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JUNE 2026

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Duffy**

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OF STOCKTON**

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OUR JUNE MEN'S ISSUE

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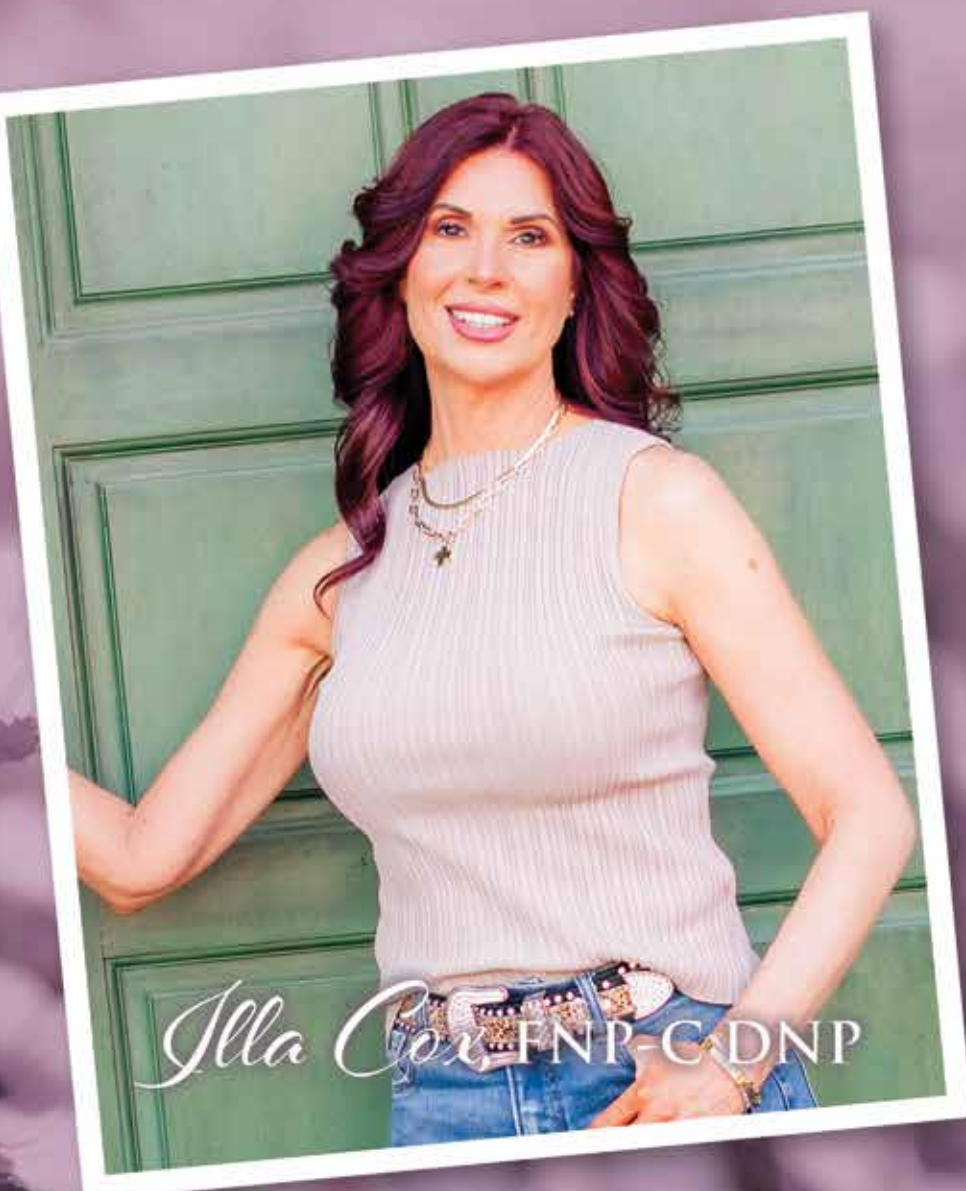
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AUGUST

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SEPT.

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03
OCTOBER

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Michael Duffy: "Working together is the key to positive change."

A dictionary definition of stewardship is the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care, such as resources, property or environment. It involves acting as a caretaker to protect and manage assets, often for the benefit of a larger community or future generations, focusing on sustainability and accountability. Stockton's Michael Duffy exemplifies all these qualities in his career and outlook on life.



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School's out for the summer! Boats have been tuned up, skis and wakeboards dusted off, inner-tubes inflated, new bathing suits purchased and sunblock ready to shield the harsh rays.

Summers on the Delta are some of the best memories for our family, such as early morning wakeboarding on water as smooth as glass. Sassman would gather up the kids and their friends and spend an entire day tubing, wakeboarding and the traditional end-of-day stop for a burger at Bob's at the Marina.

When out-of-town friends are visiting (or even locals who have never been boating on the Delta—imagine!), we especially enjoy entertaining with an evening cocktail cruise, packing up a platter of salami and cheese, a nice selection of beverages and simply cruise, leaving from Ladd's Point. It's full throttle as we enjoy the beauty of the Stockton Golf and Country Club, then slow to enjoy the elegant homes along Riviera Cliffs and Atherton Island. After Louise Park, we usually pull up to a huge ship in port then slowly cruise into downtown Stockton, past the Waterfront Warehouse, the Banner Island Ballpark, Adventist Health Arena and Weber Point. It is a completely different perspective from the water. Then it's a U-turn and we head on back up the river. The finale is usually about 7:30 as the sun displays the most vibrant, orange and red hues as it settles behind Mt. Diablo. It's time to trailer up and get back home.

The Delta is not only a regular outing for local families but quite the destination for many Nor Cal boaters. Often, I'll have out-of-town friends call to say they are RVing at Tower Park or one of the many



Delta campsites and say, "We're taking our boat down the river tomorrow, can you meet us at a place called Garlic Brothers? Is that close to you?" Well, it's basically my backyard! Even though you can take the Delta all the way out through and beyond the Golden Gate Bridge, there is much to be explored right here. We are blessed to have our Delta, the waterway to the world!

In this Men's Issue of *HERLIFE* Magazine, we feature Stocktonian and community advocate Michael Duffy, describing how he grew up in San Joaquin County enjoying the Delta and serving our community in so many ways, including his appointment to the Port of Stockton as a port commissioner. In other stories, we add more value to the Delta experience by highlighting some unexpected treasures you can

find on the waterways. If you are a lover and admirer of beautiful classic wood boats, read about the annual Runabouts on the River Classic Boat Show. We are also excited about the progress of the restoration of the USS Lucid and the Maritime Museum. Currently moored by the Stockton Rod and Gun Club, the Lucid will eventually move to downtown Stockton, where it is sure to be a great tourist destination. A recently added treasure is the Maritime Preservation Trust. With our rich boat-making history in Stockton, you will enjoy reading about what they are doing to not only preserve beautiful yachts but to train students in the craft of woodworking and boat restoration. You can even investigate our local rowing, sailing and sculling clubs!

So, buckle up the life vests, practice water safety, and tow, tow, tow your motorboat...

Carrie



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CHECK IN

with Dr. Ruby Gill

LET'S CHECK UP ON...

HE'S NOT HIMSELF EITHER: A CLINICAL LOOK AT MALE HORMONAL & METABOLIC DECLINE

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

For many women navigating midlife, the physiologic changes of perimenopause and menopause are well recognized. What is less often discussed—yet equally relevant—is that men frequently undergo their own, more subtle shift in the same decade of life. It does not present as abruptly, nor is it framed with the same clinical vocabulary, but its effects are meaningful. Often, it is first noticed not by the patient, but by the partner.

In clinical practice, I commonly hear a similar observation: "He's just not himself." The description is rarely dramatic. Instead, it reflects a gradual change—lower energy, diminished motivation, increased irritability, and a reduced sense of engagement with daily life. Many men will not articulate these changes directly, but they may manifest as decreased exercise tolerance, increased central weight gain, disrupted sleep or a general decline in productivity.

From a physiological standpoint, these symptoms often correlate with changes in metabolic health and testosterone levels. Beginning as early as the fourth decade, men can experience a gradual decline in serum testosterone, accompanied by increased visceral adiposity, insulin resistance and unfavorable lipid shifts. These changes are not isolated; they exist within a broader network of endocrine and metabolic signaling that impacts mood, cognition and cardiovascular risk.

Anecdotally, what surprises many patients is the emotional component. While public perception often associates testosterone with excess—particularly in the context of athletic misuse and mood volatility—the clinical reality at physiologic levels is quite different. When testosterone is optimized appropriately in men with true deficiency, improvements are often seen in mood stability, motivation, metabolic parameters and sexual health, including erectile function. Rather than amplifying irritability, many men experience a more balanced emotional baseline and a restoration of their prior sense of drive.

It is also important to acknowledge that the regulatory landscape continues to evolve. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has recently taken steps to re-evaluate labeling considerations for testosterone therapy, including its role in men with idiopathic hypogonadism. This reflects an ongoing effort to better define which patients may benefit from treatment while maintaining

appropriate safety standards and clinical rigor.

In an integrative setting, these conversations are rarely isolated to one individual. When I evaluate couples, I often find that both partners are experiencing parallel physiologic changes—hormonal, metabolic and lifestyle-related. Addressing these patterns together can be both clinically effective and personally meaningful. There is a distinct shift that occurs when both individuals begin to feel stronger, more metabolically stable and more aligned in their health goals.

Over time, I have observed that couples who engage in care together often report not only improvements in laboratory parameters, but also in quality of life. They describe restored intimacy, improved energy and a renewed ability to participate in activities they had gradually stepped away from—whether that is travel, exercise or simply feeling present in their daily lives. In many cases, they report feeling better in their 40s and 50s than they did in their 30s.

The key is thoughtful evaluation. Not every patient with fatigue or weight gain requires hormonal therapy, and treatment decisions should always be grounded in a comprehensive clinical assessment—history, laboratory data and an understanding of the individual's broader health profile. When appropriate, targeted interventions—ranging from lifestyle optimization to pharmacologic support—can help restore physiological balance.

