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Dixon Independent Voice

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Grillin' and Chillin' to Return!

Get Ready for the Big Cook Off



Downtown Dixon will be packed with jaw-dropping, gorgeous cars, trucks and savory food once again for this year's Grillin' & Chillin' July 15. Photo by Nicholas Brown

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - The Dixon Action Team announced that the 14th annual Grillin' & Chillin' Car & Truck Show, which includes a Rib and Chili Cook Off on July 15, will once again be in downtown Dixon from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. and applications to participate are now available.

There will be plenty of shopping with a variety of vendors, a Kids Zone which includes inflatable water slides and beer booths. Crowds will enjoy shopping for their one-of-a-kind, homemade arts



The 14th annual Grillin' & Chillin' is set for July 15 but reserve your spot now for the Rib and Chili Cook-offs. MPG file photo

and crafts perfect for their home. Local, independent home crafters/sellers are welcome. Admission to this wildly hot but fun day

is zero but bring your wallet for refreshing treats and drinks.

If you are interested in being a contestant in

the Rib or Chili Cook off, apply online now at DixonRibCookOff.com. All applications – even for the car show – are ready on the website with a deadline of May 15. Spaces are limited.

Some of this year's sponsors are PAPER Machinery, Recology, Travis Credit Union, Charity Shop Wholesale, DuPratt Ford, Weber General Engineering, Murillo's Mexican Restaurant, Higby's Country Feed, Dawson's, Solano Baking Company, Software Wild, De La Torre Trucking, California Automobile

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Murillo's Now Taking Applications

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Frances Murillo thought she would get to open her Dixon Mexican Restaurant by the end of the year 2020 but various contractor issues began to surface, then COVID hit and it's been a very slow climb back to a new date.

"The amount of work to complete is not major, but that is not something the city does. We don't build projects. We permit them, make sure they meet codes, and inspect them. The work and time it takes to build out a project is dependent on the property owner and the contractors they hire," explained Raffi Boloyan, Community Development Director back in July 2022 when movement was seen again and the landscaping pruned. Work seemed to be progressing since then for the woman who celebrated 50 years in 2020 with her Murillo's Mexican cuisine in downtown Vacaville.

"I'm aiming for Cinco de Mayo," the youthful 78-year-old said at the door of the completely remodeled former IHOP pancake house. "That's three weeks and I can thank my brother, Martin Santos, for that. He's done so much," she enthused. He and his wife, Esther, helped her get through a myriad of building issues, the wrong chairs being delivered, and the purchase of new ones. The tables were not the ones she ordered either, but they will work. That was after the truck that was supposed to deliver them was delayed because of heavy snow in the mountains and was stuck there for days.

The good news is that she is taking applications now.

"The cooks will have to learn my menu, learn to make it properly so that my customers are happy," Murillo said. She tells her teen workers that this isn't the perfect job, but it's the job that will help them get to the place they want to be. "There are ladders," Frances said. "You have to climb them." Applications are done via dropping by the restaurant and meeting with Frances herself.

The new Murillo's will be at 1435 Ary Lane. ★

Motley Welcomes Elias Moreno

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - "I had a million dollars in the bank, and I couldn't save my daughter's life," said Elias Moreno about his terrifying experience when one of his five daughters had a brain hemorrhage. "After that, money meant nothing." Moreno came to the realization that life wasn't about how much money he could make but the blessings he could give.

Moreno is a real estate agent and has just joined up with Dixon's Motley Realty. With many brokers to choose from, he was asked why he wanted to work with Motley and his answers came easy. He knew he was good, he wanted to work in an office where he could work as hard as he wanted, and where he wasn't micro-managed. But, most importantly, he wanted to ensure that he'd enjoy working.

Moreno was born in Mexico City and immigrated to California with



Elias Moreno joins the Susan Motley Realty Team. Photo by Debra Dingman

his parents when he was 13.

"I didn't know one word of English, but I made really good friends in middle school and became a straight A student," he said. His parents went through a divorce in his senior year and that created a lot of emotional upheaval, and he lost a few years by not making good decisions.

But he always wanted to be in law enforcement so was soon back on his feet and in college.

"My goal was to be a paramedic, or firefighter, and ultimately a helicopter pilot. I went four years to college, then to the police academy, and tried to get a job. And they wanted me because I was bilingual, but I had been arrested and

I could not get a job. It was a huge slap in my face," he said.

At first, he worked in construction with his dad, then he worked in law enforcement in Las Vegas in the Narcotics unit for three years and then a family member talked him into working in his successful janitorial service in Napa.

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Life's too SHORT

Democracy at Work

By Debra Dingman

I'm certain there is something wrong with me. When I left the last City Council meeting, I was exuberant! There was such a deep, internal sense of happiness that carried me to the car in the dark and floated me home. It's seeing the great American democracy at work.

A couple wants to put a whiskey bar in downtown, but a single force – who has been a negative Nellie ever since she moved here a decade ago – has gotten quite skilled at fighting any development downtown and wants nothing to do with it. She sees the business equating to drugs, crime, indecent behavior, and public urination. She gets supporters including the church pastors to write letters. This is what you do when you feel strongly about something.

I liked what Mayor Steve Bird said to justify his decision. He wasn't for cannabis being approved either, but it was passed and it is legal.

"Once that issue became legal, who am I to say whether something is right or wrong? If the operation is legal and properly zoned, it's legal folks." So we have to respect the law, he said.

The couple, Tiffany Fabiani and Edward Renger, have done everything they were supposed to do to open the 'Whiskey Barrel 707' in the old B of A building across from First Northern Bank. It doesn't matter if the applicant has tattoos. I like that Tiffany Fabiani came dressed to present to the council in her casual garb to prove a point:

"This is the way you would see me out

in the community, shopping at Safeway, talking to neighbors, doing business downtown... This is to remind each of you that my husband and I are not only applicants of the City, we are also hard-working, law-abiding, tax-paying residents who want to invest in our community." That is what matters.

None of us have a crystal ball and can see what the future holds. Sure, there could be someone bad or gangs that roar into town and shoot people. That can happen anywhere. But, then it could be like the Pip Wine Bar where a whole new set of consumers enjoy visiting over a cool glass of flavorful wine and brings a creative entrepreneur to the downtown core. After 40 years in law enforcement, Bird says it's how the establishment is run.

I want people to realize the facts: Almost every business that has withstood the test of time – which for Dixon is three years – in downtown serves alcohol: Bud's, Dawson's, The Pip, The Frying Pan, Bangkok Garden, and Luke's Lounge. So far, so good. We have reason to be optimistic.

But that's not really my point. My point is that there was a conflict, and our City Council did what it was supposed to do. They studied. They heard from experts. They listened to residents on both sides of the conflict. And, they made a decision. People were appreciated for their input and efforts. Well, okay, maybe a curmudgeon or two was still upset. But, the process worked. Just because you didn't get your way, doesn't mean it didn't work. And we didn't take all night to get there. It was City Hall at its grandest! ★

Honoring Their Mission to Local Farmers



A huge, eye-catching mural has been mounted on the backside of Pedrick Produce facing I-80 Freeway. On a blue-sky day, it looks as if a giant red tractor is in front of a humongous wheatfield. The enlarged picture is the collaboration of "a whole team" of employees who wanted to make the long-standing produce stand more visible.

"We were trying to figure out how to be more visible when people drive by," said Purchasing Agent Aaron Hogeboom who started as a produce clerk when the company was only 10 years old. Now, he's been with the company 25 years. "It's our mission to have very fresh produce. We really want to support the local farmers," he said. Pedrick Produce is the most popular produce stand in Dixon according to regulars and is located at 6850 Sievers Road right off the Pedrick Road exit. Photo by Binky Rowe Eason

CAL FIRE Launches New Online Burn Permit Application

CAL FIRE
Special Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - CAL FIRE has launched a new Online Burn Permit application platform that offers the public a user-friendly way to request a burn permit. Burn permits that are available on this platform include the following:

- Residential Burning (LE-62A) is burning outdoors at a single or two-family dwelling unit or residence using burn piles less than 4ft x 4ft. All residential burn permits expire on April 30 annually and a new permit must be applied for on May 1st.

- General Burning (LE-5) consists of agricultural burning, incinerator barrel burning in specific counties, burn piles, small parcels or strips, small plots of grass or weeds, or burn on vacant land. This permit is also used for a Hazardous Project work that could cause a fire (e.g., outdoor welding, grinding, metal work, hot work etc.).

- Broadcast Burning (LE-7/8) is controlled application of fire to the land for fuels reduction purposes (e.g., grasslands, shrublands, and oak woodlands). No pile burning!

The permits are for projects located within the State Responsibility Area and

other jurisdictions where CAL FIRE has authority to require them. Users can now fill out the application form from anywhere they have internet access. The applicant will receive email confirmations throughout the process and the Department will have easy access to the records electronically.

