working to rebuild their lives. Throughout her treatment, she stayed in contact with Lodi House staff. When Jenny graduated from treatment in February, she walked through the doors of Lodi House with newfound strength and determination. What awaited her wasn't just a roof over her head—it was a community ready to walk beside her, every step of the way.

At Lodi House, Jenny learned life skills, attended counseling and set personal goals. Each day was a chance to grow, not just in sobriety, but in confidence, self-worth and independence. She began to see herself not as a person defined by her past, but as a mother preparing for her future. "I had to learn how to let go of guilt and see my mistakes as lessons, not life sentences," she said. "That shift helped me believe I deserve to be in Noah's life. And now, I'll never let us go backward."

By November 21, 2024, just over a year after she took her first courageous step, Jenny had achieved what once felt impossible. She had a job, a car and an apartment of her own. Most importantly, she had Noah back in her arms full time.

But her story doesn't end there. Jenny continues to challenge herself—to pursue her education, strengthen her family and reach out to other women walking similar paths. Her gratitude runs deep, not only for the second chance she



found but for the community that made it possible.

"To anyone who feels like time is slipping away," she advised, "Don't get discouraged if your progress feels slow. Those tough moments are signs that you're growing. If you keep going, what's meant for you will come, right on time."

Jenny's story is just one of the more than 500 that are the heart of Lodi House's mission. Each woman who comes through the door is met with compassion and accountability, but also with the understanding that true recovery takes time, courage and support. The women who succeed at Lodi House don't do it alone; they are lifted by hundreds of quiet acts of generosity from people across the community.

As Lodi House celebrates its 25th anniversary, gratitude is at the center of everything. Gratitude for the women who dare to begin again. Gratitude for the staff and volunteers who walk beside them. And above all, gratitude for a community whose compassion continues to make new beginnings possible.

Jenny's journey is a testament to what happens when hope and opportunity meet. It's a story of one woman's courage—but also of every hand that reached out to help her rise.

At Lodi House, transformation begins with that first spark of belief. It grows through love, persistence and trust. And with the support of a generous community, it shines brightly, lighting the way for the next woman ready to begin her own story of hope. ♦

To help Lodi House continue this important work, please visit lodihouse.org.

SUPPORTERS CELEBRATE BISHOP'S AWARDS

On September 19, almost 500 friends and supporters attended the 2025 Bishop's Awards Celebration for the Diocese of Stockton in the Holy Family Center at St. Bernard Catholic Church in Tracy. It was a wonderful evening of gratitude and faith as the event celebrated the Jubilee Year of Hope and recognized clergy, religious leaders, lay leaders and the faithful. The celebration also commemorated the successful completion of the Diocese-wide Call and Sent campaign to support parishes, the Seminarian Education Program, the Priest Retirement Fund and the Office of Evangelization for Youth and Young Adults. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN



A PASSION FOR POETRY...

Shubhpreet Kaur

BY HERLIFE STAFF

Shubhpreet Kaur, a senior at Stockton Early College Academy, is making a name for herself in the poetry world. Being selected as a recent finalist in the National Amateur Poetry Competition led to the publication of her poem *Unfinished* in the Eber and Wein Publishing's anthology *Figments of the Soul*, released January 1, 2025. In an interview with *HERLIFE Magazine*, Shubhpreet shared about her love for writing, her poetic words and other pursuits after college.

HLM: How long have you been writing?

SK: I've been writing since I was in middle school.

HLM: Why did you start writing poetry?

SK: When I was 11 I got my first journal and since then have filled countless journals. I think our lives are filled with superficial things and it is necessary to have something that helps you feel connected with yourself.

HLM: What inspires you?

SK: My inspiration is everyone and everything around me. I love writing about the things I love and that make me happy. And my favorite thing is realizing how valuable each moment of our lives is and the importance of living it to its fullest.

HLM: What do you hope to do with poetry?

SK: I want to be able to put in words all the thoughts in my head. And if, by some chance, someone is able to connect with what I write, it would be the best thing I can do.

HLM: What are your plans after graduation?

