

ABOUT TOWN

All events are subject to change or cancellation. The Times-Herald encourages readers to contact organizers of events when possible to verify information.

Today

- Independent Order of Fellows, San Pablo Lodge No. 43, and Myrtle Rebekah Lodge No. 15, pizza night, 7 p.m., Straw Hat, 3780 Sonoma Blvd., Vallejo. 224-9479.
- Sons in Retirement Branch 123, monthly luncheon, 11 a.m., Moose Lodge, 337 Nebraska St., Vallejo. Al Christle, 644-8739.
- Carl H. Kreh Post 1123, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Ladies Auxiliary, potluck business meeting, 6 p.m. (dinner) and 7 p.m. (meeting), Veterans Building, 420 Admiral Callaghan Lane, Vallejo. 643-7074.
- Napa Valley Bonsai Club, 7 to 9 p.m., Napa Senior Center, 1500 Jefferson St., Napa. 255-8822.
- Food box distribution, 6:30 p.m., Amador Street Hope Center, 929 Amador St., Vallejo. 648-1986 (English) or 342-0237 (Spanish).
- Boy Scout Troop 77, 7 to 8:30 p.m., Community Presbyterian Church, 2800 Georgia St., Vallejo.
- Independent Order of Odd Fellows, San Pablo Lodge No. 43, 7 p.m., Odd Fellows Temple, 342 Georgia St., Vallejo. 224-9479.

Tuesday

- McCune Collection open by appointment, 2 to 4 p.m., first floor, JFK Library, 505 Santa Clara St., Vallejo. 644-0764.
- "Write Your Personal History" writing group, 2 to 4 p.m., McCune Room, lower level, JFK Library, 505 Santa Clara St., Vallejo. Bring writing materials. David Koven, 552-1738.
- Al-Anon family groups, 7 to 8 p.m., Community Presbyterian Church, 2800 Georgia St., Vallejo.
- Vallejo Cub Scout Pack 12 meeting, 7 to 8:15 p.m., Cooper School multipurpose room, 612 Del Mar Ave., Vallejo. Anne Ramos, 980-6957.
- Bay Area Ridge Trail, Solano County Committee, 7 to 9 p.m., South Vallejo Recreation Center, Magazine Street and Sonoma Boulevard, Vallejo.

Wednesday

- Lawyer in the Library, 4 p.m. sign-ups, John F. Kennedy Library, 505 Santa Clara St., Vallejo. Brief legal advice and referral. Appointments start at 6 p.m. (866) 572-7587.
- American Legion Post 550, social night, 6 p.m. Details and reservations: 644-3097.
- Monthly Teen Poetry Slam and Open Microphone, 6:30 p.m., John F. Kennedy Library, Joseph Room, 505 Santa Clara St., Vallejo. For ages 12 to 18. (866) 572-7587.
- Vallejo Emblem Club No. 371 meeting, 4 p.m., Elks Lodge, 2850 Redwood Parkway, Vallejo. 643-1298.
- C.O.D.A., 7 p.m., St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 1300 Tuolumne St., Vallejo. 648-1316.
- Food box distribution, 1 p.m., Amador Street Hope Center, 929 Amador St., Vallejo. First come, first served. Bring a photo ID. 648-1986 (English) or 342-0237 (Spanish).
- Walk it Off group, 6 to 7 p.m., Benicia Marina, 200 block East B Street, Benicia. 455-3242.

Thursday

- Independent Order of Fellows, Myrtle Rebekah Lodge No. 15, Heart Fund Luncheon, Noon, Odd Fellows Temple, 342 Georgia St., Vallejo. 644-1731.
- Caregivers Support Group, 6 to 8 p.m., Community Presbyterian Church, 2800 Georgia St. Call Theresa 642-2173.
- Compassionate Friends meeting, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Benicia Fire Department, 601 Hastings Drive, Benicia. Support group for families with the death of one or more child, any age, any cause. Third Thursdays. Free, refreshments. Information: Nancy, 751-3772 or Georgia, 373-0497.
- Al-Anon family groups, 8 to 9 p.m., Benicia Congregational Church, preschool building, 1305 W. 2nd St., Benicia.

ALDER: BRIDGE

Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote, "Boston's a hole, the herring-pond is wide, / V-notes are something, liberty still more. / Beside, is he the only fool in the world?"

North wondered that after watching his partner's performance on this deal.

Almost everyone loves to take finesse ... but everyone should try to avoid them. One distracted the declarer on this deal.

South was in four hearts. West led the diamond two. East won with his ace and returned the diamond seven, his original fourth-highest. West captured South's queen with his king and shifted to a low spade.

