



Fourth on the Field Returns

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Dixon Independent Voice

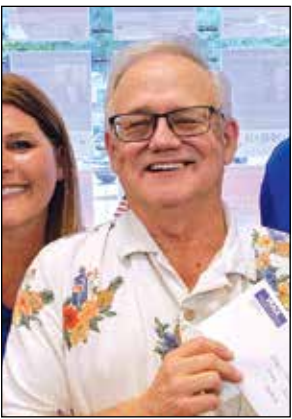
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Fun and Fireworks



This is the first time that the City of Dixon has partnered with the Dixon Rotary Club to host the event. Photo courtesy BigBearVacations-Pixabay

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - The City of Dixon and the Rotary Club of Dixon will be hosting a 4th of July Fireworks Show in Dixon's Hall Park, 450 Hall Park Drive Mayes & South Fifth Street, where it has been held for 32 years after a small group of local citizens band together to bring it to fruition.

This is the first time, however, that the City of Dixon has partnered with the Dixon Rotary Club to host the event and comes after a two-year hiatus. The plan is to "welcome the community back with the largest fireworks display to date," according to an announcement by the City.

The festivities will begin with the Pat Granucci Aquatic Center in Hall Park, 450 East Mayes Street, being open for recreational swimming at 3

p.m. They will remain open until 6 p.m. The entry price is \$5.75 per adult and \$4.00 for children and seniors.

A food truck court will be in the parking lot of the pool from 6-9:30 p.m.

There will also be some fun Pickleball games offered from 7-8:30 p.m. The Pickleball activities are free and are made possible through donations. They are open to all skill levels including beginners.

This is one of Dixon's largest gatherings of locals and folks are encouraged to bring blankets or lawn chairs to view the show. There are usually children playing frisbee or other games and families bring watermelon or cookies while some prefer popcorn. Some people choose to bring their dogs but with the loud sounds, it may not be a good idea, but all pets are required by law to be on a leash.

The fireworks show will begin shortly after sunset, after 9 p.m. This free event is open to all members of the public and is made possible through donations. Individuals and businesses who would like to donate can do so by mailing a check to: Dixon Rotary Foundation, PO Box 181, Dixon, CA 95620.

The Dixon Police Department reminds residents that Safe and Sane fireworks will not be permitted in Hall Park. Fireworks that explode, shoot through the air, move along the ground, including skyrockets, bottle rockets and firecrackers of all types are never permitted. A violation of the Fireworks Ordinance is punishable by the issuance of an administrative citation with an accompanying administrative fine up to \$1,000. ★

Basic Fireworks Safety Tips



Dixon allows the use of Safe and Sane fireworks, but only from June 28 to July 6 each year. Use of any other type of fireworks is prohibited. Photo courtesy of Johnhill118 | Dreamstime.com

MPG Staff

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Severe burns, amputations, blindness, and, in some cases, deaths are often the results of 4th of July celebrations.

Dixon allows the use of Safe and Sane fireworks, but only from June 28 to July 6 each year. Use of any other type of fireworks is prohibited.

Fireworks that explode, shoot through the air, move along the ground, including skyrockets, bottle rockets, firecrackers of all types, Roman candles, etc., have always been illegal in California. Penalties for those caught storing, selling, or using these types of fireworks can include a fine of \$1,000 and/or one year in jail.

Many illegal fireworks have wording such as "D.O.T. approved," etc. Don't be misled by these phrases; they do NOT make such fireworks legal in California. If the seal of the State Fire Marshal and the words, "Safe. . .Sane," do not appear on fireworks, they should not be used.

Here are some tips from the Office of the State Fire Marshal to keep you safe: Always read directions; always have an adult present; use only outdoors; never use near dry grass or other flammable materials; Light only one at a time; keep a safe distance; never point or throw at another person; have a bucket of water and a hose handy; never attempt to re-light of 'fix' fireworks; do not wear loose fitting clothing; never carry in your pocket; and remember that parents are liable for any damage or injuries caused by their children using fireworks.

Dispose of fireworks after thorough soaking and do not put the trash indoors or in a garage.

Report Illegal Fireworks. All State-Approved Fireworks are called Safe and Sane and bear the California State Fire Marshal's Seal. Anything that goes in the air, travels, or explodes is illegal and dangerous. A fine in Dixon begins at \$500 for the first offense. ★

Drown Used Fireworks

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Dixonite Kayla Robinson wants you to know her family's story.

The 4th of July will never be the same for them as one year ago, her only brother, Danny Kittell, lost his life in a house fire caused by the "improper disposal of fireworks."

The married mother of two small children recanted what started as a happy and fun family gathering that turned into the worst nightmare anyone can imagine.

"It's one of those things in America that is celebrated every year, but you never think that it's going to happen to you," she said. "We were all at his home that he had just purchased in North Highlands and we went to the Rodeo and came back with a small pack of fireworks. They lasted maybe ten minutes."

Kayla, who has lived here since she was about 8 years old describes herself as a mom who is "very responsible and very cautious" when it comes to these things.



A selfie Danny Kittell of Dixon took of him and his daughter before he died in a house fire caused by fireworks. Photo courtesy of Kayla Robinson

"We thought we took all the necessary precautions; hosed off the lawn and the bushes and made sure everything was nice

and secure. We rinsed off all the cartridges and made sure there was nothing warm to the touch and put it all in the trash can

that was located in the garage. But that morning about 2:30 am, my niece called and said she had just

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Life's too SHORT



Moving On After House Fire



This building housed four rentals and was destroyed last year on the 4th of July. Photo by Debra Dingman

By Debra Dingman

Melissa Alexander was listening to the fireworks that seemed to be everywhere last year on the 4th of July while watching a movie with her daughters, then 6-year-old twins and 10-year-old. They were tenants in a small but fitting section of a home on the corner North Washington and C Streets. Suddenly, neighbors started yelling to get out, that there was a fire. The four apartments were destroyed but luckily, no one was hurt. The cause of the fire was "inconclusive." Much later, the house was sold as is.

"I lost everything including my car," she said. Her and a friend went back into the structure and took a look around the following week. "Everything inside was smoke-damaged and it was horrible to go in there. I was able to find [my older daughter's] necklace and her Bible from her room and I was able to save a book with the twins' pictures from the hospital."

In the past year, Melissa, a divorcee, has had to move several times since the fire, trying to find an affordable place and just in February, got a call from a Dixon apartment complex for a low-income unit. She had been on that list since 2018. The other affects from the fire are emotional ones.

"It's been rough. It was obviously a traumatic experience for all of us," she said. "I didn't light a candle until a couple months ago. I go back into the house and make sure the stove is turned off and I have a sensitivity to sounds and smoke." The whole property where they live now is no smoking but the slightest smell of smoke – even cigarettes, triggers the children, she explained.

"The girls really don't want to talk about it too much but they still wanted to drive by so we did a couple times. I told them, 'we won't be doing that again.' One of the twins misses the old apartment and the oldest daughter

likes where they are now.

"My church has been amazing and they provided us with a lot of support on top of a Go-Fund-Me fundraiser. It was overwhelming because I really never had support before," she said. They got a different car; "small, but it's ours," she added. The family also got a puppy.

"She is a huge distraction and makes all of us really happy. She absolutely is an emotional support dog – and she is the best alarm system," she said. This year, Melissa plans to celebrate the 4th of July with one of her friends from church who is hosting a family get-together.

"The fire brought a whole new meaning to 'You never know,' " she said.

The Dixon Fire Department could not specifically conclude that the fire was started by fireworks although illegal fireworks continued to go off while the firefighters battled the blaze.

"Last year was really, really bad and we were inundated with calls," said Assistant Fire Chief John Malone of the Dixon Fire Department. They were also going off behind the Dixon Police Department where another structure fire started and damaged a home.

"The bad news is that no one was left to respond to medical help because we were all fighting those fires," he said. "Dixon only has so many workers." ★

Dixon News Briefs



Tori Rosten and her daughter Isla regularly visit the Dixon Public Library Children's Department especially over the summer. On July 14 at 10 a.m., there will be 'Corny Crow,' a unique ventriloquy show that is sure to delight. Photo by Debra Dingman

MPG Staff

DHS Class Reunion

Mark your calendars! Class reunions are so much fun and this one will be especially so since it is a multi-class one. The 1982 Dixon High School Class Reunion--which will include 1979 through 1985--is set for Friday, November 11. Classmates, faculty, and friends are invited www.dhsrams1982.com email dixonhigh-classof82@yahoo.com or call Suzi (Haase) LaChance Reunion Committee Chairperson at 209-418-8796.

