



State Plan for School Reopening

PAGE 2

A Blessing for the Forgotten

PAGE 5



Carmichael Times

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SEE INSIDE

SUPERVISORS RICH DESMOND AND SUE FROST ARE SWORN IN



PAGE 3

BABY BASKET DRIVE RAISES \$13K FOR NEW MOMS



PAGE 11

STRESS CHANGING MEDICARE PLAN



PAGE 9



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Susan's Gifts Keep Giving



Supervisor Susan Peters presents donations to Scott Young (Carmichael HART president) and Effie Yeaw Nature Center Executive Kent Anderson (right).

By Susan Maxwell Skinner

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Supervisor Susan Peters' recent retirement has enabled a windfall for two District 3 non-profits. Community groups gave generously to support a secretly-hatched appreciation for the Supervisor's 16 years of County service. With two weeks left in office, she got the surprise of a lifetime when opening a December issue of the Carmichael Times. Her own face beamed larger-than-life in a full page ad, embellished with the legend: "For 16 Years of Devoted Service to Sacramento County, District 3 Thanks Supervisor Susan Peters." The tribute also honored her Chief of Staff Howard Schmidt, who retired from 16 years with the County.

Published simultaneously in The American River Messenger, the two Messenger Publishing Group editions reached many thousands of District 3 constituents. If readers were dazzled by the uber-portrait, the lady herself was blindsided. "I came home to find the newspapers and a bouquet had been left on my doorstep,"

she reports. "I burst into tears. It was really nice of all these people to donate to thank me for doing a service I've really loved.

"I'd never seen such a big picture of me. My 94-year old dad was especially proud. He wanted copies of the newspapers for our relatives."

Part-subsidized by Messenger Publishing Group owner Paul Scholl, the advertisement was also sponsored by donations from Peters' fans. These included private citizens, business organizations, non-profits, and notably, previous and serving county supervisors. So generous was support that the project's cost was quickly covered and a balance remained.

Rather than return donations, it was decided to split surplus funds between two charities that Peters nominated. She chose the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and Carmichael Homeless Assistance Resource Team (HART).

A community favorite, the Nature Center has promoted nature education for 46 years and is steward to a 100-acre wildlife preserve. After the center lost public funding ten years ago, its operations have continued

under the American River Natural History Association's aegis. Adult and youth programs are entirely supported by fundraisers and donations.

Carmichael HART was established less than five years ago as a coalition of faith communities, non-profits, businesses, agencies, and individuals. Along with affiliated groups in many other Sacramento areas, HART's efforts include developing programs to help homeless men, women, and families.

The published appreciation to Susan Peters was sponsored by the Carmichael Times; the American River Messenger; Susan Maxwell Skinner; Supervisor Muriel and Dr Ernie Johnson; Peter Tateishi; the Fulton Ave Association; Carmichael Rotary; Allan Davis (Milagro); Gabrielle Rasi DDS; Linda Beech Cutler; Carmichael Park Foundation; Carmichael Chamber of Commerce; Carmichael Rotary Club; Carmichael Recreation and Park District; Kim Pacini-Hauch; Carmichael Improvement District; Supervisors Rich Desmond, Sue Frost and Sandy Smoley. ★

Seniors 65+ Now Eligible to Receive COVID Vaccine

By California Department of Public Health

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - In order to increase the pace of COVID-19 vaccine distribution to those at greatest risk, the state is prioritizing individuals 65 and older to receive the vaccine as demand subsides among health care workers.

"There is no higher priority than efficiently and equitably distributing these vaccines as quickly as possible to those who face the gravest consequences," said Governor Gavin Newsom. "Individuals 65 and older are now the next group eligible to start receiving vaccines. To those not yet eligible for vaccines, your turn is coming. We are doing everything we can to bring more vaccine into the state."

Those in Phase 1A - health care workers and long-term care residents - remain the highest priority to receive vaccines. Demand for the vaccines continues to far exceed supply.

"With our hospitals crowded and ICUs full, we need to focus on vaccinating Californians who are at highest risk of becoming hospitalized to alleviate stress on our health care facilities," said Dr. Tomás Aragón, Director of the California Department of Public Health and State Public Health Officer. "Prioritizing individuals age 65 and older will reduce hospitalizations and save lives."

Following a bipartisan letter from nine governors including Governor Newsom on January 8, the CDC announced changes yesterday to its vaccine plan including making more of the coronavirus vaccine supply available to all states. Along with the increase in vaccine supply, the federal government encouraged states to expand the pool of those eligible to receive the vaccine to individuals 65 and older.

The Governor also announced a new system to let people know if they are eligible to receive a vaccine, and if not yet eligible, to register for a notification via email or text when they are eligible. That system is expected to launch next week. A second phase of that system will help counties, cities and others run mass vaccination events. This will include a way for eligible members of the public to schedule their vaccination appointments at those events. Community vaccination events are only one way for eligible Californians

Continued on page 3

Start the New Year with a New Pet

By Allison Harris, Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Do you want a happy start to your new year? Why not adopt your new best friend or family member from the Bradshaw Animal Shelter? Adoptions are only \$50, and the shelter has already had its first adoption of 2021!

Sacramento County's Bradshaw Animal Shelter's first adopted animal in 2021 is El Fuego - a 6-year-old orange tabby and domestic shorthair cat. Before arriving at the shelter, El Fuego was found as a stray just before New Year's Eve and promptly went up for adoption.

