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Dixon Independent Voice

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Charitable Christmas Program Continues



Teri Brown and Trina Shaw gather donations for the Community Christmas Program that needs new leaders to keep the program going.

Story and photo by Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Collections for Dixon's Community Christmas Program, formerly known as Dixon Toys for Tots, are in full swing across town for Dixon's underserved children, families, and seniors -- continuing the tradition for more than 50 years--although there are some major changes in the program itself.

In the past couple years, there were Santa 'drive-thrus' or Santa waving from the front of the church as cars full of children drive by but now with lingering virus concerns coupled with volunteer labor shortages, Santa won't be present at all, according to program organizers.

This year, Cornerstone Church Office manager Monica Sepulveda, who is also a program volunteer, reported the normal screening for income would not be done, that letters were not distributed to the schools, and that parents would

be the ones who pick up toys for their children.

Organizations such as the Dixon Women's Improvement Club continue to collect unwrapped toys as well as local nonprofits like the American Legion Post 208 Women's Auxiliary who are also doing a food drive for the Cornerstone Church Food Pantry.

"We just don't have the people anymore," Sepulveda said. "A lot of people have retired." For many years, Sepulveda was in charge of the senior portion of the program which included delivering food and lap blankets to senior shut-ins across town and in the rural areas.

"I've already got the senior part [of the program] so I will make sure that happens again this year," she assured. She jokes with Pastor Frank Salamone that she doesn't understand why she even pays rent since she "practically lives at the church." She had just finished helping to pack all the shoeboxes for Samaritan's Purse,

an evangelical Christian humanitarian aid organization.

The United Methodist Women, now called United Women in Faith, are once again partnering with the Dixon Women's Improvement Club to collect lap blankets and socks for Dixon seniors who will receive a Christmas Eve meal and visit through the Dixon Christmas program for seniors.

"Some members are busy sewing, crocheting and knitting lap blankets while others will be purchasing lap size fleece blankets," said organizer Suzanne Galloway. "At our annual Christmas party we will be collecting both blankets and socks in addition to toys for the local Community Christmas Program."

If community members would like to help in this project they can drop blankets and socks off at the church, 209 North Jefferson or leave a message at the church

Continued on page 2

Council Race Concludes, Bogue Unseats Pederson

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - After three weeks of one of those nail-biting elections where there was less than a 20-vote difference, Thom Bogue, who is a former Councilman and former Mayor of Dixon, appears to have won the City Council race for District 2 and incumbent Scott Pederson has lost.

Pederson has already served on the Council two terms after serving as appointed City Treasurer, but Bogue also had experience. His first run was in 2010 for City Council and won, then serving while Jack Batchelor was Mayor. Bogue ran again in 2016 for Mayor against Batchelor and the late Loran Hoffmann and won, thus serving Dixon as Mayor for four years. He had not planned to run again except he felt he was the only one who could beat Steve Bird who was also vying for 2020 Mayor along with Councilman Devon Nishimura (then Minnema.) Nishimura, Bogue and former Councilman Ted Hickman split the votes giving Bird the most plurality.

Bogue's supporters encouraged him to run to represent them in the newly outlined District 2 which encompasses Creekside neighborhood where he has lived with wife Janelle for many years. Now he's won a seat back on the Council.

"I already put together an agenda I'd like to achieve in the first year working together with the rest of the council and with the supporting reinforcement of the community to achieve these lofty goals," said an enthusiastic sounding Bogue.

According to John Gardner, Assistant Registrar of Voters, November 28 was the last day for anyone contacted regarding a signature mismatch or other ballot issue to respond and they still could have received ballots that were dropped off at other counties after that although that was "a small, remote possibility at this point," said Gardner at press time. The votes were certified Wednesday afternoon. ★

Senior Community Opens

Story and photo by Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - There's been more than a few families who moved to Dixon decades ago never considering this would be the town where they would live their life. But then, unexpectedly, their hair turns white, and their children are having children.

In the making for years, Dixon now has a 55+ Active Lifestyle Community, offering resort-style recreation including pool, spa, barbecue areas and a clubhouse with fitness classes and more where mature citizens can thoroughly enjoy life and feel safe.

K. Hovnanian's Four Seasons At Homestead opened with fanfare and an official ribbon cutting by the Dixon Chamber of Commerce recently. It is a gated community with some homes already built and being lived in. It is tucked back into the large Southwest Development located at 240 Morning



Sales Consultant Jennifer Castiglioni shows photos and a map of K. Hovnanian's Four Seasons At Homestead, the new Dixon community for seniors aged 55 and over that is now open with six models available to peruse.

Glory Lane.

"We create a resort-at-home atmosphere where the clubhouse is at the heart of it all," said Sales Consultant Jennifer Castiglioni who gave tours of the six models. "We're seeing people from all over the place including Fairfield, Davis, San Jose, and Dixon." She added that, so far, the people viewing the homes do seem young--those who are "just turning 55."

"First of all, the homes are just beautiful," enthused Shauna Manina, Dixon Chamber of Commerce CEO, who had a personal interest in the homes. "There was a lot of storage. I was impressed with the closets, pantries and cabinets. The location is perfect. It's on the outskirts but close to everything you need. The fact that you're going to have a clubhouse and all the additional amenities

included is a real plus."

The different floor plans to choose from, beginning with the smaller units, from 1,460 sq. ft. to 1,521 sq. ft. are called Autumn and the larger floor plans that are 1,901 sq. ft. to 2,084 sq. ft. are called Spring. Prices start at \$587,056 and climb to \$692,400.

"The price is slightly lower for the homes, so it attracts older homeowners

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The Pumpkin Pie Ordeal

By Debra Dingman

Hubby and I were bored the day before Thanksgiving because my daughter was cooking and we only needed to bring dessert.

I suggested we start the pumpkin pies and he scoffed, saying he was going to do that in the morning because we had plenty of time. I disagreed.

I've had things go wrong, I told him. If you start early, you have time to fix it but if you wait, you won't have time and the stores will be closed.

We started the pies. For the most part, we work well in the kitchen. He mixed the puree and all the other ingredients smoothly. He made his crust one way, and I made mine more scalloped looking. I looked the other way when he was filling the pies but when he was trying to pour the last of it in the already bulging-about-to-overflow pie shells, I said firmly, "No." He said there was just a little bit left. I told him we'd make another pie. He said there wasn't enough for another pie because it was too little to fill another shell up. I told him I love crust and that the pies were going to overflow in the oven as they were, so "no,

don't add another drop."

He decided I might be right.

He got out the large cookie sheet to put the pie shells on and pulled out the hot rack from the oven about 10 inches. "Honey, that is way too far. I've had things spill right down the front of the stove because the whole rack can lean forward so just pull it out a few inches." I pushed it back. Then he put the pan on the rack. I'm curious... then I see him start to pick up the bulging pie. "Stop!" I say as the orange puree starts to spill over the edge. He puts it down but doesn't take his hands away. I ask what he is doing, and he says he's going to put it on the pan. Why would you not put the pan on the counter and carefully move the pies onto it, then put the whole thing in the oven, I asked only because I tried to understand his thought process. He says it's easier his way. But the pans are flimsy, and they need support. He insisted on putting the pie in his way. I watched. It immediately started to spill and I tried not to freak out as the pumpkin started to splatter all over the freshly swept and mopped kitchen floor. Some spilled onto the cookie sheet and some on

the hot oven door.

You can imagine what I was thinking but I didn't say anything and took the pan and the spilled pie out of the oven and placed it on the counter. We cleaned everything up. I slowly moved the over-filed last pie onto the cookie sheet next to its twin. Then, I placed the whole thing in the oven and closed the door and he set the timer. He said my idea worked best. "Experience," I answered.

Not more than 15 minutes into the clock, I heard a loud bang and opened the oven. The cookie sheet had actually gone cattywampus on the rack and one pie spilled a bunch of its contents onto the sheet. We had no idea why the sheet did that, but it did.