Library Storytime

On Tuesdays at 10 a.m., the Dixon Public Library offers parents and their little ones to join them inside for storytime. Children read, sing, and do a fun craft project. It is geared for children under the age of 8 or 9-years-old but if there are siblings or special needs that want to come along and could enjoy listening to stories, they are welcome. The activities are free. The library is located at 230 North First Street.

Past Parades

Thanks to Joe Azevedo and some highly technical volunteers for the Dixon History Society, numerous 16mm films of past May Fair parades have been uploaded on Google Drive and are now available for the general public to watch on the Dixon Historical Society website: dixonhistoricalsociety.org. They are from the 1950s.

In addition, elementary school yearbooks from Gretchen Higgins, Tremont Elementary and even Dixon Montessori Charter School have also been made available for public viewing. East Elementary School Yearbooks from 1965 to 1969 are also available. Please support the Dixon History Museum with an annual membership and drop by to see the new displays. It is located at 125 West A Street.

Dog Grooming

Patti Sousa-Liu, 10-year business owner of Clip-N and Groom-N who retired a couple years ago, is bringing herself out of that and back into business. She does not do cats but all size dogs.

"I really miss my customers and there is a huge need in Dixon, right now," she said. To schedule your paw pal, call (707) 635-3303.

City Council

Hopefully residents will have recovered enough from their 4th of July celebrations to come to the next City Council Meeting that is only the next day, Tuesday, July 5 at 7 p.m. As always, the meeting is inside the Council chambers at City Hall, 600 East A Street but is also on Zoom to participate from your computer or Granicus to watch. See the agenda and links on the City of Dixon website.

Memoir Writing

If you've ever entertained the idea of writing down your life story, the Dixon History Museum has an opportunity for you. Their next Coffee Hour is set for Wednesday, July 20, 3-4:30 p.m., at 125 West A Street and will feature Debra Dingman, Editor and Author of Learning A Living, Key Life Lessons Learned Over 40 Years of Juggling Jobs. Dingman will share her experiences with getting published by WestBow Press and being sold at Barnes & Noble as well as Amazon. Participants will be given ideas on how to find their inner author and are asked to bring three photos of different times of their lives.

There will also be a repeat of the popular Coffee Hour on 'Finding Your Ancestors.' That class will be on August 17, 3 p.m. For reservation, call (707) 693-3044 or email info@dixonhistorical-society.org. ★

WE SUPPORT FIRST RESPONDERS 

Air Quality Management District Awards for Clean Air Projects

Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District News Release

DAVIS, CA (MPG) - At the June 8 meeting of the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District's Board of Directors, the board approved a total of \$530,275 in funding for 10 Clean Air Fund (CAF) projects for the 2022/2023 grant cycle.

This annual grant program provides funding to private businesses, non-profit organizations, and public agencies for local projects that will reduce

emissions from mobile sources of air pollution within the district. The funds are intended for the purposes of implementing the use of cleaner technologies, low-emission vehicles, alternative transportation, transit services and public education.

Funding for the CAF Program comes from a portion of the annual Department of Motor Vehicles registration fee and additional funding for Solano County projects is provided by AB 8 property tax proceeds. Funding is awarded on a competitive

basis for projects that aim to achieve the greatest amount of emission reductions for the money awarded, maximizing cost-effectiveness.

The following is the list of projects that were awarded funding for the 2022/2023 cycle: River Delta Unified School District – Green Grass Clean Air Project (Electric replacement of 2 gas-powered lawn mowers), Bike Campaign – Bike Racks for Davis and Woodland Schools, City of Vacaville – Markham Elementary Pedestrian

Improvements (Sidewalk Gap Project), North Davis Elementary – NDE Safer Bike Racks and Happier Riders, ROAMBase – ROAM: Shared Bicycle Locks for Everyone, Solano County – Foothill Drive Bike Connection Project, West Sacramento – OnDemand Rideshare Recreation Center Summer Pilot, Yolo Commute – E-Bike Loan Program, Solano Transportation Authority – Eastern Solano County Commuter Incentive Relaunch and Breathe California – West

Sacramento Bike Rodeo.

For more information about the District's Clean Air Funds Grant Program or to register for the mailing list to be notified of the next application period visit <https://www.ysaqmd.org/incentives/clean-air-funds/>.

For more information about the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District, including signing up for air quality alerts and the monthly newsletter, visit: www.ysaqmd.org. Connect with the District on Facebook or Twitter @ YoloSolanoAir. ★



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

- Can Washers
- Clean Energy Funding Solutions LLC
- Fevans Co, DBA La Familia Tortilla Shop
- Happy Bins Cleaning
- Lions Center for the Visually Impaired
- State Farm – Olimpia Campos Garner
- The Creative Space
- Vacaville Jazz Society
- and
- CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE - RUBY Member**
- Milk Farm Development LLC

For information on how the Dixon Chamber can help your business be more successful, call 707-678-2650 or email info@dixonchamber.org.

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Sewing Our World*

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Ephesians 3:20

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Small Groups meet throughout the week.

Frank Salamone - Pastor/Teacher

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Drown Used Fireworks

Continued from page 1

jumped out of her bedroom window, that the house was on fire and that “My Dad was stuck inside,” Kayla’s voice cracked. Her niece was 11 at the time. Kayla told her to run across the street and call 911.

“She said the firemen were pulling up, so I stayed on the phone with her. She was just in shock. She said she could hear her Dad yelling. They got him out of the house, and she thought he was fine, but they took him immediately to the ICU,” Kayla said. “I remember sitting in the lobby and watching it all on the news and watching his house burn. He ended up passing on July 6 in the evening. Eighty percent of his body was burned but the main thing was the smoke damage to his brain,” she said, pausing again.

“When it was time to let him go and my mom was holding his hand, she told him, ‘Danny, we love you and everything is going to be fine. Give us a sign that you can hear me.’ Across the entire room,

and the second she said that the [sensored] towel dispenser spit out a paper towel. There was no wind, no shadow, nothing that could have set that off,” she said. And then he died. Danny was 33.

Firefighters originally thought the fire started in the front yard but after investigations, the family was told it was caused by “improper disposal of fireworks.”

“If I had known before that those extra seconds it takes to soak them would have kept him alive...everyone needs to know and take the time. Leave them in a bucket of water. If you think everything is safe, do another round with the hose knowing how dangerous those things can be,” she said. “After the fact, our lives have never been the same.”

Kayla is diligent now to make sure the smoke detectors work and they have an escape plan, for example.

“It’s been a full year of adjusting to him not being there,” she said. “It’s not really a holiday.” ★

Beamans Win Chamber Mixer Prize



Steve Beaman, center, accepts a week-long advertising certificate from Leanna and Thomas Jackson of VEALE Outdoor Advertising. Beaman won it at the last Chamber of Commerce Mixer and his wife, Janice, said it would be donated to Rotary for promoting a crab feed or another Rotary event. The Jacksons shared their story of beginning the business with one outdoor sign and now they have them in more than a dozen locations all over northern California. The large billboard-size electronic sign is along the stretch of Interstate 80 in Dixon. For more information on the Dixon Chamber of Commerce, call (707) 678-2650. Photo courtesy of Robin Tully

Dixon Senior Center Activities



Senior citizens listen to an announcement about upcoming activities by Phyllis Nixon. Photo courtesy of Cookie Powell

By Cookie Powell

DIXON, CA (MPG) - The

following is some information about the Senior Center activities and the Senior Club. After COVID restrictions were eased, the

Senior Center events started slowly trickling 'back to normal.' People started coming back to see old friends and get out of their homes finally, but slowly, and some are still hesitant. I am happy to report that participation is growing and there is a big list of fun things coming up.

In June 2021, Senior Club president, Phyllis Nixon, called together the members of Senior Club Board and The Advocates for Dixon Seniors Group and floated the idea of us merging. We all agreed at that meeting that the two groups needed each other's help to get our activities, events and advocacy work going strong again. Both groups' membership had

decreased over the last few years.