Shortly after El Fuego went up for adoption, he received adoption inquiries through the shelter's adoption appointment line. He immediately won over the Bastion family by showing off his outgoing, affectionate and loving personality at his first meet-n-greet adoption appointment. El Fuego was adopted and is now enjoying his forever home and new family.

If you are interested in giving a shelter pet a second chance at a new life, the Bradshaw Animal Shelter has



If you are interested in giving a shelter pet a second chance at a new life, the Bradshaw Animal Shelter has a wide variety of animals available to adopt today. Photo from Pixabay

a wide variety of animals available to adopt today. The Bastion family may have adopted Sacramento County's first shelter pet in 2021, but it's not too late to adopt your new best friend or family member today!

To schedule your adoption appointment, visit BradshawShelter.net then call the adoption appointment line at 916-875-2287, Tuesday

through Sunday, between 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Adoption appointments are required before arriving at the shelter. Visitors are also required to practice social distancing and wear face coverings during their visit. For more information about the shelter's COVID-19 modified services and operations, visit their FAQ webpage. ★

School Reopening Plan

By Ricardo Cano, CalMatters.org

The record \$89.5 billion education budget Gov. Gavin Newsom unveiled Friday includes \$2 billion in grants aimed at nudging schools to reopen classrooms for its youngest students by mid-February and \$4.6 billion for summer school to address students' learning.

The governor's push to reopen schools, though, comes as many of the state's large, urban districts have delayed or scaled back plans for in-person learning amid the state's worst surge in coronavirus cases since the pandemic initially closed schools almost a year ago.

School districts will also be under tight deadlines if they wish to receive the full \$450 to \$750 per student in grant funding. In order to get the full amounts, districts will have to submit to the state by Feb. 1 plans outlining the safety and testing measures for in-person learning with approval by their local employee unions, according to trailer bill language describing the program.

Schools then must offer in-person instruction to students in transitional kindergarten through second, as well as students most at risk of disengaging from school, by Feb. 16, followed by third- through sixth-graders by March 15.

Schools — and the governor — are under intense pressure from parents and communities to reopen campuses as they near the anniversary of their initial March 13 closures. In California, reopening schools has been left to local superintendents, schools boards and employee unions, resulting in a patchwork of school reopenings that's created a divide between private and public schools.

Newsom also is putting the Legislature under a time crunch by asking lawmakers to push through his proposed school-reopening grants in the next two weeks and the \$4.6 billion learning loss plan by end of March, ahead of the traditional summer deadlines.

Aided by better-than-projected state revenues, Newsom's budget plan pays down two-thirds of the schools' \$11 billion in deferrals. It also marks the most significant involvement by the governor in the state's charged school reopening debate since he introduced reopening guidelines in July that effectively kept most schools closed to start the year.

During his budget presentation Friday, Newsom affirmed his position that schools should be open for in-person instruction if



Schools must offer in-person instruction to students in transitional kindergarten through second, as well as students most at risk of disengaging from school, by Feb. 16, followed by third- through sixth-graders by March 15. MPG file photo

done safely and spoke of his youngest children's struggle learning remotely.

"Those kids are falling through the cracks, and we have all the support in the world," Newsom said. "I can't imagine what's happening for millions of other children. This is why this is so important."

But the governor's reopening plan has come under criticism both from local school leaders who say it would do little to help districts most impacted by the virus, as well as teachers unions pushing against reopening schools as cases climb.

Los Angeles Unified superintendent Austin Beutner said Monday that the governor's plan "falls well short of what's needed to help our schools" because it neither sets across-the-board safety standards nor sets a requirement for when schools should reopen. "It leaves the definition of a safe school environment and the standard for reopening classrooms up to the individual discretion of 1,037 school districts across the state, creating a patchwork of safety standards in the face of a statewide health crisis," Beutner said. "And it reverses a statewide commitment to equity-based funding of schools."

Beutner, leader of the state's largest school district, and six other superintendents from large, urban districts raised concerns about Newsom's reopening plan ahead of its release. The superintendents pushed back against the proposed \$2 billion coming out of the state fund earmarked for

K-12 schools and community colleges. In a Jan. 6 letter, they said the proposal shuts many of their schools and students out of grant funding because they reside in communities with some of the state's highest case rates.

The nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office also raised concerns about the reopening plan, writing that the "proposal sets unfeasible time lines" in an analysis of the governor's budget.

Suzanne Kitchens, president of the California School Boards Association, praised Newsom's budget plan for easing the financial strain on schools by paying down most of the deferrals, as well proposing a 3.84% cost-of-living adjustment for schools, but added that "we have work to do on both the school reopening and summer school plans."

"While some schools will undoubtedly take advantage of the incentives to reopen schools this spring, others are not in a position to do so given community health concerns, local standards, funding, resource staffing, and capacity limitations," Kitchens said.

Newsom's budget does not propose extending the school funding protections that held attendance-based funding flat this school year. The proposal assumes in-person learning as the "default mode of instruction" during the 2021-22 school year for funding purposes.

As California schools begin the new

semester, most will remain learning remotely, many indefinitely. Some of the state's districts, such as San Francisco, have yet to come to agreement with their local teachers union on how to reopen schools. Others, such as Oakland, have said they planned to reopen campuses once their counties reach the orange tier at the request of their unions — a requirement more stringent than what state public health officials allow for in-person learning.