When the pies were all done with one having pumpkin cooked all over one edge, the other looking like a stopped-in-place pool swell, and the dark brown-edged third pie that was only filled halfway with the puree, we stared at them on the kitchen counter.

Thanksgiving morning David went to Safeway and found the perfect-looking pies to take to our family dinner. ★

Dixon News Briefs



Volunteers, family, and veterans take time to see the Sacramento Valley Cemetery's Wreath Project come to completion last year. Photo courtesy of the Wreath Project

MPG Staff

Wreath Project

Curtis Stocking, representative from Remember A Vet Wreath Project, spoke about the importance of honoring our veterans during the holidays to the Dixon Soroptimist recently. The mission of the Wreath Project is to secure donations to purchase fresh, green boughs, ensuring that each veteran and his/her grave site at the Sacramento Valley National Cemetery is recognized and is honored during the holiday season.

They are concentrating on raising awareness of this project and encouraging other civic groups, organizations, and individuals to join in the effort each year, for this one-and other cemeteries. To contact Remember A Vet Wreath Project call Susie Stocking at 707-249-5852 or email wreathproject@yahoo.com, or visit their website at wreath-project.webs.com.

Ugly sweater

Atkinson Self Storage has announced an Ugly Sweater Contest that can save you \$100 off your monthly storage rental if you win. Your job is to wear your ugly sweater in their office at 1800 North First Street and they'll take a picture and you'll be in the contest.

Christmas Cruise

The Dixon Christmas Cruise is back for its third year to entertain residents with their holiday-decked vehicles. Like last year, the group meets up at Hall Park at 5 p.m. on Saturday, December 10. They will also be collecting canned foods and toys. Contact Regina Mraz on Facebook and watch for the route to be published on social media.

School Out

There's going to be a few extra bicycles, skateboards, and youth out and about for the next three weeks so please drive with a lot more caution in the city streets. Dixon Unified School Students will be out of school for three weeks starting December 19 through January 6 so if you want to send them to Grandma's house, that would be a good time. If you consider the Saturday after they are out through the Sunday before they go back, there is a total of 22 days out of the education grind.

Neighborhood Christian School's break begins the same day as DUSD but they are due back on Wednesday, January 4, 2023.

Meetings Cancelled

Three City Meetings have been cancelled due to the holidays. They are the City Council on Tuesday, December 20, the Transportation Advisory Commission on Wednesday, December 21, and the Parks & Recreation Commission on December 27. They resume in January.

Senior Lights Tour

The Dixon Seniors are invited to ride along for a tour of Dixon homes decorated for the holidays on Friday, December 16 at 6 p.m. Cost is only \$2 per person so bring friends and make it a fun night. To sign up, please stop by the Senior/Multi-use Center at Center to pay your fee and reserve your seat by Monday, December 5th. A Read-Ride representative will call you to make arrangements for your pick-up. This event is sponsored by the City of Dixon's Senior/ Multi-Use Center and Dixon Read-Ride. ★

Holiday Laughs from 'A Christmas Story' at The Historic Woodland Opera House



Ralphie (Owen Mayor), Old Man (Joshua Brown) and Mother (Patricia Glass) revel in a memorable Christmas in a scene from the classic holiday comedy, "A Christmas Story." Photo courtesy of Woodland Opera House

Woodland Opera House News Release

WOODLAND, CA (MPG) - Sharon Joyce presents A Christmas Story at the Woodland Opera House this November 18 - December 11, 2022.

Humorist Jean Shepherd's memoir of growing up in the Midwest in the 1940s follows 9-year-old Ralphie in his quest for a genuine Red Ryder BB gun under the Christmas tree. Ralphie pleads his case before his mother, his teacher - Miss Shields, and even a department store Santa Claus! The response from each is a resounding, "You'll shoot your eye out!" The production includes all the hilarious elements from the beloved 1983 movie. It's the perfect pre-holiday outing for the whole family.

Reserved seats are \$30 for adults, \$28 for seniors 62+, and \$15 for children 17 and under. Balcony tickets are \$18 for adults

and \$9 for children. Flex Pass specials and group rates are available.

Tickets on sale online at www.etix.com/ticket/e/1028738/a-christmas-story2022-woodland-opera-house and at the Box Office (530) 666-9617. Located at 340 Second Street, Box office hours are: Tuesday-Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Performances are on Fridays & Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2:00 p.m.

Due to the nature of the shows and for the comfort of our patrons and actors, we do not allow children under the age of 4.

The Opera House is located in historic downtown Woodland at 340 Second Street, Woodland, Calif., just 20 minutes from Sacramento. Many wonderful shops and restaurants are within walking distance from the theatre.

Current COVID Policy: In accordance with the updated indoor mask requirements from the State of California and Yolo County, masks are no longer required in the Woodland Opera House. We do, however, support Yolo County in its efforts to inform the public about the medium transmission level. ★



Ralphie's (Owen Mayor) dreams come true when he receives the coveted Red Ryder BB Gun in a scene from the Woodland Opera House production of "A Christmas Story" opening November 18th. Photo courtesy of Woodland Opera House

Charitable Christmas Program Continues

Continued from page 1

707 678-2191 and someone will come by and pick them up. Like other local churches, the Methodist Church donation boxes are inside.

Another toy collection will happen during

the Christmas Cruise on December 10 beginning at Hall Park at 5:30 pm. People are asked to bring a new, unwrapped toy and/or canned food for the holiday food drive but can also be dropped off at Cornerstone Baptist Church, 185 West

Cherry Street.

"These are just some of the things that make our town so wonderful and we hold onto," said Caldwell. For more information, email: DixonChristmasProgram@gmail.com ★

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Dixon Lions Club Donates



Recently, the Dixon Lions Club presented a \$1,300 donation to Dixon Youth Basketball to use towards the purchase of three wireless scoreboards. "They are essential to every single game," said Brian Jensen, DYB President. "We started off with nothing...didn't even own a basketball and when I went to a meeting where they asked for what we needed, I told them we need a bunch of things but most important is the scoreboards. We are totally grateful to the Lions!" Photo courtesy of the Dixon Lions

Senior Community Opens

Continued from page 1 [and those are people] who are not so nervous about the interest rate," said Castiglioni. "The buyers are 55 and older so they've been through interest rate fluctuations, and they understand the concept and the rate isn't completely shocking." Now is the best time to choose a lot because some are very large and others not so. The homes themselves feature high ceilings and open floor plans that

make the house feel roomy and spacious. They are also wired with up-to-date city standards for electronics and fire safety that surpass the state level. Although there are assessments that add to one's payment and a current \$135 Homeowners Association fee, one needs to consider that one never has to worry about young neighbors playing loud music all night or not having enough to do or where

to make friends. Many communities also offer a calendar of exciting events and interesting activities such as Pickleball, dance classes, computer clubs, tennis lessons, travel clubs, and even water aerobics, according to Castiglioni. They are located at 400 Farmhouse Lane off West A Street and Evans Road in Dixon. Call (707) 348-0505 for more information ★

Why Did Measure D Lose?

Commentary by Councilman Jim Ernest

It's my opinion that too many people didn't know what it was about.

Of the ten closest cities, Dixon has the second lowest retail tax rate. Our rate is the lowest possible in Solano County. Measure D would have raised that rate and was expected to bring in around \$3M per year in retail tax revenue to Dixon. Currently, most of our city's retail tax goes to the County and State. None of the Measure D money would have gone to the County or to the State.

This money would have helped us bridge the money gap for Dixon's new Firehouse, the Police Department 2nd floor expansion, raise the level of road maintenance, and fill in gaps in the Parkway Overcrossing project funding.

Around 2700 voters

supported Measure D, and 3400 voted against it.

Of those who voted against the bill, I believe most would say they wanted Dixon to have the items listed above.

So why did they vote against it? I think there are three reasons, and three voting groups:

One group mainly worried about our National economy, the rise in prices and a possible economic slowdown. These people chose to hold off any spending until they can feel more confident about our economy.