Since that June day, we have been meeting monthly and getting along famously. Together, we organized a successful, albeit smaller than usual, Senior Resource Fair in April 2022. A good time was had by all and we plan to do it again.

Now, many fun activities are planned each month. The Ice Cream Socials also happen monthly. At the next one, we will be entertained by a live barbershop quartet.

On Wednesdays Scott Stacey will be calling Bingo from noon to 2 pm. It costs 5-cents a Bingo card to play plus there are prizes and refreshments.

The next Out-to-Lunch

Bunch is on Friday, July 8, at the Frying Pan.

On Saturday, September 17, there are plans for an indoor Garage Sale. Sellers get to have a table for \$10 to sell whatever treasures they must let go of. As a registered Garage-sale NUT, I will be there. I have treasures to let go of and to find.

If you are a senior citizen and want to participate in any of the fun events, call Recreation Manager Austin George at the Dixon Senior Center, (707) 678-7022. Become a member of the Senior Club and you'll receive in your mailbox the official calendar of events each time a new one comes out. There is a Senior Center page on the City of Dixon website. ★

Planning Council Seeks Members

SCOE 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 developed 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 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/childcareplc.

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@solanocoe.net. Visit www.solanocoe.net/childcareplc to view the general membership meeting schedule or to submit a public comment. ★

Holding July 4th Boating Under the Influence Checkpoints

California State Parks News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On one of the deadliest holidays for recreational boating-related accidents, California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) is reminding recreational boaters to avoid alcohol this Fourth of July holiday weekend. DBW and more than 45 law enforcement entities across California will be participating in a nationwide boating under the influence (BUI) effort from July 2 – 4. Dubbed “Operation Dry Water,” law enforcement entities will increase patrols and/or carry out BUI checkpoints.

For the 13th straight year, the goal of the Operation Dry Water campaign is to reduce the number of alcohol and drug-related accidents and fatalities and educate water enthusiasts about the deadly consequences of BUI. According to the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, where the primary cause was known, alcohol use continues to be the leading known contributing factor in recreational boating deaths in the United States.

“Spending time with family and friends in a boat on California’s waterways is one of the most popular ways people enjoy the Fourth of

July Weekend,” said DBW’s Acting Deputy Director Ramona Fernandez. “We would like to remind boating enthusiasts that drinking and boating is just as deadly as drinking and driving. The environmental stressors of the marine environment accelerate the impairing effects of alcohol. We encourage boaters to keep alcohol off the water completely.”

It is against the law in California to operate a boat or water ski with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 percent or more. Officers may also arrest boaters with a BAC less than 0.08 percent if conditions are deemed unsafe. BUI convictions can result in up to six months in jail and/or fines of up to \$1,000. Two convictions within seven years could add a jail term of up to one year. Boaters caught operating under the influence may also have their voyage terminated and their vessel impounded.

This year’s Operation Dry Water California State Parks and Recreation Area participants include:

Auburn State Recreation Area (Auburn), Folsom Lake (Sacramento County), Lake Oroville (Butte County), Millerton Lake (Fresno County), Ocotillo Wells District (Imperial and San Diego), Silverwood Lake (San Bernardino County) ★

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Supreme Court Gives Business a 'Tort Wars' Win



By Dan Walters
CALMatters.org

"Tort wars" is the term Capitol insiders apply to the perennial political conflict over the rules governing personal injury lawsuits.

Lawyers who file such suits seek to expand opportunities for litigation, often in concert with other interests, such as unions and environmental activists.

Business and employer groups and their insurers resist such expansion and occasionally propose ways to reduce exposure.

The conflict plays out in the Legislature, in the courts and in ballot measures with countless billions of dollars at stake in outcomes. Earlier this year, a 44-year-long dispute over medical malpractice compensation was resolved in a compromise that averted a ballot measure battle.

However, there are many other fronts in tort wars, including one that resulted in a U.S. Supreme Court ruling last week.

In 2003, just four days after California voters decided to remove him from office, then-Gov. Gray Davis handed personal injury lawyers and unions a major victory by signing legislation called the Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA). It enabled workers who had disputes

with their employers to file class action lawsuits even if they had signed pre-employment agreements to submit such disputes to arbitration.

Advocates said it was needed to protect workers' rights and make up for the state labor department's inability to keep up with disputes over wages and other working conditions. Business and employer groups said it gave greedy lawyers a license to demand big settlements of cases and earn big contingency fees.

Ultimately, business interests spent millions of dollars to qualify a ballot measure that would gut PAGA. The initiative petitions have been submitted for signature-counting, but probably too late for the 2022 ballot. Most likely it will go to voters in 2024.

Meanwhile, a case challenging PAGA's provisions has been winding through state and federal courts and the U.S. Supreme Court last week declared that some important features are void because they conflict with the Federal Arbitration Act, which encourages civil disputes to be arbitrated rather than litigated.

The case involved Viking River Cruises and one of its employees, former sales representative Angie Moriana. Essentially, the Supreme Court declared that California's Supreme Court had erred in a previous PAGA case and state courts had applied that erroneous decision, involving the division of individual and class action complaints, to Moriana's case.

The decision was not unexpected, given the tenor

of oral arguments, but surprisingly did not reflect the court's much-discussed 6-3 ideological split. The vote was 8-1 with only the court's most conservative member, Clarence Thomas, fully dissenting, saying state issues should be left to state legislatures and courts.

Predictably, even a Supreme Court decision does not end the battle over PAGA because it was decided on technical legal points rather than the broader issue.

Unions, lawyers and their political allies immediately pledged to write new legislation to get around the Supreme Court decree. Sen. Dave Cortese, a San Jose Democrat who chairs the state Senate's labor committee, said the ruling "has provided a roadmap as to how we can create for employees a new pathway to legal standing as well as safeguard the protections that state law puts in place for our workers."

Because the Supreme Court did not strike down all of PAGA, the business coalition backing the ballot measure, dubbed the California Fair Pay and Employer Accountability Act, pledged to continue its campaign. "Even with the SCOTUS ruling on Viking River Cruises, PAGA will still be an avenue for shakedown claims against businesses where trial attorneys take a huge portion of the recovery, leaving employees with a reduced amount," it said.

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



Farm and Business Groups Demand State Action on Water Projects

A coalition of agriculture and business groups is imploring Gov. Gavin Newsom and the Legislature to boost water storage and supplies as the drought threatens California's food, energy and housing sectors. "Our existing water system can no longer deliver the water necessary to sustain the world's fifth-largest economy," the groups wrote in a June 14 letter to state officers. The signatories included the California Farm Bureau, the Valley Ag Water Coalition, Western Growers and the California Business Roundtable.

Klamath Farmers Following Fields Amid Water Shortages

The water year is grim for farmers and ranchers in California's Klamath Basin. Pasture lands are drying up and farmers are following vast field crop acreage. Those who still have well water are having to pay increasing costs for pumping. The fallout comes after the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation announced in April that farmers would get 15% or less of surface water allocations from Upper Klamath Lake. Lucky Ackley, a cattle rancher and hay and alfalfa farmer, said, "We're almost to be breaking point where ... there's no profit left."

Farm Bureau President: Water Rule Should Protect Farmers From Costly Legal Expenses

California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson told leaders of the Environmental Protection Agency that the pending "waters of the United States" rule – or WOTUS – must provide protections for normal farming activities. Johansson addressed agency officials while leading a June 16 Western states roundtable discussion on the rule. He said, "California's farmland provides many social and ecosystem benefits" and that "small, family-owned businesses" shouldn't be saddled with costly legal expenses for their sustainable farming practices.

Seeds for Bees Program Helps Farmers Nurture Pollinator Habitat

California farmers are planting thousands of acres of forage cover crops that provide nutrition for honeybees and other pollinators that are essential for farm commodities, including the state's nearly 3-billion-pound almond crop. The Seeds for Bees program provides cover-crop seeds and technical support for growers. June 20-26 is National Pollinator Week. It celebrates the role of pollinators that help many crops – from almonds to blueberries, strawberries to peppers – to survive and thrive. ★

CDFW Awards for Ecosystem and Watershed Restoration

CDFW News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) announced the selection of 23 projects to receive funding for projects to restore and protect multi-benefit ecosystem restoration and protection projects under its Proposition 1 grant programs.

The awards, totaling \$26 million, were made under CDFW's 2022 Prop. 1 Watershed Restoration Grant and Delta Water Quality and Ecosystem Restoration Grant Program Proposal Solicitation Notice.