Once the application is submitted, a CAL FIRE representative will review and process the information. If a site visit is required, the Department representative will schedule a time with the applicant and move the project forward. Even with a valid burn permit from CAL FIRE, residents must confirm that it is a permissive burn day with their local air quality management agency. The contact phone numbers will appear on the permit. For information and permits required outside CAL FIRE's jurisdiction, residents should contact their local fire authority.

"Burn permits are an important education tool for us to ensure Californians know the steps to burn safely", said Acting State Fire Marshal Daniel Berlant, "This new online system will make it easier for not only residents, but also our prescribed fire community to get a permit."

For more information on the online burn permit application, visit burnpermit.fire.ca.gov ★

Dixon News Briefs



Discounted Fair tickets, carnival wristband and grandstand tickets are now on sale at the fairgrounds box office, 65 South First Street Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. or you can buy them online at dixonmayfair.com/tickets/. Photo by Karen Spencer

MPG Staff

Friday Ribbon Cutting

Katrina Marsh, owner of Busy Bee Yoga, knows her Yoga moves and is inviting the public to Yoga in the Pardi Plaza at 4 p.m. Friday, April 28, and to her Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting afterwards from 5 to 7 p.m. at 175 North First St. in downtown Dixon. She is celebrating her first-year anniversary and will have music and light refreshments. For a schedule of the variety of classes offered, check out busybeeyoga.com or call or text (707) 295-1855.

This Weekend

The 21st Annual Senior Resource Fair is this Saturday, April 29, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Information and resources provided from a variety of participants: including safety, health care, transportation, utilities, elder law, fitness, nutrition, benefits, and recreation.

There will be fun, freebies and raffles. It is free and will be held at the Dixon Senior/Multi-Use Center, 201 S. Fifth Street. For more information, call (707) 678-9317.

Selling Your Business?

The Solano Small Business Development Center is offering a class on Wednesday, May 3, "Selling Your Business - A Checklist," from 10 to 11:30 a.m. This session will take participants through the steps of selling their business, along with providing checklists and templates they can use to prepare for this final leg of their entrepreneurial journey. Cost is \$60. For more information, go to solanopasbdc.org/events.

City Council

The next City Council meeting will be on Tuesday, May 2, at 7 p.m. at 600 East A Street. There is no charge to attend. In fact, anyone who cares about what is going on in Dixon is more than welcome.

Library Week

One last event of a busy National Library Week at the Dixon Public Library, 230 North First St., will be on Friday, April 28 at 3 p.m. with a free Lego Club for ages 6 to 12. Then, at 5 p.m., there will be Masterpiece Art Family Night for all ages. Participants will learn about the featured artist, Amy Sherald, and create art inspired by the artist. For more information visit solanolibrary.com or call 1-866-572-7587. Thank you to Friends of the Dixon Library for sponsoring these events and more.

Kitten Season

As the weather starts to warm up and we head into Spring, unaltered female cats will begin to go into heat. Sixty days later, kittens will be born. This is "Kitten Season" and it typically runs from March through October.

Here's 5 Ways You Can Help Solano Kitten Network Save Kittens – Right Meow!

You can adopt kittens; become a volunteer or kitten foster...visit the website solanokittennetwork.com to complete a Foster application; shop Our Chewy Wish List...

https://www.chewy.com/g/solano-kitten-network_b80103923; donate here www.paypal.me/solanokittennetwork and spay and neuter your cats!

Parade Breakfast

The 56th annual Ron DuPratt Pancake Breakfast is an all-time local favorite before the Dixon May Fair Parade starts. The breakfast opens at 7 a.m. and goes to 10 a.m. and is only \$5 per plate. It will be offered at the Olde Vet's Hall, 231 North First Street across from the Dixon Public Library.

Veterans Dinner

Friday, April 28, the Veterans will serve breaded chicken, scalloped potatoes, vegetable and dinner roll from 6-8 p.m. for \$10 per plate at 1305 North First St. Their bar is also open. ★

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Grillin' and Chillin' to Return! Motley Welcomes Elias Moreno



The 14th annual Grillin' & Chillin' Car & Truck Show, which includes a Rib and Chili Cook Off on July 15.

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Museum, and the Jelly Belly. Yes, there is still time to volunteer, and volunteers are always appreciated. In the past, the American Legion Post 208, VFW Post 8151, various service clubs, Dixon Leon Soccer Club and Tim at Pacific Flyway Supplies were helpers. Proceeds from G & C are distributed throughout the community to nonprofits. "Our mission as the Dixon Action Team doing business as Grillin'-n-Chillin', a 501(c)(3) non-profit, is to help different organizations and groups in Solano,

Yolo and neighboring counties," said founder Mike Hamilton. "We sponsor family friendly events that are organized by volunteers and raise funds. We directly support 4-H, veterans, schools, FFA, churches, and sports organizations." Hamilton reminds you to tell your friends that there are RV spots available at the Dixon May Fairgrounds and the show is located in downtown Dixon right on Highway 113. Parking is also available at the Dixon Chamber of Commerce lot and in the lots surrounding downtown. For more information, go to dixonribcookoff.com ★

Whiskey Barrel Wins Again

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - On Maslow's pyramid of the hierarchy of needs, enjoying a night out with friends at a Dixon whiskey bar would not be considered a basic human need, however, in order for the public to benefit – be granted a PCN, or Public Convenience or Necessity – from the old Bank of America building getting restored and a restaurant to get established, serving alcohol is essential for that project to succeed.

That is one of many reasons the city council has twice agreed with the City Planning Commission's approval and twice denied appeals from downtown resident Ginger Emerson and the Calvary Church Pastor's wife to stop husband and wife, Tiffany Fabiani and Edward Renger's business from opening. Whiskey Barrel 707, a proposed upscale pub and lounge offering live entertainment, had originally been scheduled for its grand opening in June of 2022 in downtown Dixon on North First Street.

After a full year of opposition by a handful of people led by the unofficial "Old Town Neighbors" advocate Emerson, discussions of parking, loitering, security, drunk driving, noise, elderly neighbors, crime, oversaturation of liquor licensing, pedestrians, school children, and more, have been addressed to the satisfaction of the City of Dixon.

At the beginning of the meeting, District 3 Council Representative Kevin Johnson chose to recuse himself saying the couple were his real estate clients and left the room. District 1 Council Rep Thom Bogue was out of town leaving three Councilmen to make the decision regarding the appeal filed by Emerson.

"First and foremost, I want to commend all the city departments that have too, endured exhaustive efforts preparing responses to overly broad and overreaching protests submitted by one Ginger Emerson in an effort to dredge up mud and evidence of wrongdoings by myself and City staff," Tiffany read from a statement. "We have been above board in all of our workings with the City and the State. We have not asked for favors, exceptions nor variances and have accepted and abided by all permitting requirements demanded of us." She then asked everyone in the room who supported this project to stand and raise their hand. More than 50 people showed support, many of whom spoke at the podium and several more spoke via online Zoom, including the owner of that building who encouraged approval. Fabiani was prepared with several

exhibits to refute claims made by Emerson and the church such as copies of official 2003 City Planning meeting minutes when Pastor Brock was trying to get his own Conditional Use Permit approved where he stated on record that he would not interfere with future businesses downtown who apply for ABC licenses when then Downtown Dixon Business Association President Rob Salaber objected to the church in the center of downtown as it was not the best use of the building.

"Why didn't [Pastor Brock] protest the other two businesses that literally, physically sit on both sides of the church building who also serve alcohol and host gatherings?" she asked. "Why didn't he appeal to the City to not build an open, public live entertainment venue now known as Pardi Plaza that also sits less than 100 feet away from the church?"

Fabiani stated their entertainment is proposed for Friday and Saturday nights – times the church told ABC they don't hold events or gatherings. Additionally, they held an informal sound test, and one could not hear anything coming out of their brick-walled building.

The Councilmen and Mayor Steve Bird closed stating why they were for the project.

Mayor Bird said that in the past when he saw downtown Dixon "dying," there was a young cook working at Cattlemens who went to Winters to open the extremely successful Buckhorn Restaurant. He saw that as a "missed opportunity" for Dixon and expressed hopeful optimism for growth here now.

"In all of the 30 years that I've been here, I am starting to see a change downtown. We have the Pardi Plaza now and [businesses like] Pip's. These little businesses popping up are starting to give that feel of what we've been trying to do for years. It's been a long time coming," he said.

City Attorney Doug White interjected a few times to make sure it was clear for the Councilmen that the motion to deny the appeal meant in favor of the Rengers to move ahead. He also noted that the council needed all three votes to agree or whatever motion would fail. It passed 3 – 0. To review the video of the meeting, go to cityofdixon.us.

