

---

# Freedman of the Press

---

SPECIAL  
EDITION

APRIL 7, 2024

---

# FINAL ISSUE!

---

## TIMES-HERALD LEGEND RICHARD FREEDMAN DIES FROM CANCER

### RICHARD S. FREEDMAN REMEMBERED

'Freedman was a talented, devoted professional, a prolific producer of vital stories to his community'

Richard Freedman, a philanthropic community icon and the heart and soul of this newspaper for nearly three decades, died over the weekend after a courageous bout with cancer. He was 67.

Freedman was diagnosed with cancer of the kidney on Dec. 7. The illness became more aggressive in recent weeks, and Freedman, with the love of his life and wife of 19 years, Megan Freedman, by his bedside, died Saturday morning.

Freedman was a devoted husband to Megan and father to his precious son Cameron, who died tragically at the age of 26 in 2020, and a loving step-father to his wife's three children.

But for thousands of readers of the Vallejo Times-Herald, Freedman for decades was the razor-sharp voice of wit, wisdom, cynicism and a healthy dose of snark for his weekly column, which was must-reading for his legion of fans.

More than that, Freedman was the Times-Herald's longtime community editor before retiring on the first day of 2022. He wrote hundreds upon hundreds of stories on not just Vallejo's movers and shakers, but on the many Vallejoans and Solano County residents who shared the same generous, giving spirit he did.

As Times-Herald Editor Jack F.K. Bungart wrote of Freedman in a tribute column upon his retirement: "The man would cover the opening of an envelope if it helped shine a brighter light on what mattered to him: The homeless, the hungry, the disadvantaged, the downtrodden ... anyone who deserved a better deal than the one they were getting."

Bungart said Freedman's work and contributions to the Times-Herald "will never be matched."

"Richard was, indeed, the heart and soul of the Times-Herald from the day he walked in these doors,"

said Bungart. "He delighted our newsroom on a daily basis with his infectious sense of humor, keeping us guessing and laughing out loud with his hilarious — and painful — puns, his timeless — and sometimes perfectly inappropriate — observations on the working and human condition, and his remarkably generous spirit.

"Aside from that, Freedman was a talented, devoted professional, a prolific producer of vital stories to his community, able to take on any assignment at a moment's notice and produce clean, tight copy quickly enough to beat any deadline imposed on him. He was a journalist's journalist, to be sure."

Bungart and Freedman began working together in January, 1995, becoming friends immediately. Bungart said he "was gutted" by his friend's death. "I thought I was ready for Richard's passing — I wasn't," said Bungart. "He was more than a best friend — he brought immeasurable joy and caring to the lives of myself and my family. I am forever grateful we were in touch daily — hourly courtesy of his never-ending barrage of welcome texts — during his retirement. Losing him leaves a hole in my life — and my heart — that will never be filled."

Freedman, a 1979 graduate of San Jose State University with a bachelor's degree in journalism, was constantly involved in far too many Vallejo organizations, charities and fund-raising efforts to mention. Among the many joys he had in life, he loved comedy, the music of Brandi Carlile, and the glory and the failings of his San Francisco Giants, Oakland A's, San Francisco 49ers and Golden State Warriors.

Above anything else, Freedman loved his family. He would do — and did do — anything for his wife, a son he loved with every fiber of his being, and his growing family of step-children Toby Belisle, Charlotte and Mike Payne, Beau Belisle and grandchildren with his dear Megan. The two were married on Sept. 26, 2004, in Vallejo.



Richard "Rich" Freedman died on March 30, with his wife Megan at his side.

Retiring Jan. 4, 2022 after 27 years working as a reporter and editor for the Vallejo Times-Herald, Rich was the son of Bernard Freedman, who died in 2017 at age 99, and Claire Freedman, who died in 2001 at age 81.

Rich's greatest love was his wife, Megan. The two were married on Sept. 26, 2004, in Vallejo.

Rich is survived by his wife Megan; step-children Toby, Charlotte and Beau (Belisle); son-in-law Mike Payne; and grandsons Baker and Caswell Payne. He was predeceased in death by his son, Cameron (2020, age 26), his sister, Lynn Weiss, and his parents.