For women who recognize these changes in their partners, the insight is valuable. These shifts are not simply behavioral or motivational; they are often rooted in measurable changes in physiology. Bringing awareness to this can be the first step toward meaningful intervention.

Midlife health is not a solitary experience. When approached with intention and evidence-based care, it can become an opportunity—not just for symptom management, but for optimization, resilience and a renewed standard of well-being for both partners. •

Schedule your integrative medicine consultation with Dr. Ruby Gill today! Take the first step toward thriving again with personalized, evidence-based care tailored to your unique needs. Let Dr. Gill help you reclaim your health, confidence, and joy!

Disclaimer: This article is for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Always consult with your physician or qualified healthcare professional before starting any new treatment, including supplements, to ensure it is appropriate for your individual health needs.



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Thank you, Michael Duffy!

We thank you for your unwavering commitment to St. Joseph's Medical Center and to the San Joaquin Valley's access to exceptional healthcare.

Michael Duffy's connection to St. Joseph's is deeply personal. His career began in our dietary services department laying the foundation for a lifelong dedication.

His philanthropic journey started in the mid 1990s. He volunteered his expertise, helping bring the transformative Patient Pavilion to our campus in 2010. Now, Michael is stepping forward again, co-chairing St. Joseph's Foundation of San Joaquin's pivotal "Deep Roots, New Growth – A campaign to support St. Joseph's Medical Center."

Michael's passion for philanthropy is infectious. He leads by powerful example, dedicating his invaluable time, talent, and treasure first, inspiring others to invest in Stockton's future.

"Michael's dedication to St. Joseph's is simply extraordinary. He's not just a co-chair; he's a true partner who understands the profound impact we have on countless lives. His ability to inspire and unite people behind a common goal is unparalleled, and his leadership is absolutely vital to the success of 'Deep Roots, New Growth.'"

— Suzanne Ledbetter, Campaign Co-Chair,
St. Joseph's Foundation of San Joaquin

To learn more about the Deep Roots, New Growth Campaign contact the Foundation office at 209-467-6347.



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A portrait of Michael Duffy, a middle-aged man with grey hair, smiling. He is wearing a blue suit jacket, a white shirt, and a red bow tie with blue and white stripes. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with a blue sky and some structures.

Michael Duffy

"Working together is the key to positive change."

BY RACHEL FENTON

PHOTOS BY KEVIN RICHTIK, CAROLINE PHOTOGRAPHY

Stewardship might seem like an archaic concept in this day and age, but it is more relevant now than ever. We are surrounded by glorious bounty, especially here in the Central Valley, from the abundant farmers markets that bless us every harvest season to the cool waters of the Delta. Our location is perfect, close to some of the most beautiful and cosmopolitan places in the world. But the Central Valley doesn't belong to us alone; it also belongs to future generations. We should all do our part in ensuring the beauty of our county will last for centuries to come, to be good stewards and take care of it for the sake of our children and our children's children.

Michael Duffy, a lifelong resident of Stockton and humanitarian, has long considered himself a steward of his beloved hometown.



He has dedicated his life and career to helping his neighbors, and not just those living adjacent to him: “My neighborhood is the county!” he said. “There’s nothing that ignites more happiness in me than to see my neighbors living a good life.” From his childhood playing along the Delta to his current position as port commissioner, Michael has worked tirelessly to preserve the beauty of San Joaquin County for the generations that will follow in his footsteps.

Backyard Creek to Broader Shores

Born into a loving Irish Catholic family, Michael grew up on the north side of Stockton with the values of “God, family, and community” always at the forefront of his mind. A creek ran right behind his backyard and their home was adjacent to the Holt Ranch, which gave them permission to hunt and fish on the land. Michael said he had “a perfect childhood. growing up in a place like that.” Although their neighborhood was near the amenities of the city, the creek and ranch property gave them the beauty and adventures of country life. His childhood was something straight out of a storybook; with his siblings, Michael would build crawdad traps and rafts as they played on the creek and into the greater channel. That little creek first opened his eyes to the rest of the world. “The creek was connected in a larger way to the greater Delta. At the port there were ships that came in from around the world and the naval base, and it was all connected to the little creek behind my house,” Michael said. “It gave me a great appreciation for the Delta.”

On feast days and holidays, Michael’s parents would invite sailors from the port to come celebrate with them and go into town to shop. He remembers stories from faraway lands and their eagerness as they browsed their local stores with new wares and fresh produce. The sailors’ excitement helped him see many things he took for granted about his hometown, such as its beautiful agriculture

and abundant markets and its port with access to the wide world beyond. “The world comes into Stockton through the port,” he said. “We’re connected to everything everywhere!” After serving as a page in Congress during his junior year in high school, Michael attended San Francisco State University to study international relations, pursuing his ongoing interest in the ways the world is interconnected. Once he graduated with his degree, he spent a few years working all around the globe, interacting with different people and their cultures. Some of his favorite jobs were aboard ships, sailing and seeing the world that he’d heard stories about from the sailors sitting around his parents’ dining table.

No Place Like Home

After his travels, Michael found himself moving back to Stockton to settle down. There, he met his wife, and they raised their two children together as he pursued his career. “You can get far away from Stockton, but it always calls back,” he said with a laugh. “I could not ask for a better hometown, our community, our geography, everything about Stockton. You can’t replace good land and good people, there’s no substitute.” Michael earned his international MBA from Pepperdine University and had a successful career managing the Financial Center Credit Union for 30 years before he retired. Every day, he brought his passion for making the world a better place into work with him. “I helped people to become the best that they can be and live to their full potential through access to credit,” he said, reminiscing on how he explained his job to his young children. He loved being able to support people in their financial goals and help take care of members of the community: “I couldn’t ask for a better career in helping people.”

That theme of helping others is woven throughout Michael’s life from a young age. “My parents wanted us to be good citizens,”

he said, “with a responsibility to take care and steward the future.” His family taught him that working to make the community a better place was not a chore or a line item to add to a resume, but rather a privilege and an honor as a responsible citizen. When asked where his love for helping others started, he points to his very first job. “It started with being the milk monitor in first grade!” he said. He still proudly shows off his first-grade school picture, when he donned a bow tie for the first time. Ever since he raised his hand to volunteer for that job, he’s been finding ways to help people. “If there was an opportunity to help the greater good, to help the group as a whole, I found that opportunity and did my best to make things better,” he said. “It’s no surprise that later in life I’d be doing the same thing!” He continues to raise his hand to help those around him; he currently sits as the president and CEO of the San Joaquin Community Foundation, which works to bring resources and opportunities to those with the greatest needs in the county. He also has worked with St. Joseph’s Medical Center in Stockton for many years and is currently involved with their Tower expansion project slated to be finished in 2030.

Returning to the Waters

Even after his retiring from his professional career, Michael continued to look for ways to give back to the people around him. “I prefer to see what I can do to help without being too loud and out front,” he said, “Keeping your head down and working for a goal is the way to achieve it.” Remembering his joyful adventures playing along the backyard creek, he began to look for ways to help preserve the environmental beauty that enriched his childhood so much. He found his place at the Port of Stockton, and in 2013, the Stockton City Council appointed Michael as port commissioner. “I’ve gone to work since

“Long-term strategic planning is one of my favorite activities. I want to devote my energies to what makes things better for the next generation; everything stems from that at this point.”

– Michael

then really looking to leverage this asset for the present but also for the future,” he said. “The port is a lever of our economic engine. This is what can throttle us up or throttle us down, and if we steward it correctly, it can continue to pay off for generations to come.”

For more than a decade, Michael has dedicated his time and energy toward maintaining and growing the port while also looking for ways to make it more environmentally conscious. The Port





"I want to devote my energies to what makes things better for the next generation; everything stems from that at this point."

- Michael

of Stockton is a geostrategic asset that's often overlooked. Every year, the port works with over 55 countries, importing and exporting goods as well as conducting its domestic business. It stands as an example of human ingenuity; the complex systems and machinery never cease to amaze Michael. "I'm amazed at human beings and what they've been able to do and how they've been able to mechanize," he said, describing conveyor belts that stretch for blocks and cranes that stretch stories into the sky. But his absolute favorite part of the job is looking toward the future and finding ways to improve the way the port operates to keep it operating in a way that preserves both its usefulness and its beauty. "Long-term strategic planning is one of my favorite activities," he said. "I want to devote my energies to what makes things better for the next generation; everything stems from that at this point."

Small Actions, Big Impacts

Again and again, Michael returns to the creek that played such a pivotal role in his childhood formation, seeing it as a metaphor for our connection to the greater world. Just like that creek feeds into

the sea, we are all connected to the greater whole, and everything we do has a ripple effect that impacts the larger community. All of us are called to be stewards of the gifts we have been given, and all of us should ensure those gifts will pass on to the next generations. Even the smallest actions can lead to positive changes, and Michael is one of the first to urge everyone to do whatever they can to make the world a better place. He encourages those around him to get involved in any way they can, from helping at clean-up days to participating in food drives, every small action brings the community closer together. "I'm not so important; we're all important," he said. "The more of us that become a small part in what happens here, the more things we can do together." He emphasizes cooperation over complaining: no problem is too big when enough people come together to tackle it. "There are so many ways in our daily lives, if we just take a moment to think about how we fit in and think of others, that we can come together and make large issues into small, manageable things," Michael said. He dreams of a future when all of us come together to steward the land around us, passing it on like a precious gift to our children. "Working together is the key," he said. ♦

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The USS Lucid

Restoration Work Continues

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JO ANN KIRBY

The Stockton Maritime Museum aims to create a permanent museum on Stockton's downtown waterfront that will provide public access to Stockton's historical and cultural past. Its prominent feature will be the USS Lucid, which was acquired by the museum in 2010 and moved to Stockton in 2010, where restoration began.

