



Tuleyome Tales

PAGE 10

Construction Buzzing

PAGE 3



Dixon Independent Voice

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Serving Dixon and Solano County since 1993

JULY 15, 2022

SEE INSIDE

ROTARY SAYS 'THANK YOU'



PAGE 4

FINDING YOUR VOICE FOR CITY CONCERNS



PAGE 3

Expanding Retail & Friendships



Fabiola Sizemore looks fabulous in front of an antique dresser used to display western jewelry and accessories.

Story and photos by Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Having more retail shopping has been a priority of the Downtown Dixon Business Association for years since internet shopping and thanks to some creative women, new doors are opening.

Andria Aguilera, boutique owner who featured contemporary young women's apparel and more on the corner of A and First for less than a year, and who was ready to close, has moved around the corner into 108 North First Street, next to Pip

Wine Bar. At the encouragement and support from fellow retailer Rebecca Robinson, owner of Uptown Collective, she joined with Christina Cerna and Fabiola Sizemore, and they re-started the business together as the Unique Boutique. They feature clothing, jewelry, and home goods to name a few.

"As my landlord, Rebecca knew I was going to close my store," Aguilera said. "It was too hard with a small child and having to be open all the time." Aguilera also felt she was grappling for inventory; trying to fill a very large square footage so she

was compromising the quality of her collections, she explained.

But experienced business owner and past DDBA President Robinson had other ideas. Robinson lived years in Nevada City where the downtown thrives with small shops and where shopkeepers are innovative. She matched two other successful niche retailers with Aguilera to share the smaller storefront around the corner. It would give the women better exposure facing the main avenue but also less square footage to manage.

Robinson suggested the ladies
Continued on page 3

No Better Time to Get to Know Your Neighbors

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - If you don't already know your neighbors, National Night Out offers a good time to meet them and it's just around the corner.

Register now with the Dixon Police Department if you are planning a Block Party for the 39th event on Tuesday, August 2. In the past, several neighborhoods in Dixon have registered and got visits from public services including police, fire, and even our Mayor.

The program is played out in thousands of communities across the country and promotes neighbors getting to know neighbors with a goal of preventing crime, drug and violence through awareness. If you know something about your neighbors such as the cars they drive and something about the children, then it helps one know when something is out of the ordinary, officials say.

It also helps build good relations with local public servants. Even our Mayor and City Councilmen will be out visiting neighborhoods as they cancelled their normal City Council Meeting for it.

It is not too late to throw some plans into place. They can be as simple as blankets on the lawn and a punch bowl of lemonade or as complicated as a hot dog barbecue in the cul-de-sac.

The last day to register for a National Night Out block party is Friday, July 29. There is an online registration form to download, or you can pick one up at the front counter of the Dixon Police Department lobby. Once completed, please email the form and your map to specialevents@dixonpolice.org or bring them to the Dixon Police Department lobby.

The Community Services Section of the Dixon Police Department manages police-community programs like the K-9, motor unit, School Resource Officer, Community Services Officers, cadets, plans special events, and is the first line for business, civic, religious, or community groups. They also help organize Neighborhood Watches.

For more information, call the Dixon Police Department (707) 678-7070 or go to dixonpolice.org/nationalnightout. ★

Seniors Missing Out



Some seniors and disabled people will miss out on new California state payments. Californians who don't file taxes — because they don't earn enough to owe any — won't receive the new round of state payments. That includes some seniors and disabled people, as well as some of the lowest-income adults. Photo courtesyPixabay

By Grace Gedye, CALMatters.org

Some 23 million Californians' bank accounts will get a boost of \$200 to \$1,050, thanks to a new round of payments approved by state lawmakers.

But the payments, aimed at mitigating higher prices for gas and other goods,

will leave out lots of low-income Californians. Among those passed over are some seniors, many living on disability benefits, and some of the lowest-income adults.

That's because the direct deposits and debit cards — expected to begin arriving in late October and conclude in January 2023 — will be sent out

based on tax returns.

About 3 million Californians are in families that earn little enough that they aren't required to file taxes, according to research by Public Policy Institute of California for its 2019 California Poverty Measure. The poverty rate among people who live in families that don't need to file taxes is 60%, the

institute estimates. Neither the state Department of Finance nor the Franchise Tax Board, which is responsible for collecting state personal income tax in California, knew exactly how many Californians will be left out of the rebate.

The Legislature wanted to create a program to send payments to people who don't file taxes and aren't enrolled in safety net programs that received a boost in the budget. But after negotiations with the Newsom administration, that proposal didn't make it into the final budget.

H.D. Palmer, spokesperson for the Department of Finance, said that he couldn't offer specifics on why the proposal didn't make it into the final budget, but that proposals from both sides didn't make it into the compromise.

Representatives for Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins and Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon said nobody could figure out how to administer such payments.

"Ultimately, the configuration of the rebate was subject to three-party

Continued on page 7





Life's too SHORT

Catching Up on Tidbits



Norm Woodard III placed American flags downtown for Independence Day Weekend. Photo by Debra Dingman

By Debra Dingman

Norman Woodard III

We didn't know who this tall, strong guy was dressed in blue jeans, hat and wearing ear plugs, but he had a lot of flags in the back of his truck and was sticking them along our downtown flag poles. We were just coming back to our car from a delicious dinner at Bangkok Garden, so we offered to help put them out downtown. But he said thanks anyway, but he had this.

Then I got a close up of his face and knew I'd seen him before. "I know you." I said feeling a flashback to a young man who was then the husband of a good friend. Then he said he was Norm Woodard III. I couldn't believe the resemblance. I thought I was staring into the face of the Norm I knew and here was his offspring looking identical. And I'm sure he saw my mind racing...

He flashed a nice smile and took an earbud out when he saw I wasn't letting him go yet. I asked if he was doing this for the Downtown Dixon Business Association, but he said no.

"I do it every time there needs to be flags and I put them all up and then I take them down when they're done. I store them carefully next to my house and that way, I know right where they are...unlike my mother," he said secretly, and we laughed.

There are some people who still love their country," he said. And off he went down the rest of the street. Thank you, Norm Woodard III. Thank you, Jill Orr, for your patriotic son. (I learned later than Norm is a licensed plumber – Woodard Plumbing – and also does industrial plumbing. I used to know that but had totally forgotten.)

Correction & Apology

In the story about the new organization, Dixon Youth Basketball, and the founding of their Board of Directors, Brian Jensen's wife is Brenda and Brian was actually the Dixon High School Junior Varsity Assistant Coach. Also, Misty Dalton is the Vice President and her husband, Andrew is Athletic Director. Heather Smith is the Treasurer.

Phone Troubles

If you have called our Dixon office and got my voicemail, please send me an email or try calling again. Apparently there has been an update and my phone didn't get the memo. I so apologize! I'm working as fast as I can to fix it and hopefully by the time you read this, it will be a dim memory of my past.

Subscriptions Online

Making life easier: We have added to our website a host of services and I'm so proud. Now you can order a subscription online and have the newspaper delivered to your mailbox. Go to mpg8.com and along the horizontal list of options, one says "subscribe." Just follow the prompts and you can use your credit card online.

Getting Two?

If you are receiving two newspapers, it is because we are bulk mailing to a lot of the neighborhoods while we CAN'T FIND WORKERS (carriers)! So that means if you are a subscriber, you may be getting two. Please share the extra with a friend. ★

Dixon News Briefs

MPG Staff

Super 8

The Super 8 Hotel on Gateway Boulevard featuring 56 rooms and a swimming pool has now reopened just in time for Saturday's Grillin' & Chillin' downtown street fair and for summertime travelers. Managers Harry and Nila Patel have been busy coordinating the project with renovation and decor experts after a fire that damaged the building struck a few years ago. It features a large, built-in fish tank in the entry. It took a lot longer than they expected, according to Harry, but they are pleased.



