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Dixon Independent Voice

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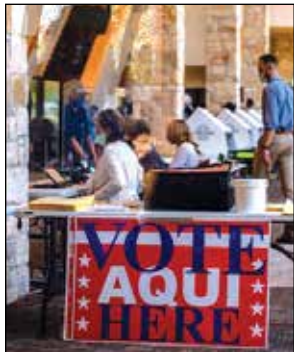
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TEXAS REPUBLICANS URGE COURT TO RECONSIDER DECISION



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Exploring Art



Dixon High Art Teacher Erin Jackson explained that the black circle in this painting is the back of a person's head and that the girl facing it is under water, according to art student Arianna Barajas. Photo by Debra Dingman

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - There's a girl with large, frightened eyes with mouth open—maybe ready to scream—and an open hand out as if to stop the dark image she is facing. The two seem to be drowning in colors of blue and black. Next to it is a blue ribbon for "Dixon High School Best of Show." It was painted by Arianna Barajas, a Junior in her second year as an art student.

The annual school art show missed a beat last year but this year, teachers Erin Jackson and Nick Stidham had every student enter at least one piece so two classrooms were transformed into a showcase of drawings, paintings, digital art, and ceramics

last week.

Messy brains, bloodshot eyes, sharp teeth, disease, frowns, and lots of dark colors seemed to dominate both the ceramics and the wall art show. They were perused by students and teachers for several days during lunch hours and one evening for student's families.

"Every student taking art classes is represented here," said Jackson. "There's a lot of students who excel and Arianna is one of them," she said, pointing out the blue girl. "Most of the assignments have to have a meaning." She explained that the girl in the painting was under water.

"I have noticed a trend this year that the art is a lot darker in nature which is indicative of issues the teens

are going through this year," teacher Nic Stidham said as his art students walked through the displays. Stidham is a Career Technical Education Instructor/Instructional Designer who picked up the sense of anxiety and depression in the students, he said.

Students don't hesitate to tell how they felt about not being able to go to school last year.

"I felt like throwing up," said Austin Lau, a junior this year and a young man who plans to keep art as a hobby as he grows up. Fellow student Zachary Reeder likes creating art on the computer and made a cup out of clay.

"Just the act of being creative releases those feelings and provides

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More COVID Relief Funds Awarded to Dixon Businesses

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Several Dixon businesses got to breathe a big sigh of relief recently when they received COVID relief funds through the City's Community Development Block Grant. Three businesses, Dawson's Bar and Grill, Moyo Hana, Inc. (The Frying Pan) and Dentist Dr. Kristina Wiley received \$49,598 each.

Three other businesses were awarded \$14,170 each. They were PIP Wine Bar, Mother House Plant Boutique and VIP Nail, Spa & Hair.

Other awards were to Central Valley Physical Therapy, \$35,427; Elite Carpet Cleaning and Upholstery \$7,085; Affordable Auto Glass \$21,256; Dixon Nail Spa \$28,341; and K & W Kitchens \$49,598.

"The program distributes the money through the focus of job retention," explained Larry Burkhardt, Economic Development/Grants Manager. "Under the program, businesses can qualify for up to \$10,000 per job retained. These eleven awardees represent our second round of funding. The first round assisted seven additional Dixon businesses. The total awards for the two rounds is nearly \$600,000, providing assistance to 18 Dixon businesses," he said.

"The Program represented an additional way in which the City sought to assist those small businesses affected by COVID-19 that are so much a part of our community," he said. Funded by the federal CDBG, the Program was to provide financial assistance in the form of forgivable loans to eligible Dixon for-profit businesses significantly impacted by the pandemic. The Program goal is the retention of existing jobs.

"Dawson's would not be here if not for this aid," said Jill Orr. "Greg and I would have lost everything. The rent, utilities, and insurance had to keep going and most of our staff was told to draw unemployment, and we turned everything we could off. We are so thankful."

Congress provided \$5 billion in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act for the CDBG program to states, metropolitan cities, urban counties, and insular areas to prevent, prepare for, and respond to Coronavirus.

Monies have also been awarded by the Paycheck

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Dreams Being Realized Thanks to Soroptimist

By Mary Lou
Batchelor, LYD Chair

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Soroptimist International of Dixon is proud to announce the winners of our Live Your Dream Award. This award is all about helping women who have faced economic and personal hardships to live their dreams.

Since 1972, the award has provided tens of thousands of women with funding to help them achieve their education and career goals. The program helps women build a better life for themselves and their dependents. This year's recipients are no exception.

Camesha Block and Cindy Perez have received \$2,000 each. We were able to give two awards this year as SI Dixon received an educational grant from California Water Service



Camesha Block pursues an Associate Degree in Nursing at Sacramento City College and maintains a 4.0 GPA. Photo provided by Soroptimist International of Dixon

for \$1,000 and the use of funds from our service projects for 2021.