SK: After graduation I want to go to college and major in political science. However, I want to keep on writing because in my opinion inspiration isn't something you can turn on and off. It's something that comes to you innately. And as long as you receive inspiration, you should continue to act upon it.

HLM: What's next for you in terms of poetry and the written word?

SK: Being able to share my poetry with people was one of the best feelings in the world for me. And I think once you experience something that you are genuinely passionate about, you shouldn't stop. Therefore, I am continuing writing and want to compile an anthology of my own, including a majority of my poems. ♦

To read other poets like Shubhpreet, check out the anthology at amazon.com/Figments-Soul-Eber-Wein-Publishing/dp/1608807843. Aspiring poets may be interested in entering the National Amateur Poetry Competition at poetrynation.com/contest/.



KIDS SHINING BRIGHTLY

Unfinished

BY SHUBHPREET KAUR

Some stories stay unfinished
Like ships lost at sea
We try so hard to make them sail
Despite knowing their destination is never any guarantee

Some poems stay unfinished
Words can't always carry so much weight
So some poems are left abandoned
Collecting dust at the forever; uncrossed gate

Some paintings stay unfinished
One decision changing the whole array
Like how different our lives would be
If not for that one April day

Some books stay unfinished
A collection of sentences not read
Same as the existence of thoughts we don't say
The "i'm sorry" that could save; never said

Some friendships stay unfinished
Hopefully just as memories in our brain
Cause the ones that teach us lessons
Mostly do it by causing pain

Some people stay unfinished
The ones that could have been so much more
But who are we to declare what someone can and cannot be
A person can only fight their own war



Infusing PERSONALITY Into Every Room

BY KATHLEEN JENNISON | PHOTOS BY CAROLINE PHOTOGRAPHY

You can spot it the moment you walk in. Some homes just feel like the people who live there. Others? They feel like someone ordered “One House, please” from a catalog. Same sofa, same art, same gray walls. Beautiful, maybe. Memorable? Not a chance.

The difference isn’t money or square footage. It’s personality. A home without personality is like a novel without a plot with all filler,

but no heart. The good news? Infusing your story into your home isn’t about buying more but about designing smarter.

The Home as Biography

Think of your rooms as chapters in your life. A well-designed home doesn’t hide your story, it highlights it. Did you travel to Florence and fall in love with Renaissance colors? That deserves a palette

in your dining room. Is Grandma's trunk collecting dust in the garage? That's not clutter, that's character.

Design becomes exciting when you treat your furnishings like paragraphs. They don't all need to match; instead, they need to make sense together. The thread is you.

Display Without the Clutter Bomb

Let's talk about mementos. Everyone has a stash of treasures from vacations, milestones and family history. Left scattered across the house, they look random. But styled intentionally, they become storylines.

Group like with like. Seashells in a glass bowl. Framed black-and-white family photos on one wall.

Give them a stage. A shadowbox, a tray or a dedicated bookshelf elevates ordinary into special.

Less is more. Pick your favorites, rotate them seasonally and give each piece room to breathe.

When you edit well, every item feels purposeful.

Marrying Heirlooms and Modern Life

Here's the thing. Your grandmother's antique buffet doesn't have to fight with your sleek new sectional. In fact, the contrast is where magic happens. Place that buffet against a bold, modern wall color. Top it with a contemporary lamp. Suddenly, the old feels fresh and the new feels grounded.

Design thrives on tension. Juxtapose rustic with polished, soft with hard, matte with shiny. It's like good conversation and the differences make it engaging.

Color Is Personality in Paint Form

Neutral lovers, brace yourselves. Yes, neutrals are timeless. But if everything in your home is beige or gray, you've erased your personality. Color is the quickest way to infuse energy.

Bold personalities might lean into jewel tones such as emerald, sapphire, ruby.

Calm souls often gravitate to soft blues, greens and creams.

Adventurers? Bring in saturated pops such as an orange velvet chair or a mustard throw.

The point isn't following a trend. It's choosing hues that feel like you.

Lessons From Italy

On a recent trip to Italy, I was struck by how much history and personal expression permeates every building. Roman marble stairs that have endured centuries. Venetian glass lighting shimmering like captured sunlight. Tuscan stone streets warmed by sunset. These elements aren't perfect because they're lived-in, layered, deeply personal.