Harry and Nila Patel announced their Super 8 Hotel is now open after renovations inside and new exterior painting. Photo by Debra Dingman

Senior Living

The construction going on behind the gas station on Gateway Boulevard is the new Farmstead at Dixon Senior Living complex, a long-needed residential assisted living and memory care facility housing 88 beds and up to 100 residents in a contemporary, 2-story facility looking more like a hotel will be opening late summer or early fall of 2023. It is being built by Chronograph Properties and Caslon Management Company based in Vacaville led by Jason Reyes.

"This is not a nursing home," said Sam Thomas, Senior Specialist Architect. "The average age of our residents is 82 and our residents are still somewhat mobile." There will be a centralized dining facility, social activities, and 24-hour staff on site.

Grillin' & Chillin'

Saturday, July 16, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. will be the popular downtown street fair. North and South First Street WILL BE CLOSED in the downtown area so plan on parking at the Chamber of Commerce/REMAX and the field there and walk through the pedestrian tunnel under the railroad tracks. (Entry is at the right of the Chamber building.)

Vet's Dinner

This Friday's Veterans Dinner will feature delicious steak at 1305 North First Street. This dinner is \$17 and the atmosphere is informal and fun with live music, too. Time is 6 to 8 p.m. They help support the veterans and keep the hall open. There is also an open, no host bar.

City Council

Next Tuesday, July 19, at 7 p.m. is the next Council Meeting in the Council Chambers, 600 East A Street, right next to the brand-new trailer/office that is now fully operational for City staff. Interested citizens may also participate via Zoom listed at the beginning of the agenda or can watch via Granicus live streaming by logging onto the City website and clicking on Government then clicking on City Planning then on 'agendas.'

Teens & Pizza

Youth ages 12 to 18 are invited to paint at the library – not the building, but art inside of it. Paint supplies and a slice of pizza will be provided while supplies last. You can get more info on the website: solanolibrary.com or call 1-866-57-ASKUS. The Dixon Public Library is located at 230 North First Street.

Foods Future

Shane MacKenzie, Executive Vice President of Superior Farms here in Dixon and Viraj Puri, Co-Founder and CEO of Gotham Greens that is a 10-acre greenhouse facility along I-80 just past Pedrick Road, will be discussing the Future of Food in Solano at the Solano Economic Development Corporation's Webinar on July 26, noon to 1:30 p.m. Go to solanoedc.org for more info. ★

Writing a Memoir Lesson Offered at Museum Coffee

By Denise McBride

DIXON, CA (MPG) - "Everyone has a story to tell" is the encouragement fledgling writers often receive from seasoned writers including local author, Debra Dingman. She serves as Editor of the Dixon Independent Voice Newspaper and will speak at the next Dixon History Museum's Coffee Hour on Wednesday, July 20, 3 to 4:30 p.m.

An award-winning journalist and speaker, Debra has worked as a weekly columnist, reporter and feature writer for newspapers since her college days, and authored her first

book, Learning A+ Living: Adventures & Rewards of a Mom Entrepreneur just a few years ago. Her book was published by WestBow press and is available at Barnes & Noble and on Amazon.

Debra will be offering instruction on how to write a memoir. Starting with the questions "Why are you telling the story? Why are you the best person to tell it? Why does the story matter? What do you want the reader to take away?" She will discuss the mechanics of a memoir including self-reflection, outlining ideas, and identifying 'nuggets.'

There will be time for participants to brainstorm

ideas and have fun creating chapter titles from their lives that might be perfect for starting on their own memoir. Debra will also share the inner workings of the book publishing business from her first-hand experiences.

Participants are encouraged to bring three photos of meaningful times in their lives. Coffee, bottled water and light refreshments will be provided and there is no charge for the workshop.

For more information contact: info@dixon-historicalsociety.org or call (707) 693-3044. The museum is located at 125 West A Street in downtown Dixon. ★



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Finding Your Voice for City Concerns



Local citizens from the Dixon Senior Club came as a group to the City Council Meeting to voice concerns over a broken kitchen stove that has made the Senior/Multi-Use Center kitchen "inoperable" for almost two years.

Story and photo by Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - At each City Council Meeting, the public has an opportunity to bring issues forward that are not already on the agenda for council to hear and possibly put on the agenda for a later meeting.

Ideally, a citizen would approach their District Representative first but that is not the only route as demonstrated by locals at the last City Council meeting.

For example, an elderly couple brought their frustrations of a neighbor playing very loud music for hours through the night and asked for a noise ordinance to be considered. By the council meeting after that, there was a proposal and it passed.

Public comments on non-agenda items included a new resident to Dixon, Kelly Pidgeon James, who reported that in the past six months, her brand-new home and neighborhood near Harbor and East Parkway had significantly filled with weeds and trash. She brought with her construction receipts and tags from building supplies from nearby Richmond American construction workers.

"I have picked up pounds of screws and nails. It's been really bad," she said and told of neighbors pitching in to regularly clean up and that weeds were 5- and 6-foot tall but that "it's become completely unmaintainable." She asked for help in getting it returned to its "former glory."

Another issue – this one about the Senior Center and it's broken stove – was brought up by former Councilwoman Yvonne McCluskey. She spoke on behalf of the Senior Club that has 103 members and explained that the kitchen at the senior center is in need of

repair and is "inoperable" and that they'd like to use it. This situation is also one of the reasons the hall is not renting out for receptions, parties, or other gatherings because people want a facility with an usable kitchen.

"It has been brought up before, but we were told 'it is expensive' and 'we can't find the money,'" she said. "Now you need to put it on the front burner." She then invited them to come for a tour at their next meeting on Tuesday, July 12 at 11 a.m.

A burnt piece of shrub was brought for the Mayor and the Council to see what was left from a front-yard shrub thanks to a wayward firework from neighbors taking part in a celebration in the street near her house on the recent holiday. When a different neighbor saw the burning bush, he grabbed a fire extinguisher and put it out. She was not at home because she is a member of Rotary and was helping at the Hall Park Fireworks Show but learned of what happened afterwards through a video.

"I'm thankful that it wasn't worse but I'm angry," she said, blaming the council for legalizing fireworks. "We're going to have to protect the property and citizens of this community. It is way past time to outlaw all fireworks." Because issues brought up are not on the agenda, these concerns will have to wait for a future meeting if the Council feels that they can't be resolved by simpler methods – like talking to a different department head that might have detailed knowledge or quick resolution. To review the council's immediate responses to these concerns, log onto the cityofdixon.us and review the video of the meeting for July 5, 2022. ★

Solano Child Care Planning Council Seeks New Members

Solano County Office of Education News Release

SOLANO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Solano County Child Care Planning Council is seeking new members who are interested in understanding the needs of the Solano County child care community and have a desire to help plan and implement beneficial strategies.

Solano County Planning Council's mission is to provide leadership and advocacy for the development of high quality, accessible, and affordable child care programs for every child and family in Solano County.

The Solano County Child Care Planning Council supports the overall coordination of child care services in Solano County. Their most important goal is collaborating with community partners to develop plans that will support child care providers based on the needs of the families they serve. The council is made up of a diverse group of members representing public agencies, community representatives, child care providers and consumers accessing child care services in Solano County.

