



**A Family  
Pantry**  
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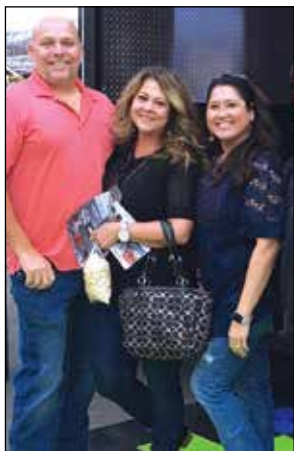


# **Dixon Independent Voice**

VOLUME 30 • ISSUE 6 *Serving Dixon and Solano County since 1993* FEBRUARY 11, 2022

**SEE  
INSIDE**

**HOME, GARDEN  
SHOW  
RETURNS**



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MIDDLE OF SOLAR  
PANEL BATTLE**



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## School Farm Raises Frustrations



DHS Agriculture Teacher Marcus Tanaka stands in a huge barn that is empty still even after a ribbon cutting was celebrated six months ago. He reports the District Superintendent “ignored” the Ag teacher’s request to be involved and that has resulted in many failures in the buildings, access, and parking. Photo by Debra Dingman

By Debra Dingman

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - The man trudged up to the podium with heavy work boots in farmer wear of jeans, a black and white plaid shirt, and the emblematic forest green vest looking every bit of an Ag teacher. After standing silent for a moment, his shoulders slumped, Marcus Tanaka, a Dixon High School Ag teacher for more than a decade struggled for composure to say, “I’m broken.”

Superintendent of Schools Brian Dolan had just supplied an exhaustive update on the Dixon High School Farm where a normal thinking person would think he was the project manager. Dolan reported on \$16,000 spent for fixtures in the green house, animal pens, 5-month delays with the utility company and Fire approvals.

He said that the company they work with sent the wrong keys and they had to send them back and now with the supply chain issues, that could delay things further.

“I can’t give you a hard timeline,” Dolan said, “but I have impressed on our partners that we are very behind. My apologies that we are not further along.”

To Tanaka, those words were just “excuses” for not having the project done because Dolan refused to include any of the Ag teachers or their expertise in the project.

“I called and I wrote emails and finally said ‘well, you must not want my input,’” he told the School Board despite that he had taught 15 years in Woodland and built their offsite 45’ x 90’ pole barn with a permanent fence and extra Ag shed there.

“I didn’t get communicated with at all. I was never included. My skills go far beyond the classroom, but you never once returned my call,” said the man who started teaching nearly 30 years ago after graduating from Cal-Poly State University with Agribusiness Management and who has expertise in Project Management, Educational Technology, and Educational Leadership. “I was ignored.”

Tanaka grew up on a small family horse ranch and appreciated lessons from his DHS Ag teacher John Ramos. Tanaka raised sheep and cattle and when he came back to Dixon, he wanted his sons to have the same opportunities. He said he was excited when the discussion of the new barn started and had already

*Continued on page 3*

## Ernest Plans to Run Again



Councilman Jim Ernest

By Debra Dingman

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - District 2 Council Representative, past Citizen of the Year, and Ramtown Karate business owner, Jim Ernest has announced he is planning to run for re-election.

“All along I was considering a second term. Some days are more frustrating than others as a councilmember. When I first ran, I had no aspirations of being a politician, but I wanted to give back to the community,” he said. “Now, there are things in the fires that I would love to see through. It feels like we’re getting somewhere.” He referred to the development in the Pardi Plaza, the northeast quadrant, the drainage issue and the Parkway Overpass. He is proud of many accomplishments while serving since 2018.

“It’s very exciting where the downtown is going. We got County Supervisor Jim Sperring to say that it was going to be about five million and I thought it was great that [Dixon] got acknowledged as a county project,” he said. “The Transportation Authority controls a lot of the money that comes down the road and so [it means a lot] to have said the dollar amount.”

Some of his goals include mentoring and encouraging younger people for involvement.

“Sometime maybe after this term we can get younger people to step up because I don’t want to do this anymore after four more years. I’m 70, and I served eight on the planning commission and now four years as council. That was my total goal. I’m not trying to raise up to Mayor or Supervisor,” he added. He is proud that the council has seemed to have less friction.

“We’ve had good people on the council for years, but there was discord and people got frustrated and insulted each other and that hurt our staff and hurt our city,” he explained. “I try to be my most professional and be my best—even more than polite—to stay calm because when you stay calm, you think your best.”

The most challenging part of the job is all the time it takes to prepare for meetings and serve on committees, he admitted.

“We haven’t solved the

*Continued on page 3*

## Redistricting Triggers Congressman’s Visit

By Debra Dingman

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - Congressman Mike Thompson wanted to get to know this town a little better so he spent a day here in Dixon last week—his first stop as a congressional candidate. Thompson, who represents District 5 will be running for re-election in District 4 in November which due to redistricting, includes Dixon.

He toured Dixon’s downtown, went on a tour of Altec alongside the City Economic Development/ Grants Manager Larry Burkhardt, met with other Dixon City staff, and stopped at the Dixon School District office.

“I think he was intent on getting better acquainted with an area within his newly-defined district that he intends to run in,” said Burkhardt.

At the end of the day, Councilman Jim Ernest, together with Dixon Planning Commissioner



Congressman Mike Thompson hopes to represent Dixon and got to meet up with Hispanic business owners at Dawson’s restaurant as part of his local visit. (L-R) Israel Joe Guzmán, Marissa Gamino, Loraine Hernández-Covello, Jim Ernest, Jill Ferguson-Orr, Julian Cuevas, Congressman Mike Thompson, Aimee Echeverria, Hortencia Guerrero, Victor Guerrero and Roberto Rodriguez (Masks removed for photo). Photo by Lucy Brazil

Loraine Hernández-Covello and Dixon School Board Candidate Julian Cuevas brought together members of the Latino community, for a meet and greet with the Congressman.

The meet and greet was hosted by Jill Orr at Dawson’s Restaurant. The group discussed the

Congressman’s career and his connection to this area. Participants discussed issues particular to Dixon and touched on issues concerning Dixon’s Latino community.

Dixon is in US Congressional District 3 represented currently by Congressman John Garamendi but beginning

January 2023, redistricting will move the City of Dixon to Congressional District 4 and Garamendi will be moving to a different district. Primaries will be held this June, and the General Election will be November 2022.

The maps and the new district boundaries don’t

*Continued on page 3*





# Positive Feedback Confirms Readership

By Debra Dingman

It's really nice hearing from people who read our newspaper. I have sticky notes from subscribers who sent a note saying that they were enjoying the paper, and I often get comments on social media that are positively wonderful. Recently, I got a call right after the January 28 issue came out from Mike Pappa, a former Dixon Little League President and current District 64 Administrator. He caught something not quite right in the article about the need for umpires for all the children in Little League, although he did commend us for publishing such an article.

Because it's been too many years since I had a son in Little League, I would have not caught this but apparently, the writer only listed two cities, Dixon and Woodland, in District 64 but Woodland, Davis, Rio Vista, and even Esparto are also in that district.

As we talked, I remembered his name from many moons ago. Since he's a 40-year Dixonite, he probably was in the thick of my youngest son's games. I clearly remembered my little guy in Northwest Park with white shorts that hung to his calves and the red v-neck shirt running as fast as his stocky legs would take him alongside all his little buddies. I still have the photo up in the house somewhere.

With Mike, I appreciated the great conversation we had about how often men are reluctant about being an umpire because "they don't know that much about the rules," Mike said. But, there are clinics

offered regularly by Brian Riley, who is part of District staff. Brian's phone is (530) 219-8719 in case you want to help out with the love of baseball.

Michelle Townsend wrote the article, and it was helpful and encouraging for more folks to become umpires. The article said you can make as much as \$600 in a weekend and the teams need help. You can reach Mike at (707) 678-1341 and/or read the article at independentvoice.com and click on "back issues." You can also go on tshq.bluesombrero.com for more information.

We also love getting tips—Wes Besseghini, a coach and father of three, said they are looking for Dixon youth to play some flag football this spring.

"It's the perfect entry point for a kid who is brand new to the sport, and it's also great for experienced players who want to keep their skills sharp in the offseason," he said. The short, easy spring schedule is SUNDAY AFTERNOONS ONLY, March 27 through May 10. Cost is \$90 and includes jersey, flags, and insurance – you just need cleats and a mouthguard. Go to dixonrams.com for more info.

And I truly appreciate people taking the time to give us a thumbs up or giving comments on our social media pages, too. When I posted my article on Dixon's growth titled, "Investing in the Future," the comments kept coming for days on several different social media sites and last I checked, it was somewhere around 200 comments between the various places. Thanks for reading! ★

# Dixon News Briefs

MPG Staff

## Driving School

A free class for seniors Age Well, Drive Smart will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 16, from 10 am to noon at the Senior Multi-Use Center. This class is specifically designed to help seniors tune up their driving skills, refresh their knowledge of the rules of the road, and discuss normal age-related physical changes that affect their driving ability. To register, contact the Solano CHP at (707) 639-5600.

The Senior Center recently reopened, and they are excited to welcome folks back but also want to ensure a safe environment for members of the community so will require masks and social distancing.

The Center is located at 201 South First Street and the office phone is (707) 678-7022 Monday through Friday from 9 am to 2:30 pm. Please take note, they will be closed on Monday, Feb. 21, for the President's Day Holiday.

## City Council

The next City Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 15, at 7 pm unless you're a fly on the wall in the Closed Session at 6 pm where lawsuits are long-topics of discussion led by City Attorney Doug White.