How should declarer have played from there?

After North made a three-heart game-investigational limit raise, East wanted to enter the auction, but allowed the prevailing unfavorable vulnerability to dissuade him. This was lucky because four spades doubled would have cost 500 even if declarer found the diamond queen.

South could not resist the spade finesse, but East took dummy's queen with his king and returned a spade to dummy's ace. Now declarer had to find the club queen. As you can guess, he did not do that, finessing through West and going down one.

The spade queen was a black herring. If declarer had won trick three with dummy's spade ace, ruffed the diamond eight in his hand, drawn trumps, and exited with his last spade, whoever won that trick would have been endplayed. He would have been forced either to lead a club, finding the queen, or to concede a ruff-and-sluff, on which South's club loser would have evaporated.

— Phillip Alder

North				02-15-10
A Q				
9 8 5 4 2				
8 4 3				
K J 7				
West		East		
A J 9 8 3		K 10 6 5 4		
10		J		
K 10 5 2		A J 9 7		
8 6 5 2		Q 4 3		
South				
7 2				
A K Q 7 6 3				
Q 6				
A 10 9				
Dealer: South				
Vulnerable: East-West				
South	West	North	East	
1♥	Pass	3♥	Pass	
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass	
Opening lead: ♦ 2				

Schools face huge deficits as federal stimulus runs out

By Terence Chea
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The nation's public schools are falling under severe financial stress as states slash education spending and drain federal stimulus money that staved off deep classroom cuts and widespread job losses.

School districts have already suffered big budget cuts since the recession began two years ago, but experts say the cash crunch will get a lot worse as states run out of stimulus dollars.

The result in many hard-hit districts: more teacher layoffs, larger class sizes, smaller paychecks, fewer electives and extracurricular activities, and decimated summer school programs.

The situation is particularly ugly in California, where school districts are preparing for mass layoffs and swelling class sizes as the state grapples with another massive budget shortfall.

The crisis concerns parents like Michelle Parker in San Francisco, where the school district is preparing to lay off hundreds of school employees and raise class sizes because it faces a \$113 million budget deficit over next two years.

"I'm worried they're not going to have the quality education that's going to make them competitive in a global society," said Parker, who has three kids in district elementary schools.

Around the country, state governments are cutting money for schools as they grapple with huge budget gaps triggered by high unemployment, sluggish retail sales and falling real estate prices. A recent report by

the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities found that 41 states face midyear budget shortfalls totaling \$35 billion.

"The states are facing a dismal financial picture," said Jack Jennings, president of the Center on Education Policy.

The Obama administration's \$787 billion federal stimulus package provided roughly \$100 billion for education, including \$54 billion to stabilize state budgets. In October the White House said the stimulus created or saved 250,000 education jobs.

But many states have used most of their stimulus money, leaving little to cushion budget cuts in the coming fiscal year.

Experts say the looming cuts could weaken the nation's public schools, worsen unemployment, undermine President Obama's education goals and widen the achievement gap between students in rich and poor districts.

Wealthier communities are filling school budget gaps with local tax increases and aggressive fundraising, but could worsen inequality and undermine the larger system for paying for public schools, said John Rogers, who heads the UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education and Access.

In California, school districts have already laid off thousands of teachers, increased class sizes and slashed academic programs.

But state officials are warning the worst is yet to come because the state has already handed out most of its \$6 billion in stimulus money.

Per-pupil spending for K-12 schools fell 4 percent last year and would be slashed another 8 percent under Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's

proposed budget for 2010-2011, according to the state Legislative Analyst's Office.

"It's cataclysmic. It hasn't been seen since the Great Depression," said Bruce Fuller, an education professor at the University of California, Berkeley. "Now you're talking about sizable layoffs and further increases in class sizes."

More districts are expected to look like Vallejo City Unified School District, which has laid off most of its middle school guidance counselors and no longer offers music or art in elementary school. Last year it laid off 60 of its 860 teachers and raised K-3 class sizes from 20 to 28 students, and officials are considering more layoffs and even bigger class sizes this year, said Christal Watts, who heads the teachers union.

Lori Peck, a first-grade teacher at Vallejo's Patterson Elementary School, said the larger class size means she can no longer give her students the individual attention they need.

"I feel like my class in general is further behind where they should be," Peck said. "My concern is they don't reach the standards by the end of the year."

In San Francisco, Superintendent Carlos Garcia said he's worried the cuts will reverse the district's progress in narrowing the achievement gap between black and Hispanic students and their white and Asian classmates.

"These cuts hurt some of our poorest and neediest kids," Garcia said. "The decisions that school boards and superintendents have to make pretty much go against the grain of everything we believe in."