From here, a legal court proceeding with an adjudicating judge who will listen to ABC, the protestants and the Rengers as applicants will occur on May 11. The judge will make a final recommendation to the ABC office official who will make a final determination within 30 days of the hearing. ★

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It wasn't long before Moreno started his own business.

"It grew fast. We went from ten [businesses] to 600 with 16 employees and from Solano all the way to Las Vegas," he said with pride. A friend asked him to help sell real estate to Hispanics and he helped some clients but didn't feel a need to pursue that. But, then 9/11 happened and the janitorial business collapsed. He then got serious about real estate. He passed the exam on the first try.

He was top salesman for 2003, 2004, and 2005. He loves educating clients and their smiles when he gives them their keys, he said. But in 2008, the real estate market crashed and once again, income disappeared.

"I've been on both sides," Moreno said, adding that he had learned the value of life and it wasn't money. Eight years ago, he got a call from his daughter who was at home and discovered her 16-year-old sister unresponsive.

"She told me that she thought she was dead and described that she was blue and not breathing," he said. He told his daughter to call 911 and raced home. "My wife and daughter were screaming but then all my training kicked in and I checked for breathing, an obstruction, and started CPR. I was able to bring her back," he said, recounting the horrific scene. Then she started moving like she was having a seizure and the responders kept saying she was overdosing but I knew she wasn't. I knew it. But in the ambulance, the paramedic said it again to the hospital



Elias Moreno with his daughter, Debbie (unique spelling of name) who "died" a few times due to a brain hemorrhage. Photo courtesy of Elias Moreno

and I lost it and yelled at him that she wasn't overdosing."

Even at the hospital, he said the doctors were saying his daughter was "dead" and there was nothing they could do but he begged the doctor to try.

"My daughter was dying right in front of my eyes, and I couldn't do anything," he said. He prayed fervently. Then surprisingly, the doctor gave her a CT scan and saw a brain hemorrhage and flew her to a San Francisco hospital where they cut the back of her skull down to past her neck. She died on the operating table, but they got her back. Doctors told the family she'd be basically comatose for two weeks after the surgery, but she responded to a pinch on her toe within four hours, he said.

"It was a miracle," he said.

Over months, the

daughter recovered and is now 24 now, but the lesson left a dramatic impact.

"My attitude before was to make money and make more money. It was to save more, buy my wife and kids whatever they want... But I couldn't pay all the money to save my daughter's life," he said. Moreno works to help others and return the blessings he's been given.

"I have agents call me all the time wanting to join my office, but I wasn't interested in growing," said Motley. "But after speaking to Elias and learning his history of being an agent for over 20 years and a top producer, speaking Spanish, and wanting to be part of a small, hometown office, and part of this community, I was sold," said Susan Motley. Their office is located at 100 S. Adams Street or call (707) 678-0218. ★

Police Chief Promotes Officers



Lt. Mick Geisser, Lt. Jenna Cameron, and Sgt. Alberto Oliveira were all smiles when they received recognition along with their official promotion certificates at the last City Council Meeting by Dixon Police Chief Robert Thompson. Photo by Nicolas Brown

City of Dixon Press Release

DIXON, CA (MPG) - The Dixon Police Department is proud to announce the promotion of three internal candidates to leadership positions within the department. Lt. Jenna Cameron, Lt. Mick Geisser, and Sgt. Alberto Oliveira have all been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and Sergeant, respectively.

The promotion of these three outstanding officers is a reflection of the department's commitment to promoting from within and recognizing the contributions of our dedicated employees. They represent the next generation of leadership for the police department and will be instrumental in the next evolution of the department.

"I am thrilled to promote these three exceptional officers to leadership positions within our department," said Chief Robert Thompson. "Their hard work, dedication, and commitment to our community make them ideal candidates for these positions. We are excited to see them lead and inspire our team to continue providing excellent service to our community."

Lieutenant Jenna Cameron joined the

department in 2005 and has held a variety of positions, including Detective, Investigations Supervisor, Watch Commander, and Community Services Supervisor. Her experience and leadership will be invaluable in her new role as a Lieutenant.

Lieutenant Mick Geisser has been a member of the department since 2005 and has served in various capacities, including Field Training Officer, Officer in Charge, Watch Commander, and Investigations Supervisor. His experience and dedication to the department will be a great asset in this new leadership role.

Sergeant Alberto Oliveira has been a valued member of the department since 2017 and has proven his commitment to serving and protecting our community. His promotion to Sergeant is a testament to his hard work, dedication, and leadership skills.

The Dixon Police Department congratulates Lt. Jenna Cameron, Lt. Mick Geisser, and Sgt. Alberto Oliveira on their promotions and wishes them continued success in their new roles. The department is proud to have such talented and dedicated individuals serving our community. ★

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California Water Service Partners with State for Water Bill Assistance

California Water Service News Release

SAN JOSE, CA (MPG) - As part of California Water Service's (Cal Water) ongoing commitment to support those struggling to pay their water bills, the utility is encouraging its customers who meet maximum income limits to apply for financial assistance from the California Department of Community Services & Development's (CSD) Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). LIHWAP is a federally funded program offering a one-time benefit of up to \$15,000 per household for past-due or current bills.

Cal Water residential customers can check their eligibility to receive assistance from LIHWAP based on income, place of residence, and other factors. Applications must be submitted through local, community-based organizations listed by county. Recipients of CalFresh, CalWORKS, and LIHEAP are automatically income-qualified for LIHWAP assistance.

"Our top priority is to provide safe, clean, reliable, and affordable water service to our customers, yet we recognize that customers sometimes have difficulty making ends meet and paying their bills," said Cal Water CEO and President Martin A. Kropelnicki. "That is why we provide, or work with other agencies to provide these customers access to financial assistance like LIHWAP, one of many assistance programs available to Cal Water customers."

"California recognizes that water and wastewater services are essential for public health and well-being, and the department is committed to assisting low-income Californians in need of financial support to keep their water flowing," said CSD Director David Scribner.

In addition to encouraging its customers to access LIHWAP assistance, Cal Water offers:

Customer Assistance Program (CAP): Customers who meet maximum income limits or are enrolled in a qualified public assistance program may qualify for a monthly discount on their water bill.

PromisePay Payment Arrangements: Residential customers with a past-due balance may be eligible to privately enroll in flexible, customizable, interest-free PromisePay payment plans.

Alternative Payment Arrangements: If customers do not qualify for PromisePay and have a past-due balance that's difficult to manage, then they may still be able to split payments among several months to pay off the full balance.

Payment Extensions: If customers need more time to pay their bill, then they may be able to defer payment to a later date.

For more information on LIHWAP, please visit www.calwater.com/lihwap. For more information on Cal Water's other customer assistance programs, visit www.calwater.com/assistance. LIHWAP also helps pay down wastewater bills; customers should inquire with their wastewater provider to see if it participates in the program.

About LIHWAP

Established by Congress in December 2020, the federally funded Low Income Household Water Assistance Program provides financial assistance to low-income Californians to help manage their residential water utility costs. CSD is the designated administering agency for LIHWAP in California. Through LIHWAP, CSD works with a network of community-based local service providers to help low-income households pay down their residential water and wastewater utility bills. For more information about how LIHWAP can help households pay down their water or wastewater bills and how to apply, visit Paying My Water Bills.

About California Water Service

California Water Service provides high-quality, reliable water utility services to about 2 million people statewide through 494,500 service connections. What sets Cal Water apart is its commitment to enhancing the quality of life for its customers and communities. Guided daily by their promise to provide quality, service, and value, the utility's employees lead the way in working to protect the planet, care for people, and operate with the utmost integrity. Integral to Cal Water's strategy is investing responsibly in infrastructure, sustainability initiatives, and community well-being. The utility has been named one of "America's Most Responsible Companies" and "America's Most Trustworthy Companies" by Newsweek and a Great Place to Work. More information is available at www.calwater.com. ★

Chasing Joy

with Jeff Myers



Commentary by Jeff Myers

I hate to admit it, but I'm the stereotypical hot-tempered red-head. I've been that way since I was young. (My younger brothers can attest.) Now that I'm in my early 50's my anger is generally subdued, but even still that dormant volcano occasionally erupts. Nothing devastating, but in the age of 24-hour news networks, out of control inflation, pitching clocks and discontinued treats (R.I.P. Chaco Taco), a rant's got to rant!

Aside from life's general frustrations, I honestly have to work at not allowing my temper to damage the most important people in my life – my family and friends. I've learned over the years that my words and actions have consequences, and some angry outbursts have a price tag that is too high.

There's a guy in the Bible's Old Testament that found this out the hard way. Ask any person of "the big three faiths" and they will tell you Moses is the man! He was a prophet, a national leader, a freedom fighter and so much more. He's still the most highly revered figure of the Jewish scriptures – a mighty man of God who led his people from slavery to their own land and national identity. But Moses' kryptonite was his temper.