Rich's accomplishments are numerous, including Benicia Man of the Year, The 2013 Humanitarian of the Year by Theta Pi Chapter, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity in Vallejo, 2009 West Coast Blues Hall of Fame Award as Blues Journalist of the Year, the California Commendation Medal by the Military Dept., State of California in 2003, and the Doctor of Medicine WebMD diploma, compliments of his sister-in-law, Amy Johnson Bax.

Rich was a big sports fan, including the San Francisco Giants, 49ers and Golden State Warriors. He loved baseball the most, having played until he was 16 when a blown elbow and inability to hit a curveball ended his fantasy of playing minor league baseball.

*Cont'd. on page four*

---

# Richard S. Freedman **HOW TO TALK TO SQUIRRELS**

July 21, 1956 - March 30, 2024

- Welcome** ..... Larry Davis  
Sr. Pastor, Northgate
- Obituary** ..... Hale Burkin  
Dear friend
- Prayer and word of comfort** ..... Ken Jensen  
Pastor Emeritus, Northgate
- Crazy video 1** ..... Rich Freedman  
Mayor of Crazyville
- Amazing Grace** ..... Carlos Reyes
- On benevolence** ..... Pastor Al Marks
- Crazy video 2** ..... Rich Freedman  
Mayor of Crazyville
- Family sharing** ..... Irene Sanders family  
Art Freedman family  
Gary Freedman family
- Crazy video 3** ..... Rich Freedman  
Mayor of Crazyville
- Family sharing** ... Johnson/Bax/Welch families
- On laughter** ..... Rob Schneider  
Paula Poundstone  
Johnny Steele  
Joe Klocek  
Mike Pritchard  
Whose Line it is Anyway?
- Close to Heaven** ..... Peppino
- On journalism** ..... Jack Bungart  
Long-time colleague and friend
- Rich and Jesus** ..... Jeff Bachman
- On friendship** ..... Brian Martin  
Friend, like forever
- Crazy video 4** ..... Rich Freedman  
Mayor of Crazyville
- Family sharing** ..... Belisle family  
Megan, Toby, Char, Mike, Beau
- The Good News** ..... Larry Davis
- A life in pictures** ..... Hallelujah  
The Promise
- Blessing and sending** ..... Larry Davis

The thought of talking to squirrels may seem like a foreign concept. To many people, the very mention of talking to squirrels conjures up images of some crazy old loon, walking through the park bickering at animals. In reality, talking to squirrels is not strange or bizarre at all. Squirrels are social animals by nature, and although they are instinctively timid, they are also curious about humans. Once they learn that you are not a threat, talking to squirrels becomes very easy and natural. Keep reading to learn more about how to talk to squirrels.

Find a quiet location where there are plenty of squirrels in the vicinity. A city park may work for those who live in urban areas, but a more secluded location should be used if one is available. Ideally, you will want to find a wooded location that is free of other people, automobiles or anything that generates a loud noise. You want to be in a spot that contains nothing but you, trees and squirrels. Once you have found a suitable location, you are ready to begin teaching the squirrels that you are not a threat.

Return to the same location often. You should go at least 2-3 times a week, but the more often you go, the faster the transition will be. You do not need to do anything but to sit quietly, allowing the animals to get use to your presence, and to even recognize who you are. This is a good time to read a book, meditate, listen to your ipod, or whatever else you may choose to do when you need some quiet time to yourself. The squirrels will quickly come to recognize who you are so that they do not feel so disturbed by your presence.

Observe the behavior of the squirrels. When you are spending time sitting quietly among the squirrels, take time to observe their behavior. Pay particular attention to how the squirrels communicate with each other. Squirrels usually have three basic forms of communications: tail waving, chirping and barking. Tail waving is usually done to communicate with squirrels across a distance, like waving a flag, and is normally done as a warning to be on guard. Barking is typically only done when hostility is required, such as when an animal is too close to the babies. Chirping seems to be the more playful form of squirrel communication. Learn to recognize these sounds, and practice them whenever you can.