Of the \$26 million, approximately \$21 million was awarded to 15 projects statewide through the Prop. 1 Watershed Restoration Grant Program. Approximately \$5 million was awarded to eight projects through the Prop. 1 Delta Water Quality and Ecosystem Restoration Grant Program to projects that directly benefit the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

"California's fish, wildlife and their habitats are facing continued impacts from climate change including persistent drought conditions," said CDFW Director Charlton H. Bonham.



Martis Meadow near Truckee, California. Photo by Cory Saltsman/CDFW

"These impacted species need strong conservation and protection efforts now more than ever. The projects that were awarded funding this year represent a collective effort to meet these challenges and push toward our conservation goals under California's 30x30 Initiative."

The approved projects complement CDFW's ongoing initiatives toward species recovery and provide resilience to climate change, representing priorities outlined in the solicitation, as well as the California Water Action Plan, State Wildlife Action Plan, Sacramento Valley Salmon Resiliency Strategy, Delta Plan, California EcoRestore, Safeguarding California Plan, the California Biodiversity Initiative and the fulfillment of CDFW's mission.

Projects approved for

funding through the Prop. 1 Watershed Grant Programs include:

Acquisition Projects:
2022 Upper Truckee River Watershed Acquisition (\$1,500,000 to California Tahoe Conservancy); YMCA Camp Jones Gulch Conservation Easement (\$1,002,000 to Sempervirens Fund).

Additional projects are still under consideration. General information about CDFW's Prop. 1 Restoration Grant Programs, as well as a schedule for upcoming grant solicitations, once available, can be found at www.wildlife.ca.gov/grants.

Funding for these projects comes from Prop. 1 bond funds, a portion of which are allocated annually through the California State Budget Act. More information about Prop. 1 is on the California Natural Resources Agency website. ★

DWR Offers Grants to Protect Communities, Support Fish Populations and Restore Streams

DWR News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Department of Water Resources (DWR) on Wednesday, June 1, released the final Guidelines and Proposal Solicitation Package for the Riverine Stewardship Program, which provides funding to plan and implement projects that will reduce flooding, improve water quality, and restore streams, creeks, and rivers to enhance the environment for fish, wildlife, and people.

As communities and wildlife alike face challenges posed by climate extremes and California's ongoing drought conditions, the program will award up to \$15 million in competitive grants to implement projects that help reduce flood risk, increase water supply, and enhance and restore fish populations and habitat. The funding will be delivered through the Riverine Stewardship Program and its two subprograms the Urban Streams Restoration Program (USR) and the San Joaquin Fish Population Enhancement Program.

All three programs will help support watersheds, local wildlife, and aquatic habitat. Eligible projects include habitat restoration,

bank stabilization, water temperature improvements and habitat enhancements to increase water supply reliability to help fish adapt to climate change.

"Climate change is driving multiple threats to California including the severe drought conditions that challenge our communities and fish populations alike," said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. "This funding supports a local and state partnership to make our communities and their streams more drought resilient for people and fish."

Both the Riverine Stewardship Program and San Joaquin Fish Population Enhancement Program are funded by Proposition 13, while the Urban Streams Restoration Program is funded by Proposition 68, 84, and state budget general funds.

During the 2019 solicitation, DWR awarded \$54.4 million in competitive grants to 20 projects that improve habitat and spawning conditions for fish species, reduce flood risk to property and local communities, and more. The Urban Streams Restoration Program, which has funded projects for 35 years, recently celebrated ribbon cutting ceremonies for previously completed restoration projects located in Santa

Barbara, Berkeley, and Santa Rosa.

Applications will be accepted starting June 1, 2022, and funding is available for Tribes, local public agencies, and certified non-profits as specified in the program guidelines and proposal solicitation package. Other applicant types such as community groups will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For-profit corporations, non-public entities, and individual landowners are not eligible. The released guidelines will also address future funding that may become available to DWR through the 20222023 Budget Act to address drought resilience and aquatic habitat improvements.

The Urban Streams Restoration Program also provides funding and technical assistance for public engagement, outreach, and underrepresented community support. DWR encourages community participation in project design and implementation to promote educational opportunities to community members of all ages and increase understanding of the project's benefits.

For more information about upcoming grant opportunities, visit DWR's Grants and Loans webpage. ★



**Publisher,
Paul V. Scholl**

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Sacramento selects Keegan Murray in 2022 NBA Draft



Kings general manager Monte McNair speaks at a press conference to recap the 2022 NBA Draft on Thursday, June 23 at the Golden 1 Center practice facility in Sacramento.

Story and photo by Shaun Holkko, sports editor

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)

- Anxious Kings fans waited outside the Golden 1 Center on Thursday afternoon in scolding 100-degree weather to see who the team would select in the 2022 NBA Draft.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver stepped to the podium around 5:30 p.m. PST and announced, "With the fourth pick in the 2022 NBA Draft, the Sacramento Kings select Keegan Murray from the University of Iowa."

The reaction among the hundreds of Kings faithful that braved the heat to witness what could be a franchise-altering selection was mixed, to say the least.

As a sophomore with the Hawkeyes, Murray was selected to the All-Big Ten first team after averaging 23.5 points, 8.7 rebounds, 1.5 assists, and 1.3 steals in just under 32 minutes a game in 35 starts. He made a huge leap in scoring from his freshman year, increasing his points per game by

16.3, which is the largest increase in PPG by a Big Ten player in the last 25 seasons.

"Keegan Murray was the best player available and we jumped at the chance to select him," McNair said in a press conference after the draft. "I think as we went along, and certainly as we got into the final days, it was just apparent to us that if Keegan Murray was there, that was going to be the best course of action for us."

The 21-year-old ranked fourth in the country in scoring average and first in total points (822) and field goals (307). He also displayed his versatility last season as the only collegiate player with at least 50 dunks and 50 3-pointers. Murray is the highest drafted player in Iowa history and the first Hawkeye to be selected in the first round of the NBA Draft since 1998.

At 6-foot-8 and 215 pounds, Murray cemented himself as one of the best power forwards in the nation in the 2021-22 season, winning the Karl Malone Power Forward of the Year Award.

Murray was also named a consensus first-team All-American and the Big Ten Tournament Most Outstanding Player.

In the second round of the draft, Sacramento was scheduled to pick at No. 37 and No. 49. However, McNair traded away both picks on Thursday, dealing the latter first. Just before 10 a.m. PST, the Kings exchanged the 49th pick for the rights to Sasha Vezenkov and cash consideration from the Cleveland Cavaliers, according to McNair. The 26-year-old was a first-team All-EuroLeague selection in 2022 and was selected 57th overall in 2017 by the Brooklyn Nets.

"Sasha, certainly the intrigue with him is his size with his shooting," McNair said. "Somebody whose hit threes at a high clip but also can playmake and just shows his feel out there on the court. The fact that he's done it at arguably the second-best league in the world at an age where he's just entering his prime, we love to see that."

Sacramento waited until they were on the clock at No. 37 to trade the other second-rounder. The Kings traded the pick to the Dallas Mavericks for two future second-round picks, according to McNair. NBA insider Marc Stein reports that the picks are for 2024 and 2028.

Following the conclusion of the draft, Sacramento reportedly agreed to deals with two undrafted free agents. The Kings agreed to a two-way deal with shooting guard Keon Ellis from Alabama. The Athletic reported. Sacramento agreed to terms with forward Jeriah Horne from Tulsa, as reported by Yahoo Sports. ★

'Speak on It,' Mike Brown is 'Here to Win'



New Kings head coach Mike Brown (right) smiles and answers a question alongside general manager Monte McNair at his introductory press conference on Tuesday, June 21 at Golden 1 Center in Sacramento.

Story and photo by Shaun Holkko, sports editor

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Hours after parading through the streets of San Francisco to celebrate the Golden State Warriors' fourth championship in eight years, Mike Brown was formally introduced Tuesday afternoon as the new coach of the Sacramento Kings.

Brown is the 20th head coach in Sacramento franchise history and the 12th since Rick Adelman departed the organization in 2006. Adelman is currently the only Sacramento coach to lead the team to a winning record. The Basketball Hall of Famer had a (.633) regular season winning percentage along with eight playoff appearances in eight years.