A key distinction between Newsom's reopening plan and legislation Democratic lawmakers introduced last month is that the governor's effort does not establish a requirement for when schools have to reopen.

Assembly Bill 10, which legislators plan to advance this month, would require that schools offer in-person instruction starting in March once their county moves out of the state's purple tier. The bill is in response to the fact that many school districts, primarily those in Bay Area counties, stayed closed after they had clearance from public-health authorities to reopen.

Teachers unions have pushed back against Newsom's plan and AB 10, saying schools should not reopen without extensive health and safety measures and until after the state's current surge.

"We are in the middle of a devastating COVID-19 surge, and any discussion of returning to in-person instruction is premature," Jeff Freitas, president of the California Federation of Teachers, said Friday.

Other highlights from Newsom's education budget include: \$315 million to support teacher professional development, such as social-emotional learning and implicit bias training; \$300 million in special education funding, with an emphasis on services for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, adding to the \$100 million for special-needs students passed last year; \$400 million in one-time funds toward preventative and early intervention behavioral health services for students; \$15 million to continue developing the state's cradle-to-career longitudinal data system, an effort Newsom championed since his first year in office; A requirement that high school seniors complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, known as FAFSA.

Ricardo Cano covers California education for CalMatters. Cano joined CalMatters in September 2018 from The Arizona Republic and azcentral.com, where he spent three years as the education reporter. ★

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Seniors 65+ Now Eligible to Receive COVID Vaccine

Continued from page 1
 receive their vaccines. When available, the public can also go to their doctor or pharmacy to receive the vaccine.

Governor Newsom has aggressively led the state to increase the pace of vaccine administration. He laid out the goal of 1 million additional vaccines administered by the end of this week. At the direction of the Governor, the state has tackled the problem with a multi-pronged approach, including: Increasing the number of people who can provide vaccinations by more than 100,000 health care professionals. Last Monday, added 36,000 dentists to the pool of health care providers who can administer the COVID-19 vaccines. The state has already received anecdotal reports of dentists actively administering

vaccines after completing the required COVID-19 training. This expansion comes on the heels of a similar waiver in late December allowing pharmacy technicians overseen by licensed pharmacists to administer COVID-19 vaccines. There are 69,000 pharmacy technicians in California. Directing Resources, Driving Commitment. The Governor's office has convened meetings with leaders across the public and private health care system and received commitments to cooperatively accelerate the pace of vaccine administration.

For more information on the state's efforts to distribute a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine in a fair way to everyone who wants it, visit the Vaccinate All 58 webpage. www.cdph.ca.gov ★

Supervisors Rich Desmond and Sue Frost are Sworn in

By Kim Nava, Sacramento County

The Chair and Vice Chair serve annual terms. ★

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The annual vote to elect a new Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Supervisors was held Tuesday, Jan. 11. This year's elected Chair is Supervisor Sue Frost of District 4, and Don Nottoli of District 5 was elected Vice Chair.

"I am honored to serve as the 2021 Chair of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors," said Frost. "2020 was a most challenging year, and I'm confident that the Board's work this year will tackle important issues that are meaningful to the residents of Sacramento County."

The Board of Supervisors showed their appreciation for the previous 2020 Board Chair, Supervisor Phil Serna, by contributing funds in his name to the Washington Neighborhood Center, Inc.

In addition to electing a new Chair and Vice Chair, two County Supervisors were sworn in for four-year terms:

Rich Desmond, Third Supervisorial District; Oath Administered by Susan Peters; Sue Frost, Fourth Supervisorial District; Oath Administered by Jack Frost.

Board Chair responsibilities include the following:

Presides over the Board meetings; the Vice Chairperson assumes the role in the Chairperson's absence or inability to act. If the Chair and Vice Chair are absent or unable to preside, the members present will select a member present to act as temporary Chairperson; Acts on procedural matters or questions; Recognizes a member of the board desiring to speak on an item; Is entitled to vote on all matters before the Board, participate in discussion relating to any matter, make motions without relinquishing the Chair, and second any motion without relinquishing the Chair; Sits on other boards/commissions as a representative of the County of Sacramento and is the point of contact for questions from the public regarding the meetings (i.e., coordination of resolutions/presentations and general questions not specific to a district, etc.).



Rich Desmond, Third Supervisorial District; Oath Administered By Former District 3 Supervisor Susan Peters. Photo: Sac County



Sue Frost, Fourth Supervisorial District; Oath Administered By Jack Frost. Photo: Sac County



Board Chair and District 4 Supervisor Sue Frost presenting a ceremonial check to Washington Neighborhood Center, Inc. on behalf of District 1 Supervisor Phil Serna. (Lisa Nava accepting on behalf of Phil Serna). Photo: Sac County

Vehicle vs Pedestrian Fatal Collision

By A.J. McTaggart, California Highway Patrol

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On January 12, 2021, at approximately 6:40 PM, North Sacramento CHP Area units were dispatched to a call of a collision that occurred near the intersection of Arden Way at Watt Avenue. Upon Arrival to the scene, units discovered an unknown adult male was struck by a white GMC Sierra pickup truck, driven by a 69-year old male out of Carmichael. The male pedestrian was pronounced deceased at the scene of the collision by responding medical personnel. The driver of the GMC Sierra

immediately stopped upon impact with the pedestrian and fully cooperated with investigating officers. The cause is still under investigation and the driver of the GMC Sierra was arrested for suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol at the time of the collision.