You can attend City Council Meetings in person at 600 East A Street, partake in discussion or simply watch using Zoom on your computer. If you are planning to talk at these meetings on issues on the agenda, you need to remember that you may get only three minutes under Mayor Steve Bird's discretion.

Also, if you want to bring up something that is NOT on the agenda, that can only happen in the beginning of the meeting under "comments on NON-agenda items." You still may have only three minutes so prepare if at all possible.

## Transportation Issues?

On Wednesday, Feb. 16, the City of Dixon's Transportation Advisory Commission will be meeting also at 7 pm and as of press time, also inside the Council Chambers. They only meet every other month so if you have traffic concerns,

better attend this one and speak your piece. See their agenda on the City's website.

## Citizen Deadline

Another reminder is from the Chamber of Commerce that this coming Thursday, Feb. 17, for the Citizen of the Year and Business of the Year nominations. Criteria is available by calling the Chamber office at (707) 678-2650.

The entry needs to include the following information: 1) Nominee's name, address, phone number, spouse's name, years of residency in Dixon and occupation along with 2) Your name, address, and phone number.

All letters submitted must be signed and dated. All Nominations must be received at the Chamber office no later than 4 pm. You can mail, email or drop-off your nomination to the Chamber. Submit to: Dixon Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 159 or 220 N. Jefferson St., Dixon, 95620 or info@dixonchamber.org.

This award is traditionally a surprise to the recipient. Therefore, nominees should not be aware that their name has been submitted. The Dixon "Citizen of the Year" Award will be presented at the Dixon Chamber's Annual Awards Night Dinner to be held later this year, subject to COVID restrictions.

## Rotary Crab Feed

Tickets are going fast for the annual 18th Rotary Crab Feed and Dance with the Time Bandits on Saturday, Feb. 26 at Madden Hall at the Dixon May Fair. No-host bar opens at 6 pm and dinner starts at 7 pm. Tickets are sold only online at Event Brite.com. Tickets are \$70 and that will be refunded if the event has to be canceled. Contact Janice Beaman for more info at (916) 240-0147.

## Fish Fry/Valentines

The Veterans Fish Fry is Friday night, 6 pm, for \$10 and it's delicious! Served with coleslaw and cornbread treats. Afterward, the public is invited to join the ALP 208 Women's Auxiliary and the Dixon Kiwanis Club in making Valentines that will be distributed to seniors and special groups on Valentine's Day. The Veterans Memorial Hall is at 1305 North First Street. ★



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**Sheila Dybdahl - Children's Minister**

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# Make a Valentine for a Solano Life House Resident



Corinne McCoy of the Dixon Public Library presents the Valentines Creation Station at the Dixon Library where anyone is invited to make two Valentine's Day Cards: One to give to someone you love and one to leave at the library for the senior citizens who live at the Solano Life house Assisted Living here in Dixon. McCoy was quick to give credit where credit is due: The project is the inspiration of Jennifer Springfield. The library is located at 230 North First Street in downtown Dixon. They are open daily at 9 am except for Sunday when they are closed. Photo by Debra Dingman



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

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D-Sign Graffix  
Dixon Community Theater  
Panda Express  
Solano County Black Chamber of Commerce  
Solano Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

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

**Connect • Communicate • Collaborate**



# School Farm Raises Frustrations

Continued from page 1  
reached out to local farmers who would have “helped a lot” for free.  
Tanaka lamented that when he first came here, 100 to 125 students were “knocking down the doors” to get to show an animal in the May Fair and they had a place for them.

“Five years ago, if I had known it would take this long to build a barn, I would have said don’t sell the old one. At least we could get to it. You can’t get to this one and there is no grass for the cows to ever get off the concrete. Its placement is wrong, the concrete is wrong, there are lots of things wrong. The Dream Team I assembled five years ago has been disassembled and never included. Lip service is cheap here,” Tanaka directed toward Dolan. He added that the project has taken too long and now there are only about 20 to 25 students that want to show animals, and they have to find places to raise them.  
“Mr. Tanaka is the only one that helps students find barns,” said DHS Senior David Hoffman, who is raising a pig for the May Fair. “He has been my teacher for the past two years, but I’ve known him awhile because his wife



In a disheartening speech at the last school board meeting, Ag teacher Mr. Tanaka told the Board of Trustees that the ‘Dream Team’ he created five years ago to assist in the building of the new school barn was ignored and dismantled. Photo by Debra Dingman

was my 4-H Leader. He is the best Ag teacher at the high school.” Hoffman had just returned from a field trip to the Colusa Farm Show with Mr. Tanaka and three other students.  
“All of us who grew up in the 70s and 80s have benefitted from the life skills learned in agriculture. Students and families of this community deserve better,” Tanaka said, listing off names such as Robbens, Jones, Raycrafts, Gills, Huffman, Rhonda Rayn, Seiferts and others.  
“I have been told I don’t have access to my own facility,” he told Dolan. “I don’t know what to say. I’m sad and frustrated. I’m feeling broken. I see these as excuses. The only thing I asked for was

communication and a little respect. I didn’t get either.”  
After the meeting, he was asked about ‘going forward’ and on a tour, pointed to pipes that were too small to handle animal feces, other drainage issues, dangling light fixtures, tattered and exposed insulation, dangerous rises in concrete, splitting asphalt, no place for trailers to turn around, only one exit when the law requires two, and the fact that only one toilet exists hundreds of feet away from where students will be with their animals.  
“I should be included in everything from this day forward. We’ve spent \$55,000 on a consultant to build that farm wrong,” he said. ★

# Home, Garden Show Returns to May Fair

MPG Staff

**SOLANO COUNTY, CA (MPG)**  
- Solano County Home and Garden Show is returning to the Dixon May Fairgrounds for its annual spring home and garden show over the weekend of March 26 and 27. The home and garden show has been a tradition since 2015 but was passed onto Shawna Arzadon-Zambrano and Juan Zambrano in 2019 by Nicole and John Arabia who started the event. Their slogan: “New owners but same great show.”

Attendees are able to come out and meet with home improvement specialists who can share their expertise on the latest products and services or to find those finishing touches for unfinished projects and more. Dixon residents are invited to come enjoy a unique shopping experience with local Artisans who design and make unique gifts and home decor items.  
Vendors offer a wide range of products and services on upgrades, repairs for heating & air, solar, kitchen and bathroom, doors and



John and Nicole Arabia are mentoring Shawna Arzadon-Zambrano and Juan Zambrano in the business of the popular Solano Home and Garden Show. The Zambranos will experience their first time running the show at the Dixon May Fair. Photo Courtesy of Solano Home and Garden Show

windows, screen, garage flooring, alarms, electrical and more. The event offers a relaxed atmosphere with family-friendly activities such as the Kids Korner, Bingo Scavenger Hunt, food, shopping and more. Organizers report it will happen rain or shine. Hours are Saturday 10 am to 6pm and Sunday 10 am to 5pm. General Admission tickets are

\$8 but with the coupon available online, it’s only \$5. Seniors and Military are \$5 (no other discounts applied.) Children 12 and under are free.  
There is also free parking. Visit [www.SolanoHomeShow.com](http://www.SolanoHomeShow.com) for more information and updates. The event’s sponsors are Home Depot, Ambrose Soar, and Greiner Heating and Air Conditioning. ★

# Ernest Plans to Run Again

Continued from page 1  
water problem and we’re trying to get that settled plus the lighting and landscape district issue. We haven’t done everything

but it’s kind of exciting too that people are getting behind things,” he said. “We may not get all those things completed but I’d like to do as much as I can.” ★

# Women’s Club Features Milk Farm Developer

By Debra Dingman

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - Ross Hillesheim and Phil Tagami from California Capital & Investment Group located in Oakland will be welcomed to the Dixon Women’s Improvement Club at their Wednesday, Feb. 16, meeting to share their vision for the development of two Dixon properties, both bordering I-80 (Interstate Highway), that they purchased in the past year. We are looking forward to an interesting presentation regarding what the future holds for Dixon residents.  
In addition, Police Chief Robert Thompson will speak to the DWIC members from the Dixon Police Station via Zoom regarding community policing, citizen assistance and reporting crime, along with sharing plans for restarting the Dixon Police Cadet program. Chief Thompson joined Dixon Police Department in 2017, coming from a 15-year-long career with the Federal Bureau of Investigations in Sacramento.  
In other news, the annual Scholarship Fundraising Dinner at Bud’s Pub and Grill

is on Monday, Feb. 21 from 5 to 8 pm. The tickets are \$30 per person and can be purchased at Dixon Florist and Gifts or by calling Loran Hoffmann at (707) 372-7094. Ticket holders can choose from five delicious entrées that are served with a house salad, vegetable, potatoes, bread and a non-alcoholic beverage.  
Members are creating and offering Gift Baskets that will be on display at the dinner for those interested in donating to the DWIC Community Grants program. We are so pleased to be able to hold this fun and worthwhile event again and hope everyone will join us.  
The February club meeting will be at 12:30 am on Wednesday, Feb. 16, at the Dixon Methodist Church at 209 North Jefferson Street.  
Please note we are meeting earlier than our usual 1pm start time. Guests and new members are welcome! Please contact our membership chair, Mary Kay Callaway at (916) 541-0417, to let her know if you would like to attend or have any questions about the club. ★

# Redistricting Triggers Congressman’s Visit

Continued from page 1  
actually become “operative” until the 2022 primary and general elections; the new boundaries are used for those elections and the new districts don’t actually “exist” until after the 2022 general election is completed.  
Thompson, 71, has been in the House of Representatives since 2013 representing all of Napa and parts of Contra Costa, Lake, Sonoma and Solano counties. He is a Vietnam Veteran who was awarded a Purple Heart, is a small vineyard owner, and also an avid sportsman. He announced this week that he intends to seek re-election in newly drawn Congressional districts that represent Solano County from the south to the area of Vacaville north, east of Fairfield-Suisun and down to Rio Vista.  
Garamendi who lives in Walnut Grove, represents Dixon but his residence location removes him from districts that included Solano. Thompson’s district has changed also but his residence is in St. Helena, in the new District.  
“I was born, grew up and have lived my entire life in the newly numbered 4th Congressional District. The outpouring of support I’ve received is humbling and I’m looking forward to working with state and local leaders on the challenges we face,” Thompson said in a statement.  
Thompson’s number one priority in Congress is to create jobs and grow our economy. He has co-authored numerous pieces of legislation to improve our nation’s infrastructure, boost our renewable energy economy, and better our education system, according to his website.