"I'm excited about being here," Brown said at his introductory press conference. "The fan base is tremendous. I remember back in the day, them damn cowbells just use to ring in my ear and use to drive me crazy. I hope we get back to that point because now I'd love to hear them cowbells every game."

"I'd be the first one raising the roof and telling everybody to get up and ring those things all day long. The fans, they're extremely passionate, they're knowledgeable and I'm just looking forward to being around them."

Brown has been as an NBA head coach on three separate occasions, with the Los Angeles Lakers (2011-12) and twice with the Cleveland Cavaliers (2005-10 & 13-14). In seven full seasons as the leading man, Brown has led his teams to the playoffs six times, without a single first round elimination. Brown was named the NBA Coach of the Year in 2009 after leading Cleveland to a 66-16 record and a trip to the Eastern Conference Finals.

"We conducted a very robust, thorough, comprehensive process and we wanted to

ensure that we found the right coach," said Kings general manager Monte McNair. "We did a lot of research, and it came down to really three key things for us: experience, successful head coaching experience; relationships, the ability to build relationships across the organization; and leadership, as a head coach and leadership for everything that we're trying to do here."

During seven plus seasons as a head coach in the league, Brown has a winning record in both the regular season (.616) and playoffs (.566). The 52-year-old spent the last six seasons as an assistant coach with the Warriors, adding three rings to the one he earned as an assistant with the San Antonio Spurs in 2003.

"We gotta get one for the thumb, I only got four!" Brown said to a media member while pounding the table with a laugh and a smile.

Brown expressed three areas of focus as he enters his new role: 1. An alignment of trusts within the organization. 2. A set of values upheld by leadership. 3. An embracement of your role.

"I was brought here to bring some leadership in a lot of different areas," Brown said. "I've been with a lot of different teams in my 30 years, and I've experienced what I believe is something that can get organizations over the top, not just in one year, but year in and year out, and that's having a winning culture. Every organization out there in my opinion has a soul. A strong soul in my opinion equates to a winning culture."

It's well chronicled that the Kings' active playoff drought is the longest in NBA history at 16 seasons. Some new coaches may try and avoid questions about it, but not Brown.

"There ain't no elephant in the room, you can speak on it," Brown said. "We're going to embrace that. I'm not coming here to 'have fun and be excited enjoying the area.' I'm coming here to win!" ★

UC Davis Health Performs First Robotic-Assisted Bronchoscopy Procedure

UCD News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - UC Davis Health physicians have performed the first single-anesthesia diagnosis to treatment of lung cancer using a fully robotic approach in the UC Health System.

The procedure, known as robotic-assisted bronchoscopy, allows for the diagnosis and removal of a lung cancer mass during one surgery. It reduces anxiety and unnecessary waiting time for patients.

Interventional Pulmonology is one of six specialties in which UC Davis Medical Center offers minimally invasive, robotic-assisted technology. Others include gastrointestinal, cardiothoracic, gynecologic oncology, otolaryngology and urologic surgery.

"Innovations such as the robotic bronchoscopy platform are patient care at the absolute highest level, from diagnosis to treatment with a multidisciplinary team approach," said Bahareh Nejad, medical director of Robotic Surgery. "As we continue to grow the UC Davis Robotics Program, the institutional support

we have received has been instrumental. We are excited to facilitate more growth with robotic surgery to make patient treatment better and more efficient."

Streamlining patient care

Traditionally, when a patient is diagnosed with a suspicious nodule or mass in their lung, they are referred to a pulmonologist, who may perform a lung biopsy to confirm if it is cancerous.

If the lung nodule or mass is confirmed to be cancer, the patient may be referred to a thoracic surgeon, who determines if it can be surgically removed. If it can, the patient undergoes another procedure on a separate day that requires additional anesthesia. On average, patients may wait up to three months from the time a nodule or mass is first discovered to when they receive a diagnosis and treatment.

"Waiting months between a biopsy and a diagnosis can be an emotionally difficult and exhausting experience for patients," said Chinh Phan, director of the UC Davis Interventional

Pulmonology Program. "By utilizing the robotic-assisted bronchoscopy platform we can help reduce the anxiety and unnecessary waiting times that patients traditionally experience."

The robotic-assisted bronchoscopy procedure utilizes the Ion Endoluminal Platform by Intuitive. The high-tech system creates a 3D map of the patient's lungs using a CT scan. The software then generates the safest and most efficient route through the lung to the nodule or mass. Once the route is determined, an ultrathin and ultra-manueverable catheter is guided to the site of the lung nodule or mass, where it is marked and biopsied with precision and stability. Lymph nodes are also biopsied during the same procedure, using endobronchial ultrasound. The samples are then evaluated on-site.

If the lung nodule is determined to be an early-stage cancer, the surgical team uses the same navigational route to mark the area with dye to prepare for its removal. Then, the patient, still asleep, has a second robotic procedure

to remove the lung cancer on the same day.

Recently, the UC Davis Health team identified a 1.5 cm pulmonary nodule in the right upper lobe of a patient's lung, perform a biopsy, identify malignant cells from rapid on-site evaluation, and inject an inert dye for marking, all within 45 minutes. Surgeon Luis Godoy subsequently used the Da Vinci Robotic System by Intuitive to safely resect the lung cancer. The patient was discharged home 24 hours after being diagnosed and cured of lung cancer.

"With these two robotic technologies, we now have the ability to diagnose and treat suspected early-stage lung cancer patients in one anesthetic event," explained Phan. "To put it into perspective, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network guidelines for time from diagnosis to surgical treatment of lung cancer is eight weeks; we have set a new standard for innovative and efficient patient care."

Shift in preventative screening

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States

among men and women, making up almost a quarter of all cancer mortalities. It is a malignancy that tends to spread quickly, shows no symptoms unless it is very advanced, and can silently spread to virtually any part of the body. This makes early screening and treatment critical.

In 2021, the United States Preventive Services Task Force updated its lung cancer screening guidelines, making more people than ever eligible. The new guidelines recommend annual screening in adults aged 50 to 80 years who have a 20 pack-year smoking history and currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years. By some estimates, 14.5 million Americans are now candidates for screening — an increase of 6.5 million people, including more high-risk women, and Black and Hispanic smokers, who were previously underrepresented in screened populations.

"The most effective method for treating cancer is to catch it early and to start treatment as soon as possible," explained Phan. "With these new screening guidelines and our robotic-assisted bronchoscopy

platform, we are introducing a paradigm shift in lung cancer treatment that will further advance health equity for our community and others."

Collaboration and looking forward

The robotic bronchoscopy program is a multidisciplinary collaboration. It includes operating room staff, the anesthesia and pathology teams and leadership, who provided the necessary tools and facility space to deliver the best care possible.

"We would not have been able to implement this innovative platform without the commitment of everyone involved and I am thankful to all who contributed to this milestone achievement," said Phan. "Our health system is now equipped to help patients detect and defeat lung cancer earlier."

Moving forward, the UC Davis Interventional Pulmonology Program has already implemented strategies of growth in their integrated service lines and plans to implement their comprehensive anesthetic diagnosis, staging, and lobectomy into additional treatment programs. ★

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by Jess Townes and Jennifer Harney

Willow loves magic and she even has incredible magic skills. She is able to mesmerize, dazzle and even charm her



family, until the day her baby brother arrives. Baby Rowan instantly casts a spell on everyone, taking all their attention. What if he is actually a powerful wizard? Now it's up to Willow to put a stop to his hocus pocus, before she falls under his spell too.

Follow the adorable adventure of a little girl learning to accept her new baby brother. While it might be a hard adjustment, this magical book highlights the joy (and maybe a little magical power) a new baby has on the family. Perfect for any new big sister or big brother.

Hang In There

by Sabrina Moyle and Eunice Moyle

Have you ever had one of those bad days, where everything goes wrong? Don't worry, don't give up; just hang in there!

Follow Cat on a day where everything is going "cat-astrophyically" wrong. Readers will fall over in

fits of giggles with the charming animal-paired wordplay, learning that, in the end, laughing with friends will make bad days better.

The Legend of The Storm Goose

by Fiona Halliday

Erin loves all the stories that her papa has told her, but she loved the story of the Storm Goose most of all. Then one day an injured goose arrives to Erin from within the storm clouds. Worried, she knew there was no way this goose can be the same one meant to protect her papa at sea. As summer turned to fall the goose remained by her side, and Erin is finally able to understand the message it brings.