The second group's main objection, in my opinion, was lack of trust in our City government. They didn't trust that the extra funds would be used for the items listed above.

The third group never saw a good explanation of the issue and voted against it because they weren't sure what it was. More than 4% of Dixon voters

left the Measure D question blank.

It is important to ask why Measure D lost, and then decide where we go from here.

Can we learn something and move forward? I think so. We have been talking a lot about communication lately and have worked hard to make communication better. Measure D was a communication short fall. If communication told us that people did not want Measure D, then we (me included) shouldn't have put it on the ballot.

If we thought people did not understand it, then we should have been willing to spend the time, effort, and find the support to get the message out. I would like to recognize that, and work for clearer communication and build more trust between all of us in the future. ★

Big Grant for Business Success

SBDC News Release

DIXON, CA (MPG) - A six-week training program for 100 Solano County business owners to improve and grow their business is being offered through the Solano Small Business Development Center.

The Solano Success Accelerator is a special program funded by ARPA (the American Rescue Plan Act), with the goal of helping businesses recover and thrive in Solano County.

This is an intensive six-week program that will include weekly mandatory online business training and one-on-one business advising. Business owners who complete all components of the program

will receive a \$4,000 grant for business growth and recovery.

Eligible businesses include those that are: Located/based in Solano County; Open and earning income prior to Jan. 1, 2020; Has a current Solano County or city business license (or a state business license for childcare providers); No more than 50 employees; and was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The deadline to apply for business training in January and April is 5 p.m. on Dec. 2, 2022. Qualified applicants will be selected in a random lottery, with two rounds planned in 2023. Apply for round one by December 2 and learn more at <https://www.solanonapasbdc.org/solano-success/>. ★

Sheldon Wins Caption Contest



"See honey, this is why I hate time-change-Sunday — we're the only ones here and the pastor's waiting for us in the parking lot." Photo by Debra Dingman

MPG Staff

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Miranda Sheldon, who is the wife of the Pastor at Grace Fellowship Church, is the winner of last week's Turkey Caption Contest with the below caption.

"See honey, this is why I hate time-change-Sunday — we're the only ones here and the pastor's waiting for us in the parking lot."

She will be receiving a \$25 gift certificate from

Dawson's Bar and Grill, located at 105 North First Street in downtown Dixon. The Dixon Independent Voice appreciates Dawson's donation, and we appreciate our readers for their submissions that gave our staff some good laughs. Here's a few of the finalists:

"Hey, you guys this is the place, when we get in just say "Sanctuary!" was submitted by Leslie Olesen.

A song was also

submitted by Miranda Sheldon and is sung to the tune of We Three Kings... "We three turkeys of Dixon are baring feathers, we travel afar, from Pitt School to Hall Park, making your dogs bark, merrily dodging your car..."

"Local turkey flock seeks sanctuary at Grace Fellowship on Thanksgiving Day, hoping to avoid any "foul play" was submitted by Chris Smith. ★

Robert Rivas Elected as Next Speaker of the California State Assembly

California Farm Bureau News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - California Farm Bureau, the state's largest agricultural non-profit, representing over 29,000 members, including over 20,000 small family farms, congratulates Assemblymember Robert Rivas on his caucus's selection as the next Speaker of the California Assembly. Assemblymember Rivas, from Hollister, is the first Speaker from an agricultural area since Cruz Bustamante in 1999.

"The state needs to hear more voices from rural and agricultural areas," said Jamie Johansson, President of the California Farm Bureau. "Rob has served his community for over 20 years and as an Assemblymember, and Chairman of the Agricultural Committee, has brought that perspective and conviction to statewide solutions. We look forward to working with him to grow more food in this state so we can feed people while protecting the environment and providing continued economic opportunities in urban and rural areas." ★



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SCC Appoints New Trustee for Area 7

James Thomas Media News Release

FAIRFIELD, CA (MPG) - At a special meeting of the SCC Governing Board held on November 9th, 2022 the trustees appointed Amanda Lopez-Lara to serve as Trustee for Area 7 which includes Winters, Dixon, and parts of Vacaville.

Ms. Lopez-Lara, who resides in Dixon, will finish Mr. Michael Martin's term of office from November 9 through December 2024. Long time Winters' resident Michael Martin served as trustee for this area since 2012 until his resignation on October

30th when he relocated to Ohio.

Trustee Lopez-Lara attended Davis Senior High School where she served as the student representative to the school board during difficult budget times. She attended UC Berkeley and graduated with a BS degree in Political Economy and completed major coursework in accounting. She has worked in large accounting firms as an auditor and accountant and currently serves as an accounting manager at Stanford University.

Trustee Lopez-Lara



The SCC Governing Board trustees appointed Amanda Lopez-Lara to serve as Trustee for Area 7 which includes Winters, Dixon, and parts of Vacaville. Courtesy headshot

has a unique understanding of the area including the importance of representing higher education needs that will serve agriculture and farming communities as well as the Latino population and first-generation students. Trustee Lopez-Lara will participate in her first Board meeting on November 16th. ★

SCOE Awarded \$300,000 Grant for Student Salmon Monitoring Project



Pictured in the back row from left to right: Ward Stewart, Joshua Davis and Daniel Latham. Front row from left to right: Rhonda Hopson, Milla Abono, Peggy Harte and Richard Munoz. Courtesy photo

SCOE News Release

SOLANO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Solano County Office of Education (SCOE) has been awarded a \$300,000 Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The grant focuses on engaging teachers and students in citizen science to help solve a mystery threatening the salmon population in California's ecosystems. SCOE's grant program, dubbed the Spinning Salmon Citizen Science Monitoring Project, launched today with a two-day training for a small pilot group of teachers from across Solano County at SCOE's main office in Fairfield.

The Spinning Salmon project was developed through a collaborative effort with SCOE, NOAA, the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the UC Davis Center for Community and Citizen Science. Other community organizations like the Solano Land Trust and the Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District also supported the project and teacher training. The teachers will lead Solano County high school students through a partnership with researchers from UC Davis and facilitate the collection of data in the classroom to support UC Davis' work.

"Exposure to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and STEM-related fields can be a significant equalizer for students. We are excited to be awarded this grant that will provide students the opportunity to provide real research and data that can help

CDFW, and UC Davis scientists solve a problem endangering salmon in our local ecosystems."

A mystery emerged in 2020, when experts at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Fish Health Laboratory and UC Davis Aquatic Animal Health Laboratory discovered something was causing young salmon in fish hatcheries to swim in corkscrew patterns and die at unusually high rates. Investigators with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's California-Nevada Fish Health Center noticed that a bath of thiamine immediately revived the ailing juveniles. They now suspect the problem is linked to a deficiency of thiamine in returning adult salmon that fed off the coast of central California.

SCOE's Spinning Salmon project will place fish tanks, research equipment and salmon fry in local classrooms. Teachers received training and permitting from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CA DFW) allowing them to legally possess wild species. The program aims to provide real-world data collected by Solano County high school students to support research looking to uncover what is causing the deficiency in salmon, which plays a critical role in our Californian and global ecosystems.

The NOAA B-WET program is a competitive grant program that promotes Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences: activities driven by rigorous academic learning standards that aim to increase participants' understanding and stewardship of watersheds and related ecosystems. ★



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

Abrams Publishing Shares Their Favorite Titles for Holiday Gifting

This year Abrams and Amulet publishing has chosen a bountiful display of books perfect for readers of any age. Whether you might be shopping for a new book to spark excitement about the holidays or looking for one that will unfold a whole new world of enchantment to carry throughout the Holiday break, this guide has it all.

Now that it is the beginning of the Holiday season, these two books will excite any reader for Christmas. Murray, the Patrol dog, takes his job very seriously. So, when his humans start acting very odd, like planting a tree in the living room, it is up to Murray to protect them. But what happens when the strange man in a red suit enters his house? Readers will laugh through *Murray Christmas* by E.G. Keller as they witness Christmas from the eyes of a dog who takes his job very seriously.

