



Carmichael Times

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A Tribute to Mr. Chevron

Ed Marszal's Family Celebrates a Life and New Births



Above: In memory of national gas station giant Ed Marszal -- and to celebrate his two grand babies in keeping with family tradition -- Carmichael Chevron was decked in blue and pink this week. Adam Marszal holds his four-month old daughter Lucy. His sister Annie Marszal Fass (right) holds her four-week-old son, Eddie. Grandma Susan (center) cradles a portrait of her late husband. Right: Ed Marszal served as honorary Carmichael Mayor in 1985; His retail empire expanded to five US states from humble Carmichael beginnings.

Story and photos by Susan Maxwell Skinner

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - A Sacramento pillar of business and philanthropy, Ed Marszal died on March 21. He was 74. Born in a working class Cleveland, Ohio neighborhood, this descendant of Polish immigrants was the first of his family to attend college. After graduation, he served the Army then cultivated an astonishing flair for retail. In 1981, Marszal bought a run-down Carmichael service station and began pumping gas. Days before his death, the Marszal family operation -- now known as California Retail Management -- opened its 43rd gas and convenience store business in South Lake Tahoe.

His daughter and son take over an empire with Chevron, 76 and Shell stations in three states.

Although his passing came after a long illness, the Carmichael resident lived energetically into his final weeks. "He got a bonus of three years that no doctor thought he would get," says his wife of 40 years, Susan. "During that time, his son and daughter both married and gave him grandchildren. He built the home of his dreams in Hawaii and lived there for four months. He got last rites from Jesuit High School's President, Father John McGarry. My children and I heard Ed whisper 'Amen.' He knew it was time."

Days earlier, daughter Annie Marszal Fass had delivered her first child. "Dad had Facetime with me and the baby," she reports. "He was tearful and proud that we named little Eddie after him."



Honoring the late Ed, his swaddled namesake and son Adam Marszal's new-born Lucy, Marszal's heirs this week decked the Marconi and Walnut Avenue Chevron station in blue and pink. The gesture revisited history: at Annie's 1983 birth, her father swathed his macho business in pink ribbons. "He told us people drove by honking horns," says Annie (37). "His station was quite a neighborhood center. Customers went there on Saturdays just to hang out with dad."

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Local United Way CEO to Step Down

By Kristin Thebaud, Thebaud Communications

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Stephanie McLemore Bray, president and CEO of United Way California Capital Region, will leave her position in mid-April as she transitions to her new role as chief engagement officer for Seattle Foundation in May. Amber Lovett, chief resource development and marketing officer at United Way California Capital Region, will transition to interim president and CEO on April 1 while the organization undergoes a nationwide search.

"It has been a privilege to lead United Way California Capital Region for the past seven years," Bray said. "I am proud of our work to end poverty, starting at school, by removing barriers to student success for low-income children. Through our partnerships with nonprofits, government, school districts, donors and community members, we have helped many families move from crisis to thriving. Our local United Way is well-positioned for its next leader to continue that great work."

Bray launched United Way's Square One Project in 2015, which continues to show improved education outcomes for low-income children in the region. She also completed a successful merger with Woodland United Way and brought in more than \$16 million since March 2020, including a \$10 million gift from renowned philanthropist MacKenzie Scott.

As chief engagement officer for Seattle Foundation, the Seattle region's community foundation, Bray will oversee engagements and relationships with the organization's hundreds of philanthropists, investors and donors. With more than \$1 billion in charitable assets and committed bequests, Seattle Foundation awards more than \$100 million annually to nonprofit organizations working to make Greater Seattle a stronger, more vibrant community for all.

"Stephanie has been a tireless advocate for people who are marginalized in the greater Sacramento area, and Seattle is fortunate to have her join the community," said Steve Lins of SMUD and chair of United Way's board of directors. "We are grateful for all she has done for United Way, and we know she is leaving us in an outstanding position to continue accomplishing important change in our

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Celebrating Easter

Story and photos by Susan Maxwell Skinner

CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG) - The Easter Bunny made many Carmichael visits last weekend. Carmichael Park District assisted the bouncing egg bearer with home deliveries for nearly 50 families on Friday. CRPD then joined forces with Mission Oaks District and Carmichael Kiwanians for a drive-through car hop on Saturday. The bunny trail followed COVID-safe protocols on a sedate route through Carmichael Park. Roadside booths provided treats for children and -- at the end of the trail -- a giant lop-eared lapin handed Easter eggs through the windows of about 80 cars.



The Cantrell family enjoyed Christian services at Carmichael's Crossroads Church.

Hundreds enjoyed Christian festivities on Sunday at Crossroads Church. The Grant Avenue establishment offered outdoor Easter services, with refreshments under canopy in the church yard. An egg hunt for more than 100 kids followed worship.