Any persons who may have witnessed this collision or who can provide any additional information should call Officer A.J. Mc Taggart at the North Sacramento Area CHP office at 916-348-2300 or by cell phone at 916-798-0975. Follow us on Twitter @CHPNSac, Facebook.com/chpnorthsac, Instagram @chpnorthsac, or Nextdoor. ★

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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 huge 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 (a large office with its own bathroom and direct outdoor access and one upstairs master), 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. Centrally located to Highways 50/80, The American River, parks, cycling/running trails, and excellent schools. Adjacent .42 acre parcel in the compound is available for sale separately.





6610 Stanley Avenue, Carmichael | \$979,000

This beautiful home is situated on a private lot in the heart of Carmichael! Step inside to a spacious floor plan with 5 bedrooms, an office and 3 full baths. The open-concept kitchen and bar is an entertainer's dream with new quartz countertops, stone detailing, a gorgeous backsplash, and a walk-in pantry. Relax and unwind in the adjoining family room with great natural lighting and a cozy fireplace. There is a separate dining room and living room with an additional fireplace. The sumptuous master bathroom features a soaking tub, step-in-shower, his-and-her sinks, and a walk-in closet. Enjoy seamless outdoor entertaining with a large covered patio, fire pit, Pebble Tec pool, full-sized sports court, and water feature. Highlights include newer wood flooring, an updated downstairs bathroom, large walk-in linen closet, dual pane windows, whole house fan, 3-car garage and RV parking. Just minutes away from Ancil Hoffman Park, The American River, and great shops and restaurants!





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Although he was preparing for a career as a professional trumpeter, God had different plans and called Mike into the ministry. He first served as youth pastor and song leader in his local church in East Longmeadow, Mass., before being called to serve as youth pastor and music pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Windsor, Conn. he also attended Northland Baptist Bible College (Dunbar, Wis.) earning a master of ministries degree in Bible. During the ministry at Calvary, Mike and Lori adopted their son, Drew. He also attended Northland Baptist Bible College (Dunbar, Wis.) earning a master of ministries degree in Bible. Mike next served under Dr. Frank Bumpus at Bethel Baptist Church in Schaumburg, Ill., before being called to serve the next 17 years as a school representative and staff evangelist for Bob Jones University. During his time on University staff, Mike traveled the United States, speaking at countless churches, camps, and retreats.

Today, Mike travels as an independent evangelist, preaching and playing his trumpet at ministries across the United States and around the world.

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A Blessing for the Forgotten

Mercy Holistic Ministry Showers Reaches out to Homeless

By Elise Spleiss

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Pastor Berhanu Kumalo Didanu has known since he was a child what he was meant to do with his life. On January 6, 2021 he, his wife Miheret (Mercy) Bune, members of Sacramento based Mercy Holistic Ministry, and their Partners were present as the first mobile shower purchased to be used by the homeless in the Sacramento area debuted. The inaugural shower took place at Advent Lutheran Church in Citrus Heights as part of week one of the Citrus Heights Winter Warming program sponsored by Citrus Heights Homeless Assistance Resource Team (HART). David Leon Guerrero was the first guest and came out looking refreshed and happy.

Berhanu and his wife came to Sacramento from Ethiopia in 2008 and created Mercy Holistic Ministry to serve Ethiopian and Eritrean immigrant families find housing and settle into their new country. Since then, Berhanu has been ordained as a Missionary at Large at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Woodland, Calif. His education, natural heart for the needs of others, and experience since he was a teenager in Ethiopia makes this ministry a natural for him. The need for mobile showers was the overwhelming concern made known by Mercy's clients to help restore their dignity and begin a change in their lives. The ministry, which



Founders of Mercy Holistic Ministry Rev. Berhanu Kumalo and Miheret Bune pose in front of Mercy Showers on its first day of service, January 7, at Advent Lutheran, Citrus Heights: From left to right: Berhanu Didanu, David Kretzmann, David Hardin and Miheret Bune. Photo by Elise Spleiss

relies on volunteers, also feeds and works with the homeless in the downtown Sacramento area. Until now their focus has been mainly on providing food, clothing and other necessities to their clients. With the addition of the showers their dream of serving the homeless in a much more meaningful and permanent way has finally been realized.

Their long-term goal is to be at a different location throughout the county once a week and to serve 30-40 guests a day. Mercy Holistic Showers is actively seeking partner churches. Hosts are asked to provide a place to park the showers and furnish electricity and a water connection. The trailer provides two individual showers with sink and toilet. Recycled water drains

into the sewer. Ideally, hosts also provide clothing, food and other services such as barbers and doctors. Mercy provides each client with clean underwear, socks and toiletries and has access to an experienced counselor. This type of partnership is working well in the San Fernando Valley and Santa Barbara areas.

Funding for the shower has come from many

sources, from GoFundMe accounts to major grants. Funds available following the closing of a church provided \$55,000 – enough for the purchase of a towing truck and to hire a person to keep the showers sanitized.