Visit Santa's workshop, where every page is an adventure to behold. With wonder and discovery nestled within every page's flap, gatefold, and peek-through hole, *Merrytale: A Christmas Adventure* by Christopher Franceschelli is an excellent book for any little one.

For the young reader all year long, *I AM ME, and Maya, and the Beast* explore the beauty and strength of celebrating who you are. While there may be times a child may feel like they don't blend in, *I Am Me* by Susan Verde is a celebration of each child being uniquely them. Follow the story of one girl who wouldn't let



anyone or even asthma stop her dream of being a surfer in *Maya and the Beast* by Maya Gabeira.

Step inside a fairytale with *The Secret Unicorn Club*, complete with the history, the care, and everything you need to know about these magical creatures. Readers will earn badges on their way to being an official secret club member and might even discover a hidden secret badge and handbook.

Celebrate the middle-grade reader on your list with the hilarious *Garbage Pail Kids Cookbook*, complete with recipes that match the most familiar trading cards. Do you believe in Bigfoot? Head out the woods in search of evidence with *The Search for*

Sasquatch, where Laura Krantz explores the science and the myth. *Wildseed Witch* by Marti Dumas will immerse readers from the very first page with the beauty of new magical abilities, charm schools, and one girl destined to bloom above the rest.

Young Adult readers will fall into the novel *Outer Banks Lights Out* by Alyssa Sheinmel, based on the Netflix series. This book is perfect for a read-and-watch pairing during the holiday break. Readers will be thrilled to continue Tarisai's journey as Raybearer in *Redemptor* by Jordan Ifueko. Fans of the Hunger Games will fall for the next fight-for-survival fantasy, *Lightlark* by Alex Aster. Find all of these titles anywhere books are sold. ★

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The Dixon District Chamber of Commerce is proud to welcome the following new members

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The Chamber would like to wish everyone a very Happy Holiday Season

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Heeney's History

Dreams Realized

Commentary by Ed Heeney

I enjoyed our editor's "dream" story a few weeks back and when the dream "new church" came up I was immediately alert. It reminded me of my church, The United Methodist Church in the mid-1980s.

We had some young mothers who were trying to run a children's program with very limited facilities and supplies. Some of us older folk just couldn't see how we could do any better with our limited resources and since the California Lottery had just been born all we had to wish on was that some rich Methodist would leave his fortune to the Dixon Methodists.

Some of us studied the possibility of doing SOMETHING. First on the list was to enlarge the present building. Second, was to purchase land in the suburbs and build a new church with lots of parking. Third, was to jack up the old building and move it to a more spacious lot.

There was much argument, comment, and discussion and after several months we decided to build right where we were. The hard part was over. But wait! The hard part was not over... Where's

the money?

We appointed a local committee to raise the financing, but they were not too successful and only a small amount was in the bank when we were ready to build. It was determined that we needed to hire professional money folk who knew what they were doing. (The Lottery was not up and running too well yet.) We started building anyway.

Then, there were about a dozen retired men of differing building expertise background who signed on as the volunteer building crew, and one elderly man who couldn't do much labor, but he furnished donuts daily.

As the two by fours went up, so did the enthusiasm. Many autos and pickup trucks drove by daily just to monitor the progress, and few were disappointed. The grand old building that was transported many years earlier from Silveyville by a mule team now stands as a testament to many dreams and much love. The memorial redwood tree shades many dreamers but also lottery ticket holders - DREAM ON! ★



Kevin McCarthy's Task

Kevin McCarthy may now have the hardest job in Washington.

Assuming that he becomes speaker of the House, which will require the near-unanimous support of his caucus and isn't necessarily a foregone conclusion, he's signing up for the most miserable experience of any congressional leader since John Boehner barely controlled a Republican House majority in the Obama years.

Boehner presided over a caucus infused with new tea party members who expected to do great things, when the leverage a congressional majority has over a president of the opposite party is inherently limited.

The mismatch between their hopes and their power led to continual frustration, which was taken out on Boehner. By the time he resigned, the Ohio Republican could be forgiven for wondering if his dog was going to turn against him.

Now, House Republicans will have a microscopic majority in a Washington still arrayed against them. It will be hard enough to pass anything consequential or controversial out of the House before it runs into a brick wall in the Democratic-controlled Senate. House Republicans presumably won't be able to get their handiwork within hailing distance of President Joe Biden's veto pen.

In light of this, the first

priority for House Republicans should be tempering expectations. Their most important achievement has already occurred - namely ensuring that Nancy Pelosi will no longer be speaker with all that that entails for Biden's agenda.

Making the most of their opportunity otherwise will require some realism, subtlety and creativity.

Deadline-driven fights loom over the debt limit and budget next year. Republicans will want to extract their pound of flesh but shouldn't overestimate their influence. They aren't going to reform entitlements or put the U.S. on a fundamentally different fiscal path in a dramatic, down-to-the-wire confrontation over the debt limit or a possible government shutdown. Usually, the aggressors in such fights lose, and it'll be hard to maintain GOP unity with more cautious Republican senators hesitant to go down this path.

Republicans would be well-served to choose a few plausible policy objectives at the outset of these fights - say, revoking the new Biden IRS agents - rather than coming up with large, superficially attractive demands that inevitably have to be abandoned.

Then, there are the investigations. Here, Republicans don't have to worry about the balancing act involved in getting to 2018 votes. The House Oversight Committee can simply get busy. There are still pitfalls to avoid, though.

The Hunter Biden investigation obviously needs to focus on the public corruption and the question of the president's involvement more than Hunter's lurid personal life. Republicans should steer clear of

any counterprogramming on January 6, especially given what the midterms showed about the political costs of any association with "Stop the Steal." And impeaching Biden without even a majority in the Senate would be an exercise in futility.

Otherwise, the field is wide open for probes that could be substantively important and politically useful, whether on the origins of COVID-19, how the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other government entities responded to the pandemic, the Afghan withdrawal, and government pressure on social media companies.

Finally, House Republicans should pass legislation, not in the hopes of getting any of it signed, but to show that the party has a solution-oriented agenda. This was an element of the party's message that was woefully lacking in the run-up to the midterms. They should pass bills to address inflation, support families, control the border, move toward a more merit-based legal immigration system, push back against the "woke" education bureaucracy, reduce college costs, and point in a more sensible direction on crime.

The party should demonstrate that it's pro-family and pro-law and order, while trying to sell itself to the middle again as serious and competent.

This will be no small task with a very narrow, fractious majority, but no one said Kevin McCarthy's job would be easy.

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

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear friends and partners,

The donation to Dixon Family Services is very important to our efforts to make a positive difference for families struggling to meet their basic needs. With your support and others in our community, we will keep doing all we can to help stabilize households, motivated by our overarching goal to ensure that all children are safe, healthy and thriving in their homes.

'Tis the Season of Giving and many have been bringing donations of food, checks, and gift cards that we can give to struggling families over the

holidays. Some of those contributors included the Dixon Lions Club who gave a huge amount of \$1,000, Jess Jones who stopped by with two turkeys, and Braddison Beathem who brought in food that she and her fellow Dixon Ridge 4-H members collected.

Vince Scholl, President, and volunteers from Families Helping Families took Thanksgiving fixings and a lot of other staple foods to families that we referred to them over the weekend. We are sincerely appreciative of the generous hearts in this community.

Cookie Powell, Director
Dixon Family Services



Members of the Dixon Lions Club handed over a check for \$1,000 to very thankful staff at Dixon Family Services. The special holiday gift will be used for food and services assistance for underserved Dixon residents. Photo courtesy of Dixon Family Services

\$647 Million to Cover Overdue Utility Bills

CSD News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Gov. Gavin Newsom on November 22 announced the release of \$647 million in funding to help over 1.4 million California households struggling to pay their overdue energy bills.