Throughout his life uncontrolled anger continued to stain his rise to greatness. He witnessed blatant abuses of power that caused him to commit a murder. His disgust for Israel's idolatry resulted in a tantrum that had him shattering what I'm sure was a lovely bit of stonework that God had just handed to him. He would lose it in frustration again and again because of his often-complaining,

ungrateful followers. But the one that really cost him probably didn't feel like that big of a deal at the time.

Moses and his people had gone quite a while without a good source of water in their travels, and once again, the people began to complain and question his leadership. When Moses takes the situation to God, God does what God does. He provides. But rather than responding in humility and gratitude, Moses lets his inner 2-year-old out and throws another hissy fit. God says enough is enough and tells Moses that he will get to lead the people to their "promised land" but he himself will not get to enter. And that's what happens. Moses delivers the people to the "land of milk and honey" but dies of old age in the loving presence of God looking in from the outside.

Did you catch that? It could be that our anger won't necessarily ruin our standing with God, but what if it cost us something almost as valuable? What if the price of our unchecked anger was our life's sweetest dream? What if we end up sacrificing the career we wanted, the family we love or the friends we cherish because we never learned the value of peace and self-control?

Let's keep taking deep breaths, thinking before we speak and weighing the impact of our words. There's almost always an option better than going nuclear. Thoughtful actions are so much better than prideful reactions. Let's love ourselves and others enough to not sacrifice our dreams for instantly regrettable moments.

Jeff Myers is Lead Pastor of Living Hope Church in Dixon, CA and will be published monthly. ★

MPG
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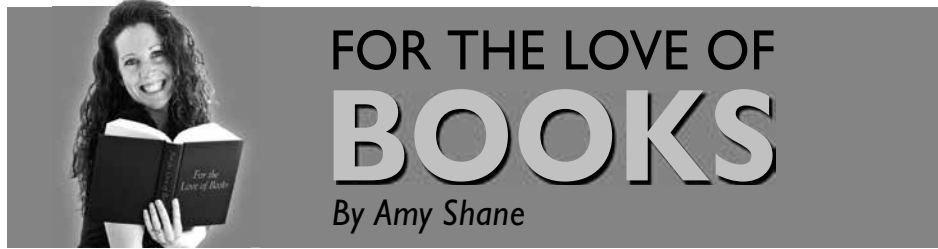
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BOOK REVIEW & SPECIAL EVENTS EDITOR • ✉ amy-shane@att.net • 📷 amy_fortheloveofbooks

Hidden Life of Aster Kelly

by Katherine A. Sherbrooke

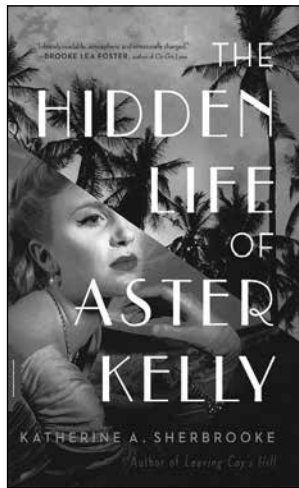
It's 1948, and Aster Kelly is starting her life over. After winning a prestigious fashion design contest, Aster leaves the NY modeling world behind for the bustle of Hollywood.

With the opportunity of a lifetime at the helm, Aster Kelly knows her life is about to change.

A design apprenticeship with the notable Fernando Tivoli is everything she needs to get her start in Hollywood. Then Aster arrives only to discover there isn't an apprenticeship. Fernando has his sights on his own career, and propelling someone else's is outside the cards. Yet, once he meets Aster, he quickly realizes she might be the key to driving his career aspirations.

Devastated to realize that she will once again put her dreams to the side, Aster decides to take the job as a stand-in model for Lauren Bacall as Fernando champions his way in convincing Galaxy Studios to be their personal couturier. If he wins the contract, Aster will finally get her chance at mentorship.

However, Hollywood always has its own plans, mixing well intentions with the glitz and



◆ Publisher: Pegasus Books
 ◆ Intended Audience: Adult
 ◆ Release Date: April 4, 2023

glamour of Hollywood starlets. But now, Aster's life as she thought she knew it drastically takes a charted course she never expected as Aster and Fernando quickly find themselves caught up in romantic affairs with Hollywood's most prominent insiders. Life is even more difficult as she blends the glamorous lifestyle with complicated secrets, leaving her to carefully craft a secret life behind the dazzling lights.

Now, twenty-five years later. Aster's daughter, Lizzy, is on the trajectory of becoming a rising Broadway star, all without knowing her mother's time in Hollywood. But as Hollywood would

have it, secrets can't be hidden forever, and when the light of the truth blinds their path, it is up to Aster to finally relinquish the truth before losing everything she has worked a lifetime to protect.

Fall for the glamour of Hollywood but stay for the secrets in *The Hidden Life of Aster Kelly*. With her ability to craft inspiring American figures with timeless issues, Katherine A. Sherbrooke immerses readers into the glamorous world of Hollywood in the late 1940s and early 1950s, then into the present day in 1975.

The Hidden Life of Aster Kelly highlights how the power of hidden love, in all aspects, can shape the trajectory of so many lives. This story blends the expectations of the time with motherhood, careers, marriage, and the scandalous independence of a woman and turns them on its head. Sherbrooke seamlessly blends three lives, two timelines, and two notable words of fashion and Hollywood entertainment. Shock, heartbreak, betrayal, and even the question of love will take readers deep into a story that is fit for a starlit Hollywood movie. ★



Republicans Can't Run and Hide on Abortion

Politicians are motivated by many things, among them power, fame, idealism, greed – and fear.

The last of these is not to be underestimated. It is a powerful, gut-level force that can strike the most loquacious politicians dumb and make the most attention-hungry suddenly shy. It can cause officeholders or candidates to reverse field on a long-held position almost instantaneously and abase themselves however seems necessary to get to safety.

Republicans at the national level, right now, are scared. You can hear it in their silence on the issue of abortion after a district judge in Texas struck down the Food and Drug Administration approval of the abortion pill mifepristone. That decision also came immediately after Republicans lost a key race for a Supreme Court seat in Wisconsin to a progressive jurist who ran, to a large extent, on abortion.

Much of what has happened since Dobbs is what you'd expect after a longstanding national legal regime on abortion is lifted and the states are given the freedom to decide their own policies. There has been a sorting out toward a new political and policy equilibrium, with red and blue states occupying different poles of the spectrum, and purple states up for grabs.

The good news for

Republicans is that there are more restrictions on abortion in place than at any time in the last 50 years, and they still took a majority in the House in last year's midterms, if smaller than expected.

In Indiana and in much of the South, Republicans have passed sweeping abortion bans and paid no discernible political price for it.

But especially in Michigan and Wisconsin, the issue has been a debacle for the party, and it has suffered notable losses elsewhere.

One lesson should be that Republicans can't just run and hide on an issue that has been of defining importance to their base and that Democrats are going to hammer them on regardless of how they try to minimize it.

Another is that outside of the Deep South, complete bans can't be defended politically, and the traditional exceptions for rape, incest and life of the mother are essential.

The Michigan and Wisconsin disasters stemmed from sweeping prohibitions that no one would have written in the post-Dobbs environment. Michigan had a 1931 law still on the books, and Wisconsin's dated from 1849.

Republicans should be pushing for restrictions that go as far as a state's voters are willing to accept, and no further. This will require keen political judgment and shrewd tactics, both of which are hard to muster in the midst of a panic.

The other obvious imperative for the GOP is to try to focus attention on the extremism of the Democratic maximalist

position on abortion, which is out of step with public opinion (Gallup finds that only 35% of people say abortion should be legal with no restrictions).

While the Republican record fighting ballot measures to guarantee access to abortion is dreadful in the post-Dobbs era – they've lost everywhere – they are going to have to do more of it. Emboldened Democrats are getting referenda on the ballot in a number of red states over the next two years. A signature battle will be a vote to write abortion rights into the state constitution in Ohio later this year. If opponents defeat the measure, it will be on the strength of arguments that the amendment will make parental consent laws impossible and go further than the pre-Dobbs abortion regime.

Make no mistake: In many places, Republicans are simply seeking to neutralize the Democratic political advantage on the issue and fight to a draw. If this is unsatisfying and discomfiting, it's still better than the pre-Dobbs context when the politics were easier, but it was impossible to get any meaningful restrictions in place.

If there's one thing that should be clear, it's that fear – no matter, how natural or visceral – is no substitute for careful thought and considered action.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review. Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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Big Problems for California's Income-Based Utility Rates

By Katy Grimes, CaliforniaGlobe.com Reprinted by permission

Last week the Globe reported that Southern California Edison, Pacific Gas & Electric and San Diego Gas & Electric had just filed a proposal to create income-based utility billing.