David Kretzmann, Mercy board member, said in an email, "We have been fortunate to receive \$75,000 in grants,

\$10,000 each from Lutheran Development Society, and from Town and Country Lutheran Church's endowment fund. We have raised approximately \$10,000 through events and generous friends of Mercy Holistic thus far."

Their approach is simple. In the words of Kretzmann, "It is important to all Mercy Holistic Board members to restore dignity to the homeless. By getting clean and restoring dignity a person can be encouraged and given hope for the future. Through the use of a simple refreshing shower a person can be encouraged to take new steps toward self-sufficiency. Looking for work and eventually becoming housed is the goal. Every homeless person is a mother's child and looks for love and understanding. We at Mercy want to encourage people by sharing God's love for all."

The official grand opening of Mercy Holistic Showers is Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 11 a.m. at Celtic Cross Church in Citrus Heights.

For more information on events and the organization visit www.mercyholistic.org.

Churches and other organizations interested in partnering with Mercy Holistic Showers should contact Mercy Board Chairman Dave Kretzmann at 916-482-6439 or dckretzmann@gmail.com ★

Republican or Democrat, Foreign Reference Pricing Kills Cures



Commentary by Sally C. Pipes

The pharmaceutical industry is on a bit of a hot streak. Just last month, both Pfizer and Moderna received FDA approval for their COVID-19 vaccines. Millions of Americans have already received them.

And yet, Republicans and Democrats alike are sitting on proposals that would make breakthroughs like these much rarer.

Specifically, they're moving to peg domestic drug prices to the lower prices in other developed nations, a tactic known as "reference pricing." Doing so, they claim, would save patients and taxpayers billions of dollars.

But reference pricing is a terrible idea. It would stifle the creation of lifesaving drugs in the future and limit Americans' ability to access medicines already in development.

In 2019, House Democrats passed H.R. 3, which would index reimbursements for prescription drugs – for both government and commercial insurance plans – to those drugs' average prices in advanced economies.

Not content to let the Democrats have a

monopoly on bad ideas, President Trump issued an executive order in September that, if implemented, would prohibit Medicare Parts B and D from paying more for drugs than any comparable country in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, a group of 37 developed nations.

Proponents of reference pricing complain that Americans pay more for drugs than citizens of other developed nations – that they're just trying to give Americans a fairer deal.

But drug prices are lower abroad because foreign governments forcibly cap them, which has all sorts of negative consequences for patients in those countries.

Consider Germany's Federal Joint Committee, better known by its German abbreviation, G-BA. The G-BA allows pharmaceutical companies to charge market rates for one year, during which the board determines a drug's clinical effectiveness. If the board decides the medicine is no more effective than existing treatments, it sets the price equal to reimbursements for those drugs already on the market.

The G-BA has a problematic track record when it comes to judging drugs' clinical effectiveness. German officials deem about 60 percent of medicines no more effective than existing ones. Yet between 2013 and 2017, half the drugs dismissed by G-BA as "no more effective" were considered breakthroughs by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

For German patients, that means going without lifesaving drugs. Between 2011 and 2019, Americans had access to 87 percent of the 356 new medicines launched worldwide. Germans had access to fewer than two-thirds of those drugs.

Reference pricing would yield similar results here. Drug developers would delay launching their products in the United States, if the potential returns shrank drastically.

Americans would lose out on not just existing medicines but future drugs, too. Developing a new medicine costs \$2.6 billion and takes ten years, on average. Only 12 percent of drugs that enter clinical trials actually make it to market. Companies will drastically scale back R&D efforts if government price-setting renders the likelihood of securing a return on their investment slim.

Americans pay more for pharmaceuticals than the denizens of other rich countries. But the solution is to make Germany, Canada, and others pay market prices for drugs – not for the United States to adopt reference pricing that hurts present and future patients.

Sally C. Pipes is President, CEO, and Thomas W. Smith Fellow in Health Care Policy at the Pacific Research Institute. Her latest book is "False Promise: The Disastrous Reality of Medicare for All" (Encounter 2020). Follow her on Twitter @sallypipes. ★

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CLG NEWS UPDATES

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'A Terrorist Is a Terrorist': House Homeland Security Chair Wants Ted Cruz and Josh Hawley on the No-Fly List | 11 Jan 2021 | The chair of the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security wants GOP Senators Ted Cruz and Josh Hawley placed on the federal "No Fly" list due to the "actions they participated in" last Wednesday, when the attack on the U.S. Capitol occurred. Homeland Security Committee Chair Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) raised the issue during a Monday morning appearance on SiriusXM's The Joe Madison Show. "There's no question about it," Thompson said in response to a question about subjecting the rioters to the infamous domestic air travel ban. "First of all, these folks, in my opinion, can be classified as domestic terrorists because of the actions they participated in on Wednesday. Now under normal circumstances international terrorists are out on no-fly lists. These are domestic terrorists-same thing. A terrorist is a terrorist, no matter who you are."

55 People Died in US After Receiving COVID-19 Vaccines - Reporting System - In some cases, patients died within days of receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. | 16 Jan 2021 | Fifty-five people in the United States have died after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, according to reports submitted to a federal system. Deaths have occurred among people receiving both the Moderna and the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines, according to the reports. The reporting system, the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), is a federal database. The system is passive, meaning reports aren't automatically collected and must be filed. VAERS reports can be filed by anyone, including health care providers, patients, or family members.

