

# FOOD & DRINK



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**EATING**  
NEWS & NOTES

## Chocolate class winners

Tiffany Dethmers, Sharon Klein Gorley, Sabiene Hesse and Lara Taylor, all of Reno, are the four randomly chosen winners of seats in the Feb. 13 chocolate making class to be led by executive pastry chef Steve Krizman at the Peppermill Resort Spa Casino.

### LA VECCHIA ITALIAN WINES DINNER

Beginning at 6 p.m. Feb. 13, La Vecchia Ristorante Italian Bistro, 3005 Skyline Blvd., is holding a five-course dinner featuring pairings like wood oven-roasted duck with Antonio Sanguineti Nessun Dorma Super Tuscan red blend, and lobster ravioli with Soave Monte Tondo, a crisp, clean white wine. Cost: \$75. Reservations: 775-825-1113.

### ELDORADO CHINESE NEW YEAR BUFFET

To celebrate the Year of the Snake, the Buffet in the Eldorado Hotel Casino, 345 N. Virginia St., is serving dozens of New Year dishes, including nightly roast pig, from Feb. 10-17. Cost on Feb. 10, 15-17: \$24.99 adults, \$12.99 children 10 and younger. Cost on Feb. 11-14: \$17.99 adults, \$8.99 children 10 and younger. Details: www.eldoradoreno.com.

### ASSISTANCE LEAGUE AUCTION, LUNCH

On Feb. 14, the Assistance League of Reno-Sparks is presenting a silent auction (begins 10 a.m.) and lunch (begins noon) in the Grand Ballroom of the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa, 3800 S. Virginia St. The event supports league programs. Purchase \$40 tickets from 775-329-1584. Details: www.renosparks.assistanceleague.org.