Additionally, under the new maps, Solano would be located in a single Assembly district, instead of being divided among three. That new district would be the 11th District, which encompasses Solano County, eastern Contra Costa County, and a portion of rural Sacramento County that has been represented by Jim Frazier, who is stepping down.  
Solano county will continue to be located within the 3rd Senate District represented by Bill Dodd, D-Napa, whose current term ends in 2024.  
The California Citizens Redistricting Commission delivered California’s Congressional, State Senate, Assembly, and Board of Equalization maps that will affect California voting districts for the next ten years to the California Secretary of State. The Commission drew four Board of Equalization districts, 52 Congressional districts, 40 Senatorial districts, and 80 Assembly districts.  
It was composed of five Democrats, five Republicans, and four unaffiliated Californians, representing a variety of personal and professional backgrounds and different parts of the state.  
Even Dixon will be affected by redistricting for the upcoming District 1 and District 2 City Council seats although unlikely for any major revisions in boundaries such as Thompson’s. The Dixon city-hired consultants are still working on Dixon, but Ernest said there is likely to be very little change since the census was taken before the influx of new residents in the Southwest Development. ★

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# River Cats Announce Full 2022 Schedule

## Sacramento River Cats Press Release

**WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento River Cats, proud Triple-A affiliate of the 2021 National League West champion San Francisco Giants, are excited to announce their full 150-game schedule for the upcoming 2022 season, including six additional games and a new home finale.

The River Cats will play 75 games at Sutter Health Park in 2022, beginning on April 5. Opening Night has a 6:35 p.m. (PT) first pitch against the newly minted Sugar Land Space Cowboys (Houston Astros), who are playing at Sutter Health Park for the first time.

Following the six-game season-opening series at home, the River Cats will hit the road, taking on the Reno Aces (Arizona Diamondbacks) for the first six of 30 total games against the division rival.

Must-see games include a series against the affiliate-rival Oklahoma City Dodgers (Los Angeles Dodgers) from April 19-24, which includes two fireworks nights. After a quick road trip to Albuquerque, the River Cats return home to celebrate mom at the ballpark, closing

out a six-game series against the Las Vegas Aviators (Oakland A's affiliate) on Mother's Day (May 8) at 1:05 p.m. (PT).

July is full of fireworks as more than half the River Cats' home games will have the postgame staple, including a 6:35 p.m. (PT) Independence Eve Celebration and Fireworks Extravaganza on Sunday, July 3.

The six additional games at the end of the season include three at the Salt Lake Bees (Los Angeles Angels) from Sept. 22-24 and a three-game homestand against the Aviators from Sept. 26-28. The season-finale is set for a 12:05 p.m. (PT) first pitch on Wednesday, Sept. 28.

All Saturday home games will have a 6:37 p.m. (PT) start and all Sundays, outside of July 3, will be 1:05 p.m. (PT) day games. All Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday games will have 6:35 p.m. (PT) first pitches.

The full schedule is available online at rivercats.com. Game dates and times are subject to change.

Season ticket memberships and packages are available now by calling the River Cats ticket hotline at (916) 371-HITS (4487), emailing tickets@rivercats.com, or visiting rivercats.com. ★

# Utilities Join to Support Regional Electric Vehicle Charging Network

## California Utilities Press Release

**SACRAMENTO CA (MPG)** - During a virtual event with Secretary of Energy Jennifer M. Granholm, Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, the California Electric Transportation Coalition and California utilities announced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support a California Regional Charging Network. The MOU encourages cooperation and leadership amongst the California utilities to build out a regional network of chargers in support of California's ambitious goals to electrify the transportation sectors in California.

The MOU was signed by the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (LADWP), Northern California Power Agency (NCPA), Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) and Southern California Edison (SCE), with additional utilities planning to join soon.

The MOU encourages cooperation and leadership in support of electric cars and trucks traveling along key corridors in California and beyond to reduce pollution, protect public health, advance equity, and support access to electric cars and trucks for all Californians.

"We're proud to support a partnership that aims to maximize EV infrastructure throughout the state," said Paul Lau, CEO, and general manager of SMUD. "We recognize that achieving the state's emission reduction goals will take a collective effort and we're happy to be aligned with utilities and municipalities that support that effort. Creating clean travel corridors throughout the state benefits everyone, especially our disadvantaged residents who disproportionately live near these corridors. We hope that this MOU will support the purchase and use of EVs while bolstering the confidence of drivers who move about our state."

"Providing the infrastructure needed to support widespread electric vehicle adoption is critical to breaking down one of the biggest barriers to EV adoption," said Pedro J. Pizarro, president and CEO of Edison International, parent company of Southern California Edison. "Edison is committed to doing our part to ensure electrification of the transportation sector is truly equitable."

The California utilities will be working together to identify key locations for

charging infrastructure in support of regional travel across the state, identify those locations that minimize grid impacts and customer costs, and define charging infrastructure characteristics that lead to more user-friendly car and truck charging.

"No single utility on its own can create a regional charging network to eliminate range anxiety," said SDG&E CEO Caroline Winn. "But by working together within a framework of shared values, we can make a bigger collective impact to benefit all Californians and advance our state's global leadership in clean transportation."

This MOU and collaboration grew from the ongoing commitment in California to zero-emission mobility and goods movement, recently highlighted by Governor Newsom in Executive Order N-79-20. Under the order, 100 percent of sales of new cars and drayage trucks are to be zero-emission by 2035 and all on-road cars and trucks are to be zero-emissions by 2045. Although California has built out its charging infrastructure at a commendable rate, much more is needed to meet the state's zero-emission car and truck goals, and ensure that all Californians have access to safe, clean, and affordable electricity fuel.

"At LADWP, we recognize the tremendous benefits to transitioning California's vehicle fleet to electricity fuel, and we are committed to doing our part to ensure this transition is truly equitable. The opportunities to benefit from this transition apply to all Californians whether or not they own or operate an electric vehicle, these kinds of collaborations help improve and ensure those benefits," said Reiko Kerr, LADWP senior assistant general manager, Power System Engineering and Technical Services.

The MOU specifically calls out the need to support and engage with local and diverse communities along the regional corridors. The MOU emphasizes equity and community inclusion, as part of the participating utilities core values.

"The California utilities have led the nation on clean, renewable, electricity and support for electrification. I look forward to this collaborative effort and to seeing it expand with partnerships and collaboration across the United States that benefit all EV drivers by ensuring they can travel freely within and outside the state," said Eileen Tutt, executive director, California Electric Transportation Coalition. ★

# SAFE Credit Union to Award \$10,000 in Scholarships

## Public Relations and Communications Specialist Press Release

**FOLSOM, CA (MPG)** - SAFE Credit Union will award \$10,000 in scholarships to high school seniors this Spring. The 2022 Scholarship Program in its 22nd year will provide 10 outstanding college-bound seniors each with a \$1,000 scholarship.

With SAFE's commitment to student achievement in mind, the Scholarship Committee will select awardees based on their exceptional grade point average, financial need, letters of recommendation and a personal statement.

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The 2022 application package is available online at safecu.org/2022Scholarship or call (916) 979- 7233 or (800) SEE-SAFE for more information. Applications must be emailed to scholarships@safecu.org or post-marked no later than Feb. 28, 2022, and addressed to:

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# State Officials Announce Latest COVID-19 Stats

## CDPH Press Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) released the most recent statistics on COVID-19 and updates on the state's pandemic response. The most up to date data is available on the state's COVID-19 data dashboard.

### Update on ICU Capacity

While statewide case rates continue to drop and hospitalization rates are stabilizing, ICUs in the San Joaquin Valley are at or near capacity activating surge protocols which allows flexibility to transfer patients to hospitals with additional ICU capacity. Counties within the region include: Calaveras, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Benito, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Tuolumne.

More information about the surge protocols can be found here. These surge protocols have been in place since August 2021 to ensure hospitals can provide all Californians the care they need.

"California has measures in place to respond to the surge and changing dynamics of the pandemic," said Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary of the California Health & Human Services Agency. "ICUs in the San Joaquin Valley, where vaccination rates are lower, are nearing capacity. Californians will get through this latest surge by continuing to follow the science, including by getting vaccinated and boosted, which is the safest way to protect yourself from the virus."

### Statewide COVID-19 Data

Rates of cases, hospitalizations and deaths are highest among unvaccinated individuals and lowest among boosted individuals. This is true for all age groups. See additional data for unvaccinated and vaccinated cases, hospitalizations and deaths.