Readers will find solace in a beautiful story of loss and comfort. Breathtaking illustrations guide readers through the pages while the story will wrap around their hearts. A perfect book for teaching about loss. ★



Riley Reviews

'ELVIS' STILL KING OF ROCK; 'DOCTOR BLAKE MYSTERIES' ON TV

A Film and TV Review by Tim Riley

"ELVIS" RATED PG-13

Nothing expresses the cinematic style of writer, director and producer Baz Luhrmann more than his Academy Award-winning "Moulin Rouge!," which brought back the movie musical and cemented his cult-like following.

It's not far off the mark to note that Luhrmann's signature blend of fantasy, romance and decadence fuses high and low culture, resulting in a trademark theatrical aesthetic that captivates audiences and ignites imaginations.

The visionary Luhrmann's artistic touch has turned "Elvis" into an epic, big-screen spectacle with flashy visuals and bold colors that underscore Elvis Presley's (Austin Butler) ascent to iconic status.

As much as Elvis establishes himself as the King of Rock 'n Roll, this Luhrmann opus (the film runs 159 minutes) is equally, if not more so, the story of Col. Tom Parker (Tom Hanks), the carnival barker who latched on to the musical sensation from Tupelo, Mississippi.

The rise of Elvis is seen through the machinations of Parker, who proved to be so focused on promotion and manipulation of his meal ticket that he quickly abandoned his touring shows with country and western singer Hank Snow (David Wenham).

The early Elvis was captivated by Black musicians on Memphis' famous Beale Street juke joints as well as revival tent shows. The blues and gospel music proved to be heavy influences on Elvis' musical style.

Enamored with Black artists like B.B. King (Kelvin Harrison Jr.), Big Momma Thornton (Shonka Dukureh), and Little Richard (Alton Mason), Elvis took their music mainstream and used his hip-swiveling stage gyrations that made girls scream in ecstasy.

Thinking about how Elvis ended up overweight and dependent on drugs makes more fascinating his meteoric rise in the early days to sex symbol status, and credit goes to Austin Butler's strong performance as the Elvis that should be remembered.

Though Elvis lived only to the age of 42, his life was stuffed with biographical excess that can't be unpacked here, and Luhrmann glosses over vast swaths of his career, notably skimming over the decade of lackluster Hollywood musicals.

Since the world is populated with thousands of low-rent Elvis impersonators with minimal talent, judge for yourself how well Austin Butler revives the Elvis mystique. The young actor nails the portrayal of a legend with blazing energy in every musical number.

In the end, it's sad to think how Col. Parker was a duplicitous, avaricious and contemptuous con artist whose scheming manipulations caused Elvis to be a virtual hostage unable to escape his greedy clutches.

The last chapter of "Elvis" are the Vegas

years where Elvis took up residence at the International Hotel, mainly because Parker needed to pay off his considerable gambling debts, while Elvis was falling deeper into a life of despair.

One can't help but think that after Elvis lost his beloved mother Gladys (Helen Thomson) and his marriage to Priscilla (Olivia DeJonge) crashed and burned, life for the King of Rock 'n Roll was destined to spiral out of control.

The dysfunctional relationship between the King and his grasping promoter that is explored is sadly essential to "Elvis," but what is most satisfying is the singer's interaction with the talented Black artists and his rocking musical performances.

"THE DOCTOR BLAKE MYSTERIES" ON OVATION TV

Ovation TV bills itself as America's premier arts network, and yet it also features foreign mystery series. The first season of "The Doctor Blake Mysteries" will begin airing on Thursday, July 7th.

This is a period Australian murder mystery series starring Aussie versatile actor Craig McLachlan as the maverick town doctor Lucien Blake, an impulsive risk-taker who's not afraid to upset the status quo.

The setting is 1959. Dr. Blake has returned to a place he once called home to take over his deceased father's medical practice set in the gothic gold rush town of Ballarat.

Everything seems peaceful on the surface, but seething underneath are the age-old passions of a regional town clashing head-on with the tension and fears of the decade to come.

Haunted by the horrors of war, his own personal loss and changed by his experiences as a POW, yet very human Dr. Blake undertakes his other role as Police Surgeon with precision and gusto while many find his unpredictable and unconventional manner unnerving.

Ahead of his time, the good doctor looks to the science of forensics and his own understanding of the human heart and mind to help solve the mysteries that inevitably come his way.

In the first episode, when a wayward girl from the local reform school is found dead in Lake Wendouree, Dr. Lucien Blake is immediately suspicious. He shocks the police with his unconventional investigative methods.

Working beside Dr. Blake, helping and at times hindering, are his housekeeper Jean (Nadine Garner); her nephew Danny (Rick Donald), a young Constable; District Nurse Mattie O'Brien (Cate Wolfe); and Chief Superintendent Matthew Lawson (Joel Tobeck).

The original, period murder mystery series "The Doctor Blake Mysteries" will air four episodes back-to-back every Thursday, with season two episodes beginning on Thursday, July 21st. ★

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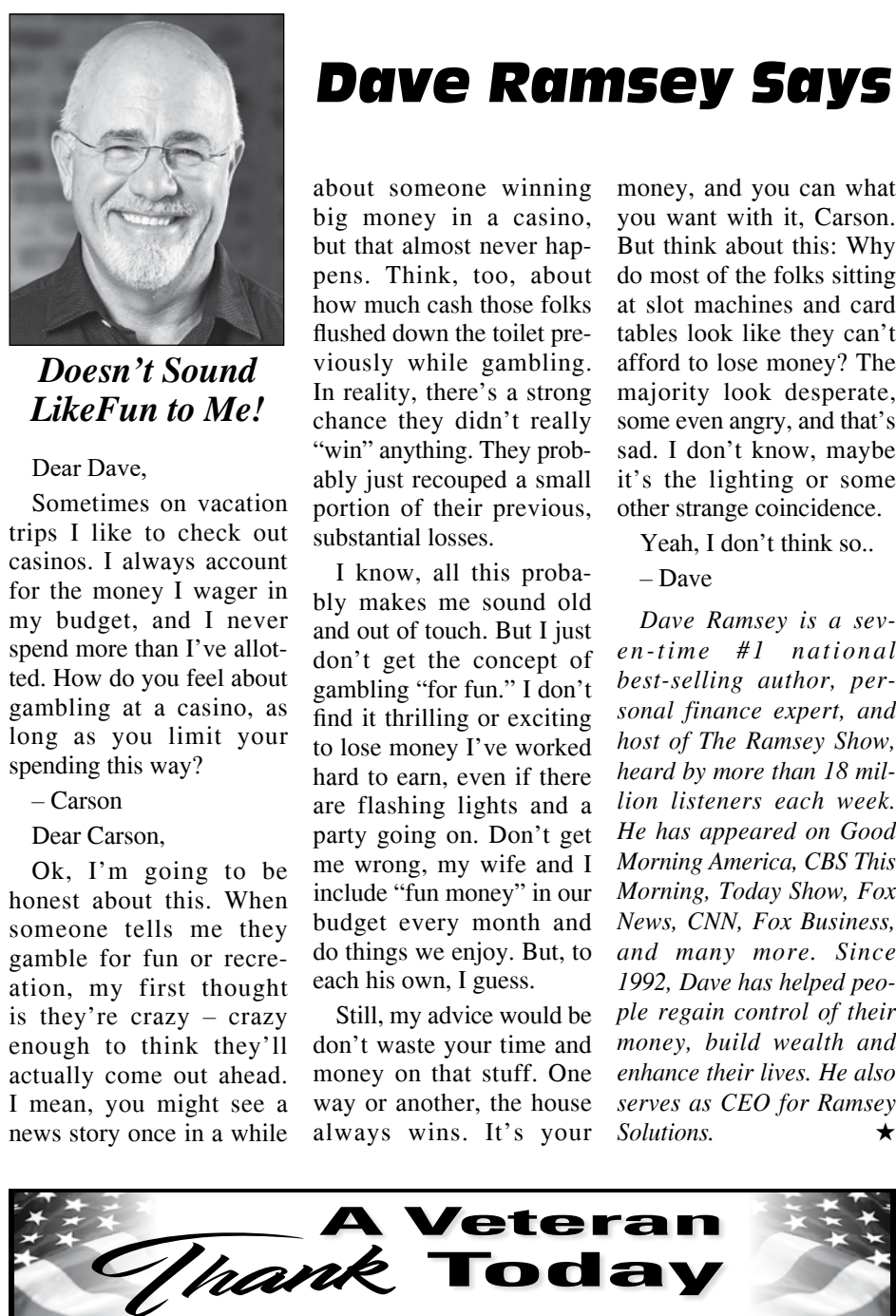
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Dave Ramsey Says
Doesn't Sound Like Fun to Me!