Camesha Block

Camesha is pursuing an Associate Degree in

Nursing at Sacramento City College and hopes to complete her education in August of 2024.

Her career goals are to make her way up the



Cindy Perez studies Sociology wishing to become a social clinician while running a beauty salon. Photo provided by Soroptimist International of Dixon

nursing ladder. She is working on her Vocational Nursing credentials and when she has completed the program, she will apply

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First Time Cat Show Turns into Last

By Debra Dingman

This is one of the journalistic pitfalls of getting “too into” a story. I entered our cat, Socks, in the Poppy State Cat Club’s show at the May Fair when I learned that there was a ‘Household Pet’ category.

It’s something I’ve never done so would be a whole new experience and should be fun. Family thinks she’s fat, but I think she’s beautiful. We’ve had her on a special diet for a year and she’s still the same. (We belong together...)

Two weeks before the event: I try to get grooming appointments unsuccessfully so resort to knowing [we] will bathe her. I read up on cat shows and register her with a big association for \$13 and receive my official certificate.

One week before: I enter Socks in the May Fair event for \$90 and get a bunch of instructions on what to do and what to expect. Panic about her beauty starts to set in as hubby has ‘helped’ groom her daily with brushing but that has produced dandruff. The more we brush, the worse she looks. Her fur begins to fall out.

Wednesday before: I watch a YouTube video on how to groom a cat. I also watch how to decorate the cat crate at the show. Looks like fun and I start putting things together.

Thursday: I watch four more videos then call/email every groomer in a 30-mile radius. For those who bother to call back, they don’t do cats. Hubby takes her to Dr. Timm of Dixon Veterinary, our long-time vet, and we get her shots updated and nails trimmed. I schedule Friday off work.

Friday, 9 am: I start the “grooming” with her ears. She clamps down her ears like an iron hatch as soon as my

cotton ball touches it. I press on. It’s not happening. I couldn’t pry it open for anything. ‘Riiiggghhht, she’s a rescued feral,’ I think to myself and the thought creeps in my mind: Dear Lord, what have I done?!

I recall the many trips we’ve had to take her on, including to the vet, and how she would escape in a heartbeat if she could. All the cats in the videos were taken to the judges table without even so much as a collar. I can imagine a black streak running across the May Fair...and I remember the chaotic scene at a previous dog show when they had a “runner” and how full of shame the owner appeared.

10 am: The counter is ready with all I need. Son calls and reports that he and his wife talked about my endeavor that morning and could see me walking into the show tomorrow with flaming red streaks all over my face and arms...

Hubby walks in with thick welding gloves up to his elbows and says, “I don’t have a problem with her.” We bathe her. There are a few unpleasant little blobs of yuck near her bottom. I have to get her clean and know it. I would be mortified if a judge saw that, I tell him.

10:30 am: The cat is clean but clearly looking venomously at me and I worry I should close our bedroom door tonight... David to Debra: “Maybe you should cut your losses.”

End Story: Socks came in last in Round One but because of that, caught the interest of Molly of Good Day Sacramento so we made her “Live” recording! Unfortunately, Socks refused to be shown in the next two rings so I cut my losses and came home to snuggle with my crazy cat. ★

Dixon News Briefs



Holiday contributions were made to the veterans living in the Dixon Residence Home by Chamber President Herb Cross, Rotary Club’s Steve Beaman, and VFW Post 8151 Commander Cecil Dennings. Photo by Janice Beaman

MPG Staff

Veteran’s Gifts

The veterans residence downtown that was built by Habitat for Humanity, Community Action North Bay and many local volunteers in August of 2018 had some special visitors over the holidays. Christmas gift cards and filled Christmas stockings were given to 17 local veterans, and Christmas wreaths were given to each house by Dixon Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce and the VFW.

In addition, Dixon’s former Police Chief Rick Fuller, and his wife Janet, donated three large platters of cookies for the residents there to enjoy over the holidays. All were presented by Herb Cross (Chamber and Rotary) Steve Beaman (Rotary) and Commander Cecil Dennings (VFW Post 8151.)

The house provides a permanent home for six deserving veterans, offering a quiet and calm environment so these dedicated warriors can live healthy and productive lives.

Planning Commission

The City of Dixon Planning Commission will be meeting Tuesday, Feb. 8, at City Hall, 600 East A Street at 7 pm. This meeting can be attended in person or can be watched on the Granicus service available through the City’s website. Agenda is usually posted on the Thursday before the meeting on the City’s website: cityofdixon.us.

Library Friends

Did you know that the Friends of the Dixon Public Library (FDPL) is one of the smaller service groups in Dixon and yet it serves the entire community?

Any child that has ever participated in any of the many summer programs, Christmas and Halloween book give-aways, or enjoyed shopping at the Friendly Bookworm Bookstore has enjoyed these services.