The design secret is to add a little imperfection, a little patina and a lot of soul. Your home doesn't need to be shiny and new. It needs to be lived in, loved and layered.

Quick Wins to Add Your Story Today

Create a gallery wall of art you've collected over time. Mix frame styles for eclectic charm.

Reupholster one piece of inherited furniture in a fabric you adore.

Style your bookcase with objects that mean something to you. Think of well-read books, a travel find and a photo of an ancestor.

Use throws, pillows, rugs in colors or patterns that reflect your energy.

Small changes can make a big impact.

The Real Payoff

When a guest walks into your home and says, "This feels just like you," you've nailed it. Personality-driven design isn't about impressing others; it's about creating a backdrop where your life can unfold authentically.

Your house should never feel like it could belong to anyone else. It should feel unmistakably yours. After all, when the story is personal, the design becomes timeless. ♦



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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FRIENDS OUTSIDE MARKS 70 YEARS

On September 21, Friends Outside, a nonprofit working inside institutions and with families and children of incarcerated individuals, celebrated 70 years of serving those who are justice impacted in California. The celebration for supporters and sponsors included a culinary competition, silent auction, live music, hors d'oeuvres, cake and refreshments at BellaVista Rooftop. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN



NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

A Holiday Tradition

BY JO ANN KIRBY



Like a good neighbor, Anne Swehla Garcia cares about her community.

In 2017, she launched a fundraising effort to purchase turkeys for the Emergency Food Bank. That first year, she collected enough money to purchase 14 turkeys that were handed out for Thanksgiving.

Her grassroots effort to help put food on holiday tables in November and December has raised a total of \$57,350 at last count. One year during Covid, she raised \$8,900 in a single season. "I don't set a goal. I just put the word out on social media and hope for the best," she said. "People just want to help. People are generous if you ask them."

And her efforts are much appreciated.

"Anne's drive is unique and special because of its consistency over the years and because she has turned it into a community tradition," Alesha Pichler, community relations manager for the food bank, said. "Anne's ongoing commitment to collecting not only turkeys but funds to purchase turkeys stands out. She has built strong community participation year after year, setting an amazing example for others."

Anne's efforts to harness her community's generosity have not gone unnoticed. Each year, United Way of San Joaquin County has the honor of recognizing remarkable individuals whose contributions to our nonprofits play a vital role in strengthening our community through the Heart of Gold Award. For 2025, they presented this award to two exceptional individuals: Jimmy Garza, director of warehouse operations at the Emergency Food Bank of Stockton, and Anne Swehla Garcia, Lodi Unified School District educator and dedicated Emergency Food Bank volunteer.

"Anne exemplified why she received the Heart of Gold award from United Way of San Joaquin County last year," Kristen Birtwhistle, president and CEO of United Way of San Joaquin County, said. "Her unselfish and humble dedication to families without, to those with less and her enduring support of 2-1-1 and Family Resources Center and years of service without reward make her someone we should all endeavor to become in spirit and service."

Anne had gotten to know her fellow award winner, Jimmy Garza, over the years as she and her family and friends would load up the turkeys and take them down to the food bank. The United Way crew

invited her to come to Jimmy's award presentation but held back on their surprise for her. "I thought they were honoring Jimmy and it was very unexpected when I went down and I found out they were honoring me too," she smiled. "My family was there to surprise me."

But Anne doesn't do it for an award or recognition. "I wish people knew that there's more hungry people in this community than they know," she said. She's not shy about how emotional it makes her to witness the need. "It makes me cry,"

Anne's annual turkey drive helps ensure that those in need can be blessed with a turkey in November and again in December, Alesha said. "The holidays can be a difficult time for many in our community, and thanks to Anne's efforts, we're able to ease the worry of how to afford a holiday meal and help families celebrate together."

Anne's big heart has struck a chord with many of her colleagues, friends, family, neighbors and complete strangers. One such friend is Diane Johnson, who tries to be the first to give. "Anne puts this at the forefront to make sure other in our community benefit. Her support for the food bank goes year-round and although the turkey drive seems to have the biggest turnout, she doesn't stop there," Diane said. "It's commendable and an inspiration to others. Every little bit helps. The more we come together for the greater good, the more we accomplish as a community."