The awarded funding will eliminate all past due energy debt accrued by residential customers between March 4, 2020 and December 31, 2021, providing real relief to households that have suffered the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and increased energy debt.

Over the last year, California has distributed over \$1.6 billion in financial assistance for bill credits through the California Arrearage Payment Program (CAPP) to reduce or eliminate overdue electric and gas bills.

"California has made unprecedented commitments to help vulnerable households stay afloat as the cost-of-living increases," said Governor Newsom. "By providing utility relief that will eliminate over 1.4 million Californians' overdue energy bills, we're helping families who continue to struggle with higher costs."

Governor Newsom and the California Legislature established the 2022 California Arrearage Payment Program (2022 CAPP) to address 100 percent of past due energy bill balances incurred by residential customers during the program's COVID-19 pandemic bill relief period covering March 4, 2020 to December 31, 2021. Thirty-three energy utilities applied for 2022 CAPP funding on behalf of over 1.4 million eligible residential customers.

Participating state energy utilities are required to apply a 2022 CAPP bill credit to their customer accounts within 60 days of receiving funds.

"Once again, we are leading with our values by working to ensure that our neighbors economically impacted by the pandemic can keep their lights on," said California Health and Human Services Agency Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly. "Many of us fell behind as the pandemic continued, and our commitment to further address energy debts is another way we are lifting up all Californians."

CAPP is administered by the Department of Community Services and Development (CSD). Under the first round of CAPP funding in 2021,

over 1.5 million residential and commercial energy utility customers received a CAPP bill credit to reduce or eliminate their past due energy bill. While this provided significant relief for customers, not all residential arrearages were covered by the original program. With today's awards, 2022 CAPP will eliminate all remaining eligible past due energy debt accrued by residential customers during the COVID-19 pandemic bill relief period of March 4, 2020 to December 31, 2021.

"California households, through no fault of their own, continue to suffer from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and cost of living increases, including energy expenses," said CSD Director David Scribner. "The state was able to mobilize quickly to address historic levels of energy debt through CAPP in 2021, and building on last year's success, we have done it again in 2022 to effectively and efficiently deliver critical financial assistance to Californians in need."

For additional information about 2022 CAPP, visit <https://www.csd.ca.gov/Pages/2022-CAPP.aspx> ★

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENTS

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 2022-001888
The following persons are doing business as: America's Flooring Outlet, 4690 E. 2nd Street, Suite 8, Benicia, CA 94510.
Floor Quest, 450 Lakeville Street, Suite F, Petaluma, CA 94952. Date Filed in Solano County: November 14, 2022. The Registrant commenced to transact business under the above business name on: N/A

This Business is conducted by: A Corporation. 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 November 13, 2027. 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: Nov. 25, Dec. 2, 9, 16, 2022 AMERICA'S 12-23-22



FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 2022-001903
The following persons are doing business as: Shop Le Jour, 643 Elderberry Loop, Vacaville, CA 95688.
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This Business is conducted by: An 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 November 15, 2027. 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: Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23, 2022 SHOP 12-23-22

ORDER TO SHOW FOR CHANGE OF NAME

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE #FCS058802
Bethany Marie Lamb filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Bethany Marie Lamb to Bethany Marie Sharp.
THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing. December 21, 2022, 9:00 a.m. Department 3, Room 2, Superior Court of California, County of Solano, Old Solano Court House, 580 Texas Street Fairfield, CA 94533
Judge of the Superior Court: Stephen Gizzi
Dated: October 3, 2022
Publish: Nov 11, 18, 28, Dec 2, 2022 LAMB 12-23-22

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CLUES

ACROSS

- Result of too much pressure
- Stir-fry pan
- Steps to the river, in India
- Hindu sage
- Attorneys' org.
- *Christmas cookies emanation
- The Brady Bunch, e.g.
- Mourner's wish
- Mature, as in fruit
- *Santa's entryway
- *Holiday plum treat
- Foot the bill
- Hot alcoholic beverage
- Not transgender
- *Frosty's corn cob
- Attract
- Bad luck prediction
- Indian cuisine staple
- The whole amount
- *"Keep this information" button
- *Coveted letter on a dreidel
- Dry as dust
- Opposite of digest
- Inconclusive
- Dirty air
- Diplomat
- Tallest volcano in Europe
- Like a fox
- Lion output
- Beholder's organ
- *Breaking holiday news
- *Not coal on Christmas
- Courtroom excuse
- Golf coach at a country club
- Very, in music
- Make a logical connection (2 words)
- Promissory letters
- Pine or long
- Chows down
- Hundredweight, acr.
- Ooze out

DOWN

- Nile denizen, for short
- *Like Duke brothers in "Trading Places"
- *New Year's Eve option: Spumante
- Title-holder
- Take for ransom
- On one's guard
- *"Wan of "Star Wars"
- K, in Greek
- *Rose Bowl field, e.g.
- Kachina doll maker
- Answer from the flock
- Drink for John Glenn
- Fervent
- Giving the once-over
- *"Mele Kalikimaka" strings
- More sordid
- Trig function
- Insect in adult stage
- *Number of candles in Kwanzaa's kinara
- Sacrifice for gain
- Eighty-six
- List components
- *Holiday song offering
- Lament for the dead
- Scotland's famous loch
- Eagle's aerie
- Lid or lip embellishment
- Go to bed (2 words)
- *Yule tradition
- Pirate's "Yes!"
- Savory jelly dish
- English county
- London art museum
- Hippobos
- *It's sometimes ignored in face of holiday treats
- Wading bird
- Displeasure display
- Biblical birthright seller
- Backgammon predecessor
- Prong of a fork
- Column's partner

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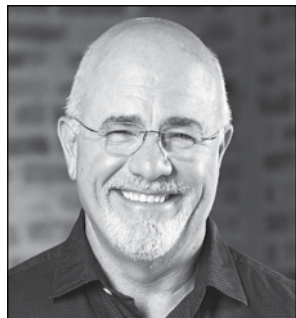
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Dave Ramsey Says

card debt. Should I take over the Parent PLUS loan under my name?

–Tommy

Dear Tommy,

Wait, are you serious? Your mom has a church car? I've never heard of such a thing. But hey, I'm going to talk to my wife about this. I knew I needed another car, I just didn't know I needed a church car. Oh, my goodness!

Ok, here's the deal. If you had an agreement with your mom, or promised at any time to pay back the Parent PLUS Loan when you were able, you should cover it. But that's not what you told me. It sounds like your mom has a good heart and was just trying to help, but she did it in a dumb way. From what you told me, she's done a lot of dumb things with money.

Under no circumstances do you take the loan back under your name. In fact, I'm not certain you can even do that with a Parent PLUS Loan. You need to get your debt cleaned up first before trying to help her. If you choose to be a bigger help after that, you need to start things by having a serious conversation with your mom. She needs to hear that she's being absolutely silly with her money. Let her

know you're willing to help because the loan was for your benefit. But make sure she understands you won't pay it all, and you won't do it while she's making two luxury car payments—including one on a church car. That's ridiculous.

Offer to be her biggest cheerleader, and help her find a good financial coach—someone with the heart of a teacher. You might want to let her know you'll match whatever she pays toward the loan, so it'll feel like a team effort. But also make sure she understands if she pays nothing in any given month, you'll match that, too.

Good luck, Tommy!

– 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, Dave has helped people regain control of their money, build wealth, and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO of Ramsey Solutions. ★

A Church Car? You've Got to Be Kidding!