### Vaccinations

69,152,754 total vaccines administered; 81.7% of the eligible population (5+) has been vaccinated with at least one dose; 122,422 people a day are receiving

COVID-19 vaccination (average daily dose count over 7 days).

### Cases

California has 7,706,395 confirmed cases to date; Today's average case count is 82,997 (average daily case count over 7 days); Unvaccinated people are 8 times more likely to get COVID-19 than boosted individuals (week of Jan 16).

### Testing

The testing positivity rate is 18.8% (average rate over 7 days).

### Hospitalizations

There are 14,674 hospitalizations statewide; There are 2,585 ICU patients statewide; Unvaccinated people are 13 times more likely to be hospitalized than boosted individuals (week of Jan 9).

### Deaths

There have been 78,825 COVID-19 deaths since the start of the pandemic; COVID-19 claims the lives of 64 Californians each day (average daily death count over 7 days).

### Health Care Workers

As of January 27, local health departments have reported 142,738 confirmed positive cases in health care workers and 550 deaths statewide.

### Testing Turnaround Time

The testing turnaround time dashboard reports how long California patients are waiting for COVID-19 test results. During the week of January 16 to January 22, the average time patients waited for test results was 1.8 days. During this same time period, 58% of patients received test results in one day and 75% received them within two days.

### Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C)

As of January 24, there have been 790 cases of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) reported statewide. MIS-C is a rare inflammatory condition associated with COVID-19 that can damage multiple organ systems. MIS-C can require hospitalization and be life threatening. ★

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NATIONAL NEWS *courtesy of* THE EPOCH TIMES



The U.S. Capitol in Washington on Jan. 5, 2022.

# State, Local Governments Now Flush With Cash Even Without Federal Aid

JOHN HAUGHEY

What a difference two years—and \$5.7 trillion in federal money—makes in fostering dramatic reversals of fortune for state and local budget managers.

In spring 2020, governments were confronted with cascading costs in managing the public health response to the COVID-19 outbreak, spiking unemployment, and steep revenue declines resulting from business disruption and restrictions.

Tribes have a third less people but got twice as much aid. I don't understand why. Why did they get so much? Nobody wants to answer this question.

Adam Andrzejewski, CEO and founder, OpenTheBooks

Two years later, lawmakers are awash in federal funding after Congress approved five COVID-19 assistance packages, pumping at least \$5.7 trillion into the economy, including \$900 billion to state and local governments.

The Washington-based Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget estimates that as much as \$800 billion of that \$5.7 trillion remains uncommitted across a spectrum of federal, state, local, and public-private agencies, and in statehouses, county seats, and city halls.

The scenario now has flipped from spring 2020. During the second quarter, from April to June, the U.S. Government Accounting Office (GAO) reported state and local government revenues declined by \$61 billion compared to the year-earlier period.

Overall in 2020, state and local governments reported \$117 billion less in revenue than the previous year, mostly stemming from the second quarter,

according to estimates of 2020 pandemic-related revenue losses filed with the U.S. Treasury.

But the economy—and state and local government coffers—rebounded sharply beginning in July 2020, largely fueled by the March 2020 adoption of the \$2.2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act.

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis reported that government revenues in the third quarter of 2021 were 23 percent above pre-pandemic levels "thanks to massive federal transfer payments from COVID relief legislation."

Other factors that boosted government revenues cited in a Jan. 28 Associated Press analysis include inflation ignited by stimulus-check spending that leavened sales tax collections, a spike in capital gains tax revenues generated by a strong stock market, federal padding of state unemployment relief, and a pandemic-induced increase in home-based employment.

In reviewing 3,700 reports from governments estimating 2020 pandemic-related revenue losses filed with the U.S. Treasury, AP found that two-thirds documented declines during 2020's "steep but short-lived national recession" in the second quarter.

Texas lost \$12 billion in anticipated revenues in spring 2020, according to the Treasury.

In many places, the AP reported, state and local government 2021 revenues exceeded those of pre-pandemic levels.

A December 2021 Urban Institute report states that total state and local government revenues in the second quarter of 2021 increased by 20 percent over the same period in 2019.

Among examples of sudden red-to-black transitions cited by AP is Poughkeepsie, New York, which had a \$7 million deficit and nothing in reserves going into 2020. It reported a \$4.5 million revenue loss to Treasury and was authorized to receive more than \$20 million in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF).



Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer hold the signed American Rescue Plan Act at the U.S. Capitol in Washington on March 10, 2021.

The federal money is authorized to allocate but much remains unspent.

The deadline to expend CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) money was Dec. 31, 2021, but sunsets for the last of the five federal packages, the March 2021 \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), extend through Dec. 31, 2026.

The CARES Act's \$150 billion coronavirus fund for state and local governments couldn't be used to cover revenue shortfalls. ARPA includes a \$350 billion recovery fund that provides more discretion.

States will receive \$195.3 billion and local governments \$65 billion from the fund, which they must earmark by Dec. 31, 2024, and spend by Dec. 31, 2026.

As of Sept. 30, 2021, the Treasury had distributed \$245 billion in SLFRF, although most recipients hadn't spent most of their allocations. Determining how to do so is being discussed in statehouses, county seats, and city halls across the country.

Under the Treasury's May 2021 guidelines, governments that showed a revenue loss could spend an equal amount in SLFRF money on nearly any priority, including roads and infrastructure. A final rule issued on Jan. 6 expanded recovery fund flexibility to allow governments to claim up to \$10 million of revenue losses.

"What we're seeing now with the ARPA is certainty," said Kathryn Vesey White, director of budget process studies for the National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO).

"Both pots of money provided a fair amount of discretion for states. States were able to use CRF to cover public health, public safety, payroll expenditures. With [SLFRF], you're going to see recipients using some for revenue loss."

Eryn Hurley, National Association of Counties (NACo) deputy director of government affairs, said the Jan. 6 rule provides two options to calculate revenue loss.

"There's a lot of flexibility under the final rule that counties are very appreciative of," she said, noting the nation's 3,000 counties lost more than \$202 billion in revenues during the past two years.

The GAO, U.S. Treasury, and U.S. Office of Inspector General's (OIG) Pandemic Response Accountability Committee (PRAC) have published data that confirms state and local governments are flush with cash—even before many expend SLFRF allocations, adding weight to criticism by watchdogs who maintain the \$350 billion fund is an unneeded bailout for bad budget managers and a boondoggle.

According to reports detailing how they will use ARPA SLFRF allocations filed with the Treasury, some of the nation's most prosperous cities and ZIP codes

are benefitting greatly from the federal assistance.

OpenTheBooks.com CEO and founder Adam Andrzejewski, whose website features an interactive map that allows users to look up SLFRF allocations for each county and city, said the fund favors the big and wasteful, and the small and wealthy.

The largest cities are receiving huge allocations under SLFRF, Andrzejewski notes, with New York earmarked for at least \$4.3 billion—more money than half the state governments—and Chicago "with their bonds at junk status" is receiving \$1.98 billion, more than 12 states will receive.

According to OpenTheBooks, some of the nation's most wealthy cities will receive plugs of federal cash to spend locally. In fact, the nation's 50 richest places, as defined by Bloomberg, would receive more than \$100 million in "bailout funds."

For example Atherton, California, "the wealthiest city in America with an average household income of \$525,000, received \$1.3 million from the legislation," OpenTheBooks states.

Other cities include Beverly Hills, California (\$6.3 million); Hamptons, New York (\$8.6 million); Key West, Florida (\$10.1 million); Greenwich, Connecticut (\$21 million); Oyster Bay, New York (\$32.7 million); and Cambridge, Massachusetts (\$65 million).

SLFRF earmarks \$1 billion for the top 10 richest counties across the United States, OpenTheBooks maintains, but Andrzejewski told The Epoch Times the giveaways aren't restricted to big and the wealthy.

He said "a boondoggle in the ARPA that nobody is talking about" is why 574 federally recognized Native American tribes with a total population of 6.8 million received more than \$20 billion in SLFRF.

Michigan has 10 million people and received roughly \$10.1 billion in SLFRF, he said.

"Tribes have a third less people but got twice as much aid. I don't understand why. Why did they get so much? Nobody wants to answer this question," he said.

So Andrzejewski provided his own: "Why did tribal governments get so much more money than others? They have a big lobbyist association in D.C."

Taxpayers for Common Sense, a Washington-based nonpartisan budget watchdog, said in a Jan. 14 "Emergency Spending is Endemic" statement that wasteful spending by state and local governments is guaranteed unless lawmakers and budget managers stop acting as if they are in a house-on-fire emergency.

"Nearly two years, and \$5 trillion+ of federal spending into the COVID-19 pandemic, the budgetary emergency nature of COVID-19 is waning," the group stated.

"COVID-19 is here and will be for some time. Lawmakers who want to continue, or even expand, federal spending in response need to plan and budget accordingly."

But with billions on the table and midterm election campaigns heating up, politics will likely trump prudence in how SLFRF and other federal aid is allocated at state and local levels, Taxpayers for Common Sense stated.

As a result, "long-term fiscal emergency may be upon us," it stated. "And it's in large part because lawmakers in both parties continue to designate spending in response to COVID-19 as an 'emergency' to avoid making tough choices."

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“THE EPOCH TIMES IS A BEACON OF LIGHT IN THE ‘NEWS’ DARKNESS THAT PRETTY MUCH COVERS THE COUNTRY.” —Jonne Rosenau

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# Defensive Tackle Left Defenseless Against Superbug

**Commentary**  
**by Brandon Noble**

I wasn't nervous about a minor knee surgery. As an NFL football player who'd undergone far more extensive operations before, this procedure seemed completely routine. Little did I know that within 36 hours, I would be lying unconscious on the sofa at my daughter's second birthday party, my right leg inflamed like an overinflated balloon.