Parishioners sponsored 1600 candy-filled treats and a scrambled egg brunch for congregation and guests. ★

The Silver Lining of Proposition 19



Senator Ted Gaines

Commentary by Ted Gaines

Proposition 19, The Home Protection for Seniors, Severely Disabled, Families, and Victims of Wildfire or Natural Disasters Act, was passed by voters last November, enacting significant changes to California's property tax law. One provision of the measure – that concerning “parent-child” and “grandparent-grandchild” exclusions – triggered a massive property tax increase that took effect February 16.

Unfortunately for homeowners, the statute in its current state is a confusing mess. As a State Board of Equalization Member and dedicated taxpayer advocate, I continue to work closely with state legislators and county assessors to provide clarity and answer as many questions as possible for taxpayers affected by these provisions.

While Proposition 19 has some serious shortcomings – increasing taxes on tens of thousands of California families and making it more difficult and expensive to pass on property and family farms to your children and grandchildren – it does offer noteworthy tax

benefits to homeowners who are nearing retirement, severely disabled or victims of natural disasters. Beginning April 1, 2021, qualified homeowners can transfer their low Proposition 13 tax base year value to a replacement home of any value, in any of California's 58 counties. Homeowners who want to downsize, move closer to family, or relocate for any other reason can blend the taxable value of their old house with the purchase price of a new, and possibly more expensive home, reducing the property tax burden they would otherwise face.

When voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition 13 in 1978, it was to rein in property tax rates that had spiraled out of control as county governments routinely raised property taxes, in many cases forcing families from their homes. The landmark ballot initiative placed restrictions on how much a homeowner's taxable value could increase every year, even if a home's market value grew substantially.

California voters later passed Propositions 60, 90, and 110, which extended Proposition 13 protections to homeowners 55 or older and people with severe disabilities by giving them a one-time opportunity to retain their Proposition 13 tax base if they moved to a home of equal or lesser value within the same county or to one of the 10 counties with an intercounty agreement.

Proposition 19 further expands Proposition 13 benefits by allowing eligible homeowners to

transfer their base year value up to three times. It also gives property owners whose homes were damaged or destroyed by a wildfire or other natural disaster the ability to transfer their Proposition 13 base year value to a new home. These provisions of Proposition 19 take effect on April 1, 2021 and give homeowners two years to transfer their base year value to a replacement residence in any county.

I support the base year transfer provisions of Proposition 19 because they allow more homeowners to take advantage of Proposition 13 protections that continue to be widely supported by California voters. While some of Proposition 19's provisions hurt California taxpayers at a time when they need economic security the most, it's always nice to have a silver lining.

Visit my website at boe.ca.gov/gaines for more information on Proposition 19. I encourage all homeowners to check with their County Assessor for specific county regulations, policies, and any paperwork associated with base year transfers.

Senator Ted Gaines (Ret.) was elected in November 2018 to represent the Board of Equalization's First District. He is a leading taxpayer advocate and is committed to providing trustworthy and transparent representation for nearly ten million constituents in 30 counties of northern, eastern, and southern California. For more information, visit boe.ca.gov/Gaines. ★

Disabled Americans Could Soon Face Healthcare Discrimination

Commentary by Angela F. Williams

Patients with disabilities are 11 times more likely to die from Covid-19 than their able-bodied peers. That's a sobering statistic. And it's why public health officials have prioritized these vulnerable patients for vaccinations.

Unfortunately, when it comes to non-Covid matters, society doesn't always show the same concern. In fact, many states and private insurers are pushing for a “reform” that could deprive Americans living with multiple sclerosis (MS), cerebral palsy, and other disabilities of life-saving medicines.

The reform relies on a metric known as a “quality-adjusted life year.” These QALYs supposedly quantify the “cost effectiveness” of drugs by assessing the “quality” of an individual's life. The use of QALYs should concern every American, but especially those living with disabilities or battling chronic illnesses.

When this metric is utilized, a drug that delivers one year of “perfect” health receives one QALY. A drug that provides a benefit – but doesn't return a patient to “perfect” – receives a fraction of a QALY.

So, by design, QALYs devalue important treatments for chronically ill and disabled patients.

Since even breakthrough drugs will not restore perfect health in those patients, this puts them at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to accessing life-saving or life-improving drugs and medications. While there is no cure for blindness, MS, or cerebral palsy, new drugs can still dramatically improve patient well-being and longevity.

The British national health system regularly employs this tactic to deny coverage for advanced new therapies for chronically ill and disabled patients. Many other nations use QALY-like assessments to determine which medicines are available to patients.

The biggest advocate for their use stateside is the Institute for Clinical and Economic Review – or “ICER” – an influential Boston-based organization.