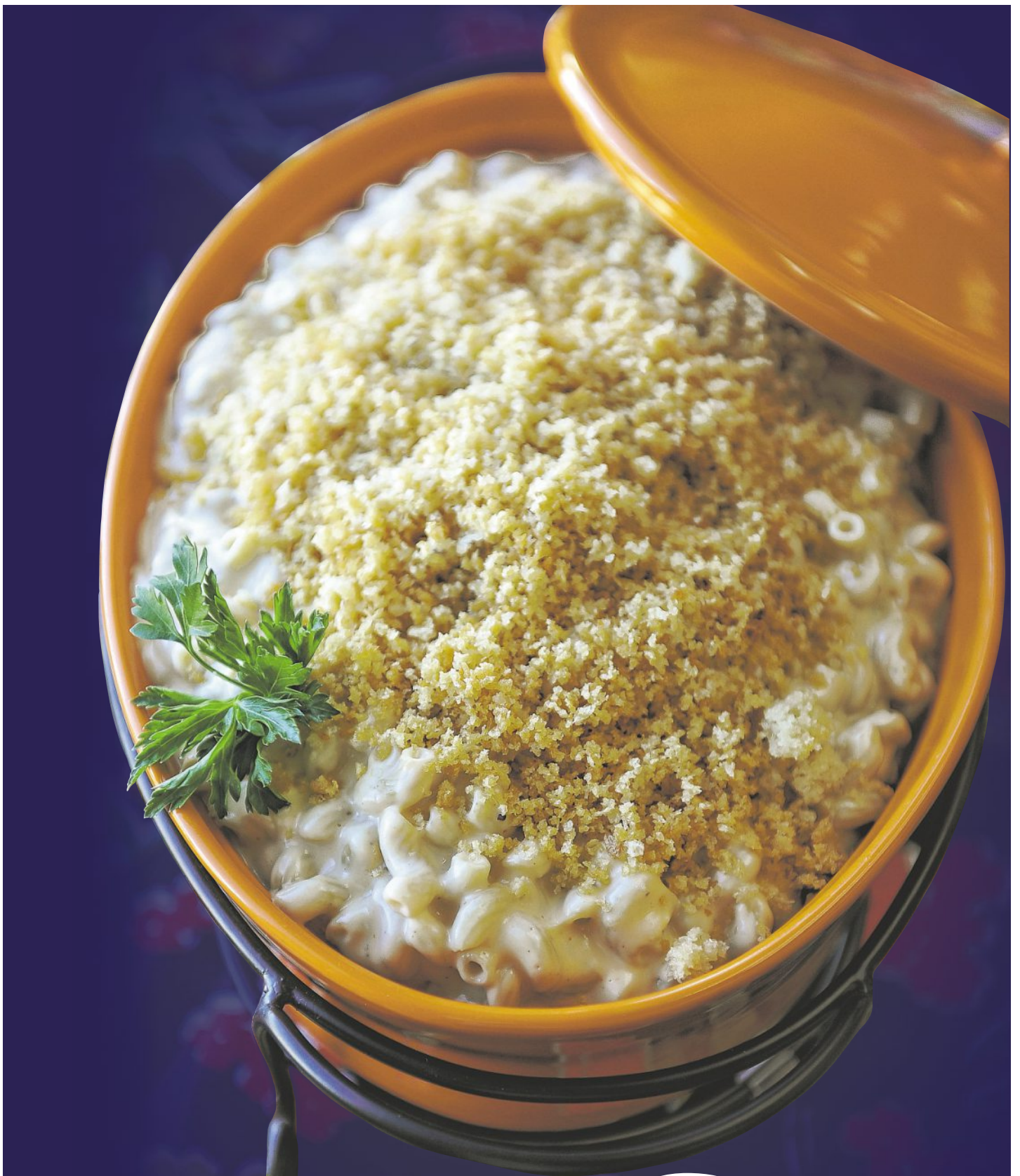
### MONDAVI DINNER

Beginning at 7 p.m. Feb. 15, the Steakhouse in Circus Circus Reno, 500 N. Sierra St., is offering a four-course dinner featuring wines from Robert Mondavi Winery of Napa Valley. Pairings include rib-eye with the 2010 merlot. Cost of \$59.95 includes tax. Reservations: 775-789-5604.

### BEN'S SCHOOL BENEFIT

From 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Feb. 22, Ben's Fine Wine & Spirits, 3480 Lakeside Drive, is holding a fundraiser for Great Basin Outdoor School. The event, which benefits the school's field studies and service projects for area students, features wine, craft beer, spirits and live music. Cost: \$10 donation at the door. Details: 775-825-0244.

— Johnathan L. Wright, RGJ



# THE DISH ON MACARONI AND CHEESE

Culinary partner Nancy Horn shares the secret to her best-ever version of the classic comfort food

In America, macaroni and cheese seems like the national comfort food dish, with the ubiquitous orange-and-blue boxed kind leading in popularity.

Growing up in Canada, we had the same orange and blue box. It went by the name Kraft Dinner, meaning this small amount in a box

was supposed to be a complete meal. But in Canada, dinner means lunch, and supper means dinner (in American speak), so the brand name always confused me. Even more so because it was never satisfying or filling.

See DISH IT UP, Page 3E

### DISH IT UP

**NANCY HORN**, owner of Dish Café and Catering, uses fresh ingredients to create upscale comfort food.



To prevent drying, the noodles in Dish Café's macaroni and cheese aren't baked, as many recipes call for. The mac and cheese also is topped with lighter panko bread crumbs instead of traditional crumbs. LIZ MARGERUM/RGJ

## VALENTINE'S DAY

# For toasting Cupid, columns of bubbles

By Laura Longero  
llongero@rgj.com

Valentine's Day is quickly approaching, and it's one holiday I always associate with sparkling wine — it's fun, effervescent and celebratory.

I would be perfectly happy drinking bubbles every day. They're great with food, and the diverse range of styles means there's something for every palate, budget and dish. I've picked out a few sparklers in several price ranges to try this Valentine's, but first, a primer.

If you're offered a glass Champagne (such as on a Valentine's menu), you're very likely being offered a glass of sparkling wine. Champagne sounds far sexier than sparkling wine, but the name can only be applied to the sparkling wines of France made in the Champagne region. Not even other sparkling wines from France can be



Flutes of sparkling wine are a classic accompaniment to romance. RGJ FILE

called Champagne — they're called crémant.

So: bubbles from California are simply sparkling wine, crémant d'Alsace comes from Alsace (France), Cava comes from Spain and prosecco comes from Italy.

### Last-minute

Local retailers are preparing for the crush of sparkling shoppers for Valentine's Day. Brian Lalor, manager at Whispering Vine Wine Co. in the Mayberry Landing shopping center, said that the store sells more bubbles before the holiday — about 25 percent more — than it normally would.