Marjorie Taylor Greene says she will introduce impeachment articles against Biden | 13 Jan 2021 | Newly-elected Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) on Wednesday said she plans on filing articles of impeachment against President-elect [sic] Joe Biden on his first full day in office next week. During an appearance on Newsmax Wednesday evening, Greene, a vocal supporter of President Trump, said that she is planning on introducing a measure to impeach Biden on Jan. 21, one day after his inauguration. "I would like to announce on behalf of the American people, we have to make sure our leaders are held accountable, we cannot have a President of the United States who is willing to abuse the power of the office of the presidency and be easily bought off by foreign governments, foreign Chinese energy companies, Ukrainian energy companies, so on January 21, I will be filing articles of impeachment on Joe Biden," Greene told Newsmax.

Outgoing Capitol Police chief says request for National Guard backup during siege was denied six times | 11 Jan 2021 | Outgoing U.S. Capitol Hill Police Chief Steven Sund says his requests for National Guard assistance to monitor the Trump rally last week were denied or delayed at least five times ahead of the evening riot on Wednesday. Sund, who announced his Saturday resignation last week under pressure from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, said he had asked House and Senate security officials for D.C. National Guard assistance ahead of the rally, where President Trump urged his supporters to march to the U.S. Capitol building, in anticipation of the large crowd. The first request was rejected, and in the midst of escalating violence on Capitol grounds, Sund said he asked for assistance five additional times. "If we would have had the National Guard, we could have held them at bay longer, until more officers from our partner agencies could arrive," Sund told the Washington Post.

Democrats Drafting Bill to Prevent Anything Being Named After President Trump | 14 Jan 2021 | As Democratic lawmakers celebrate their vote to impeach President Trump a second time, several of those lawmakers are attempting to take things one step further. Representatives Linda Sanchez (D-CA) and Joaquin Castro (D-TX) are working on a bill that would prevent the naming of anything - including schools, highways, or federal buildings - after the 45th President... "I am working on a bill that would mean that nothing-not even a bench, no airport, no highway, no school-nothing-ever bear the name of this traitor." ★

Ask Toni

Stress Changing Medicare Plan



Toni King

Morning Toni:

When I first got Medicare, I picked a Medicare supplement plan F. Two years ago, I was approached by a telemarketing phone call. He talked me into plan K to save

some money since I was in good health and could answer the health questions.

I was hospitalized in March 2020 due to low sugar when I passed out at home. I had no idea that I was a severely insulin dependent diabetic. The diabetes has caused me to need dialysis when my kidneys stopped working.

With Plan K, I must pay 50% of the Medicare Part A hospital deductible and the Medicare Part B costs is astronomical. I now pay the Part B deductible plus 50% copay for all Part B services. I had to pay over \$5,000 in 2020. I made an awfully bad decision to change!

I tried to apply for a Medicare Supplement during Medicare Annual Enrollment last fall, but the agent said I cannot because I am having dialysis.

I thought with Medicare that pre-existing conditions did not count. Can you help me to understand this? ~ Thanks, Terry

Wow, Terry...What a great question:

Americans that do not have health problems need to realize that a healthcare crisis can happen at a second's notice. Everyone wants to save a few dollars and do not realize what having to be medically underwritten means with any type of insurance plan, especially a Medicare Supplement.

Terry, you went from a Medicare supplement plan "F", where you would have zero out of pocket and all Medicare expenses would be covered 100% to "Plan K" which does pick up Medicare expenses, but has a tremendous out of pocket as you are experiencing. Because you now have End Stage Renal disease which requires kidney dialysis; you cannot qualify for a Medicare Supplement.

Good News because beginning 2021 certain Medicare Advantage plans are now

accepting those with ESRD (end stage renal disease).

There are 2 chapters in my book, Medicare Survival Guide® Advanced edition which explains the difference in Medicare supplements and Part C Medicare Advantage Plans. Chapter 3 of the Medicare Survival Guide discusses Medicare Supplements, also known as Medigap policies. In chapter 4, I explain what Part C or Medicare Advantage plans are and the different type of plans...HMO, PPO, PFFS (Private Fee for Service), SNP (Special Needs Plans).

With a Medicare Supplement, the most comprehensive plans that cover more of your Medicare expenses are "Plan F and G". Now remember that Medicare Supplement Plan "F" are not available for those who turned 65 beginning January 1, 2020 but is still available to those who's Medicare Part A began prior to January 1, 2020. To make a change to their Medicare supplement they may have to answer underwriting questions.

Medicare Supplement plan "F" picks up most of your Medicare approved amounts with zero out of your pocket. Plan "G" is similar to Plan "F" except it does not include the Part B deductible that is \$203 once a year for 2021.

America should be made aware of telemarketers that call to try and change one's Medicare plan options. Please be careful when answering phone calls and giving out personal information. Medicare telemarketers are lurking around waiting for the right person to attack and have them make an important decision when they only need proper Medicare information to make the right Medicare decision.

2021 Confused about Medicare Zoom webinars is Thursday, January 28 th at 4:00 PM. Visit www.tonisays.com to sign up for Toni's new event.