The incision site on my knee had been infected with methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA, an antibiotic-resistant "superbug." What my doctor had initially diagnosed as a simple infection nearly cost me my leg. It could have even taken my life.

It took weeks of intensive care, including six weeks of intravenous antibiotics, for me to recover. I was lucky to walk away from such a dangerous situation. Not everyone is as fortunate. Superbugs like MRSA kill upwards of 160,000 Americans a year. Within the next 30 years, such infections are expected to kill 10 million people around the world annually, as superbugs spread, and existing antibiotics lose their efficacy.

The only way to prevent such carnage is to invent new, stronger antibiotics. And we're not pouring nearly enough resources into research and development.

Consider the resources spent battling Covid-19. The United States alone funneled \$18 billion toward vaccine R&D via Operation Warp Speed. Yet governments around the world spend only \$550 million a year on antibiotics research. That's not nearly enough to fight this global health crisis.

A world without effective antibiotics is almost too terrible to imagine. Infections like strep throat, pneumonia, meningitis, and gonorrhea are adapting to resist treatments; people may once again start dying from what we used to consider small problems. Minor surgeries like mine might become too dangerous to perform at all.

Why isn't the necessary research happening already? The market is broken. Pharmaceutical companies have little incentive to spend the roughly \$1 billion it costs to develop just one antibiotic because it is so difficult to make a return on investment.

Doctors are encouraged to use powerful antibiotics in moderation – to prevent bacteria from evolving to

resist those medicines. This caution is necessary – but it means that drug companies struggle to sell enough doses to earn back the costs of R&D and fund research into new products.

We need to revamp the system, fast. While I may not usually be in favor of major government intervention into market issues, this extreme case warrants it. Governments and hospitals need to incentivize the companies that can develop these important medicines. Congress is currently considering legislation, like the PASTEUR Act and the DISARM Act, that could encourage the creation of new antibiotics that save millions of lives.

We need lawmakers to take this issue seriously. If I – a professional athlete in prime physical condition – can be sacked by superbugs, anyone can. We need to work together to prevent another global health crisis.

*Brandon Noble is a former American football defensive tackle in the National Football League for the San Francisco 49ers, Dallas Cowboys, and Washington Football Team. He played college football at Penn State University. This piece originally ran in The Hill. ★*

# Reining in Government Spending Will Be Very Tough

**Commentary by Lee H. Hamilton**

With a \$1 trillion infrastructure package on the books and the Biden administration's \$1.8 trillion "Build Back Better" measure preoccupied the Senate after passing the House, government spending is very much on Americans' minds. In public meetings, I frequently hear people say that government's share of the economy is too big, and it's likely that voters' feelings about federal spending in particular will figure prominently in next year's elections.

If you look ahead, even beyond the current debate on Capitol Hill, there's no question that there will be intense pressure to expand even further. To deal effectively with climate change, reckon with the impact of an aging population, handle the health care needs of Americans post-pandemic. These are problems that will demand a role for government. Which, in turn, will mean more spending, more bureaucracy, more opportunity for corruption, and less space for the individual enterprise that fuels economic prosperity.

The US is not alone in this. "On current forecasts," The Economist wrote recently, "government spending will be greater as a share of GDP in 2026 than it was in 2006 in every major advanced economy."

What other countries do about it will be up to them. What the US needs to do, however, is to take a hard look at where we're headed. This will be extremely difficult. Inertia is powerful in government. Once a program is established, it's much easier just to let it continue, no matter how ineffective. And public interest in using government to solve real problems that people care about is a powerful force. Politicians quickly learn that not everyone who decries big government really means it; some people may oppose the idea in general, but when it comes to cutting a government service or program that benefits them or addresses an issue they follow, they'll storm the barricades.

It's worth remembering that government did not grow big by accident. It was pushed by a desire to address real problems, to respond to the demands of real people, both well-meaning and self-interested, and to meet the soaring visions of elected leaders.

The challenge, it seems to me, will be

to develop a mindset that looks realistically at what government can and cannot do well and that appreciates that government's ability to satisfy the demands it faces is limited. Overall, our goal should be to sustain a government that performs well, intervening where it can be effective and avoiding areas where it cannot be.

How do we do this? We have to focus on where government is being asked to intervene and ask whether it's really necessary and whether there are market-based or other solutions that are preferable. We have to examine the effectiveness of public programs – at the federal, state, and local levels – by checking regularly on how they're operating, asking whether improvements can be made, examining whether the private sector could do it better, and, where a program is ineffective, either cutting or eliminating it.

To be sure, it's baked into the American system to debate the proper role and scope of government. We've been doing it since the beginning. But turning debate into action is far more difficult. When I first entered politics, I thought that making government more efficient and effective was such a blindingly obvious goal that everyone would rush to embrace it. And, rhetorically, most people, both in and outside government do. But regardless of their ideological hue, they all have their exceptions, places where they want government to expand, the military or health care or basic R & D or critical infrastructure. Add those up, and you get a government that never stops growing.

What we need, in the end, is to lower our expectations of government. So far, we haven't shown that we're very good at it.

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

For information about our educational resources and programs, visit our website at <https://corg.indiana.edu>. "Like" us on Facebook at "Indiana University Center on Representative Government," and share our postings with your friends. ★

## CLG NEWS UPDATES

Provided by Citizens for Legitimate Government (CLG) See [legitgov.org](http://legitgov.org)

**Calif. Bill Would Allow Children 12 and Older to Be Vaccinated Without Parental Consent or Knowledge** | 20 Jan 2022 | California Senate Bill 866, introduced by Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco), would permit children 12 and older to be vaccinated, including against COVID-19, without a parent's consent or knowledge. The bill is the first to be proposed this year by a group of Democratic lawmakers that has pledged to strengthen vaccination laws and target misinformation amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaccine consent laws vary across the country, with Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia allowing children 11 and older to be inoculated without parental approval. If SB 866 is passed by the Legislature and signed by Newsom, the bill would go into effect Jan. 1, 2023.

**US to close borders to unvaccinated Canadian, Mexican truckers on Saturday – Mandate moving ahead as planned despite pushback from industry** | 20 Jan 2022 | The U.S. will close its borders to unvaccinated and partially vaccinated Canadian and Mexican truck drivers on Saturday, the Department of Homeland Security said on Thursday. "These updated travel requirements reflect the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to protecting public health while safely facilitating the cross-border trade and travel that is critical to our economy," Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in a statement. The border COVID-19 vaccine mandates are coming into force despite pushback from the truck industry. The impact will be felt most acutely for the U.S.-Canada freight market, where around 160,000 truckers regularly cross the border – 75% of whom are Canadian. Already capacity has tightened significantly, with huge price increases in the spot market. Since millions of (untested, unvaccinated) immigrants are allowed to enter the US illegally every year, it's obvious that the DHS cares not a whit about public health. Not to mention the fact that Biden's TSA allows illegal immigrants to use their arrest warrants as an acceptable form of ID.

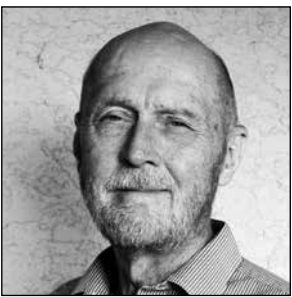
**University finds novel 1984 'offensive and upsetting' – Students are being warned of 'explicit material' awaiting them in a novel that ironically describes the dangers of censorship.** | 23 Jan 2022 | The University of Northampton has issued a harsh warning over potentially "offensive and upsetting" material contained in the famous dystopia by George Orwell, 1984. The novel, which describes the dangers of totalitarian rule and censorship, is now red-flagged, as it addresses "challenging issues related to violence, gender, sexuality, class, race, abuses, sexual abuse, political ideas and offensive language." The warning, issued to students taking a module called "Identity Under Construction," became public following a Freedom of Information request by The Mail on Sunday.

**'The Final Variant Is Tyranny': Thousands of anti-vaccine mandate protesters flaunt mask rules to descend on D.C. – A crowd of up to 20,000 gathered in Washington DC Saturday to protest ongoing vaccine mandates, including those in the Capitol. "Americans want democracy back, and this rally is a demand to get their democracy back," keynote speaker Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., said.** | 23 Jan 2022 | Thousands gathered in Washington D.C. – a city that mandates vaccines – for a "Defeat the Mandates" protest, with protesters blaring ballads by Meat Loaf... Robert F. Kennedy and Informed Consent Action Network founder Del Bigtree were among big names who addressed the rally Sunday morning. Around 20,000 people were expected to attend the demonstration. "Americans want democracy back, and this rally is a demand by Americans to get their democracy back," Kennedy said of the rally, according to WUSA9. Kennedy compared the plight of the vaccine-adverse to that of Anne Frank on Sunday, saying, "Even in Hitler's Germany, you could hide in the attic like Anne Frank did."

**Deloitte funded group that wants to keep homeless on subways** | 22 Jan 2022 | The corporate employer of tragic subway shoving victim Michelle Go, who was allegedly killed by an unhinged vagrant, helped fund a progressive non-profit that sued to keep the homeless from being ousted from the NYC transit system. Go, 40, a senior manager at consulting conglomerate Deloitte, was killed Jan. 15 when Simon Martial, 61, allegedly **pushed her** in front of an oncoming train at the Times Square station. He told reporters he did it "because of God." Deloitte Financial Advisory Services donated between 25,000 and 50,000 in 2021 to the Urban Justice Center, according to the group's annual report.