Rebecca Davidson, wine supervisor at Total Wine and More, said she hadn't yet seen an uptick in sparkling wine sales for Valentine's Day, but the store did see more sparkling sales in preparation for the Super Bowl last Sunday, which was unexpected. She said that Valentine's Day shopping tended to be last-minute.

Lalor said his choice for Valentine's Day would be a brut rosé, specifically the Schramsberg brut rosé.

See SPARKLERS, Page 5E

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VALENTINE'S DAY

# Dining out options to celebrate romance

By Johnathan L. Wright  
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Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, is one of the busiest dining out days of the year (and one of the most challenging for restaurants — all those tables only for two). Restaurants tend to fill fast, so call for reservations. Listed prices do not include tax and gratuity. All menus are for Feb. 14 unless otherwise indicated.

Below are some suggestions. Main course or course choices are in parentheses.

**ATLANTIS CASINO RESORT SPA**, 3800 S. Virginia St., 775-824-4411, www.atlanticcasinoreno.com

» **Atlantis Steakhouse:** Four-course menu (pan-roasted Chilean sea bass or duet of USDA Prime grade filet mignon and prawn), from 5 p.m., \$55 or \$65

» **Bistro Napa:** Four-course menu (Verlasso salmon or beef tenderloin roulade), from 5 p.m., \$55 or \$65

**BISTRO 7**, 7111 S. Virginia St., 775-851-9463, www.b7reno.com

Four-course menu (black cod, beef Wellington, Berkshire pork chops or truffled mushroom lasagna), 5-9:30 p.m., \$55

**BONANZA CASINO**, 4720 N. Virginia St., 775-323-2724, www.bonanzacasino.com

» **Cactus Creek Prime Steakhouse:** Four-course menu (USDA Prime grade filet mignon and buttered Maine lobster tail), from 4 p.m., \$62.50

**CAMPO**, 50 N. Sierra St., 775-737-9555, www.camporeno.com

Four-course menu (duo of sea scallop and beef sirloin),



For Valentine's Day, several local restaurants are doing pairings of lobster and beef, a classic duo. RGJ FILE

served Feb. 14-16 from 5 p.m., \$90, \$105 with wine

**THE CHEESE BOARD AMERICAN BISTRO**, 247 California Ave., 775-332-1848, www.cheeseboardcatering.com

Four-course menu (short ribs, salmon or roasted vegetable napoléon), from 5 p.m., \$45

**CIRCUS CIRCUS RENO**, 500 N. Sierra St., 775-789-5604, www.circusreno.com

» **The Steakhouse:** Four-course menu (beef tenderloin, wild salmon, or tomahawk steak for two), from 5 p.m., \$59.95 (extra charge for toma-

hawk steak for two)

**DAVID'S GRILL**, Red Hawk Golf and Resort, 6590 N. Wingfield Parkway, Sparks, 775-626-1000, www.resortredhawk.com

Three-course menu (New York steak or shrimp scampi), 5-9 p.m. (live music begins 6:30 p.m.), \$34

**ELDORADO HOTEL CASINO**, 345 N. Virginia St., 775-786-5700, www.eldoradoreno.com

» **The Prime Rib Grill:** Four-course menu (Chateaubriand with sauce Diane), from 5 p.m., \$65

» **Roxy:** Four-course menu (beef Wellington), from 5 p.m., \$150 per couple, \$195 with bottle of Nicolas Feuillatte brut Champagne

» **La Strada:** Four-course menu (sole-king crab roulade and pancetta-stuffed chicken), from 5 p.m., \$55, or \$90 with a bottle of Bocelli prosecco

**GRAND SIERRA RESORT AND CASINO**, 2500 E. Second St., 775-789-2000, www.grandsierraresort.com

» **Briscola:** Four special dishes (crisp sea bass with cioppino), 5-9 p.m., \$8-24

» **Charlie Palmer Steak:** Five special dishes (USDA Prime grade New York strip steak with grilled prawns), 5:30-9:30 p.m., \$6-32

**JOHN ASCUAGA'S NUGGET**, 1100 Nugget Ave., Sparks, 775-356-3300, www.janugget.com

» **Restaurante Orozko:** Three-course menu (steak and lobster duet), from 5 p.m., \$45