"High-quality learning environments are critical and foundational for young children. Solano's Child Care Planning Council serves an important role in providing leadership and advocacy for every child and family in Solano County," commented Solano Superintendent of Schools Lisette Estrella-Henderson.

Every five years Solano's Child Care Planning Council is responsible for assessing the countywide child care needs and creating and implementing comprehensive plans designed to identify public and private resources to address those needs. The assessment focuses on identifying local funding priorities for general child care, developmental and state preschool programs, as well as, fostering local partnerships with a variety of public and private organizations. By cultivating these



Solano Superintendent of Schools Lisette Estrella-Henderson. Photo provided by the Solano County Office of Education

partnerships, the council strives to optimize resources and staff needed to reduce and eliminate countywide child care shortages.

To view and complete a council membership application please visit www.solanocoe.net/childcarelpc.

For more information about the Solano County Child Care Planning Council or becoming a member, please contact Bronwyn Kennedy at 707-339-4452 or bkennedy@solano.net. Visit www.solanocoe.net/childcarelpc to view the general membership meeting schedule or to submit a public comment.

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 63,000 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. ★

Expanding Retail & Friendships



Filly and simple dresses perfect for summer wear are available in various sizes.



Turquoise-crafted jewelry - some of it vintage - is on display.

Continued from page 1

could partner and split everything so now the store features more variety and offers more of a boutique feel. Between the two women, they opened last week. Aguilera brings contemporary young women's fashions; Sizemore brings the Vintage fashions and Home Decor by Tres Bandidas; and the unique antiques are by Vintage Affair owned by Christina Cerna and her sister, Rachel.

"We have a little bit of everything," said Sizemore while standing next to elegant displays created with meticulous attention. They take turns attending the shop and have built camaraderie.

"It's so nice. I think it's really going to work," said Aguilera. "They are really talkative and really fun. We're each about ten years apart so we can speak to a whole range of customers. They are also so knowledgeable about their products. Some of the items are very old. Now, I don't have to worry about filling a whole entire store and I don't have to be there every single day. I get to do the fun stuff like marketing, social media, plus I'm able to create my collections and be more in love with them."

They are open Thursday thru Saturday at 108 North First Street next to the Pip Wine Bar. Each of the businesswomen work one day a week.

"Rebecca has been super, super supportive," said Aguilera. "I really appreciate her for giving me the chance when nobody else would," said Aguilera. ★

Construction Buzzing



Numerous workers and lots of equipment working on the foundations of the senior living facility being built on Gateway Boulevard

Story and photo by Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - The 'Farmstead at Dixon' currently looks similar to bees on honey with numerous workers and lots of equipment working on the foundations of the senior living facility being built on Gateway Boulevard. The construction is behind the gas station on Gateway Boulevard. It is a new senior living complex, a long-needed residential assisted living and memory care facility housing 88 beds and up to 100 residents.

The building is a contemporary, 2-story building looking more like a hotel that will be opening late summer or early fall of 2023. It is being built by Chronograph Properties and Caslon Management Company based in Vacaville led by Jason Reyes.

"This is not a nursing home," said Sam Thomas, Senior Specialist Architect. "The average age of our residents is 82 and our residents are still somewhat mobile." There will be a centralized dining facility, social activities, and 24-hour staff on site. ★



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California's Chronic Technology Woes Will Be Probed



By Dan Walters
CALMatters.org

Last month's primary election was the latest test for a state computer system that is supposed to provide timely and complete data on campaign contributions, lobbying expenditures and other financial aspects of the political process.

Cal-Access, as it's known, struggled to do what it was supposed to do, which surprises exactly no one who tries to use the system.

It's not a new problem. The shortcomings of the 23-year-old political reporting system have been known for years. The former secretary of state, Alex Padilla, once described Cal-Access as "a Frankenstein's monster of code" that is in need of "a complete rebuild" and sponsored 2016 legislation to create a replacement.

Then-Gov. Jerry Brown, himself a former secretary of state, agreed that the system needed an overhaul and signed the legislation. A successor system was supposed to be ready within a few years, but it wasn't.

Last year, Padilla was appointed to the U.S. Senate. Shirley Weber, a Democratic assemblywoman from San Diego, was named as his successor and she more or less scrapped what Padilla had done on the Cal-Access

Replacement System or CARS, as it's called.

"To ensure that the CARS project can fully meet its statutory obligations, the scheduled June 30, 2021, rollout of the project will be postponed," Weber said. "Moving forward, the secretary of state's office will assess the project's state of readiness so that on the date it goes live it will meet the expectations of the public, stakeholders and the regulated community."

It's another example of a syndrome that has plagued state government for years. While California's Silicon Valley and other technology hubs may be global leaders in the development of information technology, its state government has been chronically incapable of implementing IT systems that work as promised.

One of the most spectacular IT failures was a meltdown in the Employment Development Department's handling of claims for unemployment insurance benefits from hundreds of thousands of California workers who lost their jobs due to pandemic-related shutdowns, compounded by approving billions of dollars in payments to fraudsters.

The long list of IT systems that that have failed, incurred huge cost overruns and/or were delayed for years is, or at least should be, especially embarrassing to Gov. Gavin Newsom. In 2013, he published a book, "Citizenville: How to Take the Town Square Digital and Reinvent Government," predicting that technology would transform American democracy and end political gridlock.

California's sorry record

of IT failure raises the obvious question of "why?" Is it bureaucratic sclerosis? Is it an inability to define missions precisely enough for software engineers to design solutions? Do vendors overpromise results to pad their bills?

The state auditor's office has identified managerial shortcomings in many specific projects, such as one dubbed FISCal, supposedly a comprehensive integration of financial data. However, there's never been an analysis of what obviously is a systemic procurement failure — until now.

Last week, the Legislature's audit committee directed the auditor's office to examine the entire IT procurement system, beginning with the Department of Technology, which was created several years back to solve the chronic problem.

The audit was requested by Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris, an Irvine Democrat who chairs the Assembly Accountability and Administrative Review Committee.

"The pandemic showed us the disastrous results of state IT systems that are overloaded, antiquated, and not ready for the task ahead," Petrie-Norris said. "This audit request is a critically needed look at the technology systems Californians should be able to easily rely on every day to interact with their government and obtain vital services."

A long-overdue look.

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



Watermelon Production Meets Demand as Prices Increase

San Joaquin Valley watermelons are fetching higher prices this year. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a carton of 45 valley seedless watermelons was selling for \$158 to \$161 at the end of June. That was up from \$119 to \$126 in June of 2021. Seedless miniature watermelons were going for \$12.95 to \$13.95 for cartons of six to nine melons, up from \$8.95 to \$10.95 for six to eight melons. Watermelon production in the valley remains steady this year.

Farmers Markets Rebounding after Setbacks During Pandemic

California's farmers markets are rebounding after the pandemic shuttered numerous markets or drove away reliable urban customers as downtown offices closed. "We are doing very well now," reports Amy Arnold, who manages four farmers markets in Los Angeles County. Three of those markets closed during the early days of the COVID-19 crisis. Now they are greeting throngs of customers seeking summer fruit. Other markets report high demand for melons, peaches, oranges and cherries.

Higher Milk Prices aren't Helping Dairy Producers as Production Drops

Higher milk prices aren't bringing good news for California dairy farmers. Amid price spikes, demand for dairy products is slipping and production is dropping. At the same time, feed costs are rising and supplies are tightening amid the drought. As a result, dairies are milking fewer cows. Meanwhile, a stronger cattle market is incentivizing some dairies to raise more bulls for beef than dairy replacement heifers. Across the country, that is lowering U.S. cow numbers.