ICER's evaluations impose brutally simplistic categories on complex diseases. For instance, the institute splits patients with spinal muscular atrophy that have received treatment into three rudimentary categories: mobile, requiring ventilation, and dead.



Patients with disabilities are 11 times more likely to die from Covid-19 than their able-bodied peers. Image by klimkin from Pixabay

That classification is offensively reductive. Spinal muscular atrophy is an extremely challenging condition that involves several gradients of incapacitation. Drugs can deliver significant improvements to patients' well-being without moving them between those three categories.

Worryingly, the Institute has become very effective at getting large health insurers to utilize its metrics in their coverage decisions. And now New York health officials have begun using ICER metrics in their state-run Medicaid program, specifically to clamp down on access to advanced cystic fibrosis treatments.

ICER hasn't been the only group working to jeopardize disabled Americans' access to medication.

Shortly before President Trump left office, his administration announced a rule that ties the price of physician-administered drugs covered by Medicare to their cost in a select group of other developed nations. In doing so, then-President Trump imported the ruthless QALYs used abroad.

Countless Americans with disabilities rely on cutting-edge medications to live healthy, productive lives. Unfortunately, access to those drugs is now in jeopardy because of ICER and the Trump administration's rule. As we navigate the ongoing public health crisis, we must work to ensure these individuals have the tools to thrive, not simply survive.

To truly protect the health of the one in four Americans living with disabilities today, policymakers must work to ensure that those most deserving of new medicines are able to access them.

Angela F. Williams is president and CEO of Easterseals, a leading provider of services for people with disabilities, veterans, and seniors. This piece originally ran in the Buffalo News. ★

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Local United Way CEO to Step Down



Stephanie McLemore Bray, president and CEO of United Way California Capital Region, will leave her position as she transitions to her new role as chief engagement officer for Seattle Foundation in May.

Continued from page 1
 the community under a new leader.”

For nearly 100 years, United Way California Capital Region has brought local people together to make community change happen. Today, the nonprofit is bringing people together across Amador, El Dorado, Sacramento, Placer and Yolo counties for its Square One Project, a 20-year promise

to significantly increase the number of students in our region who graduate from high school ready for success in college and beyond. United Way believes ending poverty starts in school and is working to ensure kids meet important milestones and their families receive support and resources. To learn more and make a donation, visit YourLocalUnitedWay.org. ★

A Tribute to Mr. Chevron

Continued from page 1

He planned to decorate it in pink and blue last month, to celebrate both his grandkids. By doing it now, we're fulfilling dad's dreams.”

Fulfilling dreams was a big part of Mr. Chevron's business. Ed Marszal served boards for Make a Wish and United Cerebral Palsy Foundations. He donated generously to any number of police charities and wrote big checks for the 11-99 Foundation in aid of bereaved CHP families. “Dad's focus was on children,” says son Adam. “When he was a little boy, a family friend gave him a nickel. He never forgot how happy that gift made him. When we ate lunch at a restaurant, dad handed kids dollar bills for their piggy banks. He just loved to make people happy.”

He also liked to make them laugh. Marszal's humor was exemplified by his marriage proposal. “Ed got on his knees and flashed this gaudy, cheap ring,” recalls Susan Marszal. “I was surprised at his taste, but I said yes. When he asked if I liked the ring, I tried to entice. Then he pulled a beautiful diamond solitaire from his pocket and he said he'd brought this other one, just in case.”

Fun was interspersed with decades of hard work. It's an understatement to say Ed Marszal came a long way from the nine-year-old Cleveland kid who sold rescued golf balls back to their owners. “He was a natural-born entrepreneur,” says his son. “He knew an older guy was also collecting balls from around the golf course. Dad figured people might prefer to deal with a cute kid. So he paid the other guy to find balls and he sold them to the golfers at a profit. Our grandfather wanted dad to join him in the newspaper printing trade. But dad's passion was to run a business of his own.”

With college and the Army behind him, Marszal moved to California and sold auto accessories. “I felt I could run a gas station at least as well as the guys I was selling tires to,” he recalled. “I didn't plan an empire. I just wanted to make one station work.” He launched Carmichael Chevron and turned his hand to selling gas, checking under hoods and mopping floors. His bride commuted from the Bay Area to pump gas at weekends. “People like family businesses,” Marszal considered. “We always had someone available

to run out and help customers. We never charged for air or water. Our cashiers were the most important people in our company; their friendliness determined whether people came back.” This ethic shaped his children's careers. “Dad had two rules,” notes marketing specialist Adam Marszal. “Rule One: the customer is always right. Rule Two: if the customer is wrong, refer to Rule One.”