Dear Dave,
Sometimes on vacation trips I like to check out casinos. I always account for the money I wager in my budget, and I never spend more than I've allotted. How do you feel about gambling at a casino, as long as you limit your spending this way?
- Carson

Dear Carson,
Ok, I'm going to be honest about this. When someone tells me they gamble for fun or recreation, my first thought is they're crazy - crazy enough to think they'll actually come out ahead. I mean, you might see a news story once in a while about someone winning big money in a casino, but that almost never happens. Think, too, about how much cash those folks flushed down the toilet previously while gambling. In reality, there's a strong chance they didn't really "win" anything. They probably just recouped a small portion of their previous, substantial losses.
I know, all this probably makes me sound old and out of touch. But I just don't get the concept of gambling "for fun." I don't find it thrilling or exciting to lose money I've worked hard to earn, even if there are flashing lights and a party going on. Don't get me wrong, my wife and I include "fun money" in our budget every month and do things we enjoy. But, to each his own, I guess.
Still, my advice would be don't waste your time and money on that stuff. One way or another, the house always wins. It's your money, and you can what you want with it, Carson. But think about this: Why do most of the folks sitting at slot machines and card tables look like they can't afford to lose money? The majority look desperate, some even angry, and that's sad. I don't know, maybe it's the lighting or some other strange coincidence.
Yeah, I don't think so...
- Dave

Dave Ramsey is a seven-time #1 national best-selling author, personal finance expert, and host of The Ramsey Show, heard by more than 18 million listeners each week. He has appeared on Good Morning America, CBS This Morning, Today Show, 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 for Ramsey Solutions. ★

A Veteran Thank Today

NATIONAL NEWS *courtesy of THE EPOCH TIMES*

A driver unloads raw crude oil from his tanker to process into gas at the Marathon refinery in Salt Lake City on May 24, 2022.

Biden Blames Oil Companies for Record Gas Prices Amid His Plan to 'End Fossil Fuel'

Refineries suggest a different path for Biden administration to boost production

KEVIN STOCKLIN

U.S. fossil fuel companies responded on June 15 to President Joe Biden's June 14 letter that accused them of profiteering and driving up gas prices during a "time of war."

Biden's letter blamed gas prices, which have skyrocketed from \$2.53 per gallon when he took office to about \$5 today, on "Putin's war of aggression" and greedy corporations, ignoring his own efforts to suppress American fossil fuel production. Since taking power in January 2021, the Biden administration has worked relentlessly across multiple agencies to carry out a campaign pledge in which he stated, "I guarantee you we are going to end fossil fuel."

Biden's note to energy executives put the blame for today's surging gas prices on refineries and the "high-profit margins for refining oil into gasoline," stating that when crude oil was \$120 per barrel in March, similar to today's prices, "the price of gas at the pump was \$4.25 per gallon. Today, gas prices are 75 cents higher."

The difference, he claimed, was due to refiners' profit margins, which he said have tripled since then. Simultaneously, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre slammed U.S. oil companies for failing to do their "patriotic duty."

Responding to Biden's letter, the American Petroleum Institute and the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers stated that U.S. refineries are currently operating at 94 percent capacity, among the highest utilization rates in the world, and that prices for oil products are set on world markets based on global supply and demand, not by American companies.

According to the Energy Information Administration, refining costs made up 14 percent of the total price of gasoline in 2021. The remainder includes 54 percent for crude oil, 16 percent for distribution, and 16 percent for taxes. Escalating prices have driven up the share of crude oil to 60 percent of the total this month.

Regarding Biden's complaint that U.S. refineries had pushed gas prices higher by reducing their capacity by 800,000 barrels a day, industry representatives responded that half of the refineries that have shut did so because they're being converted to renewable fuel production.

"These investments cannot be easily or quickly undone," they stated.

The fossil fuel industry, its consumers, and its investors have responded to administration policies designed to reduce production and capacity. This includes federal incentives to replace gasoline-powered cars and trucks with electric vehicles, cancellation of oil leases in Alaska, canceling new lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico, and canceling the \$9 billion Keystone XL Pipeline, for which construction was already underway.

On March 11, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reinstated California's authority to enforce its own emissions standards for cars and trucks, "which other states can also adopt and enforce," according to an official statement.

"With this authority restored, the EPA will continue partnering with states to advance the next generation of clean vehicle technologies."

Kathleen Sgamma, president of the Western Energy Alliance, said in a June 16 Fox News interview, "We keep hearing that he's



President Joe Biden delivers remarks at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles on June 8, 2022.

working like the devil to bring down energy prices, and that is anything but the truth." She noted that there were about 5,900 development leases and 3,000 permits that were currently being held up by environmental litigation.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) recently announced the creation of its Office of Environmental Justice, which "will engage all Justice Department bureaus, components and offices in the collective pursuit of environmental justice." In addition, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) issued a ruling on March 21 that all listed companies must issue audited reports on their greenhouse gas emissions, including that of their suppliers.

The SEC action underscored the administration's alignment with progressive investment managers, pension funds, banks, insurers, and finance ministers who have joined together in global groups such as Climate Action 100+, the Global Investor Statement to Governments on the Climate Crisis, the Net Zero Asset Managers Initiative, and the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero. Members of these groups have signed joint pledges

to reduce or eliminate financing for the fossil fuel industry.

The sum effect of these policies has been a chilling effect on fossil fuel investment. While the last major refinery built in America was in 1977, long before the current administration, Chevron CEO Mike Wirth said he doesn't expect any new refineries will be built in the United States, for economic and political reasons.

"We've seen refineries closed," he said. "We've seen refineries being repurposed to become biorefineries. And we live in a world where the policy, the stated policy of the U.S. government is to reduce demand for the products that refiners produce." Currently, the United States has 129 operable refineries.

Many in the fossil fuel industry see current gas prices as the result of a deliberate and continuing effort by the Biden administration to force Americans to switch from oil and gas to renewable energy.

Biden recently praised higher oil prices as "an incredible transition that is taking place that, God willing, when it's over, we'll be stronger and the world will be stronger and less reliant on fossil fuels." Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said that

rising prices were "an exclamation point" demonstrating the need to switch to wind and solar from oil, previously advising Americans that "if you drive an electric car, this would not be affecting you."

"They want this current situation," Daniel Turner, executive director of the energy advocacy group Power the Future, told The Epoch Times. "They want the status quo, they just don't want the political fallout from it. The Biden administration needs to understand that if they're going to pursue this agenda, then there are going to be consequences."

"It's almost childlike naïveté to think that you can have such a radical agenda and not have any consequences. It just shows how unserious and in over their heads this administration is."

But the progressive push to curtail fossil fuels is taking effect before renewables such as wind and solar are capable of filling the gap. Price hikes and shortages of gasoline, diesel, and fertilizer—an oil derivative—have had a ripple effect throughout the economy, hitting not only prices at the pump but also food prices, shipping and delivery expenses, and the cost of products that use plastic or other oil-based components.

To the many things Democrats have blamed on Russia, including buying Facebook ads to support President Donald Trump's campaign and spreading misinformation, Biden has now added America's inflationary crisis.

"There is no question that Vladimir Putin is principally responsible for the intense financial pain the American people and their families are bearing," he wrote.

He encouraged refineries to stand up to Putin and "take immediate actions to increase the supply of gasoline, oil, and diesel." Biden says he has done his part by releasing supplies from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, allowing greater use of ethanol in gasoline, and using the Defense Production Act to provide inputs for energy production.

The fossil fuel industry responded to Biden that better solutions would include "promoting infrastructure development, addressing escalating regulatory compliance costs, allowing all technologies to compete to reduce emissions, modernizing fuels policies, and ensuring capital markets are functioning for all participants."