With the money donors give her, Anne is thankful to count on Gerald Garfield, the director at Food 4 Less on Hammer Lane in Stockton, for his help to stretch every dollar. "I call him ahead of time and he orders for me; he always gets me the best price," Anne said. Some years, the money goes further than other years. It just depends on the price of turkeys. Anne and her family and friends used to deliver the turkeys to the food bank but now that the effort has grown, the food bank sends a truck to Food 4 Less to pick up pallets of the turkeys that have been purchased.

Those who want to pitch in can send Anne any amount, big or small, via Venmo, Paypal or Zelle. Simply contact her via email at aswehlag@gmail.com for the best way to donate. She will be collecting for Thanksgiving through November 14 and then will collect for Christmas from November 27 to December 11.

"It's just neighbors helping neighbors," she said. ♦



Turkey Trot...

HUNGER DOES NOT TAKE A HOLIDAY

BY JO ANN KIRBY | PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE EMERGENCY FOOD BANK

Q On a day set aside for gratitude, hundreds of people get up early to get their steps in for a good cause.

The Emergency Food Bank's Run & Walk Against Hunger starts at 8:00 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day and follows a course along downtown Stockton's waterfront in a collective effort to put food on the tables of those in need.

"Within San Joaquin County, there are 83,690 people who are food insecure; that is 10.8 percent of the county's population. Of that number, the Emergency Food Bank served 73,589 individuals, 88 percent of the food-insecure population," Alesha Pichler, community relations manager for the food bank, said. "While we're proud of that impact, it also shows just how much the Emergency Food Bank is needed. Because of the rising costs of utilities, housing, gas, insurance



and groceries, many working families are facing food insecurity for the first time. While families struggle, the Emergency Food Bank is also struggling to maintain the level of food supply that our community needs."

A decrease in federal food support and donations along with the government shutdown are making it difficult for the food bank's warehouse director to source supplies. In 2019, the food bank distributed 3.9 million pounds of food, and by 2024 that number increased to 7.2 million pounds.

The first "turkey trot," as it is nicknamed, took place in 2005 as the brainchild of Ralph Womack, who served on the food bank's board of directors and continues to serve today.

There is still plenty of time to sign up for this year's event as a runner or a walker. "We encourage everyone to register for the Run & Walk



Against Hunger, become an event sponsor or just come out on Thanksgiving morning to cheer on the participants,” Alesha said. “We also invite attendees and the community to bring a canned food item to donate, because every contribution helps support the programs of the Emergency Food Bank.”

Each participant will receive a 21st Annual Run & Walk Against Hunger long-sleeved race shirt and a finisher medal while supplies last. The current registration fees are \$45 for the 5K and 10K events and \$21 for the Kids’ Fun Run. Prices will increase on race day to \$50 for the 5K & 10K and \$25 for the Kids’ Fun Run.

Melissa Pfeifle’s husband and her two sons run the event while she and other family members cheer them on at the finish line. They made it a family tradition beginning in 2021. “This is such a great community event,” Melissa said. “People are genuinely happy to be there. There’s music playing, people dressed up in costumes, a lot of families and everyone there working is smiling and so friendly.” Melissa and her son, Jake, said that the atmosphere is one of gratitude and giving. “There’s a warm spirit in the crowd. People aren’t just running for fun; they’re running to make a difference.”

Alesha said that the event day starts in the early morning hours with volunteers putting the event’s signature 20-foot inflatable turkey in position and setting up the course. “The Bukkyo Taiko drummers arrive and begin warming up. When participants and spectators start lining up on Fremont Street, the energy is amazing. You see people of all ages and all walks of life, some running the full course, others walking, chatting with friends and family members. You see families with toddlers being pushed in strollers or pulled in wagons.” In that moment, everyone is united to support the Emergency Food Bank. That is what makes this event such an endearing Thanksgiving tradition. About 77 volunteers help with everything from early morning setup and course monitoring to water stations and race clean-up.