When an early customer wanted her car washed, Marszal soaped the sedan himself. “Watching me, my employees learned never to pass up an opportunity to extend service,” he explained. “From then, we put carwashes in all our stations.” While alert to innovation, Marszal treasured the continuity of old retainers and family. Chief Financial Officer Elizabeth Valentina was his right hand for 37 years. Daughter Annie has worked 10 years for California Retail Management and son Adam joined its marketing team in 2015. “My kids did their share of cleaning restrooms,” boasted their dad. “I wanted them to learn how important every role in our business was.”

During his 50 high-octane years in the gas industry, Marszal established stations in California, Ohio, Georgia, Hawaii and Nevada. He saw rivals come and go. “Many lost their focus on service,” considered the veteran. “Over the years, our friendly service constantly opened doors for more customers. The gasoline engine will be around for many more decades. As for gas stations, I believe the strong and the friendly will survive.”

A memorial for Ed Marszal will be held in Carmichael next week; a Catholic mass is planned for Cleveland in May. In June, *ohana* (family and friends) will gather on the island of Maui. “Ed loved living in Carmichael,” explains his wife. “He had strong family ties to Cleveland. Maui was our special place to rest and renew. He had friends everywhere. They'll all want to celebrate his life.” She last week looked through his desk and found a note scribbled by his hand: “Do not mourn that which you lost -- rejoice instead that you had it.”

“That's what we'll do,” says the widow. “We'll always rejoice that we had Ed in our lives.”

For information of Ed Marszal's Carmichael service E mail: Aubrey@alluringeventsanddesign.com ★

Got a Room or House for Short-Term Rental?

By Laurie Slothower, Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA - Got a room or a home you want to list, or are listing, on Airbnb or a related service? Sacramento County would like to remind homeowners that prior to accepting guests, short-term/vacation rentals require a permit and a business license, and they must register to pay transient occupancy taxes for visitors.

Short-term/vacation rentals are defined by stays of less than 30 days. Sacramento County updated its regulations in 2018 to clarify that houses and apartments cannot be used exclusively for short-term/vacation rentals. Rentals must be an “accessory use” to the property, meaning the owner must live in the house for at least six months of the year.

The Board of Supervisors adopted this requirement to make sure short-term rentals do not disrupt neighborhoods and to limit traditional rental units from being converted to short-term use.



Short-term/vacation rentals are defined by stays of less than 30 days. MPG file Photo

Stays of 30 days or longer do not require a permit.

If you are using your primary residence as a short-term rental, or are thinking of taking the plunge, please follow these steps:

Review the guidelines and application materials for a Short Term Rental Permit; Apply for a General Business License. You will need to set up an account with the Department of Finance to complete the application. Please do not submit

until after you have received your Short Term Rental Permit; Register with the Tax Collector's Office for Transient Occupancy Tax returns once you have your business license.

For more information, please contact the Office of Planning and Environmental Review at sacplan@saccounty.net or the Business Licensing Division of the Department of Finance at BusLicense@saccounty.net. ★



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Rio Linda Man Pleads to EDD Fraud Charges; Sentenced to Prison

Sacramento County District Attorney

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Walter Lee Dawson pled to five counts of fraudulently applying for unemployment benefits (EDD Fraud) and possession for sale of marijuana. He also admitted to a prior 2015 strike conviction for residential burglary. Dawson was sentenced to 9 years and 4 months in state prison.

Dawson was arrested on December 3, 2020, when Sacramento Probation Officers and Sheriff's Deputies conducted a probation compliance search and recovered a Glock style pistol with no serial number, multiple rounds of 9 mm ammunition, approximately \$58,000 in cash, approximately 3.8 pounds of marijuana, and packaging material consistent with marijuana sales. Dawson was arrested and charged with felon in possession of a firearm, felon in

possession of ammunition, and possession of marijuana for sales charges in Sacramento Superior Court case number 20FE019364.

During the search, nine EDD debit cards issued in different names were also recovered as were approximately 20 additional EDD documents in various people's names. After Dawson's arrest, a joint investigation by the District Attorney, Probation Department, Sheriff's Office, and the California Employment Development Department (EDD) Investigations Division revealed that approximately \$219,000 had been fraudulently acquired by Dawson when he obtained the nine EDD cards.

Dawson was ordered to pay \$219,964 in restitution to EDD. The \$58,155 in cash and all money left on the EDD cards that were found during the probation search will be turned over to EDD as restitution. ★



3501 Bluff Court, Carmichael | \$1,925,000

From dusk until dawn, experience remarkable views of the American River at this classic family estate, which is making its market debut for the first time! This secluded 4 bedroom and 3 bath retreat is tucked away on the river bluff and includes a private gated entrance and natural surrounding landscape to ensure the utmost in privacy. Built in 1938, this iconic property features a Spanish Adobe home with a red tile roof, tile pavers, and a minimalist design that showcases the home's breathtaking panoramic river views. The masterfully-designed outdoor deck is ideal for entertaining and gives way to riverfront views and the expansive grounds. There is an adjacent lot available, which allows the unique opportunity to own a 2.6 acre riverfront estate. A desirable cul-de-sac location and 3-car garage add to this home's charm! Centrally located near Highways 50/80, parks, cycling paths, running trails, and excellent schools. Must see!