**Russia Responds to UK's 'Very Dangerous' Coup Allegations** | 23 Jan 2022 | Russia's Foreign Ministry on Sunday dismissed claims from the United Kingdom that Moscow wanted to install a pro-Russia leader in Kyiv while it considers whether to invade the beleaguered Eastern European nation. "We have information that indicates the Russian Government is looking to install a pro-Russian leader in Kyiv as it considers whether to invade and occupy Ukraine," the UK statement, published Saturday, began... The UK did not provide evidence for its claim. Over the weekend, Russian officials said the UK's Foreign Office should stop publishing "nonsense" and "disinformation." "We strongly urge London to stop foolish rhetorical provocations, which are very dangerous in the current overheated situation, and contribute to the real diplomatic efforts to ensure reliable guarantees for European security," the statement issued by the Russian Embassy in the UK said. Murayev, meanwhile, responded to the UK's statement by dismissing the claim. "This morning I already read in all the news publications this conspiracy theory: absolutely unproven, absolutely unfounded," Murayev told Reuters on Sunday, adding he was considering legal action. ★

## COVID Cases Down, Deaths up in Solano County



**Commentary**  
**by bil paul**

To lead things off, here's something I haven't mentioned so far in this column: vaccination numbers in Solano County. Only 70 percent of county residents have been fully vaccinated, and only about half of them have received booster shots. I had expected the numbers to be higher. That means that 30 percent of us have a much greater chance of being hospitalized with COVID.

In this latest COVID surge, the number of active cases in the county took an impressive dive last week. On the other hand, the number of COVID deaths in a week suddenly doubled (to 10).

In Dixon specifically, the number of new, reported COVID cases dropped 35 percent last week as compared to the week before – with 178 new reported cases. More cases, you can be sure, went unreported.

I want to relate the experience of my daughter in the Bay Area, who probably picked up COVID from her three-year-old. My daughter (in January) stayed away from work for nine days and was also ill over a weekend. She was tired and weak.

Even as she was about to return to work, her nerves were jangling and she was still tired. An older friend of my wife's went through the same 10 or 11 days of being ill. I'm assuming that both had the omicron COVID variant.

Hospital emergency rooms (ERs) have been unnecessarily burdened due to mild COVID cases coming in or people wanting to be tested. You should go elsewhere to be tested or use a rapid at-home test. If you only have mild symptoms such as cough, sore throat, congestion, low-grade fever, headaches or fatigue, you should instead contact your doctor or health care provider. Emergency rooms are for emergencies, such as heart attacks, strokes, gunshot wounds, auto accident injuries, burns and so on. People with these pressing problems shouldn't have to wait to be taken care of. Nonetheless, ERs by law can't turn patients away.

However, if a COVID case moves into difficulty breathing, chest pain, or a very high fever, that merits an ER visit.

I helped with the Dixon Teen Center's Elvis tribute concert on the 22nd. It was held in the high school's theater. Due to ticket sales, we knew we wouldn't have a full house, so we blocked off every-other row of seats to provide social distancing. Masks were required, so we had extra ones available if people arrived without them. The audience was very cooperative in this regard, and the event came

off well.

But in other places, masking has become an issue. A children's museum in Denver temporarily closed because the staff was being harangued by adults angry over a mask requirement for visitors over the age of two. You'd think visitors had been asked to carry a 20-pound lead weight around with them.

COVID primarily spreads via tiny droplets or particles containing the virus that spread through the air (mostly indoors) as COVID carriers talk, cough, sneeze, sing or yell. Effective N-95 or KN-95 masks will filter out those small droplets of water before one breathes them in. Single-layer cloth masks aren't very effective.

America just exceeded 900,000 COVID deaths. It's just a matter of time before we reach one million. That would mean that one out of every 330 Americans has died of the disease. That reality is hard to digest.

I saw this personalized California license plate on a pickup in Dixon the other day. It read, "I'M ALIVE." You can read anything you want into that.

*bil paul did PR for the Postal Service and medical companies, and worked as a reporter and photographer. He's the author of the book about Dixon's failed movie studio project ("The Train Never Stops in Dixon" – available at Amazon or the library) and has a non-fiction book coming out this fall about GIs in the Aleutian Islands during WWII. ★*



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#### CLUES

ACROSS  
1. Fantasy sports data  
6. Accounting acronym  
9. Stark daughter on "Game of Thrones"  
13. Branch of economics  
14. All talk, no action type of service  
15. Relating to symmetry, in geometry  
16. Base-8 numeral system  
17. "\_\_\_\_\_ the land of the free..."  
18. Lots and lots  
19. "Actor Ryan of "Blue Valentine"  
21. "Desdemona's suspicious husband  
23. Big fuss  
24. Nose-in-the-air type  
25. Uber alternative  
28. One on a pedestal  
30. Moderately wide  
35. Eye layer  
37. Twelfth month of Jewish year  
39. Cheese-covered chip  
40. Popped relief?  
41. "Love, \_\_\_\_\_" movie  
43. Splints site  
44. Muhammad's teachings  
46. Orchestra instrument  
47. Past of heave  
48. Avoids work, in British slang  
50. Give off  
52. Dose of sunshine  
53. Back seat  
55. Hair-raising product  
57. \*\_\_\_\_\_ valentine, an opposite of love note  
61. English author perhaps best known for "The Canterbury Tales"  
65. Like Mary-Kate and Ashley  
66. Pooh's "wise" friend  
68. Bring to an end  
69. Potassium nitrate  
70. Farm sound  
71. Arm bones  
72. Back talk  
73. Uniting conjunction  
74. Imposter

DOWN  
1. Smoke plus fog  
2. Comes in hard or soft shell  
3. Parts of a play  
4. \_\_\_\_\_-la  
5. Plural of solidus  
6. Heidi's shoe  
7. \*Sweetie follower  
8. Cook's cover  
9. Wheel holder  
10. Cambodian money  
11. Two-masted vessel  
12. "The Sun \_\_\_\_\_ Rises"  
15. Trash can for fireplace (2 words)  
20. Source of lymphocytes, pl.  
22. Pull along  
24. Dormant state  
25. \*Famous archer  
26. Dispatch boat  
27. "\_\_\_\_\_ and whistles"  
29. Hedgepodge  
31. Mr. and Mrs. Incredible's son  
32. Blood of the gods, Greek mythology  
33. Seven days postmortem  
34. \*Hive-related endearment  
36. Unfortunately, exclamation  
38. Rumpelstiltskin machine  
42. Stallion's cry  
45. Business combination  
49. Old Man's turf, according to Hemingway  
51. Darjeeling server  
54. Smell, usually pleasant  
56. Calms  
57. Ford Transit and such  
58. Pelvic parts  
59. Lice eggs  
60. Augments  
61. Oaf  
62. Scoop holder  
63. Biblical twin  
64. Donna or Lou  
67. Got a blue ribbon

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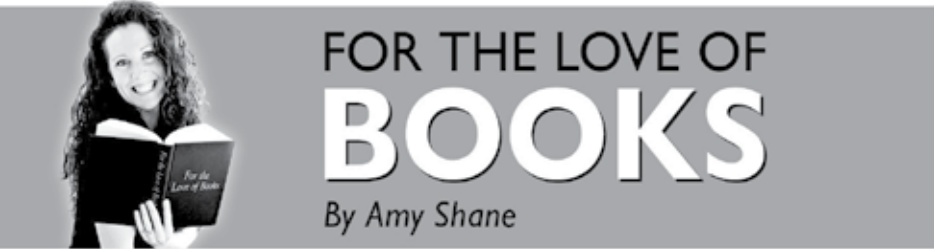
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illustrations by Fiona Lee

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**I Love You Like No Otter**  
by Rose Rossner,  
pictures by Sydney Hanson

Share all the reasons you love your little one. With Hedgehugs, mousy squeaks, and sealed with a kiss, this book is pawsitively an excellent play on words and beary special gift.

**Love From Sesame Street**  
by the Sesame Street Workshop and illustrated by Ernie Kwiat

A celebration of love Sesame Street style. “Love Comes in all shapes and sizes” while also being accepting and kind. It is giggles and kissers and full of all types of sounds and songs. No matter where you are, love can be found. Fall in love with the most beloved Sesame Street characters full



of colorful illustrations that look like a perfectly filled-in coloring book.

**Peekaboo, JJ**  
CoComelon

It’s time to play peekaboo with JJ, but where is everyone? Little ones will giggle and laugh in this light-the-flap adventure where everyone gets a chance to say “peekaboo.”

CoComelon jumps right off the television screen and into your hands, bringing the adventure right into your home.

**Sweet, Sweet Bedtime**  
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It’s time to head to bed and snuggle in tight. Follow and sing along with JJ as he “brush, brush, brushes” his teeth and “splash splash, splash” takes a bath. Then it’s time to sing the pajama song and touch the soft pajamas. Touch teddy’s fuzzy tummy and sing the bedtime song. Then it’s

time to say goodnight.

A touch-and-feel bedtime book is the perfect nighttime story for you and your little one.

**Angelina’s Ballet Bag**

Angelina has always dreamed of dancing a lead role in the ballet, and the day is finally here. Angelina carefully packs her special ballet bag with everything she could possibly need for the special day. Would you like to see what she packed?