Feed the squirrels. After about a week, depending on how often you visit, the squirrels should begin to recognize your presence and will not be as fearful of you. At the point, start bringing nuts with you. Peanuts are a favorite of squirrels. When you first arrive, pour some nuts at the base of a tree some distance from you, then sit quietly away and watch to see if the squirrels take the bait. Continue leaving nuts at the tree each time you visit, but once a week, move your sitting position to be a little closer to the tree with the nuts. Eventually the squirrels will be so use to you that they will come eat even with you sitting near by, and may even approach you out of curiosity.

Begin talking to the squirrels. Once the squirrels are comfortable enough to eat in your presence, begin talking to them. Use a combination of words and chirps. If you can do a good job of imitating squirrel chirps, then you will certainly get their attention. Otherwise, talking in a calm, passive voice also works well. While they may not understand the specific words you are saying, they can understand the tone of your voice, so as long as you are passive with them, the squirrels will respond to what you say. The squirrels may move away from you at first. If this happens, just sit still and wait for them to return so that you may try again. Squirrels are naturally curious animals, and if they hear you making sounds similar to theirs, you can expect to see them approach you to investigate. With time, patience and repeated sessions, they will eventually walk right up to you, and even become excited to see you when you approach.  
animals.mom.com



*A rose by any other name  
would smell as sweet.*

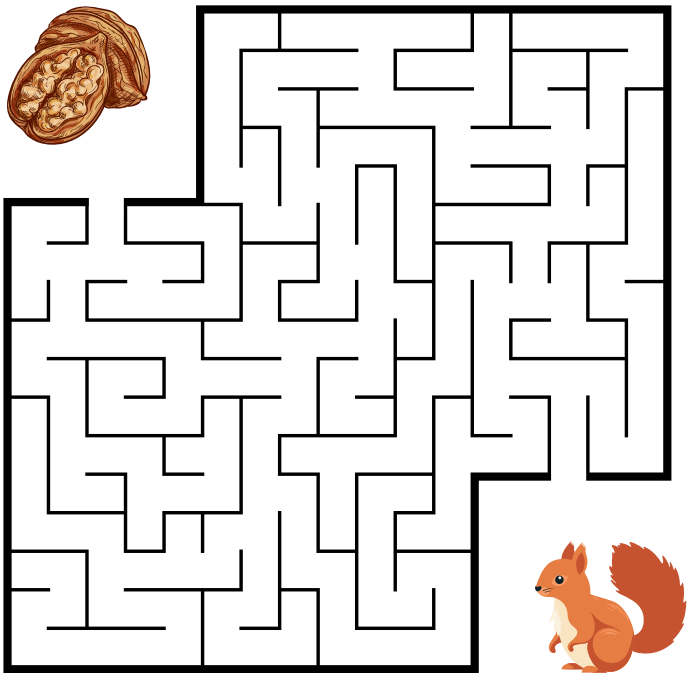


Faith Food Fridays helps our Vallejo area neighbors in need with free boxes of food, groceries and other necessities, along with resource referrals and positive encouragement.

**HUNGER RELIEF    DONATE    VOLUNTEER    ADVOCATE**

Faith Food Fridays is located at 826 Solano Ave., Vallejo, CA  
(707) 557-7933

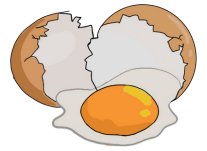
# SUNDAY FUNDAY



Help Bucky find the walnut!

## Scrambled Eggs

Unscramble these "rich" words.



- GNEAM \_\_\_\_\_
- ONCBA \_\_\_\_\_
- LSQIRURE \_\_\_\_\_
- MOCEYD \_\_\_\_\_
- LESTREH \_\_\_\_\_
- MRTSA LCAEK \_\_\_\_\_
- PRMSGA \_\_\_\_\_
- NERSVTA \_\_\_\_\_
- XETT NGKI \_\_\_\_\_
- MBUEHL \_\_\_\_\_

## FUN FACTS

- Oats can be traced in human diets back thousands of years.
- More than one-half of the world's oats are grown in the U.S. and Canada.
- In the United States, 95 percent of the oats grown are used for animal feed.
- Oats are higher in protein and healthy fats and lower in carbohydrates than most other whole grains.