1233 Kingsford Drive, Carmichael | \$1,295,000

This timeless contemporary residence captures the best of fine living! A generous floor plan of six bedrooms and five bathrooms with 5,000+ square feet of living space allows everyone their own space. Gather in the inviting living room with soaring ceilings and cozy up to the fireplace. Sliders thoughtfully open up to the bright and airy sunroom and beautiful backyard. The master invites total relaxation with a fireplace, private balcony overlooking the backyard, and walk-in shower and soaking tub. Vast view windows throughout the home soak up the natural light and create a warm and inviting atmosphere. Enjoy seamless outdoor entertaining with a roomy backyard featuring a sparkling pool and basketball court. Just steps away from The American River, walking/biking trails, fabulous shops and restaurants, and top-rated schools.



5244 Fair Oaks Boulevard Carmichael | \$1,295,000



3337 Monteglen Court, Carmichael | \$739,500

This custom 5,500 square-foot estate is a fusion of stunning architectural design and functionality. A private gate entrance and extensive landscaping ensure total privacy. Enjoy a welcoming foyer and expansive family room with soaring ceilings and clerestory windows. Highlights include light maple flooring, a grand sweeping staircase and gorgeous crown molding. The open-concept kitchen features granite countertops, custom cabinetry, pantry, and modern appliances. A generous floor plan offers 5 or 6 spacious bedrooms with 2 downstairs masters, 4.5 baths, game/media room, and formal living/dining rooms. Separate bonus room not included in square footage is perfect for home gym. Backyard features beautiful landscaping and citrus/fruit trees.

From its updated Ranch exterior to its perfectly polished interior, this beautiful 4 bedroom and 3 bath home has it all! Beautifully remodeled with two masters for the multi-generational family. The kitchen features new stainless steel appliances and cabinets, Quartzite counters, a farmhouse sink, and breakfast bar. The family room has a cozy brick fireplace and French doors that open up to the backyard. The master suite addition has a huge walk-in closet, jetted tub, separate his-and-her sinks, walk-in shower, and lovely porch. Enjoy hardwood flooring, raised ceilings, and dual pane windows. Entertain outdoors with a large covered patio, complete with ceiling fans for those warm summer days ahead. The backyard has a play structure, tool shed, citrus trees, and garden beds for your green thumb. Must see!



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JOIN US FOR A FUN & EDUCATIONAL EVENT

Our community will be hosting a variety of socially distanced booths with local industry professionals, such as realtors, home health & hospice companies, senior financial experts, and more. There will be a light lunch served and valet parking provided, as well as raffle prizes!



Poppoff!

With Mary Jane Popp

HOPE

Easter has come and gone. It's a beautiful time of awakening and renewal and a new beginning. What better time to reflect where we have been with this horrible pandemic and where we will go from here with the hope that there will be an end to the tragedy so many are facing every single day. This last year has brought so much pain and suffering. It has taken countless lives and caused strife on so many levels. Isolation has caused pain. There has been heightened hate and discord. I think that tells us we really need each other. But do we really care about each other? It reminds me of the words from an old Simon and Garfunkel song called "Sound of Silence," "People talking without speaking...people hearing without listening." Sound familiar? But we must not be silent and fear must not be our guide. We have to come together, help each other, and give hope that it CAN and WILL be a better world if we just take one day at a time and give of ourselves.

Easter is about celebrating the one who gives us hope that something awaits us when this life is done. It's a joyous day. But we can make something special of the life we are living right now. Easter has all the earmarks of what we must do to achieve that new life. All you have to do is look at the symbols of Easter. Who is hoppin' down the bunny trail? It's the Easter Bunny and its association with fertility, new life and spring. What about

the fabulous array of flowers during this holiday. Easter flowers are often a central theme to religious celebrations, but also part of secular Easter festivities too. Look at Easter Lilies? These pure white flowers are thought to symbolize purity, and as such, represent the resurrection of Christ. That's new life. Tulips symbolize passion, belief and love. And white tulips have special meaning. White tulips represent forgiveness. Much needed today. Irises represent faith, wisdom and hope. Hyacinths represent peace of mind. Why can't we merely reflect on these symbols and incorporate them into our lives?