The USS Lucid was one of 101 Aggressive Class minesweepers built in an emergency three-year shipbuilding program in the early 1950s in response to the U.S. Navy's losses from Soviet

high-tech mines during the Korean War. Stockton's historic Colberg Boat Works was tasked to build three of the USS Lucid's sister ships. The USS Lucid, which was built in 1953 by Higgins Industries in New Orleans, Louisiana, is the last surviving Aggressive Class minesweeper in the United States.

The Stockton Maritime Museum was awarded a \$950,000 Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Grant last year to cover design, architecture, engineering and permitting for the development of its one-and-a-half-acre site on the south shore

of Stockton's historic waterfront. "The restoration work on board Lucid is now approximately 85 percent completed," David Rajkovich, president of the Stockton Maritime Museum board of directors, said. "All the work is done by San Joaquin Office of Education's Building Futures Academy students and adult volunteers of the museum."

San Joaquin Building Futures Academy, or SJBFA, is a public school for students in San Joaquin County who participate in the SJCOE YouthBuild program. SJBFA is a high school dropout credit recovery program that offers grades 9 through 12 and serves youth ages 18 to 24. Academic and construction curriculum are integrated and provide multiple opportunities for hands-on experiences, meaning that students earn credits for their work on the Lucid.

More than a dozen students are working on the Lucid. The students earn valuable experience, taking on restoration tasks such as carpentry, electrical, plumbing and more under the guidance of their instructors and experienced volunteers. John Van Huystee, a museum board advisor, is helping oversee restoration of the Lucid. He has a background as a building contractor and is a vocational instructor at Building Futures Academy. "A lot of life skills are taught, from showing up on time to how to conduct yourself in different situations and surroundings," John said.

Students come out once or twice a week, depending on their school schedule, to complete work on the ship. There are adult volunteers on board five days a week. Scavenging parts for the ship has taken those involved in the project far and wide! "A group of ten museum volunteers recently returned from Kaohsiung, Taiwan, where we removed approximately 50 tons of minesweeping gear and parts from the Ex-USS Implicit, MSO-455. She was the very last remaining sister ship of the USS Lucid to be decommissioned anywhere in the world. An exact twin of Lucid, Implicit served our Navy from 1955 to 1995, then was sold to the Republic of China (Taiwan) Navy, where she served another 30 years as the Yung Yang in Taiwan's Navy," David said "We were able to retrieve much-needed gear including sonar consoles, anchors, anchor chain, taft rails, stern minesweep cranes, paravanes and



electrical gear."

The next project is to finish both engine rooms, which are being prepped for sanding, painting and lighting. It will take about two to three months to complete, since the engine rooms are the largest spaces on the ship.

David said the grant enabled the museum to hire an architect and to work through the permitting process. "Once permitting process is complete, we hope to begin construction on our permanent Weber Avenue location," he said. "Fundraising efforts are under way with private and corporate supporters, as well as additional potential state and local agency funding."

When completed, Stockton Maritime Museum, with the USS Lucid as its iconic attraction, will benefit the community with educational opportunities for all ages, offering community gathering spaces and highlighting the rich history of the waterfront's ship-building past. The transformation is noticeable. "I have been on the ship for now 12 years, and I have seen a wreck of a vessel turn into the beautiful maritime piece of history it has become," John said.

The ship is open to the public twice a year during spring and fall open house events. The next scheduled open house is set for Saturday, October 3, 2026. Additional details will be available as the date draws near. The museum's website at stocktonhistoricalmaritimemuseum.org has a plethora of information as well as how to volunteer.

"We want to encourage folks in the community to come out to see the beautiful restoration work our students, adult volunteers and donors have helped accomplish thus far," he said. "And we welcome financial support from the community, as that has been our main source of funding. With all work done by volunteers, we get a lot of work completed from every dollar we raise."

For now, the USS Lucid is moored near Pixie Woods. "We hope to be able to move to our permanent, downtown waterfront location in another three years," David said. ♦



Beauty of the Valley



Lazy Afternoon

This month's image, originally part of my ongoing Beauty of Stockton series, captures a tranquil springtime moment along the Delta, where a lone sailboat glides effortlessly across calm waters on a warm, unhurried afternoon. A soft breeze fills the sail just enough to carry it forward, while the gentle current mirrors the easy rhythm of the scene. In the distance, the familiar silhouette of Mount Diablo rises against a softly hazed sky, providing a timeless westward backdrop that anchors the composition in a sense of place. The combination of stillness, light, and motion creates a quiet balance and an invitation to pause, breathe, and appreciate one of the many understated moments of beauty found right here in our region.



Kevin Richtik is a Brooks Institute of Photography graduate and the owner of Stockton-based Caroline Photography, a studio deeply rooted in the community.

He has photographed thousands of local families and worked with a wide range of regional and national companies with his photography appearing in numerous publications. Kodak has featured his work in worldwide advertising to showcase its products.

In addition, Kevin creates a wide range of fine art images, from sweeping landscapes of the San Joaquin Valley and is creator of the ongoing Beauty of Stockton photo project, a weekly series that highlights the city's unique and often overlooked strengths, showcasing Stockton's vibrant, positive spirit. The project has expanded to include the Beauty of the Valley.

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

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RUNABOUTS ON THE RIVER

A COLLECTION OF CLASSICS

BY JO ANN KIRBY

Where can you get a free ride in an antique custom-built wooden Chris-Craft boat? If it's going to be anywhere, it's going to be this summer in Stockton!

The eighth annual Runabouts on the River, presented by the Antique and Classic Boat Society NorCal/Lake Tahoe chapter, takes place from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on June 27, 2026, at the Stockton Sailing Club on the beautiful Delta in Stockton, California. It gives attendees the chance to ride in a runabout and take a little spin on the San Joaquin River.

This event features a large collection of classic wooden boats, including world-class mahogany runabouts and historic Gar-Wood, Chris-Craft and Century models. Many of the crafts are meticulously restored and look like something James Bond would helm.

Mark Manes, who is chairing the event, said Runabouts on the River is a chance to share the chapter's love of classic boats and cars. "We want to bring awareness to the classic boating hobby, get some new members and share our boats with the community," he said. "We are especially proud this year to plan on donating a portion of any proceeds from the event to the Sea Scouts of Stockton, the Stockton Sailing Club Youth Foundation and the USS Lucid/Stockton Maritime Museum, which showcases the USS Lucid on downtown Stockton's waterfront." Funds from the event also allow the Antique and Classic Boat Society to continue offering programming for the community.

What is Mark's favorite part of the event? "Definitely the boat rides and the smiles on the kids' faces as they get to ride in a classic runabout." The beautiful, sleek wooden boats that owners bring to Runabouts are visually stunning. Some will be docked and boat owners love to share their boat's history. A car show component features all kinds of classic and antique vehicles.

Eric Koster, who chaired the event last year and is volun-

teering again this year, said that Runabouts on the River is a rare chance to see beautiful classic boats from the 1920s and later. "There is nowhere else in this region where you can see boats of this caliber," he said. "The closest experience would be the Lake Tahoe Concours d'Elegance on the west shore of the lake." Free boat rides are offered up the San Joaquin River and back down toward the Riviera Cliffs by members. It's about a seven- to ten-minute, short and sweet ride that gives attendees a rare opportunity to ride in a classic wooden runabout, hence the event's name.

"This year's event has something the whole family can enjoy, with special kids' booth and activities just for children that will pique their interest," Eric said. Runabouts on the River offers free admission and boat rides on the San Joaquin River so that enthusiasts, collectors and the community can enjoy a beautiful day at this event that brings together classic and antique boats, classic cars, hot rods and modern performance cars. There are vendors selling food, drinks and other wares; attendees can listen to live music and buy a beer at the Stockton Sailing Club. A highlight is always the live demonstrations from the San Joaquin County Sheriff's firefighting boat as it shows off firefighting skills.

ACBS NorCal/Lake Tahoe is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation, restoration and education of antique and classic boats. As one of 53 chapters of the Antique & Classic Boat Society, Inc., based in Clayton, New York, the Stockton chapter has several events each year in multiple locations in Northern California.

Sponsorship and additional vendor opportunities are available. To learn more about this event, to register a car or boat, check out sponsorship opportunities or to request vendor information, visit acbsrotr.com. ♦