Currently, utility bills are based on electricity and gas consumption. The utility companies are now proposing income-based utility billing so that higher-income earners pay for more than they use, subsidizing the rates for lower income customers.

This outrageous proposal isn't the only of its kind. The Biden Administration is proposing a tax (penalty) for having good credit. Mortgage borrowers with good credit will pay higher fees so borrowers with lower credit scores can get loans.

We reported on a 2021 report from the University of California at Berkeley recommending that the state link California's highest-in-the-nation electricity bills to customer incomes – ie. your ability to pay.

Authors Severin Borenstein (an economist), Meredith Fowlie, and Jim Sallee of the UC Berkeley and the Energy Institute at Haas admit that California's electricity rates are so high, lower-income households pay a larger share of their income on electricity.

Rather than using all available energy sources to create energy abundance, the Berkeley report proposes "cutting back on the volumetric per-kilowatt-hour charges on customers' bills and recovering the missing money through constructs tied to customers' income."

And the Legislature and Governor approved this scheme through AB 205, which was signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom in June of last year claiming it was needed because the wild swings in utility prices that California experiences.

California has the highest electricity rates in the country. "Those costs could rise even faster over the next decade, as utilities harden their grids against wildfires, grow their share of net-metered rooftop solar and add other costs that will be passed through to utility customers," Next 10 reported over two years ago.

Since we reported last week, many have recognized "the state's perpetual march toward a collectivist state," as Jon Coupal just reported.

Coupal, President of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, explains AB 205 is even worse because the bill "bypassed many of the normal procedures for

enacting legislation. It did this because it was a so-called 'budget trailer bill.'"

"While the 'budget bill' is constitutionally mandated to be enacted by June 15, it only passes by that date for one reason — so the legislators can continue to receive their paychecks."

"Moreover, after the enactment of the budget, there are so-called 'junior budget bills' amending the fake June 15th budget as well as last-minute 'budget trailer bills' directing the spending of billions in ways that the budget bill itself did not direct."

"AB 205, the 'energy trailer bill,' received scant public attention and no meaningful public hearings were held. But its impacts are profound, and not in a good way."

Is this new utility charge a tax or fee?

Coupal explains:

"Trying to shoehorn an income component into utility rates converts 'ratepayers' into 'taxpayers,' and Californians have had their fill of high taxes."

The difference between a tax and a fee is more than semantics.

Taxes are imposed for generalized government services like education, public safety, transportation, and even for a reasonable safety net for the less fortunate.

But a "fee" or "charge" has always correlated to the receipt of a specific service.

There is some good news in the face of California's race to Marxism. Coupal explains:

"A coalition of taxpayer and business organizations have already qualified the Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act (TPA) for the 2024 ballot. Among its many provisions is not only further clarification of what a 'tax' is but also a provision that requires any tax to be approved by a legislative body rather than some administrative agency or other authority not directly accountable to voters."

California's politicians and unelected agency leaders are limiting energy sources rather than using an all-of-the-above approach to energy production in California: Oil, gas, coal, nuclear, hydroelectric, solar and wind.

If all we are allowed to use is renewable energy for electricity production – a deliberate energy shortage – statewide shortages and rolling blackouts inevitably become the new California normal. "We are being conditioned to accept this as normal by some very evil leaders," we said. Fortunately, Jon Coupal says "this battle on behalf of California's beleaguered taxpayers and ratepayers is not over." ★

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California Man Found Guilty of Felony Charges Related to Capitol Breach

FBI News Release

WASHINGTON, DC (MPG) - A California man was found guilty in the District of Columbia of felony charges for his actions during the January 6, 2021, Capitol breach. His actions and the actions of others disrupted a joint session of the U.S. Congress convened to ascertain and count the electoral votes related to the presidential election.

Sean Michael McHugh, 35, of Auburn, California, was found guilty yesterday,

following a stipulated bench trial, of obstruction and assaulting, impeding, or interfering with law enforcement officers. U.S. District Court Judge John D. Bates scheduled a sentencing hearing for September 7, 2023.

According to evidence presented in court, McHugh was on the Lower West Terrace on the afternoon of January 6 where he was captured on video footage and audio assaulting multiple U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) officers. McHugh is captured

on video carrying a cannister of bear spray in a holster on his hip and discharging the bear spray into a line of USCP officers. Metropolitan Police Department body worn camera video and audio captures McHugh yelling at officers, among other things, "You're protecting communists!"; "There is a Second Amendment behind us, what are you going to do then?"; and "You ain't holding the line!" At approximately 1:40 p.m., McHugh, along with other rioters, pushed a large

metal sign into a line of uniformed police officers while McHugh yelled into his megaphone, "Put it up there! Put it up there!"

The case is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia and the Department of Justice National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section. Valuable assistance was provided by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California.

The case is being investigated by the FBI's Washington

Field Office, as well as the Metropolitan Police Department, with significant assistance provided by the FBI's Sacramento Field Office.

In the 27 months since January 6, more than 1,000 individuals have been arrested on charges related to the Jan. 6 Capitol breach, including more than 320 individuals charged with assaulting or impeding law enforcement. The investigation remains ongoing.

Anyone with tips can call 1-800-CALL-FBI (800-225-5324) or visit tips.fbi.gov. ★

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- Attired
- *Alabama, for short
- Type of pit, at a concert
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- October birthstone
- Don't do this to words?
- Elusive Himalayan
- Poet Sandburg
- Come to pass
- *Home of the Bourbon Trail
- Not us
- Winds to a ship captain
- *Dish popular in the 50th state
- *Largest state, by area
- Dick ___ of "Bewitched"
- Tombstone acronym
- Spews
- Succulent medicinal plant
- Cast member
- Greek "r"
- Gibson garnish
- Evade payment
- Like certain pentameter
- Lenon's wife
- Fashionable
- Barely audible words
- Casino's pull
- Bear down under
- Sound bounce-back
- *a.k.a. Commonwealth
- Sing like Sinatra
- Not working
- Lymphatic swelling
- Flourishing
- Commotions
- Type of pitcher
- Not in port
- Chop off
- What the phone did

DOWN

- Have a bowl
- Potato's soup partner
- Initial stake
- Happenings
- Lickety-split
- Shenanigans
- Friend in war
- *State with longest freshwater shoreline
- It's enough?
- Pond gunk
- Joaquin Phoenix 2013 movie
- Relating to eye
- *Michigan's "___ City"
- Selfish one
- Pavlova's step
- Middle East natives
- Permissible
- In a fitting way
- Half a ticket
- Sober Ness
- Not a soul (2 words)
- Operatic voice
- *Home to Arches National Park
- Tucker of "Modern Family"
- *State with panhandle
- Round openings
- School of thought suffix
- Google search category
- Often-missed humor
- Hide craftsman
- Little one

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 Meifang He, 1631 E Monte Avenue, #107, Vacaville, CA 95688.
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 Publish: April 7, 14, 21 & 28, 2023
 L&L 4-28-23

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 Publish: April 14, 21, 28, May 5, 2023
 TWIN 5-5-23

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 2023-000620
 The following persons are doing business as: HKM Sweets, 335 West C Street, Dixon, CA 95620. Hollie Martin, 335 West C Street, Dixon, CA 95620.
 Date filed in Solano County: April 7, 2023. The Registrant commenced to transact business under the above business name on: N/A
 This Business is conducted by: Individual. NOTICE: In Accordance with subdivision (a) of section 17920 A Fictitious Name Statement generally expires at the end of five years from the date on which it was filed in the office of the county clerk, except as provided in subdivision (b) of section 17920, where it expires 40 days after any change in the facts set forth in the statement pursuant to section 17913 other than a change in the residence address of registered owner. A new fictitious Business name statement must be filed before the expiration April 6, 2028. The filing of this statement does not itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business, and professions code.)
 Publish: April 21, 29, May 5, 12, 2023
 HKM 5-12-23

estate of the decedent.
 The petition requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the executor to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the executor will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or have consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.
 A hearing on the petition will be held in this court as follows: May 5, 2023, 8:30 a.m. in Dept 4; Superior Court of California, County of Solano, 600 Union Street, Fairfield, CA 94533.
 IF YOU OBJECT to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.
 IF YOU ARE A CREDITOR or a contingent creditor of the deceased, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law.
 YOU MAY EXAMINE the file kept by the court. If you are interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk. The name, address and telephone number of the Attorney for Petitioner is: Silvio Reggiardo III, 621 Capitol Mall, 18th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814; 916/444-1000
 Publish: April 14, 21 & 28, 2023
 VASSAR 4-28-23

