



20th Century Studios/TNS

Review: Rachel McAdams and Dylan O’Brien shine in Sam Raimi’s gonzo blast ‘Send Help.’


In today’s paper
SCENE: Lawrence bringing ‘Mama’ character to Gallo Center. 1C



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VOLUME 149, No. 13
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The Modesto Bee



School officials endorsed Chubon for ‘extreme character’

BY ATMIKA IYER
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Gustine Unified School District Superintendent Bryan Ballenger and Gustine High School Principal Adam Cano both wrote letters of recommendation for Brian Chubon that were submitted to Modesto City Schools when he applied to be vice principal of Mark Twain

Junior High School in 2022. The Modesto Bee acquired the letters through California’s Public Records Act as a part of its investigation into Chubon. “He is also very hardworking, intelligent, and a person of extreme character. Mr. Chubon always puts students first and makes sure his decisions are a direct relationship to what is best for students,” Ballenger wrote. Chubon was convicted of

felony charge of statutory rape of a minor, to which he pleaded no contest. The crimes occurred while he was vice principal of Gustine High School in 2022. GUSD officials did not respond to calls for comment in time for publication. The 17-year-old student came forward in February 2024 to report the abuse to the Gustine Police Department, and charges were filed against Chubon in

November 2024. On Jan. 14, he was convicted. In a phone call with The Modesto Bee, Chubon said only, “I’m not guilty of anything.” His letters of recommendation from Ballenger and Cano date back to February 2022, during the time period in which Chubon committed crimes against a minor. The abuse occurred from January through June 2022.

Sometime in spring 2022, about two years before law enforcement was notified, GUSD investigated Chubon for having an inappropriate relationship with a minor. The investigation came after Marisol Juarez, the district’s HR specialist and Title IX coordinator, reported that Chubon and the victim “left to the office together at a school event during the spring of 2022,” according to the criminal complaint. The results of the school district’s investigation remain unknown. It is also not currently known whether the letters were sent before or after the investigation.

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Kaiser Permanente Modesto Medical Center is pictured Thursday, Oct. 16, 2025.

Kaiser to open three-story health center in Modesto

BY KEN CARLSON
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Kaiser Permanente is opening a three-story medical office building in north Modesto to expand access to primary and specialty care for a growing patient population. Almost 75 physicians will see adult and pediatric patients at the outpatient center situated on the south side of the Kaiser Modesto Medical Center on Dale Road. The 107,400-square-foot building, at 4531 Dale Road,

has 28 bays for cancer infusion treatments and also features physical therapy and a pharmacy in addition to primary and specialty care. One floor is dedicated to pediatric patients. “We had incredible growth in the Central Valley in the past 10 years,” said Alexander Rakul, medical group administrator for Kaiser’s Central Valley area, in explaining the need for the facility. Kaiser serves more than 453,000 members and patients in the Central Valley area including health plan subscribers, Covered Cali-

fornia enrollees and people in the Medicare and Medi-Cal programs. Kaiser said it will meet the growing demand with more than 100 examination rooms and a spectrum of services including adult and family medicine, pediatrics, a newborn care center, a high-risk infancy clinic, hematology, oncology, and physical and occupational therapy. The in-house pharmacy will allow patients to quickly pick up prescription drugs following their appointments. Kaiser representatives said lab serv-

ices and radiology are in the next building, so patients won’t have to travel to another location for those services. The Modesto facility has solar panels and other environmental features such as drought-tolerant landscaping, energy-efficient lighting and low-emitting materials for improved air quality indoors. Health care services and new facilities continue to create employment opportunities in the Modesto area. The outpatient center will have about 350 employees. Kaiser Permanente, based in Oakland, is a nonprofit health industry leader in California. Its north Modesto medical center started to see medical office patients in 2006 and its inpatient hospital wing opened in 2008.

OB-GYN to surrender license after sexual misconduct reports

BY KEN CARLSON
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Dr. Robert Altman of Modesto will surrender his medical license amid allegations of sexual misconduct and exploitation of patients, according to the Medical Board of California. The board in an August 2024 accusation said the OB-GYN was subject to disciplinary action based on complaints from two former patients. The Medical Board decision Tuesday said the physician agreed to resolve the case without the expense and uncertainty of additional hearings. Board paperwork shows that Altman signed the order Jan. 15 and it will become effective Feb. 3. Altman is expected to pay \$94,810 for costs of the investigation and enforcement action. An attorney representing the physician could not be reached Wednesday. Altman is a former president and chief executive officer of Gould Medical Group. The allegations against Altman concerned two women who complained about inappropriate touching and other physical contact during examinations. A person identified as Patient 1 in Medical Board paperwork complained that Altman touched her clitoris in an intentional way during a December 2020 gynecological exam. The then-54-year-old woman, who was stressed due to a divorce and her mother’s illness, complained about other physical contact from the doctor during the

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Stanislaus adopts plan to protect wells in Modesto area

BY KEN CARLSON
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Stanislaus County supervisors adopted a well mitigation and management plan Tuesday for the groundwater underlying most of the northern part of the county. County government has jurisdiction over the eastern and western unincorporated

areas that are not within irrigation districts — about 22% of the groundwater basin. Modesto, Oakdale, Riverbank, Waterford, Modesto Irrigation District and Oakdale Irrigation District are the other members of the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association, which is expected to comply with the state’s groundwater mandates. A groundwater sustainability

plan was adopted in 2022 and submitted to state regulators. Two years later, the California Department of Water Resources said the plan was incomplete. The department told the local association to revise the plan to halt a decline in groundwater levels. According to a report Tuesday from county Water Resources Manager Christy McKinnon, groundwater levels are expected to decline before management efforts reverse the pattern. Almost 30 wells are at risk of failing if there is no action. The groundwater plan will focus on mitigations for domestic wells and small drinking water systems that have

been impacted by declining groundwater since 2022. It will apply only to wells affected by groundwater depletion, not electrical problems or the effects of age. Owners eligible for assistance can receive emergency water through a contract with Self Help Enterprises until well replacement or connection to a public system. Applicants may qualify for up to \$40,000 per well. The member agencies must approve the management plan before the association adopts it Wednesday. The agencies still need to develop action plans for groundwater management

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