Let's be honest. I can't totally understand all you have gone through in your life any more than you can totally understand mine. But we can still share and speak in understanding, not accusing voices. Even though Easter is done. Let's not forget what it's all about for the rest of the year. We don't need symbols to care. We don't need symbols to choose renewal. We don't need symbols to believe in hope. Hope comes from within. Dig deep into your own heart and soul and let Easter be a time for your own renewal and hope for a better life because you truly believe it can be a better life. Just one day at a time can make a big difference. Make your own symbols and let the love in your life be your guide. Happiness begins within and shared without! You don't need material symbols to SHARE LOVE!!! ★

Is California Driving Business Away?



By Dan Walters
CALMatters

Is California killing the golden goose with taxes and regulations that drive businesses and their jobs to more hospitable states?

That question has been debated for years without a definitive answer, flaring up whenever there's a high-profile move out of the state.

With the recent relocation of several well-known firms to Texas, along with one famous billionaire, Tesla's Elon Musk, the question once again reverberates in political circles.

Musk first threatened to shift locales last year after his manufacturing facility in the Bay Area was hit with a pandemic shutdown order.

"Frankly, this is the final straw," he tweeted last May. "Tesla will now move its HQ and future programs to Texas/Nevada immediately."

"F*ck Elon Musk," Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez, tweeted in response. Gonzalez, a San Diego Democrat and the Legislature's most outspoken proponent of unionization, later added, "California has highly subsidized a company that has always disregarded worker safety & well-being, has engaged in union busting & bullies public servants. I

probably could've expressed my frustration in a less aggressive way. Of course, no one would've cared if I tweeted that."

In December, Musk announced his personal move to Texas and his plans to expand activities in that state.

Last week, the Center for Jobs and the Economy, an arm of the California Business Roundtable, offered new grist for the debate by launching "CaliFormers," a running list of companies that have relocated from California or expanded operations elsewhere.

"California policies have created the highest in the nation cost-of-living and strictest in the nation regulatory costs which have caused jobs in key sectors such as manufacturing to start-up, scale or relocate in other lower-cost states, sometimes just across the border from California," the CaliFormers announcement declared.

"As we look to the future of our post-pandemic economy," it added, "the shift of the tech industry and the movement of its executives and investors will significantly impact the stability and solvency of our general fund since the state's progressive tax structure relies heavily on taxes paid by California's highest earners."

CaliFormers arrives on the scene not only as the perpetual debate heats up again but as the Legislature considers a new spate of bills that would impose additional costs on business and/or levy new taxes on business or wealthy individuals such as Musk.

CaliFormers gives the perpetual debate a factual underpinning, but it also falls short of a much-needed comprehensive analysis of the issue. Jerry Nickelsburg, who runs the Anderson Forecast, an economic research organization at UCLA, quickly criticized it for lacking context.

"The list does not sort by year or normalize by u-rate or employment," Nickelsburg tweeted. "It does not track moves to CA. (e.g if a company adds 200 jobs in CA and moves 100 to TX it appears on the table as a move of jobs to TX). So, a nice graphic, but not very useful as an analysis."

Nickelsburg makes a valid point. Obviously the issue is an important one. California depends on a vigorous private sector to provide jobs and indirectly provide revenues for the services that Gonzalez and other politicians want to expand. In fact, those one-percenters at the very top of the income ladder, such as Musk, are paying half of the state's income taxes.

It's so important that it deserves far more serious analysis. Gov. Gavin Newsom and the Legislature have immense research capabilities at their command and should order up a comprehensive and independent examination of whether California is becoming toxic to vital business activity. It's time to settle the argument once and for all.

Dan Walters has been a journalist for nearly 60 years, spending all but a few of those years working for California newspapers. ★

Three SmarT Ride Zones Expanding Monday, April 5



During COVID-19 SmarT Ride continues to be a lifeline for essential workers and community member getting to essential services. Photo from Katie Lichty, SacRT

By Jessica Gonzales, Sacramento Regional Transit

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) is expanding three SmarT Ride on-demand microtransit shuttle zones starting on Monday, April 5. The expansions will better serve residents of Arden, Carmichael, Folsom, Natomas and North Sacramento. With these new SmarT Ride zone enhancements, SacRT will have eight SmarT Ride zones, making it one of the largest microtransit services in the country operating with 45 shuttles, nine of which are

electric-battery powered. SmarT Ride is SacRT's on-demand ride-share shuttle service where customers can use a smartphone app to request a ride that will pick up and drop them off within the service zone boundaries. The SmarT Ride zone enhancements include:

Arden-Carmichael Zone - The Arden-Arcade zone will merge with the Carmichael zone creating the new Arden-Carmichael zone, which will add stops to Kaiser Morse and American River College.

Folsom Zone - The Folsom zone will expand to serve the developing community of Folsom Ranch, south of Highway 50.