Dear Dave,

My mom took out a Parent PLUS loan in 2009 to help pay for my college education. I also took out \$70,000 in student loans myself. My mom never made a payment on the loan she took out for me, and now the amount due on the Parent PLUS loan has ballooned to \$100,000. She recently told me in her mind it was my loan in her name, and I should be the one to make the payments after I became financially stable. Thankfully I just got a new job making \$140,000 a year. With this I can finally make a dent in my own loans, but she asks me every week if I'm going to pay the Parent PLUS loan. My mom is a nurse practitioner, so she makes good money, but she recently financed two new luxury cars within 24 hours of each other—one for work and one for church. She also has loans out from borrowing on her 401(k) and credit



Riley Reviews

"THE MENU" LAVISH SATIRE; DOLLY PARTON'S "CHRISTMAS" ON TV

A Film and TV Review by Tim Riley

"THE MENU" RATED R

The foodie culture has been satirized in many ways for its pretentious stylish presentation of fine dining, from the artistry of the food on the plates to the modern chic of the restaurant itself.

"The Menu" is taking the concept of haute cuisine to an insane level over the period of a five course (or it is six or more?), where the farm-to-table meal looks more like modern art than an edible experience.

The setting is a temple of exquisite gastronomy called Hawthorn, where the wealthy, celebrities and affected fools fork over \$1,250 per patron to savor the changing menu of Chef Julian Slowik (Ralph Fiennes) who runs the joint like a cult leader.

Save for one person, nobody has arrived at the island restaurant not on purpose. The arrogant Tyler (Nicholas Hoult) considers himself an aficionado of the culinary arts but he's more the buffoon.

Tyler's date is Margot (Anya Taylor-Joy), a last-minute substitute for this excursion. From the start, she's skeptical about the whole evening, and it turns out for very good reason.

As an unnamed movie star, John Leguizamo finds his acting career is fading and hopes instead to host a travel food show, and his assistant Felicity (Aimee Carrero) is desperate to quit and get away from him.

A trio of obnoxious tech guys (Arturo Castro, Rob Yang and Mark St. Cyr) work for Doug Varick, owner of the Hawthorn, which gives them an added sense of dubious privilege.

Lillian Bloom (Janet McTeer), an arrogant food critic with an overly inflated ego, has a history with Chef Slowik, and she's joined by her editor (Paul Adelstein), a spineless yes man.

Reed Birney and Judith Light play a wealthy older couple who have been regulars at Hawthorn but over the course of the meal unsettling secrets are revealed about the husband.

Chef Slowik may be at the top of his game, but he's come to loathe his elite customers, and himself, for being corrupted by them, and his disgust and contempt are a toxic brew for an evening that turns deadly.

The actors are the best thing on "The Menu" as they deal with the shocking surprises that put them on edge. Oddly interesting, the whole affair is a mysterious thriller mixed with satire and strong violence.

"DOLLY PARTON'S MOUNTAIN MAGIC CHRISTMAS" ON TV



Researchers are on the lookout for pests, 'citrus greening' disease in Southern California

Researchers are combing commercial citrus sites in Southern California to determine whether Asian citrus psyllids are spreading huanglongbing "citrus greening" disease. The insect vectors are known to carry the bacterium that can cause the virus known as HLB. So far, researchers have tested more than 3,000 of the insects collected from 15 commercial citrus sites. Just over 3.5% of the bugs had some level of bacterium. California so far has not had widespread infections in citrus, as has occurred in Florida and Texas.

Study: Farmers who increased online sales were more resilient during pandemic

Farmers who increased use of online sales and marketing were more resilient to economic shocks of the pandemic, according to a new study by researchers at the University of California, Davis. According to the study, published in the journal Agricultural Systems, farmers with a greater diversity of crops and livestock were better able to respond to the pandemic and reported no change or an increase in profitability, compared to farmers with less diverse offerings. Some 46% of 364 California farmers and ranchers interviewed said they relied on online sales.

Fans of Dolly Parton are almost certain to love NBC's most highly anticipated television event of the holiday season in the new original movie "Dolly Parton's Mountain Magic Christmas."

The moniker GOAT usually applies to a sports superstar, someone like Tom Brady, but you could say the same goes for Dolly as the most honored and revered female country singer-songwriter with a multitude of awards and number one songs on the Billboard country charts.

Don't worry about missing the premiere on the network because Dolly's special will stream on Peacock, and apparently there will be an encore on NBC on December 21st at 8:00 p.m.

While there are numerous songs that capture the spirit of Christmas and the importance of gathering with family during the holidays, Dolly gets to shine with her iconic songs "9 to 5" and "I Will Always Love You."

There are a few things to be learned during this two-hour film. Such as, Jimmy Fallon may host his own eponymous late night talk show on NBC, but who knew that he was also a singer?

In a duet with Dolly for the song "It's Almost Too Early for Christmas," Fallon wears a black leather sequined jacket as the pair dance with backup singers in a scene that looks like a 1950's diner.

Keep in mind that "Dolly Parton's Mountain Magic Christmas," which has opening scenes at Dollywood, is a movie musical about the making of a network TV special, with all of the frenetic backstage angst of a dress rehearsal.

Speaking of production anguish, Tom Everett Scott's show producer Sam Haskell frets that they are behind schedule for their live performance, and things only gets worse when the choreographer leaves for a job with the Radio City Rockettes.

Throughout the movie's production numbers and rehearsal chaos, Dolly finds herself taking a private journey into her past, guided by the mysterious appearances of her personal Wise Mountain Men.

Through the sparkle of magic dust, Willie Nelson tells Dolly to think of him as a wise old mountain man full of wisdom. Her response is to tell him that he is "full of it."

When Dolly says that Willie Nelson taught her to remember that we'll always be the kids we once were at Christmas, Billy Ray Cyrus shares his wisdom that who you are with in the present is what really makes it Christmas.

When the time comes for the special to air, a renewed and inspired Dolly goes rogue and shows the world that the real magic of Christmas lies in the hearts of the children and that Christmas is about the people we share it with. ★

Registration Now Open for SCOE's 4th Annual Solano Youth Resiliency Summit

SCOE News Release

SOLANO COUNTY, CA – The Solano County Office of Education (SCOE) is hosting the 4th Annual Solano Youth Resiliency Summit, Saturday, December 10, 2022, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Sunrise Event Center located at 620 Orange Drive in Vacaville.

The summit is free and open to students grades 8-12 living in or attending school in Solano County. Space is limited to the first 100 students. Students can register or learn more about the summit at Solano County Office of Education's website.

The theme of the youth summit event is "IGNITE: Art. Advocacy. Action." The summit will be focused on encouraging Solano's youth to get involved in leadership, share their important perspectives and develop resiliency. Various youth and expert-led workshops focusing on mental health and wellness, prevention of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, life after high school, healthy relationships and others will

be featured.

Students will discover how to use their creative talents to advocate for better ways to decrease the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD) as well as reduce other high-risk behaviors among youth. Participants will also be learning how to normalize healthy behaviors, habits, and practices.

"Solano County Office of Education is eager to host the Youth Resiliency Summit once again. It is an engaging and impactful way for us to provide students with learning that helps develop skills necessary to build resilience and effectively meet challenges, overcome adversities and advocate for positive changes in their communities," says Solano County Superintendent of Schools Lisette Estrella-Henderson.

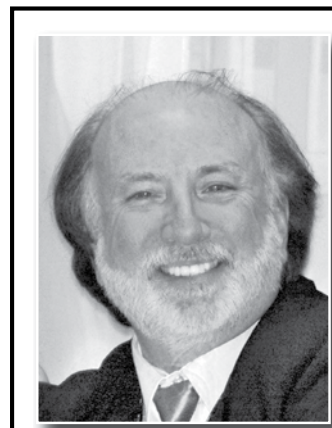
The Youth Resiliency Summit is coordinated in partnership with Drug Safe Solano, Touro University Department of Public Health, Nature of Sound, Solano Public Health, VIBE Solano, Solano County Friday Night Live,



Solano County Superintendent of Schools Lisette Estrella-Henderson. Courtesy headshot

Solano Youth Coalition, and the Vallejo Project.