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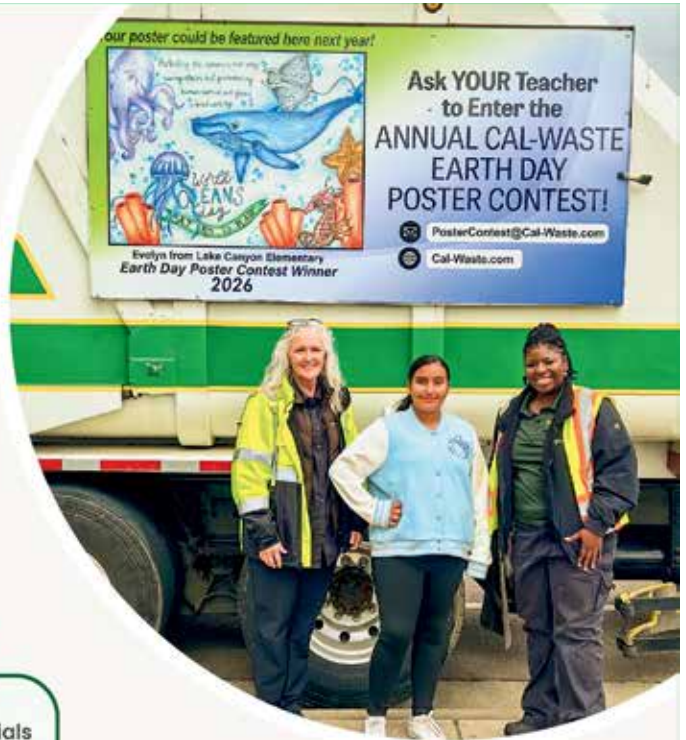
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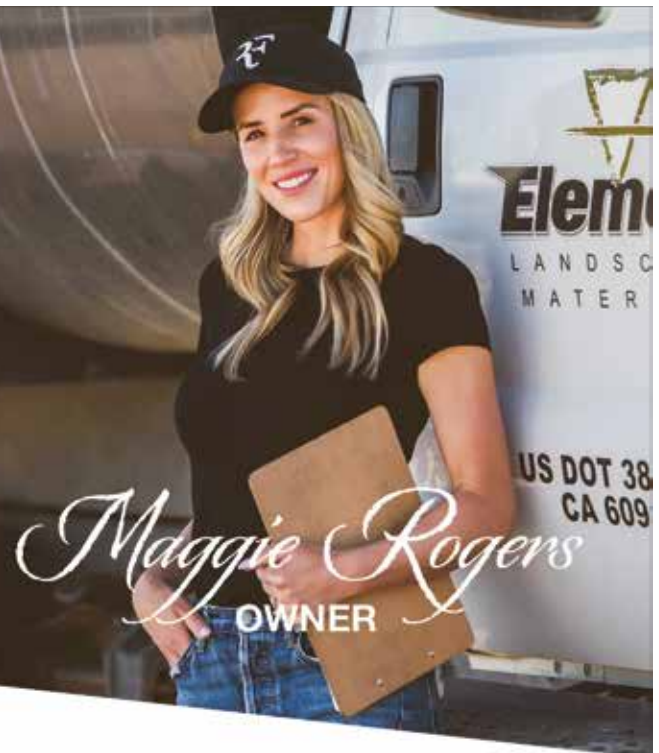
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A Seaworthy Future...

Wayne Ettel And The Maritime Preservation Trust

BY RACHEL FENTON
PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARITIME PRESERVATION TRUST

The passage of time is like water against stone. If left alone, eventually it will wear all things down. Knowledge, history, craftsmanship, artifacts all require our active preservation to ensure they are not lost forever. Wayne Ettel has dedicated his life to fighting against this entropy, specifically by conserving our nautical heritage through boat restoration and mentoring youth who show interest in sailing and industrial arts. He recently opened a new workshop in Stockton after relocating

from Southern California and aims to use his platforms to ensure these critical skills are passed down to the next generation, safe from the erosion of time.

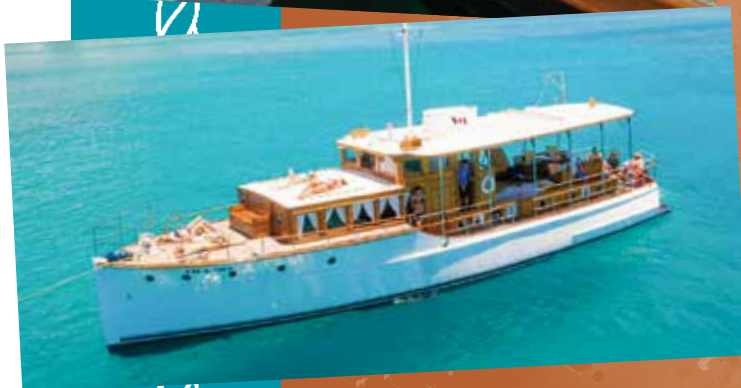
Although Wayne might be relatively new to the Central Valley, he's a Californian through and through with salt water in his veins. Wayne grew up in Southern California along the coast, spending every summer day swimming and surfing with friends and family. A self-described "aqua nut," he spent his youth scuba diving,

swimming, sailing, as a junior lifeguard and being around the water as much as he could. "You can never keep me out of the water," he said with a laugh. "I started in the Orange County Sea Scouts; they had a tall ship there, the Argus, that was the first square rig tall ship in California." The Argus, built in 1906, introduced thousands of Boy Scouts to the art of sailing during its time; it's one of the reasons Wayne himself became so interested in sailing and preserving historic boats. "There was a whole army of us that skippered the boats and maintained the boats," he said. "We just grew up doing it."

With his affinity for the sea, it's no surprise Wayne has dedicated his life to preserving and restoring the crafts that sail upon it. An expert mariner and craftsman, he began a business preserving classic wooden boats in 1977 in Costa Mesa, starting with the schooner the Spike Africa, owned by Bob Sloan. He has since worked on several notable crafts, restoring them to their former glory and preserving the history within their timbers. "I spent my whole career fixing things. We have a lot of pride in what we do," he said. "Some of the boats I work on are 100 years old; they've been in the family for generations."

Over the years, the Sea Scouts became less active, and Wayne noticed fewer youth being introduced to either the industrial arts or the art of sailing. Determined to pass on the experience he had in his own childhood, Wayne founded the Maritime Preservation Trust, a nonprofit dedicated to preserving both historic boats and essential skill sets for the upcoming generations. "We started the Maritime Preservation Trust because I wanted young people to experience what I had experienced," Wayne said. "We're preserving history, training people in the arts and crafts of woodworking and boat restoration and providing an activity for youth." They share their history and reconstruction techniques on their YouTube channel, hoping to spread their knowledge even further. Not only does the Maritime Preservation Trust teach valuable industrial skills and preserve essential historical knowledge and artifacts, but it also acts as a launching pad for those wanting careers in the maritime industry. "My favorite part is working with the young people; it keeps you young. Without them, there's no future," he said. "You can't put a price on a young person's face when they work on a boat and they fix something, and they get to go out and drive it."

Earlier this year, the Maritime Preservation Trust hosted its first Central Valley open house during which it launched the Athena, its flagship and a beautiful vessel rich with California history, originally built in Stockton in 1929. It was a beautiful culmination of the values Wayne has always prioritized; the preservation of historical beauty and skills, and the mentorship of the next generation to do the same. Through his tireless work at both his boat restoration business and the Maritime Preservation Trust, he hopes to rekindle Stockton's interest in its rich nautical heritage while mentoring the next generation of sailors and craftsmen. Under his watchful eye and careful tutelage, these essential skills will pass on to his students and his students' students, defying the erasure of time. "I can't fix everything," Wayne said. "But I'll do the best I can." ♦



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When school is out, the Lodi Boys & Girls Club offers far more than somewhere for kids to go. It provides mentorship, academic support, healthy activities and life-changing opportunities that help local youth reach their full potential.

Many people recognize the Boys & Girls Club name, but few understand the depth of its community impact. At the Lodi clubhouse, programs focus on academic success, health and fitness, character development and leadership. The bright, welcoming facility fills daily with students doing homework, exploring creative activities, playing sports and building meaningful friendships.

Executive director Roger Coover said safety is always the top priority, but keeping youth engaged and having fun matters just as much. "On a typical day after school, the first hour is homework, followed by a snack and free time," Coover said. "Then members

choose from several activities that help them learn, grow and build confidence."

Programs are designed to prepare youth for success in school and life. Teen members participate in financial literacy and career readiness courses covering budgeting, saving, resume writing, interview skills and workplace preparation. Younger members develop problem-solving and creative thinking through hands-on projects that foster leadership and citizenship.

The club serves youth ages 6 to 18 and currently has more than 425 active members, with daily attendance ranging from 45 to 120 children depending on the season. Membership costs just \$35 annually, and scholarships ensure no child is turned away due to financial hardship. "Our mission is to meet the needs of the whole child," Coover said. "That may mean emotional support, food, clothing, mentoring or simply providing a caring adult who believes in them."

For youth facing challenges beyond their control, the club becomes a place of stability, encouragement and hope. Staff build lasting relationships that can shape a child's entire future. Operations manager Brittney Austin noted that the organization also supports whole families by connecting them with food assistance, clothing and mental health resources.

None of it is possible, however, without community support. Operating on an annual budget of \$750,000, most of which goes toward the staff who mentor members every day, the club faces a persistent challenge: restricted funding. "A lot of companies don't want to give a grant for operating costs; they want to give a grant for a specific project," Austin said. That makes unrestricted donations especially valuable. The club hosts three major fundraisers each year to help bridge the gap, and donor relationships are central to Coover's role.

"Lodi has been very supportive of this club, and Lodi is a really good community," Coover said. "There are certain families who really recognize the importance of what we do, and we don't take that for granted."

To reach even more youth, the club has been actively expanding its presence by participating in community events, hosting its own resource fair, and connecting with families through Peachjar, the digital communication platform used by Lodi Unified School District. Partnerships with local organizations further extend the club's reach across the community.

Founded in 1963, the nonprofit has served Lodi for more than six decades and recently received the Boys & Girls Clubs of America Hero for Youth award for its advocacy and commitment to local youth.

The Lodi Boys and Girls Club is located at 275 Poplar St., Lodi, California. Contact the club at (209) 344-2697 or go online to bgclodi.com for more information. •



This feature was made possible through nonprofit capacity-building support from the Lodi Community Foundation. Are you interested in leaving a legacy or maximizing your charitable goals? Let's talk...

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ROSES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The inaugural Stockton Rose Garden tour was a day filled with beauty, as attendees strolled through five gardens: University Park World Peace Rose Garden, the private rose garden of Gerry Dunlap, the Faye Fotini Spanos Rose Garden, Gerry Dunlap Rose Garden at the Haggin Museum and the Rose Garden at Knoles Lawn. The event was hosted on April 25, 2026, by SASS! Public Relations, Stockton Beautiful and the Stockton Garden Club. Live music, refreshments and conversations with master gardeners made the day complete. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN



SCULLING, ROWING, SAILING: Clubs for Everyone

BY MARY RAFFETTO

Spending time on the water has long been recognized for its soothing effects, and when paired with sculling, rowing or sailing, can be the perfect combination of exercise and serenity. What's the difference? Sculling uses affixed oars that are held in each hand and pulled firmly to propel the vessel, also known as a scull. Like sculling, rowing can be done alone or as a team, but rowing involves paddles that are held independently. Sailing requires the all-important skills to catch the wind and get the sailboat to go where you want. Any newcomer will tell you, it's trickier than it sounds. Sculling, rowing and sailing are all great ways to enjoy the outdoors and Stockton has several well-established groups to teach and support enthusiasts.