» **The Steakhouse Grill:** Three-course menu (Maine lobster tail), from 5 p.m., \$55

» **Trader Dick's:** Three-course menu (duet of petite filet and king crab legs), from 5 p.m. \$45

**PEPPERMILL RESORT SPA CASINO**, 2707 S. Virginia St., 775-826-2121, www.peppermillreno.com

» **Bimini Steakhouse:** Three-course menu (Maine lobster or grilled filet mignon), 5-9:30 p.m., \$55, \$75 with wine

» **Chi:** Three-course menu (half Peking duck, lobster tail in nest or Chinese-style steak), 5-9:30 p.m., \$45

» **Romanza:** Three-course menu (Main lobster or filet mignon), 5-9:30 p.m., \$55, \$75 with wine

**SILVER LEGACY RESORT CASINO**, 407 N. Virginia St., 775-325-7401, www.silverlegacyreno.com

» **Sterling's Seafood Steakhouse:** Four-course menu (lobster-stuffed tenderloin), from 5 p.m., \$85 for two, \$109 with bottle of Korbel sparkling wine

**SODO**, 275 Hill St., 775-322-2710, www.sodoreno.com

Two specials (book a party of four and receive free bottle of William Hill chardonnay or cabernet sauvignon or any appetizer, or order New York steak or grilled mahi mahi for two for \$40), specials good from 8 p.m.

**TUSCAN TOMATO** (with L'Uva Bella Wine Gallery), 13963 S. Virginia St., in the Summit, call L'Uva Bella for reservations, 775-851-1110, www.tuscantomato.com

Four-course menu (short rib ravioli), from 6 p.m., cost of \$50 includes wine

**WESTERN VILLAGE INN & CASINO**, 815 Nichols Blvd., Sparks, 775-331-1069, www.wvsparks.com

» **The Steakhouse:** Three-course menu (trio of petite filet, shrimp scampi and scallops), 4:30-9 p.m., \$34.95

**WILD RIVER GRILLE**, 17 S. Virginia St., 775-284-7455, www.wildrivergrille.com

Four-course menu (filet mignon, herb-crusted halibut or pan-seared duck breast), from 5 p.m., \$99 per couple

**ZOZO'S RESTORANTE**, 3446 Lakeside Drive, 775-829-9449, www.zozosreno.com

Three-course menu (filet mignon, roast pork rack, sole Veronique, seafood vin blanc), 5-9 p.m., \$39.95

VALENTINE'S DAY

# Not going out? Make Valentine's at home special

By Alison Ladman  
Associated Press

If you're not braving the restaurant crowds on Valentine's Day, it's time to start planning a special menu for a romantic night in.

This crab and hearts of palm gratin is warm, comforting and rich with flavors that say "you're special." It cooks up in a gratin dish, so you can assemble it ahead of time, then when you're ready to eat, just pop it in the oven. While the gratin bakes, assemble the salad and serve everything together with a crusty baguette. Simple, special, perfect.

## CRAB AND HEARTS OF PALM GRATIN WITH ARUGULA AND CHERRY SALAD

*For the gratin:*  
One (14-ounce) can artichoke hearts, drained  
One (14-ounce) can hearts of palm, drained  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme  
Zest of 1 lemon  
1/2 cup heavy cream  
1/2 cup grated fontina cheese  
1/4 teaspoon ground white pepper  
12 ounces lump crab meat  
1/3 cup panko bread crumbs  
1/4 teaspoon sweet paprika

Pinch salt  
1 tablespoon butter, melted

Heat the oven to 375 F. Place 2 shallow individual-sized casserole or gratin dishes on a baking sheet.

Chop the artichoke hearts and hearts of palm into 1/2-inch pieces. In a medium bowl, gently stir together the artichokes and hearts of palm with the thyme, lemon zest, cream, fontina, white pepper and crab. Spoon the mixture into the gratin dishes.

In a small bowl, stir together the bread crumbs, paprika, salt and melted butter. Sprinkle over the gratins. Bake for 25 to 30

minutes, or until bubbling and golden.

