

Local

State asks for local cooperation on citrus pest

BY JOHN COX

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Attention anyone with an orange, grapefruit, lemon, mandarin, pomelo or lime tree growing in the backyard: California's citrus growers need your help.

A state program funded by industry is reaching out to homeowners who may be able to help control the spread of an insect that threatens the very survival of California citrus.

The tiny pest, a mottled-brown, moth-like insect called the Asian citrus psyllid, has been found all over Bakersfield, different places in Kern County, parts of the Central Valley and much of Southern California.

The incurable disease the psyllid carries, Huanglongbing, has not been detected in California outside Los Angeles County. But experts believe it's a matter of time before it arrives in the valley, and so anything that can be done to control the bug's spread gives researchers more time to develop a cure.

What that means to locals with citrus trees in their backyard is this: Keep cooperating with the state regarding inspections and placement of traps.

Also, be careful not to transport plant material across quarantine borders.

The good news is, Kern County seems to be doing a great job so far. The citrus program manager at the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Victoria Hornbaker, said local residents' compliance rate is nearly 100 percent.



FELIX ADAMO / CALIFORNIAN FILE

Kern County Agricultural Commissioner Ruben Arroyo displays an insect trap that holds a few of the Asian citrus psyllid pests in September 2013. Other insects are also on the trap.

"In Bakersfield we've seen tremendous cooperation," she said, adding the area is "probably one of the best areas in the whole state" in terms of cooperating with the efforts to contain the psyllid.

The program, funded by a nine-cent assessment on every 40-pound carton of citrus shipped in the state, pays for a variety of pest-control activities,

including surveys of backyard fruit, pesticide spraying and outreach ranging from advertising and social media to informational handouts and presentations to local elected officials.

Hornbaker said her main message is that people can and should educate themselves about the pest threat.

Beyond that, she asks those with backyard trees to allow

inspectors access to their trees for surveying or spraying, and never to take citrus stems, leaves or any plant material outside the area — or bring in any from other places.

Although it's OK to move fruit itself outside an establish quarantine, she said, make sure to wash it well beforehand.

Another way residents can help is by checking their citrus

RESOURCES

The state Department of Food and Agriculture offers a variety of resources to teach people about the Asian citrus psyllid, including information on what they can do if they think they may have spotted the pest or the disease it carries.

- CaliforniaCitrusThreat.org provides information about the threat to the multibillion-dollar citrus industry.
- A public service announcement video on YouTube: <http://tinyurl.com/zu6wjzq>
- The department also has a Twitter feed, <https://twitter.com/CitrusThreat>, and a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaCitrusThreat>
- The phone number to call if you think you may have detected the pest is 800-491-1899.
- A map of the state's citrus quarantines is available online at cdfa.ca.gov/go/acp-maps.

trees for signs of the psyllid and Huanglongbing, the symptoms of which include blotchy, yellow leaves, excessive amounts of fruit that has fallen to the ground and deformed fruit that doesn't ripen.

"It's a matter of folks doing what they can to protect themselves, their own trees, their community and a thriving commercial industry," she said.

Sheriff: Ex-NFL player Phillips hanged himself

BY JASON KOTOWSKI

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Kern County Sheriff Donny Youngblood confirmed Wednesday that former NFL running back and accused murderer Lawrence Phillips hanged himself in his cell at Kern Valley State Prison.

Youngblood's confirmation marked the first official statement regarding how Phillips killed himself since his death on Jan. 13. The only previously released information was that his death was a suicide.

County Coroner Manager Dawn Ratliff had refused to provide Phillips' manner of death, but did not cite any government code justifying why that information should be withheld.

Ratliff said Wednesday she was on vacation.

Youngblood said he was meeting with

his staff this week to discuss issues regarding release of information.

Phillips, 40, was a star running back for Nebraska who later played for the St. Louis Rams, Miami Dolphins and San Francisco 49ers.



Phillips

He had been in an administrative segregation unit and had a cell to himself when found unresponsive early Jan. 13.

He was pronounced dead about 90 minutes later.

Phillips was being held at Kern Valley State Prison on a first-degree murder charge in the death of cellmate Damion Dewayne Soward. Prosecutors said Phillips strangled Soward, 37, in April of last year.



Neil, left, and Dilbagh Gehlawat speak at a recent Delano Joint Union High School District meeting.