Toni King, Medicare author/advocate is giving a \$5 discount to the Toni Says® readers

on the Medicare Survival Guide® Advanced book at www.tonisays.com. Have a Medicare question? Call 832/519-8664 or email info@tonisays.com. ★

Thank A Veteran Today

Crossword Puzzle on Page 9

S	W	I	S	H		S	H	H		A	L	P	S	
C	A	N	T	O		L	E	I		C	R	O	R	E
A	R	D	O	R		U	R	N		H	I	K	E	R
B	E	Y	O	N	C	E		D	U	A	L	I	P	A
			L	E	O		T	I	F	F				
A	P	R		T	H	R	U		O	F	F	A	L	S
D	R	E	G		O	A	R	S		S	E	R	O	W
H	O	B	O		S	I	N	E	W		T	O	R	I
O	M	E	G	A		N	O	A	H		A	S	I	F
C	O	L	O	R	S		U	S	E	D		E	S	T
					M	E	A	T		A	R	E		
C	I	R	C	L	E	S		S	T	A	P	L	E	S
A	D	O	R	E		K	I	N		M	O	I	R	E
P	L	A	I	T		E	R	A		A	C	T	I	N
S	E	R	B			W	A	G		S	H	E	E	T

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD • THE GRAMMY AWARDS

CLUES

ACROSS
 1. Nothing-but-net in basketball
 6. "Zip it!"
 9. The ___ in Switzerland
 13. Ann Patchett's novel "Bel ___"
 14. "Mele Kalikimaka" wreath
 15. Ten million, in India
 16. Fire in one's soul
 17. Crematorium jar
 18. Trail follower
 19. "Artist with most 2021 Grammy nominations"
 21. "Powerhouse Award 2020 winner with six 2021 nominations"
 23. * ___ Sayer's "You Make Me Feel Like Dancing"
 24. Pettifoggery
 25. Lending letters
 28. "Through" in text
 30. Butcher's discards
 35. Fortune-telling coffee remnant
 37. Crew equipment
 39. Asian goat antelope
 40. "Polar Express" roof rider
 41. Toughness
 43. *Two-time Grammy winner Kelly
 44. Watch word?
 46. *Best New Artist nominee Cyrus
 47. "Clueless" catch phrase
 48. "Black Pumas" nominated record
 50. Hand-me-down
 52. NYC time zone
 53. * ___ Loaf, winner of one Grammy
 55. Nirvana's "Come as You ___"
 57. *Post Malone's twice-nominated work
 61. "Venue of 2021 Grammy Awards"
 65. Dig, so to speak
 66. Reunion bunch
 68. Silk-patterned fabric
 69. On Elsa of Arendelle's head
 70. Historical period
 71. Join the cast of, two words
 72. Balkan native
 73. Dog's greeting
 74. Bed cover

DOWN
 1. Union foe
 2. Stuff for sale, sing.
 3. Capital of Indiana, for short
 4. Counter seat
 5. "The Green ___"
 6. Swerve
 7. *"I Can't Breathe" artist
 8. Delhi language
 9. Seed coat
 10. Trickster in Norse mythology
 11. Like "Dead Poets Society" school
 12. Blood fluids
 15. Winnowing remains, pl.
 20. Salmon variety, pl.
 22. Flying saucer acronym
 24. Event attendance
 25. Kind of committee, two words
 26. Movie trailer, e.g.
 27. He had no cause?
 29. * ___ on Me" by Lady Gaga and Ariana Grande
 31. Cheese on Peloponnese

Crossword Puzzle Solutions on Page 9

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
13					14			15					
16					17			18					
19				20			21	22					
			23				24						
25	26	27		28		29		30		31	32	33	34
35			36		37			38		39			
40					41			42		43			
44				45		46				47			
48				49		50			51		52		
					53		54		55		56		
57	58	59	60				61			62	63	64	
65						66	67			68			
69						70				71			
72						73				74			

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Sudoku Puzzle on Page 9

5	1	3	7	2	4	8	6	9
6	2	4	9	5	8	1	7	3
9	7	8	3	6	1	2	4	5
4	9	1	2	3	6	7	5	8
8	6	5	1	4	7	3	9	2
2	3	7	5	8	9	4	1	6
1	8	9	6	7	3	5	2	4
3	5	6	4	1	2	9	8	7
7	4	2	8	9	5	6	3	1

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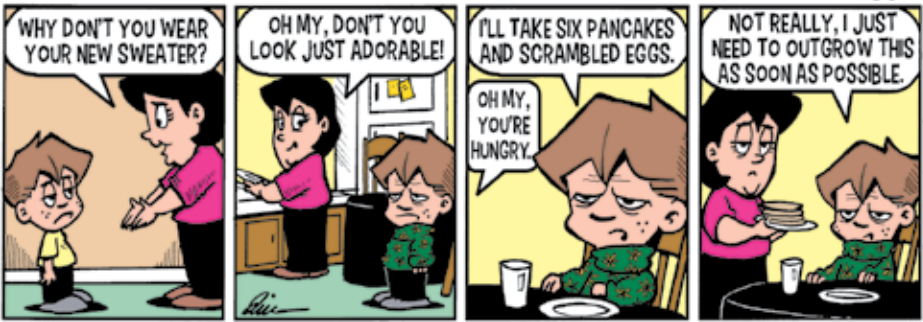
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	1	3	7			8		
6					8			3
	7	8					4	5
				3		7		
	6		1	4	7		9	
		7		8				
1	8						5	2
3			4					7
		2			5	6	3	