Meanwhile, Biden has planned a trip to Saudi Arabia in July to implore oil producers there to boost their output. And the Biden administration has been working on a deal with Iran to end sanctions, allowing it to sell more oil as well.

"I wish the Biden administration made the same overtures and had the same spirit of collaboration with [American oil companies] that they have with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Maduro government in Venezuela, and the Ayatollah in Iran," Turner said. "The American oil and gas industry just gets threats and questioning of our patriotism."

Texas Woman Pleads Guilty to 26 Counts of Voter Fraud in 'Vote-Harvesting' Operation

GARY BAI

A Texas woman pleaded guilty on June 16 to 26 counts of voter fraud committed during a local water board election in 2018.

Monica Mendez, 36, of Port Lavaca, Texas, ran a "vote-harvesting operation on behalf of a subsidized housing corporation in order to influence the outcome of a utility board election," the Texas Attorney General's (AG) Office said in a June 17 statement. The election in question was the 2018 Victoria County Water Control and Improvement District 1 election in Bloomington, Texas.

Mendez pleaded guilty to 26

felony counts of voter fraud, including three counts of illegal voting, eight counts of election fraud, seven counts of assisting a voter to submit a ballot by mail, and eight counts of unlawful possession of a mail ballot, the office stated.

Victoria County District Judge Eli Garza sentenced Mendez to five years of deferred adjudication probation.

Victoria County Elections Administrator Margetta Hill told The Epoch Times on June 20 that Mendez worked as a volunteer deputy registrar voter and assisted residents to register to vote during Bloomington's 2018 water board election.

Mendez was signing applications to register to vote and also applications to vote by mail, Hill said.

According to a local media outlet, the Victoria Advocate, the 2018 water board election appeared on the radar of the AG's office after about 275 of the 2,500 people who registered to vote used the same mailing address, which is associated with rental properties linked to a local housing nonprofit called ALMS.

According to the nonprofit's 2018 tax filings, ALMS operates as La Raza Unidos and described its mission as distributing "new and gently used

clothing to men, women, and children, free of charge."

Catherine Engelbrecht, founder and president of Texas election integrity group True the Vote, told The Epoch Times that this case is just the tip of the iceberg.

Mendez was charged with 26 counts of voter fraud in April 2021 and arrested in June 2021 by the Texas AG's Election Fraud Unit.

Attorney General Ken Paxton's Election Integrity Unit and the Victoria County District Attorney's Office jointly prosecuted the case.

Since 2015, Paxton has successfully prosecuted 534 elec-

tion fraud offenses against 155 individuals, according to the AG's website. Currently, 43 individuals in Texas have a prosecution pending. The AG is conducting 386 open voter fraud investigations.

The Texas state legislature passed legislation (S.B. 5) in 2017 that increased the penalties for most mail ballot-related offenses to felonies subjected to state jail time. It again increased criminal penalties and created criminal offenses for election fraud by passing S.B. 1 in 2021.

Officials from Paxton's office and Mendez's attorney didn't respond to requests for comment by press time.

WEEKLY COMICS

Amber Waves by Dave T. Phipps

HEY GRANDPA, MOM AND DAD ALWAYS SAY "I WILL UNDERSTAND WHEN I'M OLDER."
 SURE, THAT'S BECAUSE WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG YOU STILL HAVE A LOT TO LEARN.
 WELL, YOU ARE SUPER OLD, SO YOU MUST UNDERSTAND JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING!
 ACTUALLY, AT MY AGE THE WORLD JUST Baffles ME.

The Spats by Jeff Pickering

I WAS ONCE KIDNAPPED BY A BUNCH OF MIMES.
 HOW'D THEY TREAT YOU?
 THEY DID UNSPEAKABLE THINGS TO ME.

Out on a Limb by Gary Kopervas

BRIKE SPRINGSTEEN'S TOUR BUS SOMEWHERE ON THE NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE

THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME BY AL SCADUTO

EVER HAPPEN TO YOU? (AFTER DINNER PARTY DIV?)
 OH, DEAR! ULP! I FORGOT TO SERVE MY BEAUTIFUL WATER-CRESS BROCCOLI RABE SALAD...
 HUH? WHASSA MATTER?
 THANKS CHAS. REED, UNITY, ME.
 PUZZLE PIC-FIND THE GUY WHO PASSED UP AFTER DINNER DESSERT BECAUSE IT'S TOO FATTENING...
 YUM-POPCORN, PEANUTS, PRETZELS, POTATO CHIPS--AND A NICE COLD BEER--ALL SET FOR THE BIG GAME...
 YUM-POPCORN, PEANUTS, PRETZELS, POTATO CHIPS--AND A NICE COLD BEER--ALL SET FOR THE BIG GAME...
 WHERE DID YOU FOLKS GET THIS (MUNCH MUNCH) FRUIT BASKET? YUM--THE APPLES ARE DEE-LICIOUS--AND THE GRAPES AND BANANAS EVEN BETTER--YUM--THE CHOCOLATES ARE MY FAVORITES--YU-U-M-M...
 HUH? WHASSA MATTER?
 MUNCH MUNCH--CRUNCH--
 HOSPITAL PESTS NO. 1,753--THE VISITOR WHO DOESN'T BRING A GIFT--ONLY HIS TREMENDOUS GALL AND APPETITE TO MATCH...
 THANKS TO HAROLD LASH, BOYNTON BEACH, FL.
 THANKS TO ROB CAMERON, SILVER SPRING, MD.
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R.F.D. by Mike Marland

YOU'VE GOT THE WORDING ON YOUR SIGN MIXED UP!
 NOPE.
 I'M SET UP HERE IN THE FRONT YARD, MY IN-LAWS ARE IN THE BACK YARD AND I'VE GOT NEIGHBORS SET UP ON BOTH SIDE YARDS.
 MULTI-YARD FAMILY SALE

Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps

THE GOOD NEWS IS BASED ON WHAT I SEE HERE YOU DEFINITELY WON'T HAVE TIME TO RETURN TO WORK TODAY.

GRIN and BEAR IT

"It's OK, officer. ... We're illegal immigrants."

LAFF-A-DAY

"C'mon, Mikluk, don't you think it's time you swallowed your pride and admitted we're lost?"

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTIHOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

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Fourth on the Field Returns to Sutter Health Park



Although the team is on the road for the holiday, Sutter Health Park remains the spot to be as the River Cats are hosting their ninth annual Fourth on the Field. Photo courtesy of Ralph Thompson/Sacramento River Cats



This year's event features 22 local food trucks, picnicking in the outfield, live music by the Rod Stinson Band, fun vendors along the concourse and great activities for kids and families. Photo courtesy of Ralph Thompson/Sacramento River Cats



Although the team is on the road for the holiday, Sutter Health Park remains the spot to be as the River Cats are hosting their ninth annual Fourth on the Field. Photo courtesy of Ralph Thompson/Sacramento River Cats

River Cats News Release

WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)

The Sacramento River Cats are excited to host their ninth annual Fourth on the Field Presented by Xfinity at Sutter Health Park to cap off a weekend of baseball and the greatest fireworks shows in Sacramento.

The River Cats will kick off Fourth of July weekend with

three days of baseball followed by post-game fireworks as they host the Reno Aces from July 1-3.

Celebrate the national holiday a day early with some Sunday night baseball as the River Cats battle their division rival before the annual Independence Eve Fireworks Extravaganza lights up the West Sacramento sky with a 6:35 p.m. (PT) first pitch.

Although the team is on the road for the holiday, Sutter Health Park remains the spot to be as the River Cats are hosting their ninth annual Fourth on the Field. Baseball fan or not, there is something for everyone who attends this must-see Sacramento tradition.

This year's event features 22 local food trucks, picnicking in the outfield, live music by the

Rod Stinson Band, fun vendors along the concourse, great activities for kids and families, and even a club level for ages 21 and over.

For the grand finale, sit back and watch the greatest fireworks show in Sacramento illuminate the sky, making the perfect magical ending to a memorable night.

Gates will open at 6 p.m. (PT) and tickets can be purchased at

rivercats.com.

For more information about Fourth on the Field, or for the River Cats' schedule, head to rivercats.com. Single game tickets and ticket packages are on sale now along with season ticket memberships. To purchase, call the River Cats ticket hotline at (916) 371-HITS (4487), email tickets@rivercats.com, or visit rivercats.com. ★

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