COURTESY NEIL GEHLAWAT

Father, son donate \$100,000 to Delano high schools

BY CHRISTINE BEDELL

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A local family has donated \$100,000 to the Delano Joint Union High

School District for after-school programs, weekend tutoring, mentorships and scholarships, it was announced Thursday.

The money came from

Dr. Dilbagh Gehlawat, a pediatrician who has tended to Delano-area children for 35 years, and his son, Neil Gehlawat, an

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Local / Obituaries

Man shot dead in southeast Bakersfield

THE BAKERSFIELD CALIFORNIAN

A man died after being shot multiple times in southeast Bakersfield Wednesday evening, sheriff's officials said.

The man, whose name has not yet been released, was found at 10:10 p.m. on McNew Court west of Cottonwood Road, according to sheriff's officials. There is no suspect information.

Anyone with information is asked to call the Kern County Sheriff's Office at 861-3110 or Secret Witness at 322-4040.

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attorney at the Bakersfield law firm Chain | Cohn | Stiles.

"We anticipate this donation could potentially reach hundreds of students," district Superintendent Terri Nuckols said in a statement.

The programs the money will fund run the gamut, the district said:

- After-school tutoring of high school students by mentors.
- The hiring of music consultants and the use of high-achieving students to mentor elementary-school kids in music, math and science, including kids in neighboring districts such as Earlimart and Pond.

Both are meant to address the discontinuation of elective programs due to budget cuts.

- Saturday school tutoring of students with attendance issues.
- A summer bridge program that introduces incoming freshmen to high school life and beyond. That includes setting up 10-year plans where students could earn college credit while in high school.
- Scholarships to mentors and tutors who successfully participate in any of the programs.

"We believe that education is the great equalizer in our society," the Gehlawats said in a statement. "No child, regardless of their socio-economic background, should be denied access to educational opportunities that will have a positive impact on their future."

The family chose Delano based on the needs Dilbagh saw while practicing medicine there, Neil Gehlawat said in an interview.

"He's seen so many kids grow up there and not have access to certain educational tools that I had and other kids had," Gehlawat said.

He said that while his family wants Delano educators, who are the experts, to run the programs, it will want to monitor what results they bring.

The Gehlawats would also like to see the programs sustained through grants and by getting other community members involved in them, he said.

"We don't want to just make our donation and say, 'Hope this money helps and put it to good use.'"

Services scheduled

Ruth Ann Ray, 82, Bakersfield, Jan. 28. Visitation 10 a.m. Feb. 6, service 11 a.m. Feb. 6, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1903 Bernard St. More info at kernriver-familymortuary.com. Kern River Family Mortuary, Oildale.

Bettie Teel, 89, Taft, Feb. 3 in Arvin. Graveside service 10 a.m. Feb. 8, West Side District Cemetery, Taft. Erickson & Brown Funeral Home, Taft.

Services pending

Danny C. Bealsey, 86, Bakersfield, Feb. 4. Basham Funeral Care.

Eufemia R. Escandon, 85, Bakersfield, Jan. 27. Hillcrest Memorial Park & Mortuary.

Kerry Green, 62, Bakersfield, Feb. 4. Basham Funeral Care.

Robert W. Patterson, 44, Bakersfield, Jan. 26. Alma Funeral Home & Crematory.

Luis "Louie" Ursua Jr., 65, Tehachapi, Jan. 30. Basham Funeral Care.

No services

Michael R. Savage, 58, Bakersfield, Feb. 2. Basham Funeral Care.

TO OUR READERS

The Californian provides free listings of pending services using information supplied by local mortuaries. Services scheduled and the in-depth notices that follow are paid obituaries and remembrances. These listings must be purchased by 3 p.m. To place an Obituary or In Loving Memory, call 395-7302. Full obituaries are posted at Bakersfield.com at 9 p.m. on the day before publication.

Theola Johnson

January 5, 1950 - January 29, 2016



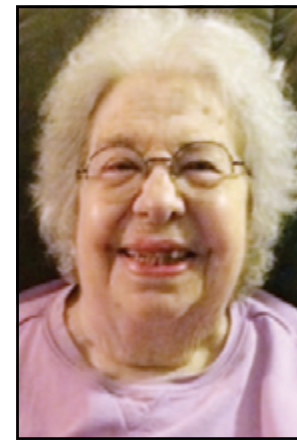
Theola, affectionately known as 'Boo', passed away after a lengthy illness.