Readers can follow Angelina on her special day while she packs her ballet bag. Lift the flaps to see all the items she packed along with a few special items. Fall for the story and enjoy the beautiful foil mirrors and a pop-up at the end. Fans of Angelina will flip over this adorable purse that will be the perfect addition to any dancer’s ballet bag. ★

# Newsom in the Middle of Solar Panel Battle



By Dan Walters  
CALMatters

High-octane battles over major policy issues are nothing new in the state Legislature. Every legislative session has at least one such clash that draws intense public and media interest.

Although the 2022 legislative session has just begun, it already has high-profile battles underway over whether public school students should be required to have COVID-19 vaccinations and whether the state should embrace single-payer medical care.

We sometimes forget that there are dozens of other, less public, venues where conflicts over important policy issues play out — like state regulatory agencies. With all of them directly or indirectly controlled by the governor or other political figures, they make decisions that can have multi-billion-dollar consequences and affect the lives of millions of Californians.

The California Public Utilities Commission, whose members are appointed by the governor, is arguably the state’s most influential regulatory agency. Originally created more than a century ago to regulate railroad freight rates, the PUC’s portfolio expanded to include utilities supplying electric power,

natural gas and water.

With that broad franchise, PUC decrees affect the finances of virtually every household and business in the state. It now faces one of the most heated conflicts in its history — a utility-backed proposal to reduce the financial incentives for installing rooftop solar panels, primarily the right to sell excess solar energy back to utilities, dubbed Net Energy Metering or NEM.

In December, the PUC released a 204-page proposal to reduce the payments to solar panel owners, largely embracing what the utilities and their unions had been seeking, but angering advocates of rooftop generation. The factions have been waging a fierce battle, mostly in the media, ever since.

The utilities contend that NEM amounts to a subsidy for Californians affluent enough to afford solar arrays that manifests itself in higher power rates for everyone else, particularly the poor, and has assembled a coalition of politicians, consumer advocates and environmentalists.

The opposition, funded mostly by solar panel manufacturers and sellers, contends that it’s a grab by utilities that will retard the growth of solar power and make it more difficult for the state to meet its greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Fundamentally, it’s an existential issue for both. Utilities fear that widespread self-generation will damage their financial viability while the solar industry sees reducing NEM’s incentives as discouraging potential customers.

The PUC’s draft was a big tactical win for the utility faction, but its rival redoubled its effort to maintain the status quo, gaining support from such high-profile figures as Sen. Dianne Feinstein and former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

As with so many big issues these days, Gov. Gavin Newsom is the man in the middle. The opposition was buoyed, therefore, when Newsom indicated this month that he wants changes in the PUC’s draft. Asked about NEM at his budget news conference, Newsom replied: “That draft plan that was recently released, I just had a chance to review, and I’ll say this about the plan: We still have some work to do.”

When asked again later in the news conference about the PUC proposal, Newsom said, “Do I think changes need to be made? Yes I do.”

The PUC got the message and delayed a vote on whether to adopt the draft, moving everything behind closed doors. Newsom hasn’t specified the changes he seeks but presumably wants to make the NEM overhaul at least marginally acceptable to the solar faction without alienating the utilities or, more importantly, their influential unions.

Whatever happens, it is another reminder about the important role played by regulatory agencies and about the power that politicians have over what those agencies decree.

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



# Riley Reviews

## “MOONFALL” LUNAR FAIL; “WOMAN IN THE HOUSE” GENRE PARODY

A Film and TV Review by Tim Riley

“MOONFALL” Rated PG-13

The choice was to see either the space odyssey “Moonfall” or the aptly-titled “Jackass Forever,” which if you’ve seen any of the previous iterations of the franchise is all you really need to know, and besides you can wait because it’s bound to show up on a streaming service.

After seeing “Moonfall,” a better option would have been to gaze at the moon. This attempt at the marvel of intergalactic thrills may not be irredeemably horrible or completely bereft of any entertainment value, but it’s an arguable point.

One goes into this movie with the expectation that director Roland Emmerich, having crafted better spectacles in blockbusters like “Independence Day” and “The Day After Tomorrow,” will deliver the goods when the world is on the brink of annihilation.

Well, “Moonfall” does have its moments of upheaval and destruction but the special effects come off as a bit shopworn and not very engaging, as the malevolent force threatening space missions can only be described as something kind of menacing.

With an opening ten years in the past, NASA astronauts Jo Fowler (Halle Berry) and Brian Harper (Patrick Wilson) are on a space shuttle ride that goes horribly wrong and a third member of the team is cast adrift.

Brian is the fall guy for mission failure and in the present day he’s been out of work every since. His wife divorced him and remarried, and his estranged son, Sonny (Charlie Plummer), has been arrested for drug possession after a high-speed chase.

Meanwhile, conspiracy theorist KC Houseman (John Bradley) is completely absorbed with everything related to outer space, even going so far as to impersonate professors to spout his hypotheses.

Falsely referring to himself as Dr. Houseman, KC is the first to detect that a mysterious force has knocked the Moon from its orbit, hurling it on a collision course with Earth and ending life as we know it.

With only weeks before impact with our planet, Jo Fowler, who has risen to the top ranks of NASA, has an idea to save our civilization but she’s going to need former top pilot Brian to mount a seemingly impossible final mission into space.

The gravity of the situation is readily apparent when tidal waves wipe out large swaths of Los Angeles, and elsewhere earthquakes and atmospheric disruptions cause havoc.

The idea of sending the alcoholic

former astronaut Brian back into space seems incomprehensible to the NASA folks other than his old teammate Jo, but there is really no choice.

More puzzling is how the fake Dr. Houseman becomes the third crew member. After all, though he figured out the threat first, this is the same guy who has a newspaper headline about gay aliens plastered on his wall.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy made public a plan to land a man on the Moon by the end of the decade, resulting in the Apollo 11 lunar mission and the “giant leap for mankind.” Now along comes “Moonfall” to spoil his vision.

One thing “Moonfall” might have going for it is that watching this disaster of the orbital tilt threatening our demise just might take our minds off the tough, challenging times we are dealing with in the here and now.

“THE WOMAN IN THE HOUSE” ON NETFLIX

When you are a prolific reader, it is not uncommon to learn new words to add to your vocabulary. A less frequent occurrence is picking up a new one watching a Netflix series, but that’s what happens with “The Woman in the House Across the Street from the Girl in the Window.”

Whew, that’s a long title that would never fit on a marquee. The new word, at least for me, was “ombrophobia,” which even spell check does not seem to recognize. Fear of rain is the definition, and it greatly affects Kristen Bell’s Anna in this dark comedy’s genre parody.

“The Woman in the House,” an episode series that lends itself to an easy binge-watching experience, is in the spirit of any number of Lifetime Channel movies where the female protagonist knows too much and is in some sort of peril.

Divorced and living alone in a big house, Anna excessively drinks red wine and pops pills for her anxiety, which is due to her ongoing grief over the death of her young daughter.

A handsome new neighbor, widower Neil (Tom Riley), moves into the house across the street with his young daughter Emma (Samsara Yett), and Anna takes notice with a welcoming attitude until strange things happen such as witnessing a murder (or so she thinks).

While other neighbors and even the police start to think she’s gone batty, Anna decides to play detective, and things start to spiral wildly out of control. Even her ex-husband (Michael Ealy) gets dragged into the situation.

“The Woman in the House” is entertaining for its spoof of the genre, and the twist in the final scene leaves open the possibility for another season. ★



### Up to 100,000 visitors Expected for Return of World AG Expo in Tulare

One of California’s premiere agricultural events will reopen to live attendance this year after being held virtually in 2021 due to the pandemic. The 54th edition of the famed World Ag Expo in Tulare County is expected to draw as many as 100,000 attendees from 60 countries. The expo takes place Feb. 8-10 at the International Agri-Center in Tulare, in the heart of a four-county region that produces \$23 billion in annual farm output. The expo will feature more than 1,200 exhibitors.

### New Vineyard Rate Leveling Off After Winegrape Market Glut

California winegrape growers are expected to plant 15,000 to 18,000 acres of new vineyards in 2022. That number is about the same as what is expected to be removed from the state’s more than 500,000 acres of winegrapes. California produced more than 4 million tons of winegrapes a year between 2016 and 2019. That caused a glut in the market. Now Allied Grape Growers president Jeff Bitter characterizes the market as “stable with a chance of oversupply.”

### Water Supply Cuts From Scott, Shasta Rivers Worry Farmers

Farmers and ranchers in the Scott and Shasta river watersheds say they fear for their livelihoods. The Northern California agricultural region faces state water curtailments through much of February, after a spate of December storms failed to remedy three years of extreme dry conditions. The State Water Board says it needs to regulate flows in the two rivers to protect endangered fish, including coho salmon, from extinction. Farmers say they are worried about water supplies vanishing by peak summer.