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF ERVIN E. VASSAR CASE NO. SP024146
 To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, and contingent creditors of and persons who may be otherwise interested in the will or estate, or both, of Ervin E. Vassar.
 A Petition for Probate has been filed by Virginia Ann Vassar, in the Superior Court of California, County of Solano, requesting Virginia Ann Vassar be appointed as personal representative(s) to administer the

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING OF THE DIXON CITY COUNCIL

The Dixon Planning Commission will hold a hybrid **PUBLIC HEARING** to consider the following project:
PROJECT: 1105 North 1st Street (United Petroleum) - Request for a Conditional Use Permit (UP23-01) for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (PCN) determination to allow a United Petroleum (Beacon Gasoline) to upgrade its existing Type 20 ABC liquor license (sale of beer and wine for off-site consumption) to a Type 21 (sale of beer, wine, and distilled spirits for off-site consumption). The existing Type 20 license allows for the sale of beer and wine, but not distilled spirits. A PCN determination is required because the California Department of Alcohol and Beverage Control has determined that the area has an over-concentration of these types of licenses. A PCN determination is therefore needed. This is done through the Conditional Use Permit entitlement.; APN: 0113-112-070; Zoning District: Service Commercial (CS); Romesh Kumar, owner and applicant; File No: PA23-04, UP23-01

The California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") requires that this project be reviewed to determine if a study of potential environmental effects is required. It has been determined that this project will not have a significant effect on the environment and no environmental review will be completed. This project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption from the provisions of the CEQA Guidelines under 14 CRR Section 15301, [Class 1, Existing Facilities]. If the Planning Commission determines that this project is in an environmentally-sensitive area, further study may be required.

HEARING DATE & LOCATION: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 at 7:00 pm. This meeting will be physically open to the public. All members of the public may participate in the meeting by attending the meeting or remotely participating via video conferencing at <http://www.zoom.us> or via teleconference by calling (669) 900-9128 (Entering Meeting ID: 988 621 1137 and Passcode: 604754) and will be given the opportunity to provide public comment.

MORE INFORMATION: Contact Scott Greeley, Associate Planner at (707) 678-7000 ext. 1115 or sgreeley@cityofdixon.us. You can also come to City Hall, 600 East A St, Dixon, CA 95620 to look at the file for the proposed project. The office is open weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can also view the staff report 72 hours before the meeting at <https://www.cityofdixon.us/MeetingAgendasMinutesVideos>.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN: All interested parties are invited to attend the public hearing to express opinions or submit evidence for or against the proposed application. Testimony from interested persons will be heard and considered by the Planning Commission prior to making any decision on the application.

The meeting will be physically open to the public and all persons attending the meeting must abide by all State rules and public health guidelines, regarding masking and social distancing in City Council chambers.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Prior to 4:30pm on the day of the meeting, written comments can be: 1) emailed to PlanningCommission@cityofdixon.us or 2) mailed/dropped off to: City of Dixon, Planning Commission, 600 East A St, Dixon, CA 95620 and must be received by 4:30pm on the day of the hearing. Copies of written comments received will be provided to the Planning Commission and will become part of the official record, but will not be read aloud at the meeting.
 You may also attend the public hearing at the time and location listed above or participate remotely, to provide comments during the meeting. To speak or provide comments remotely during public comment period, you may: 1) via video conferencing click on "raise hand," or 2) via teleconference press "9."

At the above time and place, all letters received will be noted and all interested parties will be heard. If you challenge in court the matter described above, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered at, or prior to, the above referenced public hearing (Government Code Section 65009 (b)(2)).

Appeals of decisions by the Planning Commission to the City Council shall be made in person at Dixon City Hall by completing the appeal application and submitting the required fee, within 10 calendar days of a decision (Dixon Municipal Code Sections 17.01.050 or 18.40).

Upon request, the agenda and the documents in the meeting agenda packet can be made available to persons with a disability. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City encourages those with disabilities to participate fully in the public meeting process. Any person requiring special assistance to participate in the meeting should call (707) 678-7000 (voice) at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Dixon Independent Voice 4-28-2023

Inflation Continues to Take Bite Out of Organic Fresh Produce Sales

Organic Produce Network News Release

MONTEREY, CA (MPG) - Ongoing inflation continued to impact organic fresh produce sales in the first quarter of 2023 as overall dollar sales grew by slightly less than 1 percent, and volume declined by 3.4 percent from the same per year-over-year period, according to the *Q1 2023 Organic Produce Performance Report* released by Organic Produce Network (OPN) and Category Partners.

Overall, the total produce department gained 2.6 percent in dollars for Q1 2023 compared to the same period in 2022 and declined by 1.3 percent in volume. Sales of organic fresh produce totaled nearly \$2.4 billion for the first quarter of 2023, while overall volume topped 703 million pounds. Conventional produce dollars rose higher than organic dollars by about 2 percent and declined in volume by a smaller degree than organic. The average price gap between conventional and organic is now the largest it has been in the last four years.

The Q1 2023 Organic Produce Performance Report uses Nielsen IQ syndicated data to track and report the performance of organic fresh produce—and specifically the 20 leading organic categories. The report suggests that the rising prices may cause consumers to be more selective in their organic shopping.

“In an inflationary period, we see this standard of growth for dollars and decline for volume repeated for most organic and conventional items. When we look at pricing, conventional produce average price per pound grew by 4.3 percent compared to the first quarter of 2022, while organic produce average price per pound rose by 4 percent,” said Tom Barnes, CEO of Category Partners. “With rising prices, we may be seeing more selective organic shopping from consumers as they substitute conventional items for higher-priced organic items.”

Organic tomatoes were the most noticeable example of substitution as their price per pound increased by almost three times the amount of conventional, resulting in a volume decline of 8 percent. Most other categories with large differentials in price increase (compared to conventional) did not see large drops in organic volume.

Organic grapes had an incredible quarter with a 37.3 percent increase in volume and a 40.2 percent increase in dollars. The first quarter is deep into the import season for

grapes. Imported organic grapes are closing in on entering the top 20 organic categories in Q1 with \$22 million in sales for the quarter this year, which places them in the 22nd spot by dollars. A 40 percent increase in dollars and a 37 percent increase in volume means that import grapes are a category to keep an eye on as we continue to track organic produce sales each quarter.

Prepackaged salads and the berry category (strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, and blackberries) led the quarter as the top organic produce categories in dollars, accounting for nearly 40 percent of all sales.

Current trends show both conventional and organic produce volume shrinking year over year. At the same time, while volume for conventional produce is below 2020 and organics are on par with 2020, both are consistently gaining in dollars. For the first quarter of 2023, half of the leading 20 organic categories posted increases in dollars. Organic onions generated the largest percent increase in dollars at 10 percent, followed by bell peppers, lettuce, and herbs. Inversely, avocados posted the largest decline in dollars, while apples also posted noticeable declines.

In the first quarter of this year, 15 of the leading 20 categories posted declines in volume, with only seven of those 15 categories displaying positive year-over-year dollar growth. Organic apples posted the largest year-over-year decline in volume (by total pounds) of the leading categories, followed by bananas and carrots.

Despite the flat dollar growth and minor decline in volume across the country, OPN Co-founder and CEO Matt Seeley is bullish on the long-term prospects for growth of organic fresh produce. “Inflation and supply chain challenges have impacted pricing in the short term; however, organic fresh produce will remain an important component of weekly food shopping as consumers look for healthy, safe, and nutritious products for their families,” he said.

The Q1 2023 Organic Produce Performance Report covers total food sales in the US, including all outlets (i.e., supermarkets, mass merchandisers, club stores, dollar stores, convenience stores, and military commissaries) over the months of January, February, and March of this year. The full Q1 2023 Organic Produce Performance Report is available on the Organic Produce Network website. ★

Woodland Opera House Announces 2023-24 Season

Woodland Opera House News Release

WOODLAND, CA (MPG) - The Woodland Opera House is excited to officially announce its production schedule for the upcoming 2023-2024 season. The lineup includes a variety of Main Series and Family Series shows and two Rising Stars productions that include youth only casts. The season offers great comedy, contemporary and classic musicals, and includes something special for every age group.

The Main and Family Series productions are as follows:
The SpongeBob Musical,

August 11-27, 2023; *The Addams Family*, October 6-29, 2023; Andrew Lloyd Webber’s *School of Rock*, November 17-December 10, 2023; Comedy (Title to be announced in October 2023), January 19-February 4, 2024; *Disney’s Descendants: The Musical*, March 1-17-2024; *Damn Yankees*, April 12-May 5, 2024; Peter and the Starcatcher, June 14-30, 2024.

Rising Stars productions: Roald Dahl’s *Matilda The Musical JR.*, September 7-10, 2023 (cast ages 11-18 years old); Disney-Pixar *Finding Nemo JR.*, February 16-18, 2024 (cast ages 7-14 years old)

Season tickets are currently on sale with (3) packages to choose from: Package A (Main Series productions), Package B (Family Series productions), and Package C (All Main/Family Series productions). Contact the Box Office for information and purchase at (530) 666-9617 or go to www.WoodlandOperaHouse.Org Early bird pricing applies through May 12, 2023.