The Aaron Judge ALL RISE Foundation is the proud presenting sponsor of the event.

“For nearly 15 years, the Run & Walk Against Hunger has been a cherished Thanksgiving tradition for our family,” said Patty Judge, president of the Aaron Judge ALL RISE Foundation and mother of New York Yankees Captain Aaron Judge. “This season of gratitude reminds us how thankful we are for the Emergency Food Bank and for the chance to give back through this incredible community event.”

Other sponsors include American AgCredit, Dignity Health, Adventist Health Arena, Kaiser Permanente, Amazon, Bank of Stockton, Chase Chevrolet, 54 Fund, Valley Pacific Petroleum, Lincoln Center, LifePath Wealth Advisors, Sutter Health and Mayor Christina Fugazi.

“Our goal is always to increase our participation; last year, we registered 2,763 participants, and this year our goal is to reach 3,000 participants,” Alesha said. “But aside from participating in our run, our ultimate goal is to bring to light the reality of food insecurity and to let the community see how the Emergency Food Bank, Stockton’s community food bank, is working to fill that need.”

Hunger does not take a holiday. It is a year-round issue, and the Emergency Food Bank depends on community support throughout the year, not just during the holidays. The community can help by donating monetary funds or food, volunteering regularly, hosting a food drive or creating a fundraiser to benefit the food bank. The food bank will be launching a capital campaign to support the construction of the Food Recovery Hub Capacity Expansion project, a new, modern warehouse that will provide the space and tools to serve the growing need of the community.

Melissa and her family hope others step up to help the community by supporting the food bank. “It makes us feel good to do something for others, especially on a day like Thanksgiving. No one should go hungry,” Melissa affirmed.

It’s the perfect way to put your heart in the right place for a day of Thanksgiving. To make it your new Thanksgiving Day tradition, go online to runagainsthunger.org and sign up. To learn more about how to help the food bank, go online to stocktonfoodbank.org. ♦

FEAST AT THE FOX

A unique farm-to-table dining experience took place September 19 on Main Street in downtown Stockton. Feast at the Fox 2025 included live musical entertainment, delectable appetizers, locally sourced wine and beer and a sumptuous four-course dinner expertly crafted by The Kitchen at StoneBrier, with the invaluable support of the San Joaquin Delta College Culinary Arts students. Guests received a swag bag and had the opportunity to take part in a silent auction. It was an unforgettable evening of culinary excellence and community celebration. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN



Beauty of Stockton



The Bob Hope (Fox) Theatre in Downtown Stockton, built in 1930, was one of only two “movie palaces” in the Central Valley of California. Fox Theatres was a major chain of grand movie palaces that were built on the west coast primarily in the 1920s and 1930s. Stockton’s historic Fox Theatre was saved and lovingly renovated so that future audiences may continue to enjoy its beauty. Today the Bob Hope Theatre’s 2,042 seats are host to year-round live theatre, musicals, concerts, family events, a classic cinema series, and comedy. The Bob Hope Theatre is listed on the National Register of Historical Places and features a marble mosaic floor that encompasses a 2242 square foot space in the center of the lobby. This marble was imported from Italy, and the mosaic was designed by a Canadian artist. The Theatre also features a 1928 Robert Morton theater organ, which came from the Seattle Fox Theatre which closed over 40 years ago. This organ was restored and donated to the theatre by The Friends of the Fox, a volunteer organization that has been instrumental in preserving the theatre. Today the Bob Hope (Fox) Theatre is managed by ASM Global.

~ Content Courtesy of Visit Stockton



As a professional photographer, I’ve seen countless wonderful things about the city, and I finally decided to use my art to highlight them. Artists call it a “personal project,” and with social media, it’s easy to share images with many people. I named my project The Beauty of Stockton and committed to posting a stunning photo of one beautiful aspect of the city every Monday for at least a year. That’s at least 52 unique, artistically created images highlighting something beautiful about Stockton—a year of doing exactly what cities like Santa Barbara do: emphasizing the good.