DELTA SCULLING CENTER

Delta Sculling Center is a nonprofit organization that takes pride in making the sculling experience available to people with a wide range of abilities, regardless of physical limitations or economic means. The organization serves both veterans and civilians and offers newcomers the chance to sample classes and coaching as a way to discover what this popular pastime is all about. Its programs support fitness goals and have expanded to encourage youth to develop healthy habits and self-esteem by promoting exercise in local schools and in after-school programs at its boathouse. Delta Sculling wants everyone to experience the beauty and peace that is achieved through time on the water. – **4950 Buckley Cove Way, Stockton, California 95219 • (209)607-9876 • info@deltasculling.org**

STOCKTON ROWING CLUB

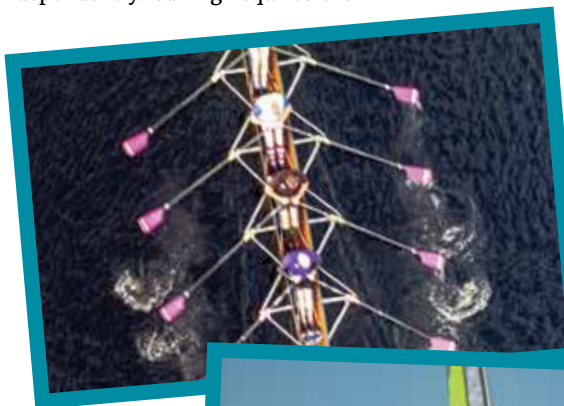
Stockton Rowing Club offers both sweep rowing and sculling as well as a fleet of classic ergs, or rowing machines, for

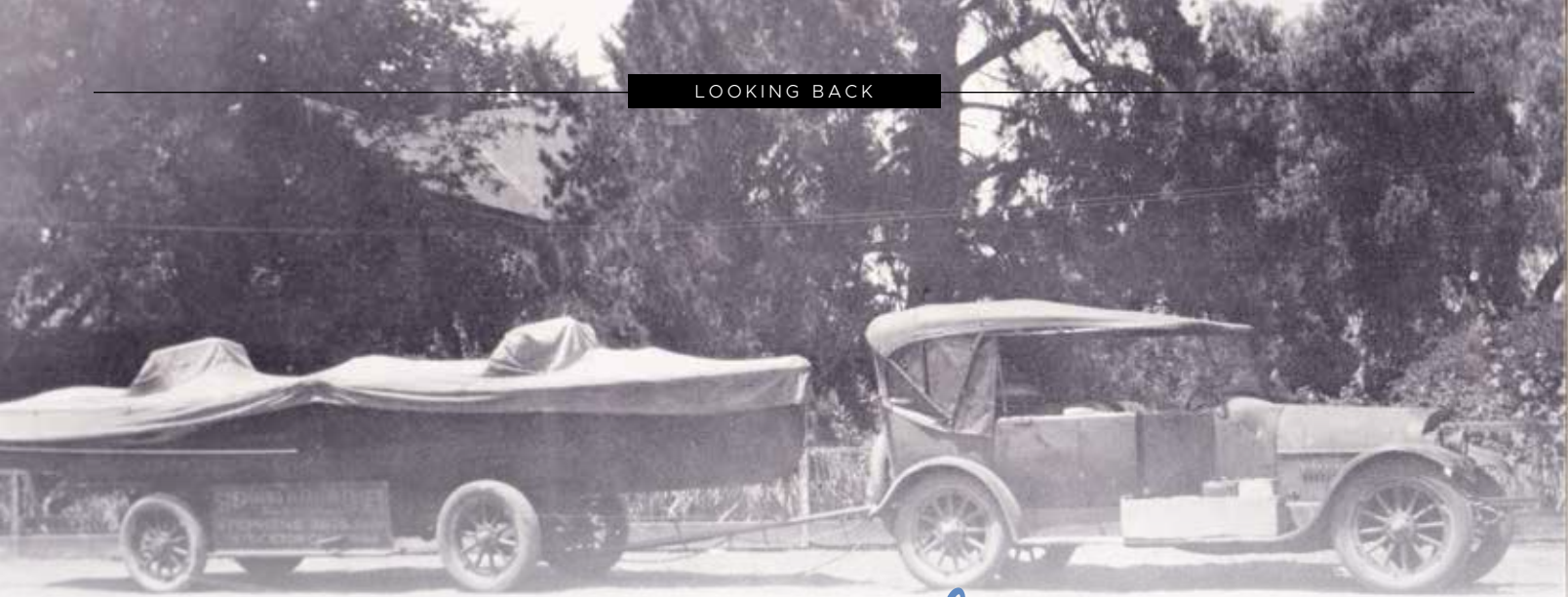
member use, ages 18 and up. Many appreciate this advantage of having a gym-on-the-water to enable growth and increase their fitness level. Throughout the year, Stockton Rowing Club, which is both recreational and competitive, offers Learn to Row introductory courses in which participants spend two hours learning basic rowing technique and experiencing what it's like to slice across the waters of the beautiful San Joaquin Delta. Age groups are Juniors 13-18 and Masters 19 and up. Stockton Rowing Club also organizes team-building events for businesses, community groups, families or anyone wishing to create a memorable experience gathering. – **4950 Buckley Cove Way, Stockton, California 95219 • learn-torow@stocktonrowing.org**

STOCKTON SAILING CLUB

The Stockton Sailing Club truly offers something for everyone including junior sailing lessons, the famous Delta Ditch Run, races, cruises, parties and many other special events throughout the year. Established in 1933, the social club and its members support one another in mastering the art of sailing and boat handling with an emphasis on good sportsmanship. Members have their own beautiful club house, retreat area and harbor with over 300 slips in addition to reciprocal use of other yacht clubs around northern California. Stockton Sailing Club also hosts events for the public, which can be another great way to become familiar with all this group has to offer. – **4980 Buckley Cove Way, Stockton, California 95219 • (209) 951-5600**

Anyone looking for an exhilarating experience, new friendships and the incomparable beauty of the California Delta will surely enjoy these sports and the groups that facilitate them. Sculling, rowing and sailing are all unique, but one thing these groups have in common is that newcomers are always welcome. ♦





A Century on the Water

FLORENCE M II AND THE LEGEND OF KEROSENE KATE

BY PHILLIP MERLO
PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

How a Lodi farming family, a record-breaking automobile, and a Stockton boatyard wrote one remarkable story!

Long before the age of freeways and powerboats, getting a mahogany runabout from San Joaquin County to Lake Tahoe was no small feat. For the Morse-Bewley family of Lodi, it meant loading their Florence M II boat onto a trailer, hitching it to a 1917 REO touring car and setting out for two grueling days of unpaved mountain roads. The car that made that journey possible became as celebrated as the boat itself: a kerosene-burning REO Speed Wagon known to all as "Kerosene Kate."

The story begins in the Delta. In the early 1900s, Stockton brothers Thod and Roy Stephens had built a thriving boat works on the banks of the Stockton Channel, supplying fast wooden runabouts — called "spud boats" — to agricultural brokers who needed to race between Delta farms to secure the best produce prices. An extra mile per hour could mean winning or losing a deal. By 1925, the Stephens Brothers had parlayed their hard-earned expertise into building sleek 26-foot teak-hulled pleasure runabouts that would become some of the most coveted water craft in California.



E.E. Morse — a Lodi farmer who had long brought his family camping through the Sierras, was among the first to want one. The family already owned a summer residence on the west shore of Tahoe and had kept an earlier Stephens launch, the original Florence M, since 1915. In 1925 they purchased the new Stephens 26 and named her Florence M II in honor of Florence, E.E.'s wife. With two cockpits, a teak hull and a powerful Scripps engine, the boat was built for both leisure and speed.

Getting Florence M II to the lake was the adventure. No paved highway connected Lodi to Tahoe, and no proper launching facilities existed on the steep eastern and western shores. The family was forced to push the trailered boat across a sandy beach near present-day Camp Richardson on the southern shore, then navigate north to their

home in Homewood. The car doing the heavy pulling was famous in its own right.

The REO Model M — a large, powerful six-cylinder touring car — had earned its nickname through a series of daring mountain crossings by J.C. Skinner, an inventive Stockton automobile

dealer. Frustrated by the difficulty of finding gasoline in remote Sierra passes, Skinner devised a vaporizer system that allowed the engine to run on kerosene, a cheaper and far more widely available fuel. In the fall of 1917, equipped with his converter and a set of wooden spools bolted to the rear wheels to winch the car free from snowdrifts, Skinner circled the Sierra Nevada — crossing both Sonora Pass at 9,624 feet and Ebbetts Pass — covering 358 miles in just over 28 hours. Local newspapers were enchanted, and the car's nickname was born. A gala dinner in Stockton that December included a poem printed on the menu: "Kerosene Kate is never late / Always in a hurry, with never a flurry."

That same car — or one very like it — would spend decades in the service of the Morse-Bewley family, hauling Florence M II up the mountain every summer and back down to Lodi every fall, where the boat spent winters in the barn.

At Tahoe, the boat found its true calling in the racing circuit of the Tahoe Powerboat Club. E.E.'s daughter Evelyn — known as Eve — was, by all accounts, fearless. She stripped the seats from the boat to shave weight, recruited her young nieces as mandatory crew (racing rules required two people aboard), and proceeded to win trophy af-



ter trophy in the annual "Bang and Go Back" races. To stay competitive into the 1940s, the family swapped out the original six-cylinder Scripps engine for a Chrysler Crown with eight cylinders so large it consumed the entire engine compartment, forcing the fuel tank to be relocated to the stern. The modifications worked. Florence M II kept winning.