Schools Get New Funding for Purchasing U.S. - Grown Foods

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is providing new funding to enable schools to purchase American-grown foods for school meal programs and to extend this year's summer meal programs through September. The funding is being made available after President Joe Biden signed the Keep Kids Fed Act, which provides support for school and child nutrition programs through the 2022-23 fiscal year. The \$943 million for school food purchases will be provided through the USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation. ★

Heeney's History

Upgrading Our Camping Travels

Commentary by Ed Heeney

Camping was never foremost in our recreation plans until I retired from the Air Force. I don't remember what caused us to think camping, but we did, and we purchased a small trailer, 'Lil Aristocrat.

It wasn't very big but had enough bunks and beds to sleep the 5 of us. No generator, no toilet, no TV, but it did have a stove and oven.

Rich Fitzpatrick and I retired in the same ceremony and then both families headed for Yosemite. The Fitz's were outdoor camping types, Boy Scouts, etc., so they set up tents next to our trailer. Marylee Fitz just couldn't get over the "luxurious kitchen" Mary had in her trailer. She was converted on the spot when Mary served hot biscuits out of the oven.

A couple years later, we bought a Chevy Van Conversion with easy chairs and roll out bed. The bed belonged to Mom and Dad while the kids each had a tent. We took a few trips with this configuration, but never really warmed up to this type of camping. So, one day, we drove down to Fairfield to look at a tent trailer that we had seen advertised. We decided the 'fold up' shower was not exactly what we were looking for.

On the way back home, we stopped in Vacaville to look at another camping

trailer. We liked the looks of a 24-ft with all the goodies plus there were two bunk beds in back (should be good for grand-kids.) We even towed this one to Colorado where we set up in Poudre Canyon. This rig was pretty handy for New Year's card playing with the Methodist's 4 M group, too.

Everything was going just great until one day I dropped into a RV sales lot in Redwood City and looked at Winnebago's ... too late now. A 32-ft Class A with all the bells and whistles plus drapes was ours. And you sat up front in a big picture window to watch the world go by. Pretty neat.

We did a lot of traveling with old Air Force friends from Visalia. They also traveled in a Winnebago and our two rigs were similar. Our most enjoyable trip was to Alabama for a reunion with six old Air Force buddies who had attended Colorado State Veterinary Technical School in the early 50s. We were meeting at one of the guy's plantations and all were present. What a neat time after 40 years.

After 20 years and two motorhomes, we accumulated about one quarter of a million miles. What a great time and wonderful memories!

Ed Heeney is a long-time Dixonite who has been very active in the community over his lifetime. He enjoys sharing his missives with Dixon Independent Voice readers. ★

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I'd like to thank the community members that made Dixon's 4th of July fireworks such a huge success and spectacular show. It is only through the generosity of YOU that we can provide such a wonderful show. All proceeds received are tax-deductible and go directly to the Dixon Rotary Foundation 4th of July Fund and are only used to purchase the fireworks at Hall Park.

This year's show was approximately \$25,000 and the cost continues to increase!! If you would still like to make a donation, please send a check to the Dixon Rotary Foundation at: PO Box 181, Dixon, 95620. There is no donation too small and we accept donations year-round!

We appreciate your continued support to brighten the sky in Dixon on 4th of July! Thank you to those listed below for your donations. We could not have put this show on without you!! Our apologies if we missed anyone.

Aggie Animal Clinic, Albertazzi Construction, Inc., Joe, Mary & Randi Anderson (Double A Ranch), Gary Archer, Kenneth and Stephanie Baltz, Barrett-Leber Realty, Jack & Mary Lou Batchelor, Janice & Steve Beaman, Meda Benefield, Carlene Blaylock,

Joe & Christa Bruch/Grocery Outlet, Buds Pub & Grill, Mary Kay Callaway, Kay Cayler, Chavez Transport, Peter & Kathy Colvin, Randy & Maura Davis, Davisville Business Enterprise, Jill & Greg Orr/Dawson's Bar & Grill, Dependable Heating & Air Conditioning, Diversified Power Corp., Carole Fukumoto, James & Liz Fuller, Rick & Janet Fuller, Jay & Suzanne Galloway, Dolores Garton, Bob & Becky Giannoni, Larry Ginter, Gnos Brothers, Herm & Lucy Gnos, Claire Goodearl, Grace Fellowship of Dixon, Lucelly Gutierrez, House of Floors, Eric & Susan Johnson, Kevin Johnson, Sharon Kraak, KUIU, Marge & Jim Litsinger, Barbara Long, Shane & Suzy MacKenzie, Shauna Manina, Brock & Jan McMahon, Angela Meisenheimer, Napa Solano Riders, Dee Osborn, Burch Parshall, Paul and Lois Pierce, Phillips Janitorial and Maintenance, Cookie Powell, Phyllis Quiring, Rohwer Insurance Agency, Roxie Sanders, Alan & Pam Schmeiser, Tad & Mollie Smith, Solano Life House, James Stevens, Ernie and Vicki Van Sant, VFW Post 8151, and Nancy Wells and Rodney & Pattie Woody.

Signed, Janice Beaman
Dixon Rotary

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Riley Reviews

NBC FALL SCHEDULE REMAINS STEADY WITH A FEW NEW SERIES

A Film and TV Review by Tim Riley

Only a few weeks ago, CBS was claiming a ratings victory for the 2021-2022 television season, with a top network executive boasting that CBS was repeating its position as “America’s most-watched network.”

What does this have to do with the NBC network? Well, the Peacock network touts winning the September-to-May Season as the number one in the key 18 to 49-year-old demographic.

In the end, do the bragging rights have any real impact on the viewing audience’s consideration of where to tune in? It’s inside baseball that matters only to advertisers, so let’s chalk it up to pointless statistics.

Claiming to be the most-watched television show of the decade, “The Voice” returns this fall to anchor Monday nights for its 22nd cycle, welcoming multi-platinum global recording artist Camila Cabello.

Gwen Stefani, global superstar and music legend, returns to “The Voice,” alongside John Legend and Blake Shelton. The versatile Carson Daly, with a career as radio personality and talk show host, resumes his hosting duties.

Television producer Dick Wolf may be best known as the creator of the wildly popular “Law & Order” franchise, but success has also come to his Wednesday night lineup known as “One Chicago.”

The Windy City is at the center of a highly-rated night of drama series focusing on the professional and private lives of police officers, firefighters and emergency medical personnel with “Chicago Med,” followed by “Chicago Fire” and concluding with “Chicago P.D.”

NBC could also be the Dick Wolf network, at least for two full nights. The producer’s iconic brand owns Thursday nights with the flagship “Law & Order” kicking off Season 22, followed by the 24th season of “Law & Order: SVU.” The night concludes with “Law & Order: Organized Crime.”

What’s old becomes new in network television. “Night Court,” which ran on NBC from 1984 to 1992, starred Harry Anderson as eccentric Judge Harry Stone, who presided over a courtroom that devolved into plenty of wackiness.

John Larroquette’s prosecutor Dan Fielding, a constant presence before the judge’s night court, was an amoral narcissist and a lecher constantly hitting on attractive women with his sexual banter.

The new “Night Court” in the fall lineup has Melissa Rauch joining the cast as Judge Abby Stone, the daughter of the late Harry Stone, who follows in her father’s footsteps as she presides over the night shift of a Manhattan arraignment court.

Judge Abby has the unenviable task of trying to bring order to the courtroom’s

crew of oddballs and cynics, most notably former night court prosecutor Dan Fielding. Indeed, John Larroquette returns thirty years later to the role. Will he be an aging lothario?