The response has been overwhelmingly positive. The best comment I’ve received so far came from a friend who described scrolling through social media, seeing posts about crime, car accidents, and city politics, and then seeing one of my beautiful images pop up, which brought a smile to his face.

That’s my goal: helping to change the impression of Stockton, one smile at a time.

You can view and share each week’s Beauty of Stockton post at: www.facebook.com/kevin.richtik or www.instagram.com/carolinephotography209



209-477-4363

www.carolinephotography.com

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Stockton

The Lounge

Stockton's Hidden Speak-Easy at The Kitchen at Stonebrier

BY ANDREA BEAR | PHOTOS BY CAROLINE PHOTOGRAPHY

Looking for a unique cosmopolitan experience no longer requires a trip to the Bay Area. Stockton's popular restaurant The Kitchen at Stonebrier has been impressing locals for the past few years with their farm-to-fork imaginative plates and unique libations. More recently, The Kitchen has expanded their dining experience with the opening of a secluded retro speak-easy style lounge. The Lounge takes you back to a time when enjoying cocktails was refined and dignified. Perfect for private and unique gatherings, this becomes a true retreat for locals to enjoy a serene haven of luxury.

Co-President Corinna Jones and house manager Angelina Perez shared how bringing this experience to Stockton is also about connecting the community. "It's kind of been my heart and soul from the beginning," Corinna said. From floor to ceiling the architecture of The Lounge is decorated with beautiful 1920s-style sconces, wooden walls and dark mahogany couches, giving a stately yet secluded feel. Patrons can sit and partake in classic literary reads from Decameron to Robin Crusoe or play a game of chess while



consuming unique libations from the specialty bar.

Yet the ambience is only part of the experience. Angelina described how quality and consistency have been the key. “It’s the people and the staff that unite the experience,” emphasizing that their staff play a key role engaging with guests to create a welcoming atmosphere. In addition, many of their cocktails and dishes are inspired by their customers. “We pull from so many backgrounds,” Corinna added. The Grand Margarita, a mix of Grand Marnier, Patron Silver and Cointreau with fresh lime, inspired by a regular patron, has now become a house favorite and wakes up the senses.

The Lounge is also the perfect place to try new trends in mixology including a new technique called fat washing, which mixes distinct oils with selected liquors; the mixtures are frozen. The fat solidifies, is removed and the liquor is strained. The technique leaves a rich, smooth and elevated taste. Stonebrier’s Classic Old Fashioned is the

perfect drink to marry the richness of this novel technique.

The Kitchen also includes seasonal spirits to bring color to the menu, including their Lavender Lemon Drop, a floral-and-lemon-blend vodka-inspired drink, garnished with fresh lavender in a 1920s champagne glass, a perfect complement to The Lounge’s retro style. If you’re looking for something more rustic and gentlemanly, try the Firebird, a Mezcal tequila with pineapple and jalapeño simple syrup with fresh lime. This bold drink continues to develop flavors after each sip.

The Lounge provides the perfect setting to talk business with clients or relax in a private setting. This hidden gem won’t stay a secret for long. Exotic and creative libations await your tastebuds at The Kitchen at Stonebrier. ♦

If you’d like to learn more about the new Lounge, or make a reservation and dine in their restaurant, you can check out their website at thekitchen-at-sb.com/ or call (209)-932-9322.

PORK MARBELLA

RECIPE & PHOTOS BY LAUREN LANE | LAUREN-LANE.COM



INGREDIENTS


2 1-lb. pork tenderloins	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup capers plus 1 tbsp. caper brine
$1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt	4 bay leaves
1 cup dry white wine	4 garlic cloves peeled, smashed
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup packed light brown sugar
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup red wine vinegar	2 tbsp. dried oregano
1 cup pitted prunes	2 tablespoons olive oil
1 cup pitted green olives such as Castel- vetrano or Cerignola	1 tbsp. unsalted butter