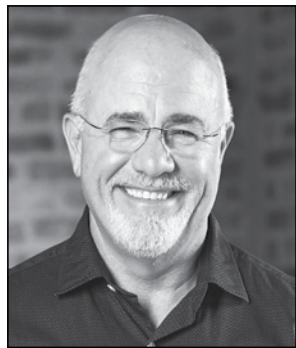
The Opera House is located in historic downtown Woodland, just 15 miles northwest of Sacramento. Many wonderful shops and a variety of restaurants are within walking distance of the theatre. ★



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It's Just The Right Thing To Do

Dear Dave,

I'm about to start paying off debt in Baby Step 2, but there's a motorcycle loan my ex-girlfriend took out for me. I crashed the motorcycle and sustained some injuries. After two months of litigation, I received a settlement of about \$15,000 that was just enough to cover the loan. Do I use the settlement money toward my debt snowball, or should I pay

Dave Ramsey Says

her back so I can get her out of my life for good?

—Arnold

Dear Arnold,

Pay her back. Anything else would be unfair. And, on top of that, it's just the right thing to do.

The whole move of her taking out a loan to buy you a motorcycle was kind of a dumb anyway. It was dumb on her part, and it was dumb on your part. And you can see why it was now, can't you? It has left you in a lurch emotionally and relationally. We're not talking about a random chunk of cash here. This money was for the motorcycle, from the motorcycle and about the motorcycle. So, you just pay her back,

and that'll clear things up.

I'm sorry the relationship didn't work out, brother. But I'm glad you're taking steps to be in control of your finances. And I hope making things right where the bike is concerned will bring you a little peace of mind.

—Dave

Dave Ramsey is an eight-time national bestselling author, personal finance expert and host of "The Ramsey Show," heard by more than 18 million listeners. He has appeared on "Good Morning America," "CBS This Morning," "Today," Fox News, CNN, Fox Business and many more. Since 1992, He also serves as CEO of Ramsey Solutions. ★



Riley Reviews

"MAFIA MAMMA" SPOOFS THE FAMILY; INSIGHT AT TCM FESTIVAL

A Film and TV Review by Tim Riley

"MAFIA MAMMA" RATED R

Though not a marquee actor in the big box office sense, Toni Collette is nonetheless a phenomenal performer who deserves a film role that rises above the rather pedestrian assignment of suburban housewife thrust into a Mafia empire.

As so cheekily cast into the titular role of "Mafia Mamma," Collette's Kristin is first seen as the doting mother to a teenage son (Tommy Rodger) heading off to college and working in a marketing job that's as exciting as finding a toy in a cereal box.

On top of perpetual worry about her son leaving home, Kristin is crushed to find that her immature husband Paul (Tim Daish), performing in a second-rate rock band, is cheating on her with a ditzy rock groupie.

News arrives that the Italian paternal grandfather she never knew has died, and that as the sole heir she needs to attend the funeral. The idea of taking a vacation in the ancestral homeland sounds like a good idea.

Good food and gelato await, but alas, she has no clue that grandpa Don Giuseppe Balbano (Alessandro Bressanello) has bequeathed to her the family business that is embroiled in a blood feud with the Romano family.

With the help of Balbano consigliere Bianca (Monica Bellucci), Kristin overcomes her understandable reluctance to step into the role of running a criminal enterprise that she'd rather make legit over the strenuous objections of hot-tempered cousin Fabrizio (Eduardo Scarpetta).

Fortuitous circumstances that seem unlikely allow Kristin to obtain some respect from other mafia figures but she'd prefer to have a fling with the handsome Lorenzo (Giulio Corso) that she met at the airport.

While Kristin would rather make wine and be seduced by an Italian hunk, the gangster film genre certainly won't get a boost from limp references to "The Godfather."

A Zoom meeting with her male colleagues planning a sexist ad campaign turns hilarious when the men are oblivious to Kristin fighting off an assassin. This just might be the highlight of the film.

Sad enough for an idea that sounded promising, "Mafia Mamma" turns flat like an extremely thin crust pizza. The glimmer of actual jokes surface with the regularity of a Metro bus in Los Angeles, which is to say not often.

INSIGHT AT THE TCM CLASSIC FILM FESTIVAL

As Yogi Berra once said to Yankee players, "You can observe a lot by watching." You can also learn a lot and

gain insight into show business at the TCM Classic Film Festival by attending a special presentation.

One such event that proved fascinating was "You Gotta Have a Gimmick: The Warner Bros. Trailers Show," hosted by Randy Haberkamp of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Anyone who goes to the local multiplex knows that the previews of upcoming attractions have an influence on whether a future film release holds potential interest.

"The Trailers Show" demonstrated how advertising wizards were clever enough to pack theaters. "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?," starring sibling rivals Bette Davis and Joan Crawford, may have gotten a boost with the tagline: "Try to remember this is only a motion picture."

Another gem for Joan Crawford was the film noir "Mildred Pierce," in which her titular role as the femme fatale was noted in the clip of Zachary Scott saying she "had more to offer a man in a glance than most women give in a lifetime."

More to the point of Crawford's role of the seductive woman likely to cause distress to a man involved with her, the most instructive tagline was Jack Carson's observation that "loving her was like shaking hands with the devil."

Haberkamp remarked that "films reflect their times," and one must wonder at the pitch made for the 1953 Vincent Price horror film "House of Wax," which did not feature either a single scene or actor in the promotional trailer.

The "House of Wax" trailer was a two-minute drill of taglines, from "It is Like Nothing That Has Ever Happened to You Before..." to "Every Astounding Scene in the Story Comes as Close as the Person Next to You...and You are Part of the Living Drama."

The prize for best trailer might go to "Casablanca," in which Humphrey Bogart is described as "the most dangerous man in the most dangerous city."

A screening of "The Jackie Robinson Story," which coincided with the actual day that he broke the color barrier of Major League Baseball, was not only fun to see the Brooklyn Dodgers first baseman playing himself, but offered glimpses into his personal journey.

Better still was the participation of his granddaughter Ayo Robinson who noted that all that Jackie wanted was respect as a human being. She pointed out that "acting was not quite his forte," even if a prominent newspaper said he was very authentic in the film.

Interestingly enough, "The Jackie Robinson Story" omits some of the most vitriolic and hateful words and acts that confronted Jackie on and off the playing field. ★



Storms Create Challenges for Small Farmers and Farmers Markets

Storms that battered farms across California took an especially harsh toll on small organic farmers who rely on farmers markets to sell their produce. Across the Sacramento Valley, organic farmers have reported harvest and planting delays, which will be felt for months. The flood impacts come after a challenging winter, in which crop losses and production gaps resulted in slim vegetable selections at farmers markets. Meanwhile, the unusually wet weather may test organic farmers, who are wary of pests and diseases this year.

Imperial Valley Farmers Await Federal Actions on Colorado River Supplies

The federal government is considering two options to prevent the Colorado River from running dry. Both plans announced last week would require water users in the river's Lower Basin to dramatically cut their use. The April 11 announcement of the two plans by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation came after the seven states that draw water from the river failed over several months to form a consensus on how to cut their water use. The outcome could significantly affect farming in California's Imperial Valley.

Farmers in Shasta, Scott River Regions Still Face State Water Restrictions

Farmers along the Scott River and Shasta River watersheds in Siskiyou County have faced curtailments of water supplies since 2021. After storms dramatically increased snowpack and reservoir levels this year, a March 23 executive order by the governor temporarily suspended drought curtailment orders for some watersheds. But farmers in the Shasta and Scott watersheds respectively will remain under drought-emergency restrictions until at least April 30 and May 2, state officials say.

New California Program Pays Ranchers for Livestock Losses, Impacts from Wolves

A new state program is compensating ranchers for livestock losses due to wolf depredation. California has allocated \$3 million for the pilot program. The first two parts were implemented last year to begin compensating farmers for livestock losses and deterrence. By early April this year, 32 applications had been processed and approved, with a total compensation request of nearly \$440,000. Of the 32 applications, 11 were for direct livestock losses and 21 were for wolf deterrence methods. ★

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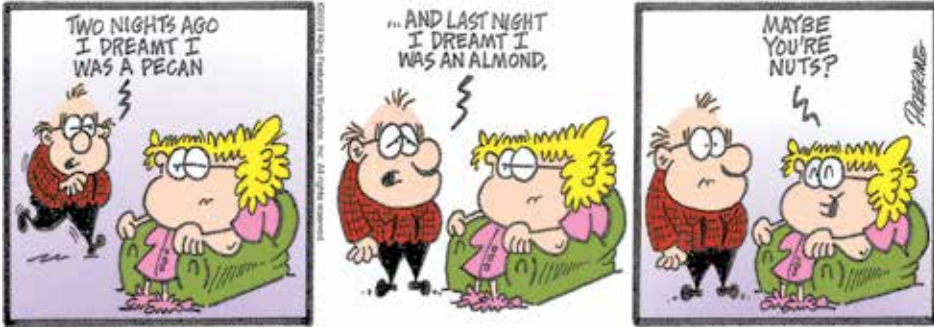
Main Office Address: 7144 Fair Oaks Blvd., Suite #5, Carmichael, CA 95608. Call 916-773-1111 for more information. The *Dixon Independent Voice* is published weekly on Friday.