Solutions on Page 9

WEEKLY COMICS

Amber Waves



by Dave T. Phipps

The Spats



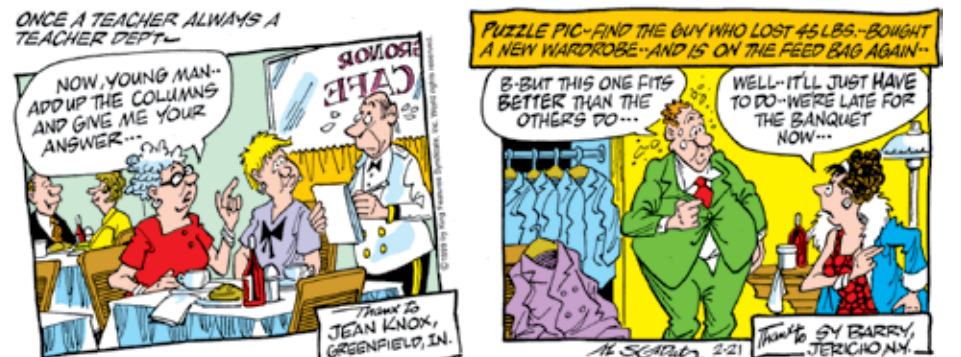
by Jeff Pickering

Out on a Limb



by Gary Kopervas

THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



BY AL SCADUTO

R.F.D.



by Mike Marland

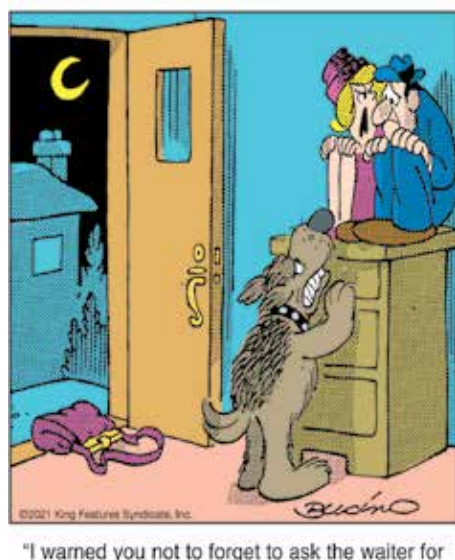
URGE TO KILL DEPT.



GRIN THE BEAR IT



LAFF-A-DAY

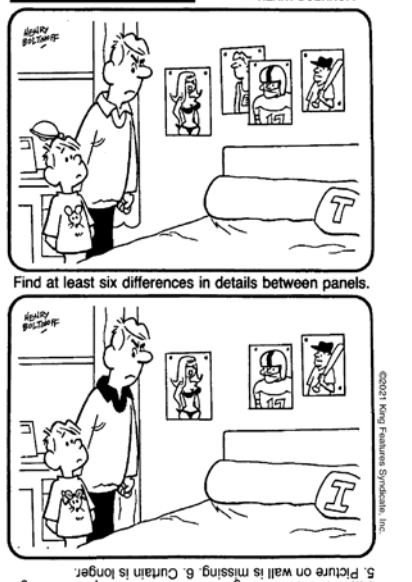


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CHM PLU 449

Baby Basket Drive Raises \$13K for New Moms

By Kristin Thébaud, Thébaud Comm.

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Life Center's seventh annual Baskets4Babies drive for new moms raised \$13,000 from the community in December, which will buy 260 baskets for Sacramento Life Center patients throughout 2021. The drive is held each December to kickstart the 500 baby baskets needed so that every Sacramento Life Center patient who gives birth in the coming year can receive a basket of needed items, including diapers, clothing, bottles, formula, homemade blankets, bibs, bathing supplies and more.

Donations will be accepted throughout 2021 and can be made online at www.saclife.org by writing Baskets4Babies in the message box on the donation page. Gifts can be made in any increment, but a donation of \$50 buys one basket. A pledge of \$50 per month guarantees a mother can return each month to the center's baby needs closet for additional necessities until her child is 2 years old.

"2020 was such a difficult year for so many families, especially those with few resources who are expecting a new baby," said Marie Leatherby, executive director, Sacramento Life Center. "Thank you to everyone who donated to this drive so we can give pregnant mothers practical and necessary items and show them that they have a family here at the Sacramento



A patient receives a baby basket in 2020 from Sacramento Life Center, thanks to the group's annual Baskets4Babies drive. Thébaud Communications

Life Center and a community surrounding them in this new year."

The Sacramento Life Center's mission is to offer compassion, support, resources and free medical care to women and couples facing an unplanned or unsupported pregnancy. The Sacramento Life Center's licensed Sac Valley Pregnancy Clinic includes a primary clinic and mobile clinic that provide all services for free, including pregnancy tests, STD tests, ultrasounds, patient advocacy for men and women, education and resource referrals. In 2018, the Sacramento

Life Center achieved accreditation by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care, which ensures the group has met nationally recognized standards for the provision of high-quality health care. The nonprofit also offers a 24-hour hotline and program for women who have experienced pregnancy loss. For more information about the Sacramento Life Center's Sac Valley Pregnancy Clinic, visit www.svpclinic.com. For more information about the Sacramento Life Center or to make a donation, visit www.saclife.org. ★



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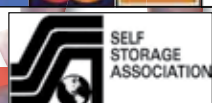
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