Natomas-North Sacramento Zone - The North Sacramento zone will expand further into Natomas serving Arena Boulevard shops, Garden Highway, River Oaks, Gateway Oaks, the University Technical Institute and North Natomas Regional Park. This will become the new Natomas-North Sacramento zone.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, SmarT Ride continues to be a lifeline for essential workers and

community members getting to essential services. SmarT Ride has provided more than 130,000 trips since March 2020. The five other SmarT Ride service zones include Citrus Heights-Antelope-Orangevale, Downtown-Midtown-East Sacramento, Franklin-South Sacramento, Gerber-Calvine and Rancho Cordova.

SmarT Ride customers can download the free SacRT SmarT Ride app, which is available at Google Play and the App Store. Rides can also be requested by calling 916-556-0100 or by going online to ondemand.sacrt.com; however, trip requests must be made on the same day.

SmarT Ride service is only available to travel within each designated service zone. SmarT Ride shuttles cannot travel outside the service boundaries.

As a reminder, a mask or face covering is required on transit at all times. More information on SacRT's COVID-19 safety precautions is available at sacrt.com/covid19. Visit sacrt.com/smartride for details on how to request a ride and view the new zone maps. ★

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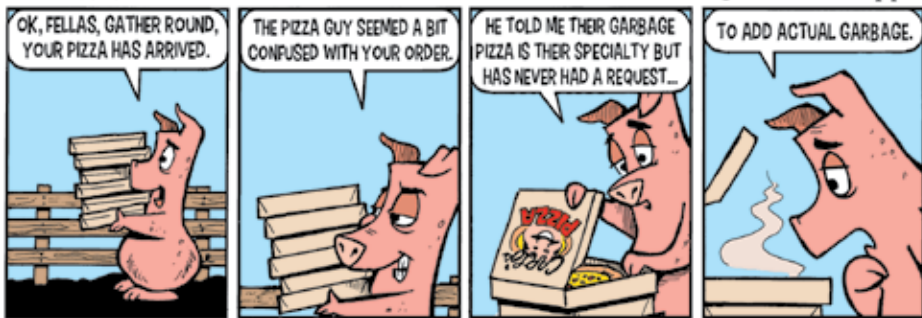
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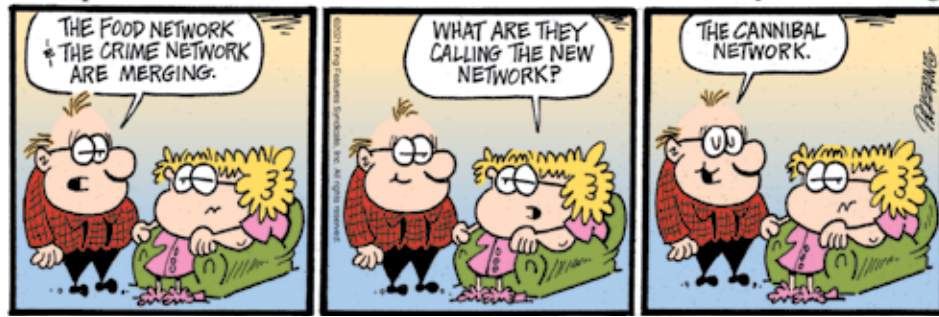
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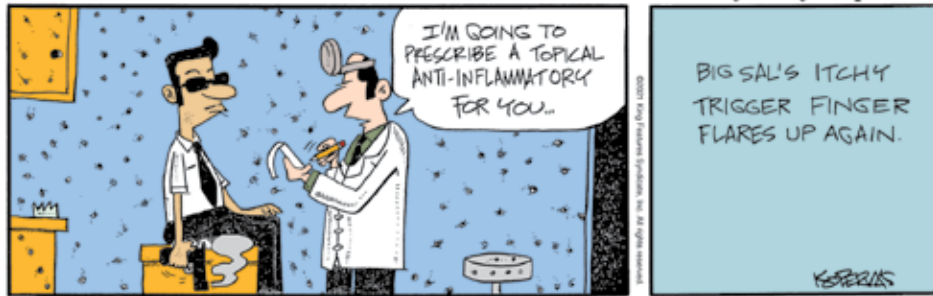
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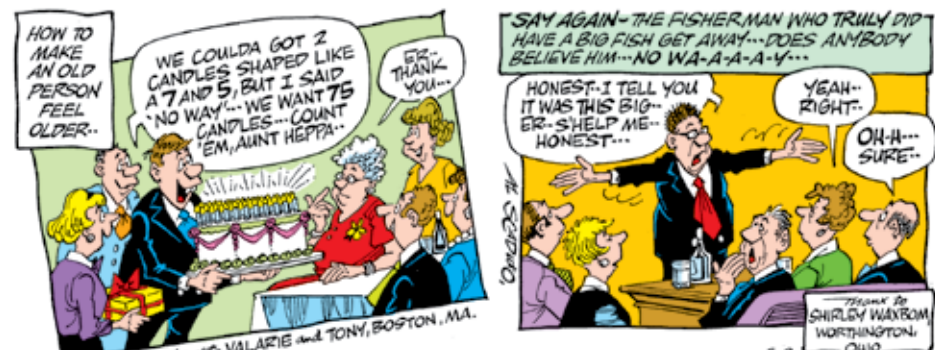
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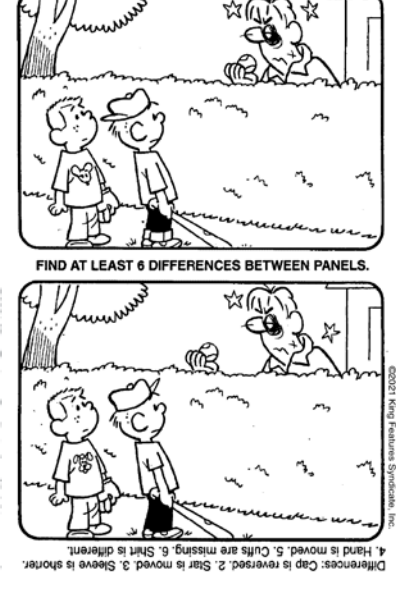
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The Last Thing We Needed