LOCAL BRIEFS

Kaiser Permanente earns 4-star quality rating

Kaiser Permanente was the only health plan in California to earn a four-star rating for quality of care in the 2010 Healthcare Quality Report Card from the California Office of the Patient Advocate, a Kaiser spokesman announced.

This is the second consecutive year Kaiser rated excellent in this report, he said.

The annual ratings, available at www.HealthCareQuality.ca.gov, provide California consumers with side-by-side comparisons of health plans, Kaiser spokesman Jim Caroompas said.

Sutter Health's local medical group, Solano Regional Medical Group, scored three out of four stars on the report card, Sutter spokesman Russell "Sy" Neilson said.

NorthBay Health Care Group got two stars. Neilson said that while Sutter is "pleased to be rated above the national average for quality and patient experience, we naturally would like to have that fourth star, much like we did last year."

The report card measures HMOs and Medical Groups and not acute care hospitals, Neilson said.

Teen trio arrested for allegedly attacking cops

Vallejo police arrested three teenagers for allegedly assaulting officers Friday night.

At about 8:30 p.m., officers were flagged down on the 900 block of Admiral Callaghan Lane by people who complained of someone possessing a gun, police said.

The officers contacted three male teenagers —

a 15-, 16- and 17-year-old — who were all uncooperative with the officers, police said.

A search revealed a concealed dagger in the front of the pants of the 16-year-old, police said.

While officers were detaining the 16-year-old, the 15-year-old then allegedly attacked the police officer, attempting to strike and punch him, police said.

As the officers took him into custody after the alleged assault, his 17-year-old brother then also reportedly charged at the officers, police said.

He was subdued with a Taser and was also arrested, police said.

Job fair scheduled Feb. 23 in Suisun City

Job seekers will find career opportunities at Solano's free HIREvent, from noon to 4 p.m. Feb. 23, at Suisun City's Nelson Community Center, 611 Village Drive, organizers announced.

Some of the area's top employers will be there seeking to fill positions in a variety of fields including administration, customer service, finance, insurance, health care, information technology, marketing, sales and more, organizers said in a prepared statement.

Free expert resume evaluations also will be available, they said.

Participants are advised to "dress for success" arrive early, and be prepared to interview, they said.

For more information, visit www.JobJournal.com or call (888) 843-5627.

— Times-Herald staff reports

SERVICES

TODAY
Allen, Martin, 5 to 8 p.m., viewing, Vaca Hills Chapel, Vacaville.

TUESDAY
Allen, Martin, 11 a.m., memorial service, Vaca Hills Chapel, Vacaville. 12:30 p.m., committal, Sacramento Valley VA National Cemetery, 5810 Midway Road, Dixon.

Hicks, Matthew, 3 to 8 p.m., visitation, Wiggins-Knipp Funeral Home, 524 Capitol St., Vallejo.

WEDNESDAY
Hicks, Matthew, 1 p.m. funeral services, Rehoboth World Outreach Center, 245 Holly St. Burial, Sunrise Memorial Park. Repast to be announced following the service.

THURSDAY
Yeafoli, James, 10 a.m., memorial Mass, St. Rose Catholic Church, 555 3rd Ave.,

Crockett, Calif. Inurnment will be private.

SATURDAY, Feb. 20
Davis, Joyce, 11 a.m., memorial service, 649 Ithica Court, Vacaville.

SUNDAY, Feb. 21
Babcock, Dorothy, 2 p.m., celebration of life, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane,

Lafayette.

SATURDAY, Feb. 27
Smith, Wilma, 1 p.m., memorial service, Paradise Valley Estates, 2600 Estates Drive, Fairfield.

Visit www.timesheraldonline.com to view and/or print recent obituaries. Some obituaries may also feature an online guest-book for people to express condolences.

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The Times-Herald (USPS 655-280) is a California Newspaper Partnership Newspaper published 7 mornings a week by the Times-Herald, 440 Curtola Parkway, Vallejo, CA 94590. Periodicals postage paid at Vallejo, CA. Postmaster: Send address changes to Times-Herald, P.O. Box 3188, Vallejo, CA, 94590.

BUSINESS HOURS
Building Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Circulation Phone Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 6:45 p.m.
Saturday 7 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and Holidays 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
Classifieds Phone Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Editorial Phone Hours: 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Main Switchboard.....644-1141
Subscriber Services/
Circulation.....644-5478
Classified.....644-1088
Newsroom Information 553-6826
Editorial/Advertising/Business Office.....644-1141
From Napa, Fairfield, Vacaville.....800-600-1141

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