Solano County Office of Education (SCOE) provides leadership, support, and fiscal oversight for charter schools and Benicia, Dixon, Fairfield-Suisun, Travis, Vacaville, and Vallejo school districts which serve approximately 60,000 students. Solano County Superintendent of Schools, Lisette Estrella-Henderson is elected by voters of Solano County. The Superintendent is a state constitutional officer who serves as the chief executive officer of SCOE and as a liaison between local school districts and the state. ★



Publisher, Paul V. Scholl

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NATIONAL NEWS *courtesy of THE EPOCH TIMES*

Special Counsel Investigating Trump Is ‘Tool to Attack a Political Enemy’: FBI Veteran

EVA FU

In appointing a special counsel to investigate former President Donald Trump, the Justice Department (DOJ) has turned its law enforcement apparatus into a “tool to attack a political enemy,” according to FBI veteran Marc Ruskin.

During a Nov. 18 announcement in Washington, Attorney General Merrick Garland, a Biden appointee, tasked former DOJ prosecutor Jack Smith with overseeing investigations related to Trump’s handling of classified records and parts of the probe into the events surrounding Jan. 6, 2021.

Trump has denied wrongdoing and characterized Garland’s move as a “horrendous abuse of power” and the “latest in the long series of witch hunts.”

The timing of the appointment is significant, Ruskin said, noting how it dovetailed with pledges by House Republicans to investigate President Joe Biden and his administration once the GOP takes control of the House in January.

“Using the legal system in baseless investigations and prosecutions has been a hallmark of the anti-Trump campaign since before 2016,” Ruskin, who served 27 years with the FBI and is a contributor for The Epoch Times, said in an interview.

‘Bait-and-Switch’

Ruskin believes that the special counsel investigation serves a particular purpose.

“It’s an old trick,” he said. “They’ll be hoping to divert attention from the congressional investigations and focus instead on a baseless special counsel investigation, because there’s no question that the legacy media is going to jump on board and give this front page attention, while the investigations being conducted by Congress will ei-

ther be ignored or relegated to the back of the newspaper.”

U.S. Code 28 CFR Section 600.1 prescribes that the DOJ should appoint a special counsel in an investigation in which there is a conflict of interest or other extraordinary circumstances, under which it would be in the public interest for an outside special counsel to step in.

During the Nov. 18 press conference, Garland described the appointment of Smith—as a registered independent—as a matter of public interest, citing Trump’s presidential candidacy and Biden’s interest in entering the race. Ruskin, however, didn’t feel convinced that there were sufficient grounds to warrant such a move.

“They really haven’t articulated facts which justified the appointment of any kind of counsel,” he said.

Some Trump critics have argued that the special counsel appointment suggests that the DOJ is intent on bringing the case to indictment. Ruskin dismissed this claim as “a fabrication in order to justify a difficult-to-justify investigation.”

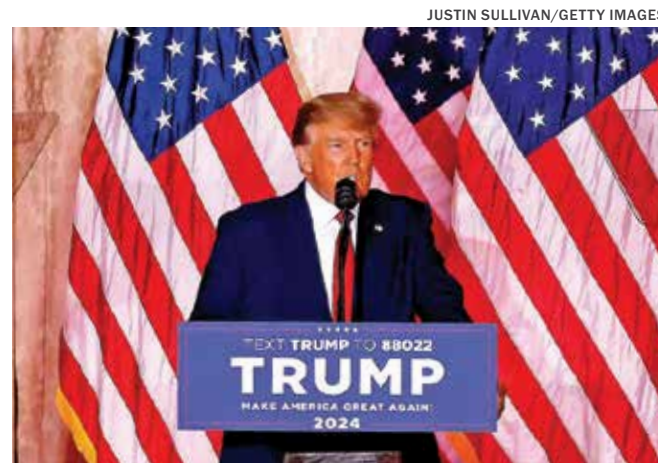
“The argument is the old ‘where there’s smoke there must be fire’ reasoning, which is fallacious reasoning,” he said. “It’s a fallacy which has been propagated in order to justify what is arguably a politically motivated investigation seeking to create an advantage for the Democratic Party in the upcoming elections.”

As Jan. 6, 2021, probes have dragged on for nearly two years, Ruskin said that he doesn’t expect anything tangible coming out of the continuing investigations.

“They’ve come up with basically nothing. It really defies credibility to even suggest that this is a bonafide, legitimate investigation.”



Attorney General Merrick Garland arrives to deliver remarks at the U.S. Justice Department in Washington on Nov. 18, 2022.



Former President Donald Trump speaks at the Mar-a-Lago Club in Palm Beach, Fla., on Nov. 15, 2022.

The FBI’s Mar-a-Lago raid was a ‘fishing expedition to obtain anything related to January 6,’ Ruskin said.

Ruskin said that the news from Nov. 18 confirmed his belief that the FBI’s Mar-a-Lago raid was a “fishing expedition to obtain anything related to January 6.”

Such a tactic, which Ruskin called a “bait-and-switch,” is no different from using “tainted evidence” in his view.

“It’s like the fruit of the poisonous tree,” he said. “You shouldn’t be able to use facts obtained via subterfuge in order to accomplish [something] unrelated to the goals.”

Hunter Biden Probe

Having won back the House with a slim majority, Republicans have wasted no time raising a number of probes they plan to unleash in the new year, with a top focus being Biden’s alleged involvement in his son Hunter’s foreign business deals.

“This is an investigation of Joe Biden, the president of the United States, and why he lied to the American people about his knowledge and participation in his family’s international business schemes,” Rep. James Comer (R-Ky.), the incoming chairman of the House Over-

sight Committee, told reporters on Nov. 17. The announcement prompted a retort from the White House, which called it politically motivated rehashing of “long-debunked conspiracy theories.”

Republicans on the committee on the same day released a report claiming to have uncovered evidence of federal crimes tied to the Biden family, which include conspiracy to defraud the United States, wire fraud, violation of the Foreign Agents Registration Act, violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, tax evasion, money laundering, and violations of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

Republicans looking into the possible abuses by the DOJ and FBI could face strong resistance from the agencies, according to Ruskin. This is especially so if the House GOP wants to look into ongoing matters such as the FBI Trump raid, in which case, the bureau could cite the ongoing investigation to refuse to disclose information.

But Ruskin sees the FBI’s handling of Hunter Biden’s laptop as a potential starting point.

While the planned congressional investigations may not result in criminal prosecutions, Ruskin still thinks they’re a necessary step.

“Sunlight is the best disinfectant,” he said, quoting Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis. “Bringing into the sunlight hidden acts is the best way to deal with them—initially, at least.”

The DOJ didn’t return The Epoch Times’ request for comment. The FBI told The Epoch Times it has “no comment.”

Arizona Attorney General Candidate Sues Over Midterm Election Results

ZACHARY STIEBER

A Republican candidate for Arizona’s attorney general position on Nov. 22 sued his opponent and a slew of election officials, including officials in Maricopa County, alleging that widespread “errors and inaccuracies” caused voter disenfranchisement.

Officials in at least 15 counties have “caused the unlawful denial of the franchise to certain qualified electors, erroneously tallied certain ballots, and included for tabulation in the canvass certain illegal votes in connection with the election for the office of Arizona Attorney General,” Abe Hamadeh, the candidate, said in the complaint.

That includes Maricopa County officials improperly disqualifying ballots cast by people who, as a direct result of poll worker errors, were incorrectly listed as voting previously in the midterm election, Hamadeh added.

“Immediate judicial intervention is necessary to secure the accuracy of the results of the November 8, 2022 general

election, and to ensure that candidate who received the highest number of lawful votes is declared the next Arizona Attorney General,” the complaint states.

The filing was lodged in Maricopa County court.

The Arizona attorney general race is headed to a recount, according to Katie Hobbs, the state’s secretary of state, due to the slim margin separating Hamadeh from Democrat candidate Kris Mayes.

Mayes is leading by just 510 votes out of more than 2.5 million cast, according to an unofficial tally from Hobbs’s office.

Mayes and Hobbs, who were named as defendants in the new suit, did not respond to requests for comment. A Maricopa County spokesperson did not immediately return an inquiry.