Commentary
by Michael Leach

The COVID 19 pandemic has increased substance abuse in America. As many feared, the virus was the last thing we needed, and it is no coincidence overdose rates are at an all-time high in America.

Substance abuse is an issue of magnitude in the United States. A drug epidemic that started with Oxycontin is now a part of our country's fabric, raging for over twenty years now. And though it may have taken too long, we finally began to make progress in reversing a trend of overdose deaths that had shortened the average US life expectancy. Rates began to drop and continued to do so for concurrent years, marking a substantial victory in just one of many battles that comprise the larger war.

But right when we thought we'd turned the tide, rates began to climb again. And then, the pandemic hit, and the last thing on anyone's mind was addiction. But those who work in the substance abuse treatment industry and the field of addiction knew one thing when we saw the news about COVID-19; things weren't about to get any better.

According to the CDC, Over 81,000 drug overdose deaths occurred in the United States in the 12 months ending in May 2020, the highest number of overdose deaths ever recorded in 12 months. Synthetic opioids (primarily fentanyl) appear to be the main reason

for the increase in overdose deaths. Thirty-seven of the Thirty-eight US jurisdictions with available synthetic opioid data reported increases in synthetic opioid-involved overdose deaths.

America's drug epidemic has taken a toll. It began in the early 2000s when prescription opioids, particularly Oxycontin, were over-prescribed. The drug's manufacturer, Purdue Pharmaceutical, took on an aggressive marketing approach that used false claims about the drug's safety to get doctors to push the medication. These claims included that Oxycontin wasn't addictive when used correctly and was safer than other opioids. This was far from the truth. Many people were now addicted to potent opioids.

Since then, Oxycontin has been heavily regulated, and the formula changed to make it abuse-resistant. But the damage was done, and those people who became addicted to opioids just found a new source for the drug, heroin.

Heroin is not only stronger than Oxycontin, but it's far cheaper. Once people became addicted, all that restricting the drug did was force people onto illicit opioids. Those who could profit from this new pool of addicts did so by flooding the market with opioids. And some of the cheapest and strongest ones are synthetic.

Synthetic drugs are made in labs, usually overseas, and smuggled into America. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that has become one of

the biggest killers in America. It is many times stronger than heroin and is causing an overdose epidemic as we speak.

The pandemic causes stress. Many people have become unemployed and have fallen on hard times. Many of us have been isolated from friends and family and don't leave our houses much. And then there's the worry. Will we get the virus? Will our parents? Even worse, will we be the ones to give it to them?

All of these things can make it difficult for someone in recovery to stay clean. It can make it difficult for someone in active addiction to curb their consumption or consider treatment. And it can make it hard for those in treatment to continue their pursuit of recovery.

But it has also been difficult for many people who previously didn't have struggles with substance abuse and now find themselves looking for drug and alcohol treatment services. And even the landscape of these treatment services has changed, and the pandemic hasn't made them any more accessible to people.

The COVID-19 pandemic was the last thing we needed. But we can't forget about the epidemic that was here first.

Michael Leach has spent the majority of his career as a health care professional in the field of substance abuse and addiction recovery. He is a medical reviewer for the healthcare website Addicted.org and a Certified Clinical Medical Assistant. ★

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