A family affair arrives for comedian George Lopez and his daughter Mayan Lopez in the fall comedy “Lopez vs. Lopez,” which is described by the network as a working-class family comedy about dysfunction, reconnection and all the pain and joy in between.

Apparently, George Lopez will have to contend with his ex-wife Rosie (Selenis Leyva), Mayan’s mother, as well as with Mayan’s live-in boyfriend Quinten (Matt Shively), seemingly thought to be the bane of his existence.

Another reboot to hit the fall schedule is “Quantum Leap,” which ran from 1989 to 1993 and starred Scott Bakula as Dr. Sam Beckett, a scientist who experimented in time travel and found himself trapped in the past.

Dr. Beckett’s journeys would have him “leap” into the bodies of different people on a regular basis to sort out their problems while trying like E.T. to get back home. On one occasion, he leaped into himself as a teenager to help his high school basketball team win a championship.

With Raymond Lee in the lead, a fresh team has been assembled in the new “Quantum Leap” to restart the time travel project in the hopes of understanding the mysteries behind the machine and the man who created it.

“Million Dollar Island,” a new unscripted series, is a high-stakes social experiment in which 100 contestants must forge friendships and build alliances as they plot to stay on a remote desert island for up to 50 days and compete to win their share of the ultimate \$1 million prize.

Upon arrival each contestant is given a bracelet worth \$10,000. During their time on the island, contestants gain and lose bracelets through various challenges, but when a player leaves the island, they must choose who will receive their portion of the money.

In this intense competition, the strength of personal bonds is just as important as being the ultimate player. “Survivor” won’t be the only game in town for an adventure reality show.

For the holiday season, “Dolly Parton’s Mountain Magic Christmas” is a movie musical about the frenetic backstage story of Dolly’s desire to uplift an exhausted world’s spirits by sharing the unique “mountain magic” found in and around Dollywood at Christmas.

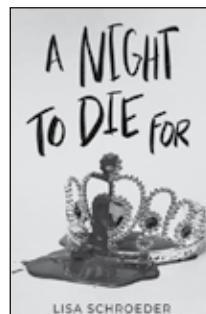
Dolly shows the world that the real magic lies in the realization that Christmas is about the people we share it with, and how her faith remains the common thread between Christmases past, present and future. ★



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

Chilling Young Adult Thrillers for Hot Summer Days

These two reads will have you covered, whether you are searching for a fast-paced read to entertain you poolside or just need a chilling read to cool you off.



A Night to Die For by Lisa Schroeder, Underlined Publishing

Mario can’t wait for life after high school. As a gamer and guy who keeps to himself, Mario knows prom night is the height of high school and his last chance to have one typical teenage night. So, when his mom asks him to take her boss’s daughter to prom, he decides to take the leap. Mario never expected that he would be crowned prom king, dancing next to the most popular girl in school until he realized he was the center of a cruel joke. Thinking that his night couldn’t get any worse, Mario is shocked to discover a body on the side of the road as he is driving home. The body of the popular prom queen.

Now charged with her murder, Mario’s one night of teenage normalcy has ruined his life, and even worse, the killer is still at large.

With a nod to the Fear Street books of the 90s, Underlined Publishing once again delivers a bite-size horror perfect for a quick trip or weekend read. With a role reversal to Carrie and a fast-paced who-dune -it, readers will be kept on the edge until the very end. This story is also told in numerous voices and multiple views into the case, opening the door to an even faster-paced reading experience.

The Counselors by Jessica Goodman, Razorbill Publishing

Goldie, Ava, and Imogen live for their summers at Camp Alpine Lake. While they might be separated throughout the year, they believe they come together as “Sisters by Choice” each and every summer. This year they are overjoyed when they find out that they will all be camp counselors in the same area together, which means

they will be together every day. This year Goldie needs her friends more than ever. Goldie is harboring a dark secret she isn’t even sure she will ever be able to tell. But when a boy turns up dead at the camp, everything turns on its head. And Goldie quickly realizes that secrets can’t always stay hidden.

A fast-paced story of secrets, lies, and betrayal wrapped up in one summer camp. Jessica Goodman once again knows how to deliver the perfect age appropriate young adult thriller.

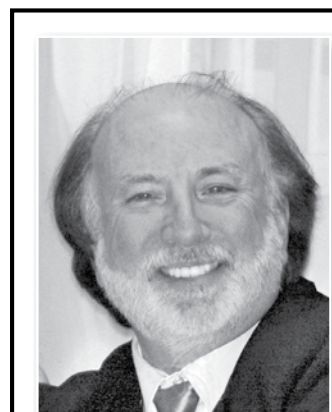
The Counselors is a perfect read for any fan of fast-paced thrillers without a horror or scary element. Just enough of a trail for readers to follow without the answer being revealed, the shocking conclusion will expose even more of a cover-up than just one girl’s secret. ★



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- Impertinent
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Zombie Build Back Better Would be an Apocalypse for Taxpayers



Commentary by Sally C. Pipes

The Democrats' Build Back Better bill has risen from the dead. Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W. Va., who killed the massive spending package last year, is back in conversation with his party's leaders about advancing a slimmed-down version of the measure.

Taxpayers would be better off if Build Back Better died again. The legislation, if passed, would make permanent the wasteful Obamacare subsidies that went into effect in March 2021 under the American Rescue Plan, and that are scheduled to expire at the

end of the year.

The legislation made Obamacare tax credits more generous for those making less than 400% of the federal poverty level, or about \$111,000 for a family of four. In addition, it extended subsidies to people making more than four times poverty by capping what they'd have to pay in premiums at 8.5% of income.

The cost of these subsidies has far exceeded early estimates. Though the expansion is only scheduled to last until the end of 2022, the Congressional Budget Office originally predicted it would cost \$34.2 billion over the agency's 10-year budget window.

But a recent CBO report reveals the expansion will cost \$30 billion this year alone – 50% higher than original projections, per former Trump administration economic advisor Brian Blase.

Many of those taxpayer dollars will be funneled to disproportionately

wealthy Americans. As Blase has pointed out, couples making \$500,000 in some parts of the country are newly eligible for more than \$7,000 in exchange subsidies. It's no wonder more than 1 million Americans making over four times the poverty level have enrolled in Obamacare this year.

Forcing taxpayers to continue picking up their health insurance tab will come at an enormous cost. The CBO pegs the cost of a permanent subsidy expansion at \$220 billion.

That's senseless. Cementing these ill-targeted subsidies in place would create an apocalypse for taxpayers.

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

Seniors Missing Out

Continued from page 1

negotiations as part of the final budget, and there were concerns that there wasn't an efficient and secure way of accomplishing a grant program to non-tax filers," said a statement from the office of Atkins, a San Diego Democrat.

The Legislature "really wanted to get help to these people, but ... we were not able to do it logistically," said a spokesperson for Rendon, a South Gate Democrat.

The payments will go out to Californians who filed 2020 tax returns by October 2021, according to the Franchise Tax Board, which has a tool for calculating how much you are eligible to receive based on how much you earn and other factors.

But in California, people earning less than \$19,310 who don't have a child or someone else depending on them – one of many different gross income thresholds – aren't required to file income taxes. The state also doesn't count Social Security retirement or disability benefits as taxable income, meaning people who receive those benefits aren't required to pay taxes, so long as they have minimal other income.

Lawmakers tried to aid some low-earners who may not file taxes by increasing payments for people receiving CalWorks benefits, a program for needy families. They also increased benefits for people who receive Supplemental Security Income – a state-supplemented version of social security benefits for senior or disabled people who would otherwise not qualify for, or have extremely small social security payments.