Problems

Maricopa County officials have acknowledged problems with tabulation equipment, saying the problem affected 30 percent of all voting centers in the county and an estimated 17,000 ballots.

On election day the officials

said that voters could place their ballots in a secure box to be counted later. Other options included “checking out” of the poll site and casting a ballot at another location, or utilizing an early ballot if one was possessed.

Both of the latter options required poll workers to properly list the voter as checking out, or leaving the site without casting a ballot, but some workers “were unaware of the process,” the new complaint alleges.

“This pervasive and systematic error directly and proximately resulted in three recurring scenarios in which qualified electors were unlawfully and unconstitutionally disenfranchised,” it added.

Hamadeh and the Republican National Committee, which joined in the legal action, say that at least 146 voters who should have been checked out and who later went to another location were required to vote using provisional ballots, which they say will not be counted because the voter was erroneously



A ballot drop box for early voting stands outside of the Maricopa County Tabulation and Election Center in Phoenix on Nov. 3, 2022.

listed as having already voted.

At least 273 other voters who should have been checked out utilized early ballots but those ballots will not count because of the same issue, the Republicans said.

Maricopa County Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Gates, a Republican, failed to outline the steps voters had to take if they left the sites at which there were problems in a widely-viewed Election Day video that featured officials acknowledging for the first time the issues with tabulators, the complaint noted. He did not mention checking out but merely said people could “go to a nearby voting center.”

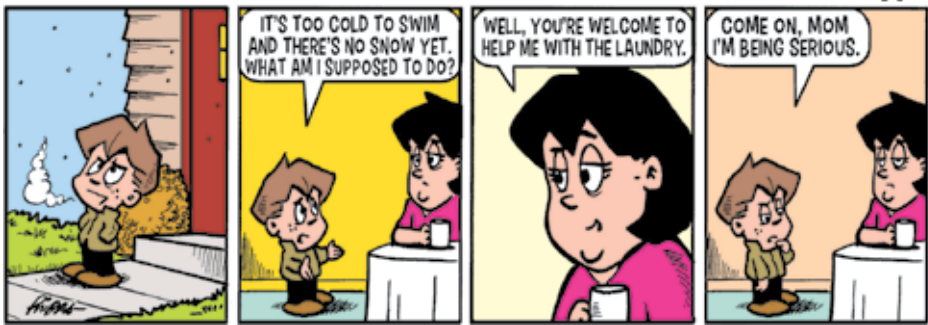
“Chairman Gates’s instruc-

tions foreseeably resulted in the disenfranchisement of a significant number of qualified electors who followed his instructions,” it says. “By inducing voters to leave polling locations and then denying-through a consistent and erroneous practice of failing to properly implement ‘check-out’ procedures-these qualified electors their right to duly cast a ballot for tabulation, the Maricopa County Defendants engaged (through their election boards) in cognizable ‘misconduct,’ and wrongfully excluded valid and legally sufficient votes from the canvass line the race for Arizona Attorney General.”

WEEKLY COMICS

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



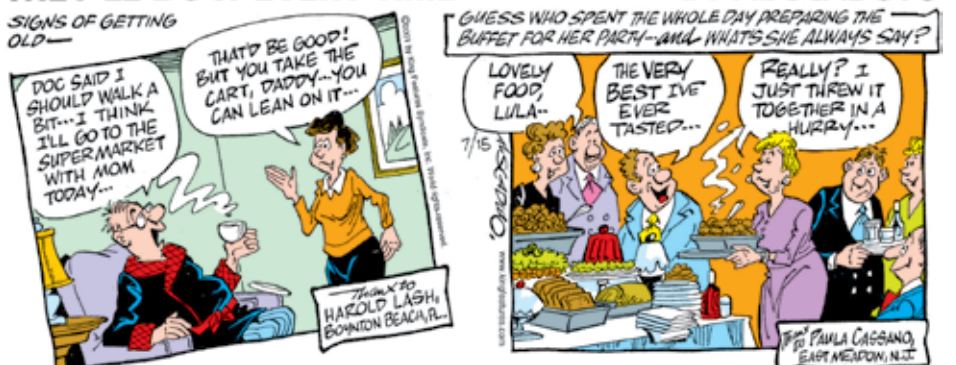
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



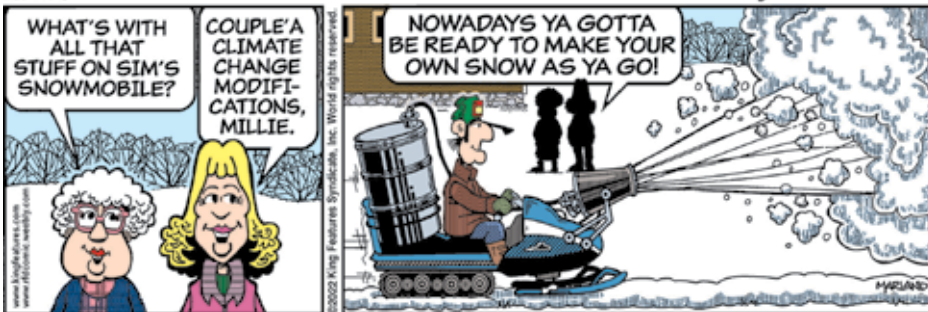
THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

BY AL SCADUTO

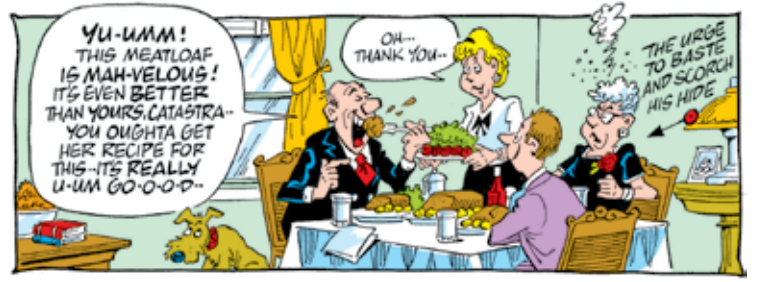


R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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A Christmas Spectacular



Enchant, the world's largest Christmas light spectacular, will take place at Sutter Health Park from November 25 through January 1. Photo courtesy of Enchant

Sutter Health Park News Release

WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento was chosen as one of the select cities to host Enchant, the world's largest holiday-themed light event, with opening day set for Black Friday (Nov. 25).

One of Sacramento's must-visit summer locations, Sutter Health Park, is taking over the winter with a holiday event sure to spark joy for all ages.

"We are so honored to be one of the nine venues across the U.S. hosting Enchant in 2022," said Brittney Nizuk, director of events and entertainment at Sutter Health Park. "This experience is going to be one that kids and grownups alike will never forget. Sutter Health Park will

be transformed into a true immersive winter wonderland right before your eyes. Magical is the only way to describe it – you must see it to believe it."

Enchant features a mesmerizing walk-thru light maze on the field with over four million lights, a 100-foot holiday tree, visits with Santa Claus, an ice-skating trail, live entertainment, and a village/marketplace with crafts, gifts, as well as holiday treats and cocktails.

In addition to partnering with Sutter Health Park, Enchant has partnered with the Hallmark Channel, the event's first national sponsor.

"Hallmark Channel's 'Countdown to Christmas' is synonymous with the holidays, bringing warmth, connection and happiness to millions of viewers," said Lara

Richardson, chief marketing officer, Hallmark Media. "Lights are such an integral part of Christmas magic, whether they be displayed on your house; strung throughout your favorite hometown spots; or featured in grand, eye-opening light displays like Enchant, this partnership creates a new way to spread Hallmark Christmas joy."

The supplemental perks with the Hallmark Channel partnership include a "Hallmark Cozy Christmas" lounge, photo opportunities, and a chance for fans to win a set visit to an in-production Hallmark movie.

Sutter Health Park is also expanding its ballpark family during this special season and will be looking for support in roles like guest services, security, parking, concessions, etc. ★

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