DIRECTIONS

Pat dry the pork and season it with salt. Let it sit while you make the marinade. To make the marinade, combine the wine, olive oil, vinegar, prunes, olives, capers and brine, bay leaves, garlic, brown sugar and oregano in a large bowl. Add the pork to the marinade. You can also place the pork and marinade in a large resealable plastic storage bag and squeeze out the air to make sure the pork is fully covered with the marinade. Refrigerate for 2 hours or overnight, turning occasionally to be sure the marinade is getting into all sides of the pork. Preheat oven to 325°. Remove pork from marinade and pat dry, reserve marinade. Heat remaining olive oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high. Cook pork, undisturbed for a few minutes, until it is golden brown. Then repeat on the other side. Remove the pan from heat and let the pan cool 1 minute and then pour reserved marinade around pork. Transfer pan to the center of the oven and bake, basting pork once with its sauce halfway through, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of tenderloin registers 145°, about 15 to 20 minutes, depending on thickness. Transfer the pork to a cutting board and allow to rest for 10 minutes. Discard the bay leaves. Return pan with the marinade to medium-high heat. Add butter and cook, stirring pan occasionally, until slightly reduced, 5 to 8 minutes. Slice tenderloin in $\frac{1}{2}$ " slices and transfer back to a pan with the sauce and serve. ♦

WHAT TO SERVE WITH PORK MARBELLA?

Mashed potatoes, couscous, brown rice, polenta, roasted cauliflower and broccoli. Substitute chicken for pork if preferred.



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ROTARY INAUGURAL SHRIMP BOIL

Congratulations to the Rotary Club of Stockton on hosting their inaugural Shrimp Boil, which raised \$70,000 to fuel Rotary's mission of serving our community and beyond. Sponsorship levels included Shell Yeah! and Shrimply the Best! The event featured an incredible feast crafted by Chef Paul Ratto with Heritage Dining & Provisions and there was live music by Latin Magic. Organizers have already set a date for next year. Mark Friday, September 25, 2026, on your calendar. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN



SIMPLE CARROT CAKE

RECIPE & PHOTOS BY LAUREN LANE | LAUREN-LANE.COM

INGREDIENTS

1 Spice Cake mix (I used Betty Crocker brand)
 ½ cup canola or light olive oil
 4 large eggs
 1 cup milk
 ⅓ cup sour cream
 1 tsp. vanilla
 1 cup shredded carrots
 Cream cheese frosting

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Do not follow instructions on the cake mix. Grease two cake pans, a cupcake pan or 9"x 11" pan. Combine spice cake mix, oil or butter, eggs, sour cream, vanilla and milk until smooth. Fold in remaining ingredients (except cream cheese frosting) until combined. Pour into the pans and bake according to box directions or until a toothpick comes out clean. Let cool in pan a few minutes and remove to a cooling rack. Once completely cooled, frost the cake. ♦



TIPS

1: Chopped walnuts or pecans for a great crunch. Use about 1 cup.

2: Raisins. For a little chew and sweetness, mix in ¾ cup of raisins.

3: Shredded coconut. For a tropical twist to your cake, use ½ to ¾ cup.



STOCKTON RESTAURANT WEEK RETURNS!

January 16–25, 2026

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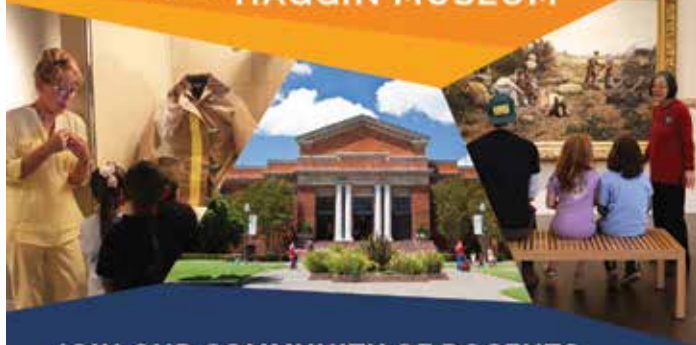
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HONEY, BENTLEY AND WINSTON: THE DYNAMIC TRIO

PHOTOS BY HAYRE PHOTOGRAPHY



HONEY



BENTLEY



WINSTON

Q: What do they call you?

A: Honey, but they call me Honey Bee, Queen B. Bentley goes by Ben and Winston is known as Winnie the Pooh or Pooh Bear.

Q: Where do you like to vacation?