We are proud members of these newspaper associations.

COMICS & PUZZLES

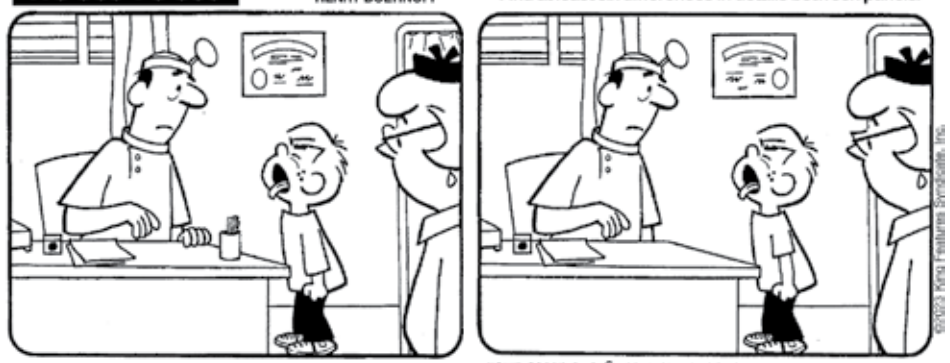
The Spats



by Jeff Pickering



HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Amber Waves



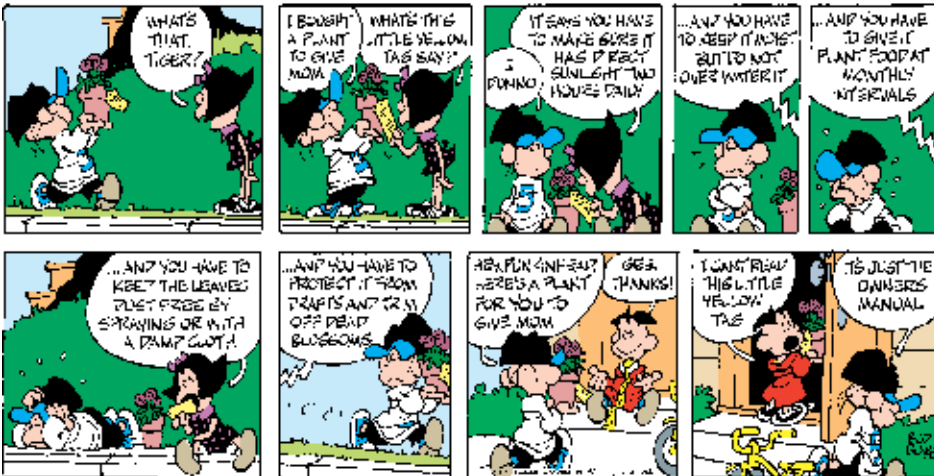
by Dave T. Phipps

Out on a Limb



by Gary Kopervas

TIGER



by BUD BLAKE

Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



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- Foreclosures
- Unclaimed property
- School Board issues
- Elections/Polling places, initiative petitions
- Tax assessments/proposals

Ramtown Round Up



Neighborhood Christian School thanks those who graciously sponsored the school in its first ever Jogathon. NCS courtesy photo



The students from Neighborhood Christian School jogged around their school for a fundraiser that raised more than \$24,000 for needed school repairs. NCS courtesy photo

MPG Staff

Swim Champions

Dixon High School Boys Swim Team was undefeated 5-0 when they went into the Golden Empire League Championship Meet swim tournament last Saturday in Woodland and wound up 6-0 Champions! Girls Swim finished 3rd. There were six different teams competing.

“The top swimmers like Sean Ward, Faith Dunn, Abby Kosiewicz and Angel Santa Cruz made a big impact,” said 1st year swimmer Gage Ruiz, who does a challenging 200-meter free style. Coach Michael Vlach earned his Master’s in Education from UC Davis and is a computer science teacher at DHS. He posted proudly on social media of the victory.

Abby Kosiewicz

Congratulations to Abby Kosiewicz, a senior swimmer in the 100-meter freestyle/breaststroke. She was chosen as Student Athlete of the Week at Dixon High School.

“Abby has had an amazing senior season thus far and a great week in the pool. Last week Abby snagged to personal bests in her main events and qualified for sections with her time in the breaststroke. She has also placed first in numerous GEL contests and has helped the girls swim team compete down the stretch for a GEL title. Abby has played water polo and swam for all 4 years of high school. She was a key part of the section championship team last year. Abby is a 4.5 GPA student and plans on attending SB city college to swim,” posted by DHS Athletic Director Brett Peterson. Abby was surprised at the honor, thanked her swim coach, Michael Vlach. Abby is a 4.0 GPA student and plans on attending Santa Barbara City College to swim.

Baseball Game

Rams vs. Rams! DHS Boys Varsity and Junior Varsity Baseball will be against Orangevale’s Casa Roble High School Rams on the Dixon home diamonds at 4:15 p.m. on Friday, April 26. Dixon High is located at 555 College Way.

Championship Track Meet

Boys and Girls Varsity Track will participate in the Golden Empire League (GEL) Championship Meet on Saturday, April 29, starting at 12:30 p.m. at Mira Loma High School, 4000 Edison Avenue in Sacramento.

Jogathon

“Thank you to our sponsors!” said Erika Figueroa of Neighborhood Christian School. “We would love to recognize them for graciously sponsoring our school in our first ever Jogathon. We successfully raised \$24,712.13 and we couldn’t have done it without their support.” A huge thank you to their sponsors: Taylor Builders, Kevin Johnson (Johnson Group Relax Gold), House of Floors, Victoria Barros-Ortiz State Farm Agent, Jovani’s Plumbing, Fisk’s Cyclery, Kuiu, and ACCU-1 Glass.

Student Jack Lang raised the most money for the school: a whopping \$1,116 and he won a new bicycle for his efforts!

Swim Lessons

Registration opens May 1 for swim lessons through the City of Dixon. Sessions will be two weeks each and cost \$80. Lessons are available for all ages and all levels. If you have questions, contact Kyla at (707) 343-8162 or email kschnitter@cityofdixon.us. ★

Dixon High School Principal’s RAMpage

By Stephanie Marquez

Prom is Coming Up

The 2023 Prom is coming up on Friday, May 5 at the Rancho Solano Country Club. This is a beautiful venue that is perfect for a fancy dance. Tickets will be sold all next week, with upper classmen (11th and 12th graders) pre-sales this Friday. Tickets cost \$65 each. Buy tickets early as this dance tends to sell out. School phone is (707) 693-6330.

Amazing Visual and Performing Arts Events

April 28-29, Friday/Saturday: Drama club production Beauty and the Beast
 May 3, Wednesday 7:00 pm: Guest Artist concert, tickets available April 20th
 Every year, Mr. Coulson hosts a wonderful guest artist concert. This year, the guest artist is Steve Russo!!! Join us in honoring Mr. Coulson and Mr. Russo, two great educators and musicians.

May 20, Saturday 7:00 pm: Alumni Jazz Band Concert

May 23, Tuesday 7:00 pm: DHS Choir Concert

May 25, Thursday 7:00 pm: End of Year Band Concert

Honoring the Class of 2023!

We have several events coming up to honor our graduating seniors. I will be sending more detailed information to seniors and senior parents next week.

April 28, Friday: Cap and gown distribution at lunch

May 15, Monday, 6:30pm: Senior Awards Night on Monday

May 19, Friday: Class of 2023 Elementary Tour

May 22, Monday, 6:30pm: Distinguished Scholars Night

June 2, Friday: Graduation Practice after last final

June 3, Saturday, 9:00am: Graduation on Saturday

Other Events and Important Dates

May 1-11: AP Testing

May 12: Minimum Day

May 16: ELD Reclassification Ceremony

May 17: AVID Senior Night

May 24: FFA Banquet

May 29: No School

May 31-June 2: Finals Schedule

June 3, 9:00 am Graduation Ceremony

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THIS WEEK'S SERMON

Prayer
 Selected Scriptures

SUNDAY SERVICES

Adult Bible Study 9:00 am, Worship 10:30 am

Small Groups meet throughout the week.

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