### Judge Gives 180-Day Extension for Retailers Who Challenged Proposition 12

A judge is temporarily blocking enforcement of a new California law that bans the sale of pork meat from pigs that were kept in spaces under 24 square feet. Judge James Arguelles in Sacramento noted that the California Department of Food and Agriculture is more than two years late in finalizing regulations for Proposition 12, the 2018 initiative that set minimum space standards now required for pork producers. But Arguelles said he is granting a 180-day extension before grocers, restaurants and retailers are also subject to enforcement. ★

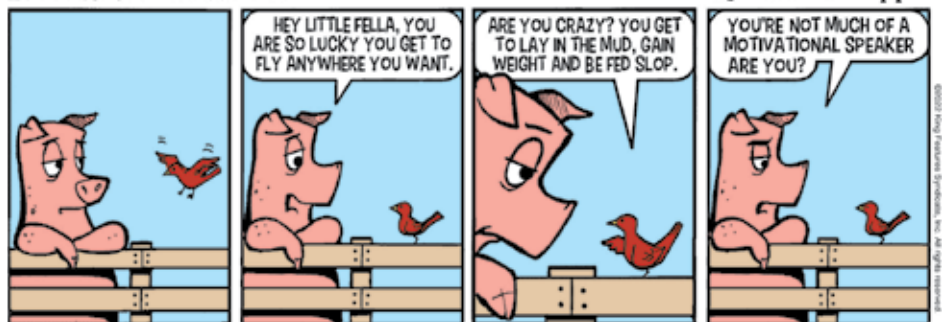




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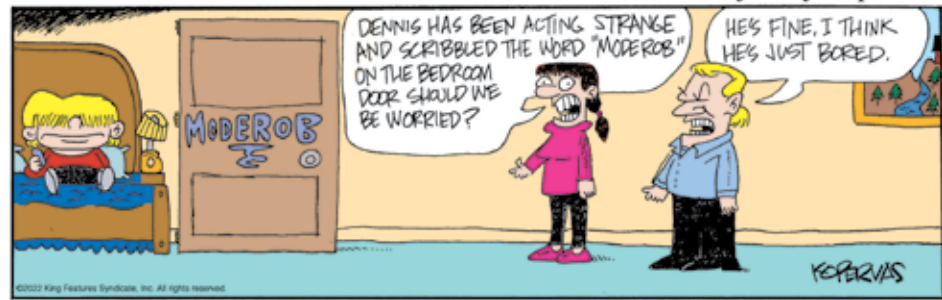
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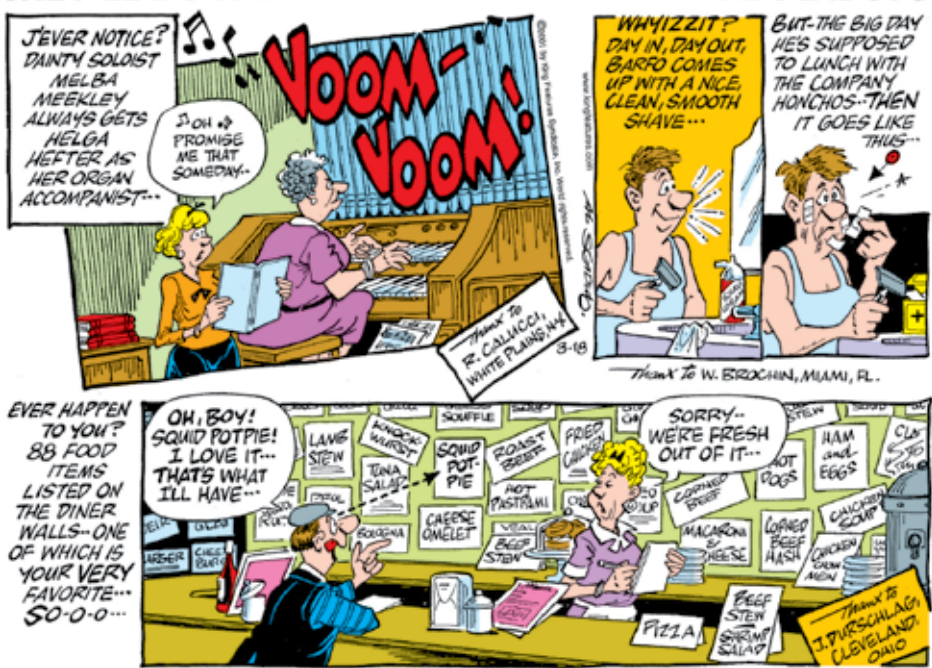
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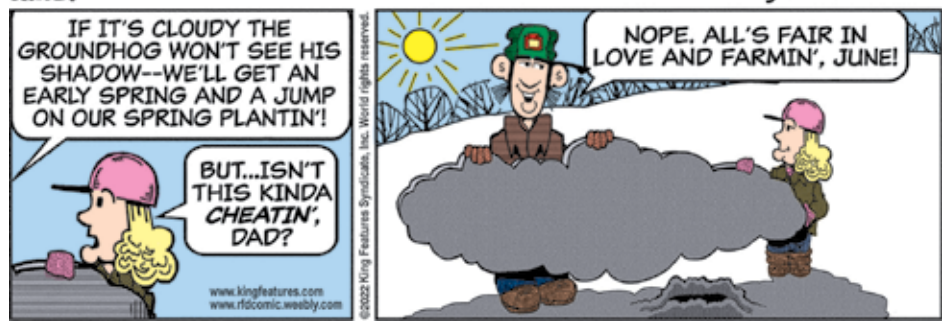
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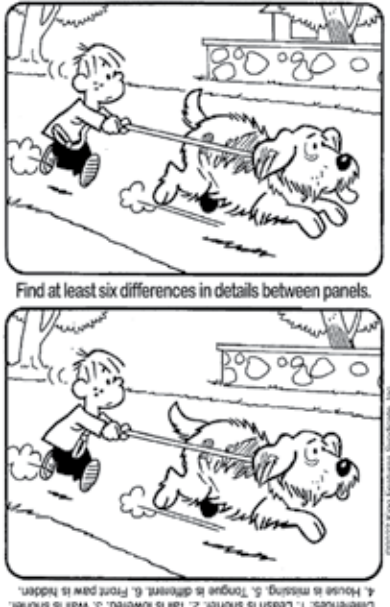
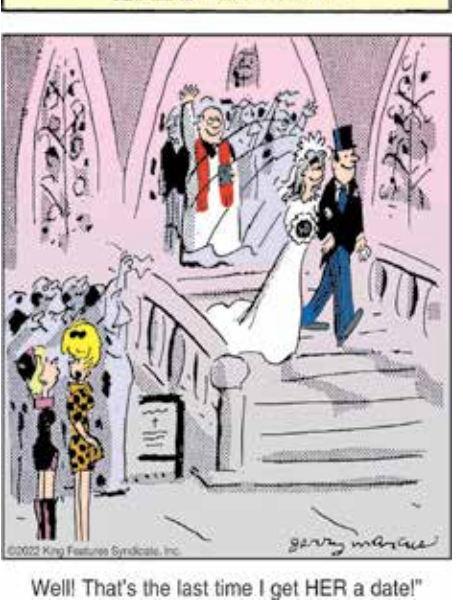
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# A Family Pantry



The Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*). Photo provided by Tuleyome Tales

By Martha Cerda,  
Tuleyome Tales

I grew up believing that food is meant to be shared with family. To my great surprise, my family is not the only one who thinks so. Among oak woodlands and local parks is the charismatic Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*). A social, rowdy, and extremely hard-working species of bird. Also known as the ‘clown’ bird because of its striking facial color pattern, red crown, and yellowish forehead and throat. Its back is black and slightly bluish with pale white eyes. And like a true clown you can hear it clowning around, projecting big laughs and calls to its family. When they fly, they seem to bounce, going up and down imaginary hills in the air until they reach their

destination. It usually inhabits oak forests (*Quercus spp.*), mixed forests with pine (*Pinus*) and oak, in addition to spruce (*Pseudotsuga*) and redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) forests.

The Acorn Woodpecker family is like a small colony, composed of a dozen or more birds. They may be monogamous, polyandrous, or polygynous. When caring for young, their parenting style is cooperative—one for all and all for one! They take turns feeding and protecting the family’s young.

In mid-fall, acorn woodpecker families are in search of acorns. Acorns are the fruits of oak trees. The acorn is a fruit with a hard shell that protects the seed and is protected by a cup-shaped dome on top. Like everything in nature, they are varied, some elongated,

others round. Oak trees have irregular cycles. In some years they produce many acorns, where the floors of trails and parks are covered with these nuts. In a great year, an oak tree can produce up to 10,000 nuts! But curiously in other years, there is no trace of any.

Most species of woodpeckers typically use their chisel-like beaks to peck trees and build their nests. In the bird world, the Acorn Woodpecker is the only one that, apart from using its beak to build nests, also uses it to store food. This behavior and great strength help to create holes and store acorns to eat in the winter. These acorns are collected by and for the whole family. The family cares for and protects the same oak tree that is maintained and used for generations.

Holes are drilled in dry trunks and branches. Dry trees are preferred, as the sap can affect the acorns. One family may drill millions of holes in a single tree. This is known as a granary tree. But the work doesn’t end after the holes are created—the fun is just beginning! The birds will now have the responsibility of checking that the acorns are not loose. If they are, they are moved to a better fitting hole, because if the acorns get loose, they will be food for other companions—such as the California Ground Squirrel or the California Scrub Jay.

Oak trees are not the only places where acorns are stored. These clever birds have adapted to using human-made structures. Holes can be seen in telephone poles, house shingles, virtually any structure made of wood. In some cases,

using natural holes. And as in any family pantry, food varies. The diet of the Acorn Woodpecker in addition to acorns, includes fruits, insects, flowers, and sap.

This season, remember that where there’s an oak tree, there’s sure to be an Acorn Woodpecker. When you least expect it, you will hear the ‘waka, waka, waka’ cackle echoing around. When you hear it, you may not be able to see it, but you will still be able to appreciate what a determined, family bird it is.

*Martha Cerda is a naturalist in Pleasanton, a city in the East Bay. She works at a historic park interpreting the local and natural history of the site. In her spare time, she enjoys exploring the endless beauty of nature and connecting with diverse communities.* ★



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