The boosts for people in those two programs are good, said Trinh Phan, a senior staff attorney focused on economic security at Justice in Aging, which advocates for low-income older adults. But, she said, the budget package still leaves out some people who are very low-income.

For example, someone getting by just on Social Security Disability Insurance could miss out on this rebate and the boosts to CalWorks and Supplemental Security Income: They might earn little enough that they don't have to file taxes, but if they don't have kids they likely won't qualify for CalWorks. And, if their disability benefits pay more than \$1060.21 per month, they wouldn't qualify for Supplemental Security Income either, said Phan.

About a quarter of Americans over 65 live in households where 90% of the family income is Social Security, according to the Social Security Administration. The average retired worker benefit in California is about \$1,500 per month, or \$18,000 per year. The average SSDI benefit is about \$1,300 per month, or \$15,600 per year.

Some low-income Californians won't receive the rebate, Department of Finance

spokesperson H.D. Palmer said. But he pointed out that many people who aren't required to file taxes still choose to do so, sometimes to receive other benefits distributed through the system. In 2020, an additional 500,000 low-income tax returns were filed in California, Palmer said in a statement, "presumably to qualify for a Golden State Stimulus payment or perhaps even a federal relief payment." Palmer also pointed to other forms of financial assistance in the budget, such as \$1.4 billion in aid for people with unpaid utility bills.

People who don't pay taxes and aren't in a benefits program run by California are hard for the state to reach quickly with aid. Social security benefits are administered by the federal government, and the state doesn't have data on recipients, said Jesse Rothenstein, a professor of public policy and economics at University of California, Berkeley, and faculty director of the California Policy Lab.

"It's obviously not great that we're missing people, and many of them are some of the most vulnerable people in the economy," said Rothenstein. But, he said, "It's not as if there's a mechanism available that reaches everybody." Given a set of imperfect options, using the tax system was the best choice, Rothenstein said.

It's also the choice lawmakers made when distributing two rounds of Golden State Stimulus payments in 2021. After that move, they faced criticism from disability advocates, and seniors who were left out.

"To see that they have done it again this year is just further proof that nobody's paying attention to people who need the most help," said Charis Hill, a disability advocate who lives in Sacramento.

California's government doesn't know much about the people who don't file taxes. The Franchise Tax Board doesn't track the number of residents who aren't required to file taxes, or what share of those people live in poverty, according to statements in response to CalMatters' questions. A spokesperson for the board said that no state agencies appear to track that information.

The difficulty of reaching people with this payment exposes a weakness in the state's system "that needs to be addressed on a longer-term basis," said Chris Hoene, executive director of the California Budget and Policy Center, which advocates for targeting aid to lower-income people. Part of the solution would be better data sharing between the federal government and the states, he said.

But, given the options policymakers were considering – including giving money to car owners, as Gov. Newsom proposed, and cutting the gas tax – he thinks the payments based on income are a good outcome. ★

Dare to Live Without Limits

by Bryan Golden

Don't Cry Over Spilled Milk

The age-old proverb, "Don't cry over spilled milk" contains more wisdom than most people recognize. Although everyone has heard this saying, few apply it effectively to their lives. This deceptively simple adage has the power to alleviate a lot of stress and suffering.

Let's look at this proverb's literal meaning and then consider the wide ranging practical applications. Suppose you knock a bottle of milk over in the sink and all the milk runs down the drain. What are your options? The milk is gone. No matter what you do, you will never get it back.

A do-over is not possible, you can't go back in time. If the milk made a mess, you clean it up. You can learn to be more careful next time and not leave the bottle where it can be tipped over. In short, you can't change the past but you can influence the present and future.

As apparent as the above choices appear, they do not seem as obvious for life's mishaps. Why do people agonize over what can't be undone? No one likes to make mistakes. Although we all would like to have everything be perfect, it just doesn't happen that way.

Everyone makes mistakes. Looking back, it's easy to identify things we would do differently if we

could only do them over. We get caught up crying over the past as if our remorse has the power to change what has already transpired.

As futile as this may be, the allure of doing so is irresistible to many. Every minute spent moaning over what you could have, should have, or would have done is lost from the present and gone forever.

But you have a choice when milk spills. You don't have to cry over it. You can learn from your experience and move forward. In your life milk will spill. You can act to minimize the spills but they will occur. Some of the most successful people have had the biggest spills.

It's virtually impossible to live a spill free life. Spills will occur, so you may as well make the best out of each situation. Each spill is simply another lesson and opportunity to learn.

What should you do when milk spills? First prevent any more milk from spilling. Then clean up the mess. Next, identify what caused the spill so you can avoid repeating the same deleterious actions. Few things are more frustrating and disheartening than repeating the same mistakes.

Change is the key to avoiding the same mistakes. You must change the way you act and the way

you think. Different results require different behavior. If you consistently blame others for your spills you will never be able to deal with the root cause – you.

A person's spill response contributes to their quality of life. One can not attain peace of mind if they are consumed by guilt and remorse. Granted, some spills are bigger and messier than others, but life and time march forward. There are no do-overs, or time outs and you can't sit on the sidelines.

Although some spills will occur, you do have the ability to reduce their frequency and severity. There are those spills that can't be anticipated or prevented. But there are many more that can. You should try to anticipate future spills so you can take action to avoid or minimize them.

Do what you can to avert spills but don't cry when they occur. Clean up the mess, pick yourself up, and keep moving forward. Learn from your experiences and you will be all the wiser.

NOW AVAILABLE: "Dare to Live Without Limits," the book. Visit www.BryanGolden.com or your bookstore. Bryan is a management consultant, motivational speaker, author, and adjunct professor. E-mail Bryan at bryan@columnist.com or write him c/o this paper. © 2022 Bryan Golden ★

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NATIONAL NEWS *courtesy of THE EPOCH TIMES*

More Companies Join the 'Great Migration' to Red States

Blue states believe their abortion policies can bring companies back

KEVIN STOCKLIN

Amid predictions of a political “red wave” in the upcoming midterm elections, an economic wave has been building for years—with no end in sight—as companies flood out of blue states and into red states.

As a result of its political divisions, the United States appears to now be dividing itself into prosperous, high-growth states and states that are suffering a chronic decline. But Democrat-run states believe that their abortion policies could be a key factor in attracting companies back.

Caterpillar and Citadel, which announced their exit from Illinois in June, are only the latest firms to leave high-tax, high-regulation states. Tesla, Hewlett-Packard, Oracle, and Remington are also among the hundreds of companies flocking out of California, Illinois, New York, and New Jersey to business-friendly places such as Texas, Florida, Arizona, and Tennessee. Relocating companies have spanned industries including tech, finance, media, heavy manufacturing, autos, and firearms.

“There is a great migration going on, and I expect it to accelerate,” Glen Hamer, president of the Texas Association of Business, told *The Epoch Times*. “When the Caterpillars and the Elon Musks relocate, it’s an advertisement to the entire country and the entire world that something positive is going on in that state. And there is a multiplier effect.”

According to a 2022 survey of 700 CEOs, the top states for business are Texas, Florida, Tennessee, Arizona, and North Carolina. The worst states for business were California, New York, Illinois, New Jersey, and Washington.

Even companies such as Apple, which didn’t move its headquarters to Texas, chose to establish its second-largest campus for employees there. Amazon selected Houston as one of its prime hubs. Ford, Volkswagen, and Nissan chose Tennessee as the location for major new manufacturing facilities. And in some cases, entire industries, such as firearms, which are being targeted by legislation and lawsuits in blue states, are moving south.