Visitation and viewing will be at Rucker's Mortuary, 301 Baker St. Bakersfield, Ca on February 5th, 1-7 p.m. with family meditation hour 7-8 p.m. Services will be held Friday, February 6th at 12 p.m. at St. John MBC, 1401 Brundage Lane.

www.bakersfield.com/obits

Mary Elizabeth Smith

January 28, 1918 - February 1, 2016



Mary Elizabeth Smith, born Mary Elizabeth Schirm January 28, 1918, in Middletown, Ohio, to Karl and Lena Schirm, passed away just after midnight February 1, 2016 in Bakersfield, California after suddenly having problems with her heart. Her spirit did not weaken up to the end. She was laughing and talking with family up until the evening of January 30.

Mary was an extraordinary lady. She was the middle daughter of a family of three girls and one boy. She was so good at school it was suggested she skip a grade (her father rejected the idea). She wrote her older sister's high school book reports and, after she was back from college herself, wrote of all of her younger sister's college papers. She was her high school's valedictorian and graduated from an accelerated teacher's degree program at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Her parents gave her elocution lesson so that she was trained to recite, play the piano and sing.

She retained a tomboy side. She hiked through the woods, played golf, tennis and the street game "shinny." She worked as a life guard during her high school years. Her voracious reading fueled an imagination that led to organizing the neighborhood kids into games of pretend cowboys, pirates, soldiers and other derring-do. "Do you know what your Mary has done now?" was a question her mother often heard in those days.

She met, and fell in love with, and married J. Edgar Smith, the love of her life. The meeting was while she was in college, but the marrying was delayed by WWII and their separate job paths until 1948. After marrying in Las Vegas, they moved to Los Angeles, then moved to Bakersfield. They had three children, Jay C. (called Chris by the family), Jeffrey L, and Kimberly K. Smith, in 1950, 1952, and 1955.

Mary was a gifted teacher. She taught in Middletown Ohio, then Azusa, CA, then in the Beardsley district. She took time off to raise her children, then worked at Bakersfield City Schools until her retirement. While teaching at Mt. Vernon Elementary in the 1960s she met three special people, young teachers who became her "Bridge Girls." The group added four more friends, has kept together for over fifty years, and gave her a wonderful birthday lunch the Friday before she died. These friends held her up during the loss of her husband, her leg, and her daughter.

J. Edgar Smith died in March, 1977, and Mary and Kimberly had a wonderful 26 years traveling the US and the world and enjoying each other's company. Mary's life was marred by the loss of her right leg in the fall of 2000, but with Kimberly's help she continued on, still going on family visits to Ventura and Monterey. Kimberly died far too early, in November, 2003. Since 2005 Mary lived with her son Jay and his wife Margaret, often with help from caretakers. Mary enjoyed bridge, mystery novels, visits for communion with her Elder Bill Schaefer of Lutheran Church of Prayer, and seeing her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mary was preceded in death by all her immediate family, parents and siblings, and her beloved daughter Kimberly. She is survived by sons Jeffrey and Jay, and by Jay's wife Margaret. She had six grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

Mary lived a full life, encouraging and amusing those around her. Her family is grateful that her end was swift and not too uncomfortable. We are very grateful to the Bridge Girls, Bill Schaefer, Dr. Stephen Strategos, and her last caretaker, Trina. We also thank the doctors, nurses and workers at the ER and the fifth floor of San Joaquin hospital who treated her and her loved ones with so much compassion and concern in her last hours.

There will be a viewing Thursday Feb. 4, from 6 to 8 pm. Graveside services will be held Friday Feb. 5, at 1 pm, both at Hillcrest Memorial Park, 9101 Kern Canyon Road, 93306.

www.bakersfield.com/obits

For information on placing an obituary or In Loving Memory
contact our Obituary Advisor at 395-7302
email at obitphoto@bakersfield.com

The Bakersfield Californian provides a free death listing, using information provided by local area mortuaries. The in-depth notices that are published daily are paid obituaries and remembrances, available to families and the general public; these listings must be purchased by 3 p.m. Monday-Friday to be published in the next day's paper.



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