Eventually, as the older generation stepped back, the Bewley children took over — learning to water-ski behind a boat powerful enough, family lore holds, to tow four people at once. Florence M II remained at Tahoe for forty continuous years, wintering in the Delta when the family eventually brought her back down the mountain.

In time, the family donated both Florence M II and "Kerosene Kate" to the Tahoe Maritime Museum in Homewood, just a block from their lakeside home. When the Tahoe Maritime Museum closed. The Bewley family's preference was ultimately that the artifacts come to the San Joaquin County Historical Museum — closer to the Lodi farm, the Delta waterways, and the Stockton boatyard where the whole story began. The artifacts are an incredible chapter of local history and remain on permanent display at the San Joaquin County Historical Museum. ♦

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What do you do when you notice a blemish on your car? Dents and dings can be frustrating to deal with; they may be minor at first, but they build up over time and eat away at both your peace and your car's value. The average American spends much of their life behind the wheel of their car, whether commuting to work or traveling for fun. Cars carry our families, hold space for our heartfelt conversations and karaoke radio sing-a-longs, and act as our home away from home. We spend our time, energy and paychecks on the things that matter to us, such as our bodies, our families and our homes. Our cars should be a part of that too.

One local entrepreneur is working to help consumers protect their investments in their cars. Earl Brown, lifelong Stocktonian and owner and CEO of Radiant Ride, is partnering with Northern California auto dealers to offer cosmetic car care, erasing any dings and dents that might come with regular wear and tear. "The core mission of Radiant Ride is to deliver the ultimate vehicle appearance experience for consumers who have high desire for pride of ownership," Earl said. "We're changing the dynamic for car care." In life, dents and dings may happen, but with Radiant Ride, they don't last long.

SMART PREVENTION

Some might think that cosmetic care is frivolous but taking care of external and internal appearances is as important as regular mechanical maintenance. Neglecting a car's exterior finish can lead to greater issues such as corrosion and rust, which eat away at both the metal and your financial investment in your vehicle. Wax and polish do more than make your car glisten and gleam; they act as armor that protects your car from harmful UV rays and the buildup of minerals and dirt. With Radiant Ride, you don't have to worry about damage building up; they provide convenient access to all the repairs you need. "We have a

EARL BROWN
OWNER



network of independent mobile technicians that specialize in dents, dings, windshield chips and aluminum alloy repair," Earl said. "We make it highly convenient for customers to have their repairs done in home or office or scheduled in their routine maintenance at the dealership."

All vehicle owners get regular oil changes and tune-ups to ensure that their cars are operating at their full potential. We should also regularly maintain our car's appearance, both inside and out, to protect against the damage and wear that comes with everyday use. The interiors of our cars are often most neglected, but seats need to be washed and oiled or vacuumed, carpets need to be maintained to prevent stains and smells, and surfaces need to be cleaned and dusted to keep them functioning and sanitary. We regularly maintain our homes and our bodies; our cars should receive the same level of care.

PROTECTING VALUE

The average price of a new car in the United States is approximately \$50,000, an investment rivaling a semester of college education or, in some places, even a down payment on a home. With such a weighty investment on the line, it makes sense to do everything you can to protect your investment. But as we grow and change throughout life's journey, sometimes our car needs change with us. Eventually most people will end up reselling their old vehicle to upgrade, whether upgrading the size of a vehicle to carry a growing family, or simply as a treat to celebrate a special occasion or milestone.

When Earl was finishing his college degree at University of the Pacific, he had a part-time job working at a nearby dealership washing and detailing cars. He still remembers the general manager telling him, "The cleaner the car, the faster it sells!" When reselling, we all hope to get every penny of what our vehicle is worth in return. An immaculate exterior can do wonders in protecting your car's resale value, and the same is true for a clean and well-maintained interior. That "new car smell" alone is often enough to make potential buyers linger a little longer when considering

your car. Incorporating cosmetic care into your vehicle's regular maintenance schedule is one way to ensure you will always get the most out of your ride, whether you intend to eventually sell it for an upgrade, or just enjoy the journey.

PRIDE IN THE JOURNEY

Aesthetics matter. A beautiful space elevates our moods and our attitudes. "After I wash my car and make a few minor cosmetic repairs, it seems to run better!" Earl laughed. Our vehicles are often our second most expensive possession, after our houses; with so much time and money invested in them, they should be more than simply pragmatic. They should be beautiful.

Our cars also are a method of self-expression, whether we mean them to be or not. With Radiant Ride, that expression is one of care and pride. Recently, Mercedes-Benz of Stockton has partnered with Radiant Ride to make automotive cosmetic repairs more convenient for their customers, offering them the option of a premium experience to accompany the purchase of their luxury vehicle. Radiant Ride works with dealerships all over the Central Valley, from Sacramento to Fresno, and has plans to expand to the Bay Area and beyond. They are also offering their services directly. "In addition to our dealer partners, we're rolling out a subscription platform," Earl said, excited to be offering the ease of Radiant Ride's mobile service experience to a broader clientele.

Above all, Radiant Ride is focused on providing "a one-stop shop solution to help with pride of ownership," Earl said. From helping clients protect their investments in their vehicle for the future or maintaining a luxury car's pristine condition inside and out, the company takes pride in their work and in their customers' satisfaction. "The most joy I have is in reading the reviews," Earl said. "It's affirmation that what we're doing is helping customers with a need they have and that we're providing a service that is meaningful to people." Whether you are hoping to keep your car in pristine condition for the possibility of reselling or simply want to make the most of your traveling experience, Radiant Ride is here to help you take pride in your journey. •



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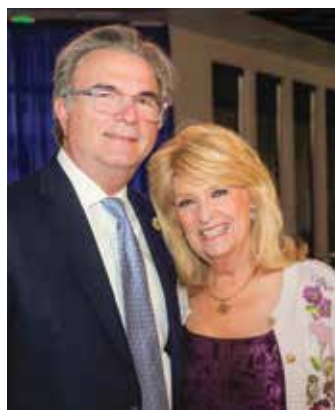
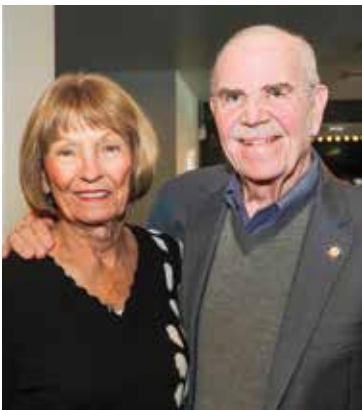
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STOCKTONIAN OF THE YEAR HONORED

The Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce and the Central Valley Association of Realtors honored John Vera as Stocktonian of the Year on April 16, 2026, at the Stockton Golf and Country Club. John is a philanthropist active in the community and supports many local organizations; he's known to show up as a donor, volunteer, board member and behind-the-scenes organizer. His influence in Stockton is longstanding and far-reaching. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN





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ANTONINI COMPANIES CARRYING THROUGH A CENTURY

BY RACHEL FENTON
PHOTOS BY KEVIN RICHTIK, CAROLINE PHOTOGRAPHY

Antonini Companies is celebrating its centennial year, and its vice president and co-owner, Karen Wuellner, couldn't be prouder of the company's heritage. It has remained strong through the various hurdles and economic crises of the past 100 years, a testament to their enduring quality and staunch work ethic. Now, Karen and her brother, Joe, continue to shepherd the company into the future, the third generation preserving the legacy founded by their grandfather and preparing to pass the torch on to the fourth generation.

Karen and Joe's grandfather, Virgilio Antonini, immigrated to the United States from Castiglione Chiavarese, a small town in the north of Italy. He initially found work as a farmer but soon realized there



was a great need for transportation to get produce to the markets quickly and efficiently. He founded Antonini Fruit Express to meet that need, driving to Oakland and taking a ferry to San Francisco to sell produce. "It was a family affair," Karen said, remembering the stories passed down by her father and her aunts and uncles. Virgilio had met his wife here in the United

States, and the couple had three boys and two girls. All three boys became involved in their father's business, including the youngest, Karen and Joe's father, who took full responsibility for the company after the death of his elder brothers.

Karen's two brothers joined their father at the family business when they were in high school and continued to work with him after



Jordan Antonini, Stefano Antonini, Karen Wuellner, Joe Antonini, Keaton Antonini, Andy Wuellner

college. They began to expand their business from hauling only seasonal agricultural produce to include year-round freight, branching out into building materials and eventually into intermodals, helping transport containers to the ports. Meanwhile, Karen pursued other interests instead, studying accounting and earning her CPA qualification. “Dad was always very supportive of anything we wanted to do. He didn’t want to force us into the business at all,” she said.

She began a successful career as an accountant, working at a ski resort, where she also met her husband. But when she moved back to the Central Valley with her husband after having her second child, the company also happened to have the perfect job opening. “It just worked out; I think I knew all along eventually I’d end up here,” Karen said. She began working as controller, and since the company has grown and expanded, she now oversees the HR department and the safety department as well. The company still has a strong agricultural business, focused mostly on tomatoes and nuts, but its year-round freight also keeps them busy during the off seasons.

The work is difficult but rewarding. “We’ve been doing this for 100 years now, but things do change!” Karen said. “No matter how many

years you’ve been doing this, you’re never fully prepared.” She credits her previous career experience for her success in the family business; her work as an accountant prepared her for managing a business and presenting data, and her work at the ski resort prepared her for the challenges of a job with intense seasons. “We have pride in our work. I like to be proud of what we have and what we’ve developed, and proud that our name is on the truck,” she said. They stand by their company values of integrity, heritage, fairness, quality and community service. “We always try to keep the customer as our top concern, the customer, employees and having a good work environment,” Karen said.