*For the salad:*

1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
1 teaspoon maple syrup  
2 cups baby arugula  
1/4 cup fresh or dried cherries  
2 tablespoons toasted almonds (optional)  
Sea salt and ground black pepper

While the gratins bake, make the salad. In a medium bowl, whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, mustard and maple syrup. Add the arugula, cherries



Crab and hearts of palm gratin offers easy elegance for a meal at home. MATTHEW MEAD/AP

and almonds and gently toss to coat. Top with sea salt and black pepper. Serve with gratin. Serves 2.

*Nutrition information per serving: 1,020 calories; 410 calories from fat (40 percent of total calories); 46 g fat (24 g saturated); 1 g trans fats; 280 mg cholesterol; 101 g carbohydrate; 13 g fiber; 13 g sugar; 58 g protein; 2,190 mg sodium.*

## Sparklers

Continued from Page 1E

Davidson also prefers rosés, which she said can be paired with more different types of food because they are fuller-bodied. She likes the Montaudon grande rosé.

One trend Davidson has noticed is that wine consumers in their early 20s are latching onto moscato.

"This whole class of wine drinkers has discovered it," she said. "It's the No. 1 trend as far as an uptick in sales."

### Bubbling quartet

Here are a few sparkling wines to try this Valentine's Day:

### 2010 Bodegas Naveran Brut Cava

Cava is from the Penedès region of Spain just south of Barcelona and is made from different grape varieties than Champagne in France

and most domestic sparkling. Cava is made from xarello, macabeo and parellada. It is usually light and crisp and is a tremendous value. I'd pick Cava over domestic sparklers at the same price point almost every time.

**Price (prices are approximate and may vary depending upon the vendor): \$16**

**Alcohol:** 11.5 percent  
**Grape varieties:** 50 percent xarello, 30 percent macabeo and 20 percent parellada

**Tasting notes:** Aromas of summer strawberries and perfumed honeysuckle. On the palate, it's light-bodied, fruity and refreshing, with a whoosh of richness and restrained but balanced acidity.

### 2008 Domaine Carneros by Taittinger

### Brut Cuvée sparkling wine

Sparkling wines from California may not be called Champagne, of course, and they aren't even supposed to use the term "méthode Champenoise," although Do-

maine Carneros does for this bottling. It's made by the French Champagne house Taittinger, though, so we'll forgive. A great value brut sparkler, perfect for any occasion and affordable enough to drink as everyday wine.



Champagne Billecart-Salmon brut rosé

**Price:** \$25  
**Alcohol:** 12 percent  
**Grape varieties:** Pinot noir, pinot meunier and chardonnay

**Tasting notes:** Yeasty aromas of white peaches and freshly baked bread. On the palate, it's light and crisp, with a medium-weight mouthfeel and a shot of acidity. Lingering finish ends with crisp apple and pear notes.

### 2009 Schramsberg Brut Rosé

I am a sucker for pink bubbles. Rosé sparkling wines tend to be a bit bigger and richer. Plus, drinking pink bubbles just makes you feel good.

**Price:** \$37  
**Alcohol:** 13 percent  
**Grape varieties:** Pinot noir, pinot meunier and chardonnay

**Tasting notes:** Complex aromas of raspberry and strawberry jump out of the glass. It's rich and complex on the palate with layers of flavors — orange peel and more strawberries. Medium-bodied and elegant, it has

a long, layered finish.

### Champagne Billecart-Salmon Brut Rosé

Valentine's Day is no day to pinch pennies, at least if you have plans on seeing your beloved beyond Feb. 14. This is a splurge bottle that's worth every cent. Another brut rosé (see above for a rhapsody on pink bubbles), this wine is one of my two favorite Champagnes, the other being the yeasty and rich Krug, which is too costly for this wine writer.

**Price:** \$75  
**Alcohol:** 12 percent  
**Grape varieties:** Pinot noir, pinot meunier and chardonnay

**Tasting notes:** Tasting this Champagne is like walking through a field of flowers holding your lover's hand on a beautiful summer day. Cheesy, yes, but it conveys the right image.

Aromas of brioche, raspberry, white peaches and freshly baked pie

emerge. On the palate, it's rich and yeasty, with medium to full body for a sparkler and a fine mousse (good bubbles). It's rich and juicy and has just enough acidity to cut through the flesh. In short, heaven. With a finish longer than Giselle Bundchen's legs.

Follow Laura Longero on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/SipRGJ](http://www.facebook.com/SipRGJ).

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