A: Beach! Winston has not been to the beach quite yet since he does not have all of his shots but the other two love the beach! We also love to just go for a car ride and errands with Mom and Dad.

Q: Where is your favorite place to play?

A: We don't really go to the park often, but love playing in our backyard and chasing each other!

Q: Name a guilty pleasure.

A: Going in the backyard and jumping in mud piles and coming in looking like black labs! We however despise getting bathed after said shenanigans!

Q: When are you most naughty?

A: When our humans are trying to get out the door and all we want to do is play so we make them chase us around. We especially love to do it with our mom because she is the softer one and Dad means business so we listen very well to him!

Q: What's your current obsession?

A: Our little brother and newest bestie, Winston! At first we were not too sure about him but we now love playing with him and chasing him around! We hear that one day he will be bigger than both of us but for now he's like a little snowball we get to boss around!

Q: Share your favorite treat.

A: The new Milk-Bone Halloween dog Oreos, we are all obsessed with the taste of pumpkin! We also love ice cubes! We always get an ice cube when Mom and Dad fill up their waters!

Q: Where do you all get pampered?

A: We are in need of some pampering coming up! Our parents love Allen's Pet Care in Lodi!

Q: Where were you born?

A: I was born in Lodi; Bentley was rescued from L.A. and Winston was born in Sacramento!

Q: Who are your parents:

A: Sydney and Dawson Hayre! We have officially outnumbered Mom and Dad and are excited to give them a run for their money! Let the good times roll and may the vacuuming daily begin for Mom. ♦

VISIT ITALY WITH PACIFIC ITALIAN ALLIANCE

On September 13, the Pacific Italian Alliance held its Passport to Italy celebration under the oak trees in the serene California Mediterranean gardens of Capecchio Ovest. Guests enjoyed a fabulous dinner by Angelina's and dancing under the stars to live music by the North Beach Band of San Francisco. The Pacific Italian Alliance is a unique cultural institution celebrating the wonders of Italy with a focus on the heritage of the many Italian families who have made their home in the northern San Joaquin Valley of California. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN



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SUN, NOV 16 | 2:30 PM

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CALENDAR

CELEBRATE COMMUNITY EVENTS

NOVEMBER 5

Stockton Leadership Trivia Night

Adventist Health Arena
Info: visitstockton.org

NOVEMBER 8-9

Stockton Hmong New Year

San Joaquin County Fairgrounds
Info: (209) 688-1539

NOVEMBER 25

Hospice Tree Lighting

Delta College, Stockton
Info: hospicesj.org

NOVEMBER 6

**Live Music: Claudia Russell
& Bruce Kaplan**

The Haggin Museum
Info: hagginmuseum.org

NOVEMBER 13

**Growing Our Future:
An Eleanor by Women United
Legacy Celebration**

Oak Farm Vineyards
Info: unitedwaysjc.org

NOVEMBER 27

Run & Walk Against Hunger

Stockton Ballpark
Info: runagainsthunger.org

NOVEMBER 6

36th Because Kids Awards

University Park Hotel
Info: frcsj.com

NOVEMBER 7-9 & 14-16

Annie

St. Peter Church Auditorium, Lodi
Info: splodichurch.org

NOVEMBER 7

**Nutcracker! Magical
Christmas Ballet**

Bob Hope Theatre
Info: (209) 373-1400

NOVEMBER 20

Athena Awards Luncheon

Stockton Golf and Country Club
Info: stocktonchamber.org

NOVEMBER 7-9

Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival

Hutchins Street Square, Lodi
Info: (800) 581-6150

NOVEMBER 21

Dueling Pianos Bingo

Stockton Ballroom
Info: (209) 271-0225

SAVE THE DATE

DECEMBER 4

Lodi Parade of Lights

Downtown Lodi
Info: visitlodi.com/events/

DECEMBER 5-7

Festival of Trees

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Info: sanjoaquinhistory.org/festival-of-trees

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Customer Service representatives are available 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., seven days a week from October 1 through March 31, and Monday to Friday from April 1 through September 30. The call is free. Messages received on holidays or outside business hours will be returned within one business day.