While her own children are pursuing their careers with her encouragement, her nephews are strongly involved and prepared to carry on the family legacy. “We’re very proud we’ve been able to continue on with what our grandfather started. The third generation and now the fourth generation have a good opportunity to move the business forward.” Guided by Karen and Joe, with their dedication and firm foundation in integrity and hard work, Antonini Companies will continue to stand strong through the next century despite whatever challenges may come its way. ♦

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BY KATHLEEN JENNISON
PHOTOS BY KEVIN RICHTIK, CAROLINE PHOTOGRAPHY

Lighting Lessons

HOW THE RIGHT
FIXTURES COMPLETELY
CHANGE A ROOM





If you've ever taken a selfie in bad lighting, you already know the truth; light changes everything. The same goes for your home. You can have the most beautiful furniture, the perfect rug and walls painted just the right shade, but if your lighting is wrong? The whole room falls flat.

Lighting is the unsung hero of design. It doesn't just let you see, but sets the mood, highlights what matters, and even makes your home look more expensive than it really is. The good news? A few smart lighting choices can completely transform your space.

THE THREE-LAYER RULE

Professional designers never rely on a single overhead light. Why? Because it makes everyone look like they're telling ghost stories at summer camp. The secret is layering:

Ambient Lighting: This is your base. Think ceiling fixtures, recessed lights or chandeliers. They provide overall illumination and set the tone.

Task Lighting: This is lighting with a purpose, such as reading lamps, under-cabinet kitchen lights, vanity sconces. Anywhere you need to do something, you need task lighting.

Accent Lighting: Here's where the drama happens. Picture lights over artwork, LED strips tucked under shelves or a small lamp casting a cozy glow. Accent lighting draws attention and creates atmosphere.

The mix of all three is what makes a room sing.

FIXTURES AS JEWELRY

Here's a design secret: lighting is to your home what jewelry is to your outfit. Functional, yes, but it's also a chance to show personality. That simple flush mount in your hallway? Replace it with a statement fixture and suddenly the hallway isn't just a pass-through, it's a runway.

In a recent project, swapping out the builder-basic foyer light for a sculptural chandelier completely changed the vibe. Guests now walk in and know immediately that the homeowners value style. It's amazing what a single fixture can say.

THE POWER OF DIMMERS

If there's one upgrade I wish every homeowner would make, it's dimmers. They create bright light in the morning to get you moving, soft light in the evening to wind down. Dimmers turn one fixture into a multi-tasker. Bonus: they also save energy.

Think of it like volume control for your room. Sometimes you want rock concert energy, sometimes you want jazz club ambiance. Dimmers let you choose.

SEASONAL SHIFTS

Lighting needs to change with the seasons. In summer, natural light pours in and does most of the heavy lifting. By fall and

winter, you'll rely on lamps and fixtures to keep your home from feeling gloomy.

This is why I always tell clients to invest in lamps with cool bulbs for living spaces. That cozy glow makes long evenings feel inviting instead of dreary. In the kitchen, mix in brighter task lighting so chopping vegetables doesn't turn into a game of "guess which finger is which."

QUICK FIXES THAT MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Replace one overhead light with a statement chandelier or pendant. Add a floor lamp to any dark corner. Watch the room expand instantly.

Install under-cabinet lighting in the kitchen and it'll feel like a magazine spread. Put bedside sconces on dimmers for hotel-level coziness.

Change your bulbs. Use warm white (2700K–3000K) for living

spaces, cooler (3500K–4000K) for work areas.

A REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

In one client's powder room, the original single bulb cast a harsh shadow that made even the bravest soul want to avoid mirrors. We swapped it for a small chandelier and added a patterned wallpaper. Suddenly, the room became a little jewel box. Guests linger instead of rushing out. That's the power of good lighting.

THE TAKEAWAY

Great lighting isn't about wattage, it's about intention. It shapes how you feel, how you function, and how your home is experienced. The best-designed rooms don't look good just in daylight; they glow at night.

So, before you buy another throw pillow or piece of wall art, look up. The right fixture might be the upgrade your home has been waiting for. ♦



Kathleen Jennison is the principal designer and CEO of KTJ Design Co., a Stockton-based interior design firm known for creating avant-garde yet livable spaces. With over 15 years of experience, she helps clients in life transitions transform their homes into places of beauty, comfort and personality. Kathleen's work has been featured in regional and national publications, and her design philosophy centers on one simple belief: a home should always reflect the people who live in it.

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SKILLET BALSAMIC PORK CHOPS WITH PEACH AND GORGONZOLA SALAD

RECIPE & PHOTO PROVIDED BY BELLYFULL.NET



Stock photo by Vecteezy

INGREDIENTS

PORK CHOPS:

4 cups water
4 tablespoons Kosher salt
2 bone-in pork chops
2 tablespoons olive oil

VINAIGRETTE:

1/3 cup balsamic vinegar
1/4 cup honey
1-2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme leaves or rosemary

1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

SALAD:

2 peaches, sliced
3 ounces of gorgonzola dolce or crumbled blue cheese
3-4 handfuls of arugula

DIRECTIONS

To brine the pork chops, dissolve salt into water and pour mixture over pork chops in a shallow dish. Cover and refrigerate 30 minutes up to 4 hours. Preheat oven broiler to high with the oven rack in the middle position. Rinse the pork chops and dry well with paper towels. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Add 2 tablespoons of olive oil to a heavy oven-proof skillet and heat on medium-high until the oil is shimmering. Carefully, add pork chops to skillet and cook undisturbed for about 5 minutes, or until very brown. Meanwhile, combine the first 5 ingredients of the vinaigrette into small bowl or jar. After searing pork chops, flip and pour all but 1 1/2 tablespoons of vinaigrette mixture to the pork skillet. Immediately place the skillet in the preheated oven and broil until the pork's internal temperature is 145 degrees and charred, 2-4 minutes. Add a splash of water if the sauce is too thick when removed from oven. If you'd like the sauce thicker, remove the chops after they are cooked through and simmer sauce until reduced. Add remaining olive oil to vinaigrette mixture and whisk. Toss the peaches, gorgonzola and arugula with the vinaigrette. Place the pork chops on a platter and arrange the peach salad around the pork. Serve with the sauce from the pork pan. ♦

TIPS

1: Brining pork for even a brief period makes the pork juicy and ensures no more dried pork! The brine mixture I use is 1 cup water to 1 tablespoon Kosher salt. If using table salt use one-third less salt.

3: Any leftover vinaigrette will keep refrigerated up to two weeks. When ready to use, let the dressing come to room temperature and shake/whisk before serving.

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Hospice of San Joaquin celebrated Kentucky Derby West on May 2, 2026, at Oak Farm Vineyards with a splash of Southern charm. Attendees sipped mint juleps and enjoyed Southern cuisine while watching the Kentucky Derby in real time on a jumbotron. They also enjoyed carriage rides, wine tasting, a live auction and a silent auction. The event raises much-needed funds for Hospice of San Joaquin. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN



LET THE MUSIC MOVE YOU

George Gibson: Singer, Songwriter and Band Leader

BY TIM DALY

Any musician who's been around a while has an interesting story about how it all began. George Gibson, leader of the popular local band Georgetowne, has several.

His early musical career, while he was still in college, was so successful that his band Buckwheat opened for Sonny and Cher at UOP; then for Tower of Power at Edison High School. The same management group that directed the Monkees approached Buckwheat for a possible deal, but they didn't come to terms when the band was asked to change its lineup.

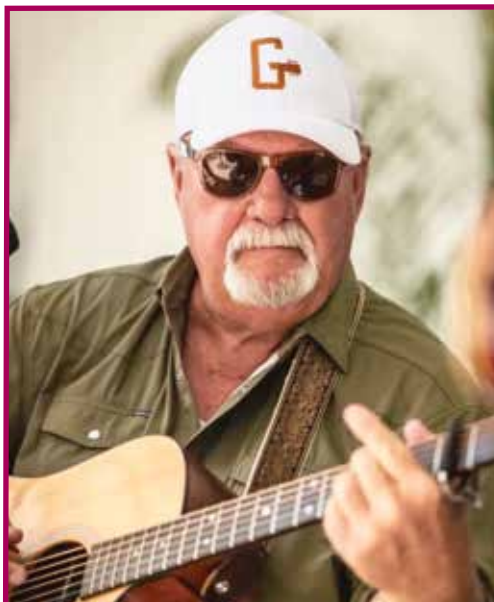
"They said, 'What the group really needs is a female singer,'" said George. "We told them that's not really what we're about. We were working on Crosby, Stills and Poco music. So, it never went anywhere."

When it was time for a more serious career, George was off to Pepperdine Law School. That led to two impressive careers, 13 years in private law practice and then 35 years as vice president and counsel for FCB Homes. Music became mostly a thing of the past. "Other than maybe a happy birthday for my mom or my wife, I didn't pull my guitar out. I didn't play for 43 years."

It was a health scare that drove George to pick up that guitar again. A growth on a vocal cord meant the possibility of surgery and even the possibility of voice damage. While George thought to record himself reading books for his grandchildren for the sake of posterity, his wife, Cherie, took the idea a step further, suggesting he record songs for those little ones as well.

"I ended up recording two or three songs into a recording device. And my wife said, 'You sound pretty good. Have you been practicing?' I said no, but it hit me, it's like getting back on a bicycle once you've been on it. It woke that musical part of my brain up again." Throat surgery went well; George had the music bug again, and, at this stage of his life, the time to seriously pursue it.

George wasn't just a singer and guitar player; as a young musician, he'd written his own songs and was ready to explore that skill again. A Stockton songwriting contest victory landed George in a regional showcase in Berkeley, where he also shined for judges. He then had the courage to take his original tunes to a week-



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long songwriting camp in Monterey, where he performed for industry giants like Rodney Crowell and Bernie Taupin. With more than 100 songwriters attending the same camp looking for guidance, those professionals had George ranked in the top five.