Shanahan

*"You schlepped with her, didn't you?"*

CartoonStock.com



## JOIN US!

Please join us at the Solano County Fair Grounds for a reception in honor of Rich immediately following the service.

Share a fun story, have something to eat and cry while you laugh.

900 Fairgrounds Drive  
Vallejo, CA

# Personals

If you like piña coladas and gettin' caught in the rain, if you're not into yoga, if you have half a brain, if you like makin' love at midnight in the dunes on the cape, then I'm the love that you've looked for, write to me and escape (707) 704-6066

Good looking, romantic, kind, generous, thoughtful, smart, funny, courageous, empathetic, adventurous, outgoing, unbiased, aromatic, sweet, playful, responsible single female who loves squirrels looking for long-term relationship. (707) 704-6066

Enneagram 1 with a 4 wing looking for 2 with an 8 wing. No substitutions. (707) 704-6066

NJB ISO SWF w/MBA no STDs. (707) 704-6066

Very sad family grateful for the countless words of love, acts of service and financial support given and shown by so many. So much love back to each of you. (707) 704-6066



Wherever there is a need in Northern California and Northern Nevada, you'll find The Salvation Army.

586 East Wigeon Way,  
Suisun City, CA

707-439-7880

[info@gokroc.org](mailto:info@gokroc.org)

*Cont'd. from page one*

Rich also loved stand-up comedy, comedy movies, and was a big fan of singer Brandi Carlile.

Rich graduated from Ygnacio Valley High School in Concord (Class of 1974), Diablo Valley College, and San Jose State University. His first full-time newspaper job was with the Valley Times in Pleasanton. That building is now a Mexican food market.

At the Vallejo Times-Herald, where he worked for 27 years, Rich was, as his editor Jack F.K. Bungart says, "a legend." He served as a reporter before becoming the paper's longtime community editor. He also wrote a weekly column, which entertained his fans with wit, wisdom, cynicism and a healthy dose of snark.

Overseeing the Vallejo-Times Herald's Community Christmas Card every year, Rich took pride in helping raise nearly \$500,000 to help feed the local hungry.

Upon retirement, Rich received a proclamation from then Congressman Mike Thompson and a Resolution from the California Legislature signed by state Sen. Bill Dodd and Assemblyman Tim Grayson

Rich's first honor in retirement was serving as the Grand Marshal of Vallejo's July 4 parade.

Rich would stay busy, taking freelance assignments for Martin Media as road manager for several entertainers, including comedians Paula Poundstone, Rob Schneider, and the improv group, "Whose Live, Anyway?" Rich traveled to exotic stops as Salt Lake City, Kansas City, KS, and Santa Fe, NM.



A cultural community venue for linking people, coffee and community. Organic, fair-trade, locally roasted.

Free tastings on Saturdays. Come and talk!

11 Sixth Street Vallejo, CA  
(707) 556-9000



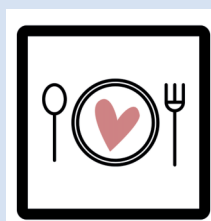
Loma Vista Farm is a non-profit 5-acre outdoor classroom that provides hands-on educational activities for children of all ages and abilities, funded 100% by Friends of Loma Vista.

(707) 556-8765

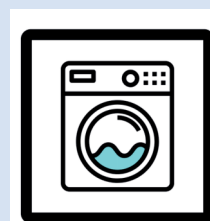
[Info@lomavistafarm.org](mailto:Info@lomavistafarm.org)



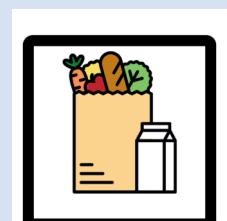
**Free meals for the community so that nobody in Vallejo goes hungry.**



Free Meals



Shower & Laundry Room



Emergency Pantry

**If you are interested in volunteering your time, please contact Pastor Mike at (707) 644-4087 or [thesparrowproject@fbcvallejo.com](mailto:thesparrowproject@fbcvallejo.com).**