“It’s a broader trend that we’ve been tracking for the last 15 years,” Lee Schalk, vice president of policy at the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), told *The Epoch Times*.

ALEC tracks state economic trends in their annual report, “Rich States Poor States.”

“You won’t see companies moving to states like New York, California, and New Jersey,” Schalk said. “They’ll be moving out of those states into neighboring states, where the policies are a little bit better, or they’ll be making the big move to places like Texas, Florida, North Carolina.”

Hamer said: “Texas was one of the first states to recover all the jobs it lost during the pandemic. Now we have a workforce that is at an all-time high, and the economy has diversity and strength. Whether it’s energy, manufacturing, health care, technology, finance, you name it, the Texas economy is firing on all cylinders.”

Texas has attracted 250 new corporate headquarters since 2015, he said.

When jobs leave, people leave with them. According to the U.S. Census, Democrat-run states California, New York, New Jersey, Michigan, and Illinois together lost 4 million people between 2010 and 2019, the so-called leftugees. During the same period, the states



SUZANNE CORDEIRO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

A giant cowboy hat welcomes visitors to the Tesla Giga Texas manufacturing facility during the grand opening party in Austin, Texas, on April 7, 2022.



SUZANNE CORDEIRO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

A giant cowboy boot is on display outside the Tesla Giga Texas manufacturing facility during the “Cyber Rodeo” grand opening party in Austin, Texas, on April 7, 2022.

with the greatest influx of people were Florida, Texas, Tennessee, Ohio, and Arizona.

States have been able to attract companies by cutting taxes, reducing red tape, and establishing right-to-work policies. In 2013, North Carolina passed a landmark tax reform package to cut corporate and personal income taxes. The business income tax there is now 2.5 percent and will be phased out entirely over the next several years.

Contrary to expectations that states would bankrupt themselves by cutting taxes, an influx of companies and new residents often boosts state revenues from property taxes, sales taxes, and personal income taxes, even when the percentages are reduced. Florida attracted 624,000 new residents in 2020, along with more than \$40 billion in income, equating to an estimated \$23.7 billion in new tax income. Florida has enjoyed two decades of net in-migration, amounting to a total income gain of \$197 billion.

North Carolina’s latest budget included a deal to phase out corporate income taxes while also giving teachers a raise and even padding its “rainy day fund,” according to Schalk.

“North Carolina has been able to do that because not only have they been bold on lowering taxes, but they’ve also gotten the spending side under control,” he said.

And when companies move in, they bring intangible benefits with them as well.

“Any sort of civic organization loves it when they hear that a blue-chip company like Caterpillar is relocating to our state,” Hamer said. “It means these executives are going to be serving on all sorts of different boards of directors, the local art museum, opera, or the chamber of commerce. When companies relocate their individuals, they become deeply ingrained in the community. They contribute time and treasure to activities

that make the community more vibrant.”

The reverse is also true for states that are losing businesses and population, creating a vicious circle where continuously hiking taxes fails to bring in more revenue because the tax base gets depleted and quality of life suffers. According to a report based on IRS data by Wirepoints, an Illinois-based economic research organization, the cost of losing companies and people is stark for states such as Illinois, which has seen decreases in its population for 21 straight years.

Since 2000, that state has lost a total of \$535 billion in income that moved away, which equates to about \$25 billion in lost tax revenue during that period, and \$4 billion in 2020 alone. Illinois’ problems include a loss of 114,000 residents in 2021, a string of 21 consecutive years of state budget deficits, a \$313 billion deficit in public pensions, and the second-highest property tax rates in the country.

“Illinois is stuck in a vicious downward spiral it can’t hope to escape from without fundamentally changing how it governs,” the Wirepoints report reads. “Structural property tax reform, reductions in pension debt, slashing units of local government—the state needs to do all these things if it wants to convince Illinoisans to stay and persuade other Americans to move in.”

Reducing violent crime would also help. Escalating crime was reportedly a factor, one among many, in Citadel’s decision to leave Chicago for Miami. Ken Griffin, the hedge fund’s CEO, had been one of Illinois’ richest residents and had given more than \$600 million in charitable donations to education, cultural, medical, and civic causes in the state.

“It’s the beauty of the 50 laboratories of our democracy,” Schalk said. “We’re able to quickly see what’s working and

what’s not working across all issue areas. Unfortunately, I don’t see the high tax and high spend states changing their ways.”

Hamer said: “We can see an acceleration of hostile business policies in states like California, Illinois, and New York. It’s a race to increase taxes, increase regulation, and make it more difficult for people to live their lives. When you contrast that with states like Texas and Arizona, the gap is just widening, and we’re seeing the great migration as a result.”

Republican representatives in Washington are attempting to grant even more economic power to states in energy production. Republicans introduced the Federal Land Freedom Act last year, which would take the authority to approve oil leases and permits away from the federal government and “give each state the right to develop all of the energy resources on the federal lands located within that state’s borders.”

Recently, however, blue states appear to be waking up and looking for ways to boost their competitiveness.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom recently said: “Some businesses may have left the state, come on back! It’s a point of pride that we welcome you back.”

New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy sent personal letters to more than 50 companies in red states, appealing for them to come to New Jersey. Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont made a similar attempt. These governors are highlighting one regulatory advantage that they believe will give them an edge over conservative states: their permissive policies toward abortion.

Murphy’s letter to companies in Georgia reads, “The overturning of a woman’s right to bodily autonomy—and the chilling effect this decision will have on your ability to attract and retain top female talent by being located in a state which has refused to recognize women’s reproductive freedom—cannot be ignored.”

Alyana Alfaro Post, Murphy’s press secretary, said, “Governor Murphy encourages businesses looking to stand with their employees to look at New Jersey, a state where they can be confident that the rights of women, the LGBTQIA+ community, and voters will always be protected.”

Lamont said in a video pitch: “We’re a family-friendly state that respects women. I know some of you are in states like Texas, which are outlawing a woman’s right to choose. We have codified, we are protecting a woman’s right to choose ... any of you business owners thinking about making a move, give me a call. I’d love to hear from you.”



California Gov. Gavin Newsom speaks to union workers and volunteers on election day in San Francisco, on Sept. 14, 2021.

JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

WEEKLY COMICS

Amber Waves by Dave T. Phipps



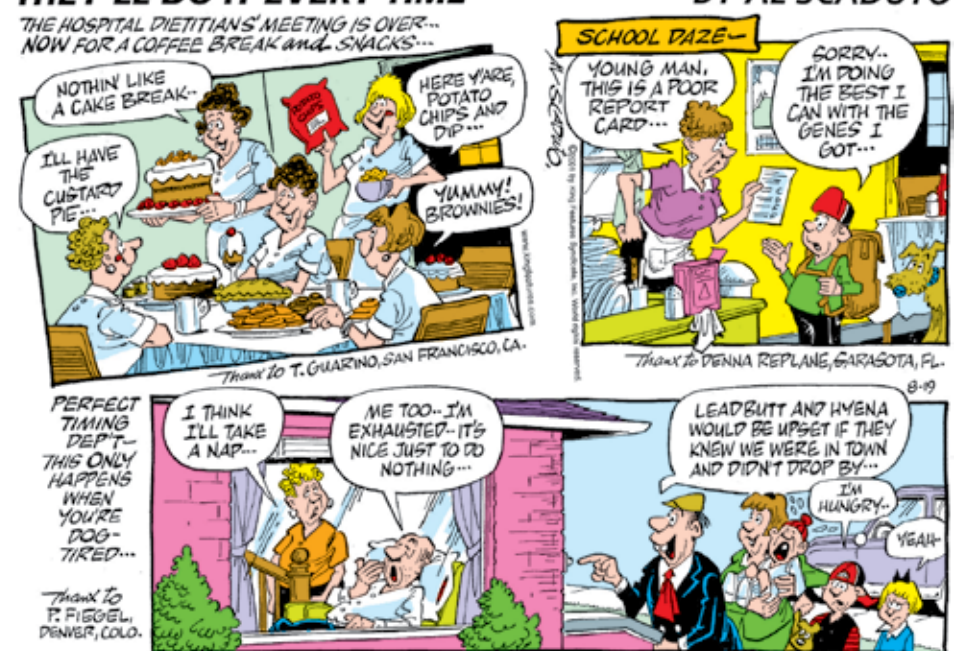
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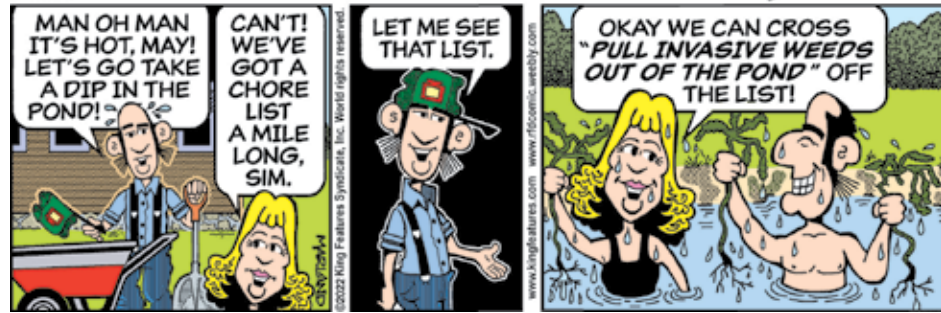
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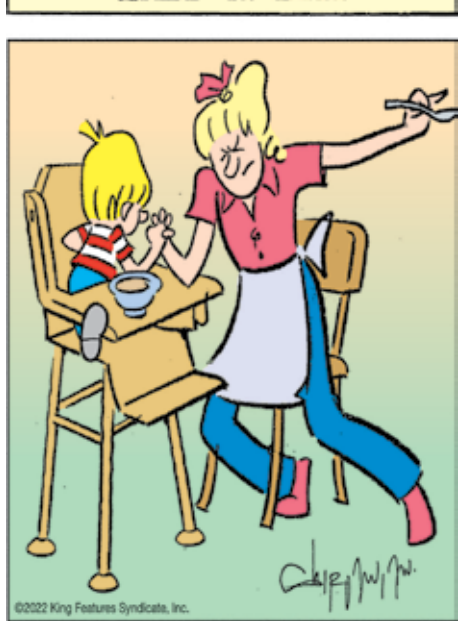
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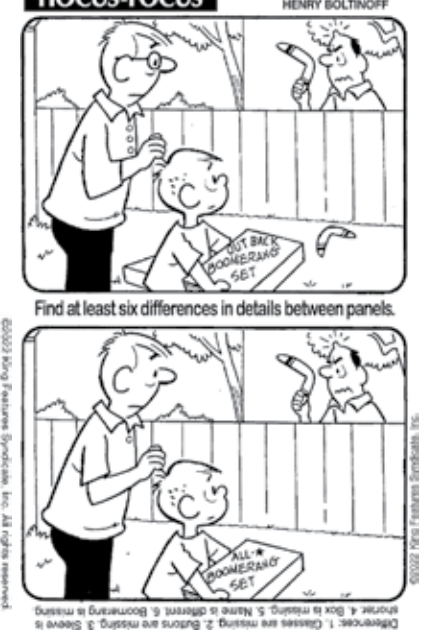
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Tuleyome Tales

The Forest Alligator Lizard

By Kathleen Scavone

As I take a late spring, early morning walk at the edge of the woods not far from the creek in southern Middletown, it feels like a luxury to drink in the sounds of these surroundings. I note the scolding squawks of several blue jays in the oaks. They appear to be distressed at the sight of a pair of crows as they near the jay's nests.

In contrast to the cacophony above, the mellifluous sounds of the creek invite me to come closer. As I arrive at a clearing, a Forest Alligator Lizard is sitting as still as a stone in the sunlight. This is the second one I have seen this month! Wanting to watch this elusive and long-bodied creature I step ever closer. Each step I take is a prayer: Please stay awhile so that I may admire your beauty! Just look at those stubby limbs in contrast to its long body. If the lizard's tail has



The California Alligator Lizard is found in the Northwest portion of the state, together with the Central Valley. Photo courtesy of Kathleen Scavone

never dropped then regenerated it will be extra long, with its tail being one and a half to two times its body length. Forest Alligator Lizards often grow to 12 inches in length.

The Forest Alligator Lizard is also known as the California Alligator Lizard, and wears quadrangular scales that are arranged in lengthy rows. The coloration of these lizards can be brown, yellowish, or

even grey. Their distinctive snake-like movements sometimes have them identified as a snake, but they have four legs with which to mobilize themselves near the oak woodlands, chaparral or grasslands.

Secretive, Forest Alligator Lizards can be diurnal, active during the day, crepuscular, or active during twilight or sometimes nocturnal when the weather warms sufficiently.

They are often thought of as secretive, since they can hide and blend in so well with their surroundings, usually on the ground among the leaf or twig litter, or among logs and rocks as they search for their prey. They prefer to dine on insects, spiders, smaller lizards and sometimes bird eggs. Since they are thigmothermic they gather strength and warmth via warm rocks, or by basking in sunlight where there is sufficient and safe cover in which to hide, if needed, nearby.

Alligator lizards are known for their first-rate stalking behavior, as well as their skills in climbing. As an alligator lizard hunts and stalks its prey, it resembles a snake, slithering along the ground while testing the air with a forked tongue. I would love to witness the Forest Alligator Lizard use its tail in a prehensile manner to hold itself safe and sound upon a tree's branches. Since it can climb, this is the

method employed as it sets its sights on a bird's egg for dinner.

What goes around, comes around though, so if the lizard is seized by a predator, it can dramatically thrash about and simultaneously cover itself and an enemy with feces, urine and nasty smelling material which they release from their scent glands. These unique creatures will hiss to inform you of their intense discomfort at your presence if you venture too close. Predators include hawks, bobcats, snakes and more.

If alligator lizards are caught, they have the ability to drop their tails in order to escape their predator. A new tail can grow in as soon as three to five weeks. This tail loss is known as tail autotomy or tail shedding. Then, the dropped tail will wiggle about for around five minutes acting just like a live creature which allows the lizard to escape. While losing a tail can be a life-saver, the down side is that he has

now lost a large store of fat and energy along with an aid to help the lizard keep its balance throughout its hunting and stalking of prey.

All in all, I would consider this a perfect morning. By viewing any of the hundreds of animal species in Lake County I can sense my insignificance in the grand scheme of things, all the while with each natural sighting, be it deer, elk, newt or lizard a surge of gratitude fizzes and wells within me. Nature's gifts lay scattered about, unbidden, but thankfully still abundant, creating room for hope to take root.

Kathleen Scavone, M.A. is a retired Lake County educator. She writes for the Press Democrat, Lake County Bloom, Napa Valley Register, News From Native California, etc. She has published People of the Water and Anderson Marsh State Historic Park. She is a potter and photographer. ★



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