He's not only back on the bike; he's riding in the Tour de France. "I've partially written 300 songs and 75 have been finished. Rodney Crowell said for every ten minutes the best songwriters spend writing a song, they'll spend 30 minutes editing their songs. I have songs I've edited more than 60 and 70 times, finding just the right word, or it might be hard to harmonize. It's like a jigsaw puzzle set to music."

And that leads to the current musical adventure for George Gibson, leading the six-piece band Georgetowne. George, Doug Carruesco (bass); Brandon Kyle (keyboards); Peter Hackett (drums); Zach Silver (fiddle) and Matthew Hackett

(lead guitar) are busy every spring through early winter now with their mix of folk, country, pop and originals. While each player is accomplished on his instrument, George is especially proud of the group's vocal skills, with three- and four-part harmonies a regular feature during their three-hour performances.

"What the audience doesn't know when we start playing is that I've got these great harmonic voices coming in right behind me, and it can be a shock. When that hits, it's just euphoria. When we sing and I can tell we're connecting with people, that's what makes me tick," George smiled.

Georgetowne is most often found at one of the many local wineries that offer music, performing roughly 50 gigs a year. Local music fans clearly like that arrangement, with Georgetowne winning the Lodi News-Sentinel readers' choice for best Live Entertainment three years in a row. ♦



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KIDS SHINING BRIGHTLY

BY HERLIFE STAFF

Cooper Powell is just 16 but already has a burgeoning photography career and is making strides as a content creator. “I am very passionate about sports photography and sports media. I got involved because I have always loved sports and wanted to capture exciting moments from games and events,” the Saint Mary’s High School student said.

He has had some exciting opportunities to chronicle the success of the St. Mary’s High School varsity football team this past season as they went all the way to the state championship. It was a historic victory as St. Mary’s celebrated Stockton’s first-ever state high school championship title. His Instagram account highlights several of their wins throughout the season as they marched to the state title.

Other sports featured on his Instagram include volleyball, track and field, cross country, baseball and more. “Over time, I started taking more photos, creating sports content online and learning how to edit videos and broadcasts,” he said. “I have worked on creative projects with friends, including sports-style broadcasts and cinematic videos.”

Cooper, who will be a junior when school starts, said being behind the lens has helped him become more confident and creative. It’s also instilled a hard work ethic. Balancing school, activities and photography while still trying to stay motivated can be challenging for any high school student, but Cooper has it all under control.

It’s been a major accomplishment to build up his photography and media skills at a young age and having people support and recognize his work. “My goals for the future are to continue improving as a photographer and content creator, graduate high school and eventually work in sports media, photography or broadcasting professionally,” Cooper said. “I got into photography because of my love for sports. And you can’t play them all, so I started by taking photos at games and quickly realized how much I enjoyed it.” He credits his mom for being his biggest supporter and mentor as he continues to grow as a photographer!

He comes from a very creative family. His mom, Kelly, is also an entrepreneur; she owns a balloon company, Pops and Parties. His



dad, Jimmy, is a professional sound engineer and designer and works as an independent contractor.

His clients have included celebrity chefs with TV shows, and last summer he worked behind the scenes at the World Series. Cooper lives in Lodi with his parents and younger sister, Morgan, who is in the sixth grade.

He is also involved in the St. Mary’s High School theater program; most recently, he had a big role in their production of Mary Poppins, playing the role of Bert, the chimney sweep. “He’s been with us for a while. Mary Poppins was his sixth show,” Kevin Costello, the theater director at St. Mary’s, said. “He’s great, he’s got it all. He can dance and he act. And he’s really a good guy. I really enjoy working with him.”

Cooper’s success in photography has led to paying gigs. “I mainly market my work through social media and by sharing my content online or on Instagram @cooper.flickss,” Cooper said. “Going forward, I hope to continue growing my photography business and pursue opportunities in sports media and broadcasting.”

After graduating high school, he plans to continue pursuing photography, sports media and broadcasting while exploring college and career opportunities. “I hope to build a successful career doing something I enjoy while still being creative,” he said. “I enjoy being creative and working on projects involving photography, sports broadcasting, filmmaking.” ♦

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN





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THE RODENT HUNTER



SCAN TO SEE THE PORT OWL CAMERAS

BY HERLIFE STAFF

Q. What's your full name?

A. Owlbert Einstein, resident of the Port of Stockton Sky Patrol

Q. How would you describe your personality?

A. Sweet, loyal and endlessly curious, always watching the world with big, wonder-filled eyes.

Q. What's your favorite vacation spot?

A. The Port of Stockton, where I have access to one of 20 cozy owl boxes and a front-row seat to the best nighttime views around. It's where I can glide silently through the night, hunt with precision and enjoy the peaceful stillness most creatures never notice, all while quietly keeping burrowing rodents in check.

Q. What's your favorite park or place to play or roam?

A. The Port of Stockton, of course. With custom owl boxes placed throughout the area, it is basically a luxury community designed just for us. A select few even feature cameras with 24/7 live feed, so I suppose you could say I have a bit of a following.

Q. Do you have a guilty pleasure?

A. Late-night hunting marathons. I simply cannot resist a good rodent chase.

Q. What's your naughtiest deed?

A. Let's just say, if you are a mouse, you probably have a story about me.

Q. Do you have an obsession?

A. Quiet nights, open skies and keeping my territory in perfect balance.

Q. What's your favorite, most wonderful treat?

A. Fresh, locally sourced rodents. A barn owl family like mine can enjoy up to 2,000 of them in a single nesting season. Delicious and efficient.

Q. Where do you go to get pampered, your favorite treatment, and why do you love it so?

A. My owl box. Safe, cozy, and perfectly positioned for both rest and observation. Bonus points if it is one of the few with a camera. I do enjoy the attention.

Q. What would you like everyone to know about you?

A. I do not hoot like other owls, I screech. I also mate for life, so when I find my partner, we are in it together. Most importantly, my presence helps reduce the need for pesticides and even supports levee protection by keeping burrowing rodents in check. You are welcome.

Q. Where were you born?

A. Right here in Stockton, where the fields and waterways make for the perfect home.

Q. Who are your human parents?

A. The dedicated team at the Port of Stockton, who thoughtfully installed and maintain our owl boxes and cameras. ♦

New Booking Summer Sessions!

Contact us at hayrephotography@gmail.com

 hayre photography

CHILDREN / FAMILIES / SENIORS / WEDDINGS



@hayrephotography



Powrta 2026 SEASON IS HERE



GET
YOUR
TIX!



CELEBRATE COMMUNITY EVENTS

JUNE 6

Lodi Elks Annual Car Show

19071 N. Lower Sacramento

Info: (209) 747-6113

JUNE 13

Delta Ditch Run

Stockton Sailing Club.

Info: visitstockton.com

JUNE 20

Haggin a la Carte

The Haggin Museum

Info: (209) 940-6300

JUNE 6

The Killer Dueling Pianos

Bar Ranch

Info: visitlodi.com

JUNE 13

Boots and Bubbly

Capecchio Ovest

Info: sanjoaquincounty.jl.org

JUNE 27

Runabouts on the River

Stockton Sailing Club

Info: acbsrotr.com

JUNE 6-7

Manteca Crossroads Watermelon Street Fair

Downtown Manteca

Info: (209) 823-6121

JUNE 13

Taste of the Mile

Miracle Mile

Info: stocktonmiraclemile.org

JUNE 7

Jewish Food Fair

Temple Israel

Info: (209) 477-9306

JUNE 19

Pixie Woods Wine and Beer Tasting

Pixie Woods

Info: visitpixiewoods.com

JUNE 13

FatherFest 2026

Victory Park

Info: (209) 953-5437

JUNE 20

Juneteenth Celebration

San Joaquin County Fairgrounds

Info: visitstockton.org

JUNE 13

Lodi Art Hop

305 W. Pine St.

Info: visitlodi.

JUNE 20

Summerfest at Appellation Lodi

2505 Turner Rd.

Info: visitlodi.org

SAVE THE DATE

JULY 4

4th of July at

Lodi Lake

1101 W. Turner Rd.

Info: visitlodi.org

AUGUST 21

Ducky Derby at

Lincoln Center Family

Fun Night

Lincoln Center

Info: lincolncentershops.com

Expanded pediatric care, here at home.

Our enhanced Pediatric Unit is now open.

St. Joseph's Medical Center is proud to announce the opening of our newly renovated and expanded Antone E. & Marie F. Raymus Foundation Pediatric Unit—the only pediatric unit in San Joaquin County. This \$17 million expansion, made possible by generous donors, enhances our ability to provide high-quality, around-the-clock care for children here at home. And because we believe the environment plays a crucial role in healing, our 7,000-square-foot unit is designed with children and their families at heart:

- 18 comfortable beds, including eight double rooms and two private rooms
- Spacious rooms with accommodations for parents to stay overnight
- Colorful, child-friendly decor to foster a positive and comforting atmosphere
- An interactive playroom filled with games, toys and activities

From critical neonatal care to comprehensive inpatient services, our highly skilled team is here to support our youngest patients and their families when they need it most. Learn more at dignityhealth.org/stockton/pediatrics.

Hello humankindness™



Health Plan of San Joaquin

More Than Health,

It's for more Family Dinners



June is Men's Health Month—a reminder that prevention, early detection, and everyday habits play a big role in long-term health. This month calls for your voice, your support and guidance. Those special talks with your husband, father, sons and friends influence their decisions to adopt healthy habits.

Things the men in your life can do to stay healthy

- Schedule preventive screenings
- Make healthy habits part of your routine together
- Have open conversations about physical and mental health

Staying healthy includes access to health care

You or your loved ones may be covered by Medi-Cal. If so, it is important to take action so that access to the program continues. Create an account at www.BenefitsCal.com for the fastest and easiest way to:

- Keep contact information up to date
- Get answers from case workers
- Complete yearly renewals



Take Action!

Learn more about
Medi-Cal Renewals

www.hpsj-mvhp.org/keep

Community • Partnership • Wellness

1-888-936-PLAN (7526)
www.hpsj-mvhp.org