Graduating high school seniors are

welcome to apply for a scholarship sponsored by the group every year. The group works to promote reading and provide books at a lower cost to the Dixon community.

All these benefits to our community are made possible by our members in the FDPL. Anyone may become a member by contributing \$5 for an Individual Membership, \$10 for a Family Membership or \$25 for a Patron Membership. Members may be interested in participating in the bookstore work or in serving on the board of directors. Some may prefer helping on the scholarship committee, sharing information on social media, or selling books online. All FDPL members are welcome to attend monthly board meetings and vote in yearly elections. Interested?

Membership forms may be picked up at the bookstore or at the Dixon Library. Some of the active members are usually present when the bookstore is open. Find out how a very small group of people can have a huge impact on the community and become one of the helpers in your town.

Gun Show

A Veteran-owned business will be hosting the Dixon Gun Show at the May Fair on Saturday, Feb. 19. For more information, call Nicole and John Arabia at (916) 542-8010 or email DixonGunShow@gmail.com.

Whiskey Etc. Raffle

The Soroptimist International of Dixon’s next fundraiser is a “Luck of the Irish” Whiskey etc. Raffle which includes other spirits, Irish beer and wine with an estimated value of \$700. Tickets are \$25 each and the winner will be drawn on Thursday, March 17. Tickets are available at Bella Moda Boutique at the Linde Lane Tea Room, 140 North Jackson Street or one can check their Instagram or Facebook sites for other members as all will be selling them. ★

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Fatal Collision on Hay and Meridian Roads

Solano County CHP Press Release

SOLANO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Incident Summary: On 01/30/2022, at 7:36 PM units were dispatched to an injury collision on Hay Road and Meridian Road.

Preliminary investigation shows the following: A Toyota Tundra was driving on westbound Hay Road, approaching the intersection of Meridian Road, at a high rate of speed. Due to possible intoxication, the driver of the Toyota did not stop at the stop sign at the intersection, crossed Meridian Road, and left the paved roadway. The Toyota became airborne after it traversed a dirt mound and collided with an irrigation ditch approximately 100 feet west of Meridian Road. The Toyota came

to rest inside the irrigation ditch on its passenger side.

One of the passengers sustained fatal injuries, another passenger sustained major injuries, and the driver sustained minor injuries. Alcohol is the suspected cause of this collision, and the driver was placed under arrest for applicable charges.

Any person with information pertinent to this investigation is asked to contact the CHP at our nonemergency line at 1-800-TELL-CHP (1-800-835-5247) or the CHP Solano Area Office at (707) 639-5600. Relate that you have information for CHP-Solano and Officer Ramos who is handling this investigation. Any information obtained in regard to the collision will be greatly appreciated. ★

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Construction Started for Valley Glen Intersection



The long-awaited stop lights for the Valley Glen subdivision at the Highway 113 and Heritage intersection are arriving soon. Construction began this past week. The traffic lights are supposed to help alleviate some of the long waits for vehicles trying to leave their subdivisions safely, but only time will tell how it will impact the traffic coming from Dixon High School at 3 pm. Photo by Debra Dingman

Parents Plan Senior Ball

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Students are invited to dress up and get glamorous and dance the night away at a Senior Ball with a theme of ‘A Starry Night’ hosted by parents of Dixon High School students on Saturday, Feb. 26 at the Woodland Hotel. This is a “parent-put-on Senior Ball” because the school will not be putting one on for the students, according to Regina Fish, parent of a DHS Senior.

According to Principal Stephanie Marquez, the senior events are put on by Student Leadership, and they decided to put their minimal funds toward spring events including a prom, she explained.

The group of parents led by Regina Fish and Jill Hernandez will be selling tickets through Feb. 21 as they have to have a final count, they said. Individual tickets

are \$50 and couples are \$65. A negative COVID test printed copy within 72 hours prior to the event will be required.

They are currently seeking photos of students as they are planning a dessert with a slideshow at 7 pm and from 8 pm to midnight, there will be dancing. If you have some photos to include, please email three to five of them to class of 2022seniorball@gmail.com

“We need help in collecting pictures and we are asking for any pictures from kindergarten to senior year,” said Fish. “Deadline is Feb. 20, 2022.” There will also be a photo booth.

If anyone is interested in pledging some financial support, contact Fish at reginafish55@gmail.com

“I am happy that the community is reaching out to our students,” Principal Marquez said. ★

Exploring Art

Continued from page 1

a natural outlet for things that are bottled up,” said Stidham. “The list is long of really talented students in my classes.”

One of the students in Jackson’s class wants to become an art teacher. This is significant for Jackson who took ten years to get her undergraduate degree before going back for a Master’s in Fine Art.

That student who already knows what she wants would be Genesis Servin who also won a blue ribbon.

“When a student takes to it, their personality really comes out. There is much to experience in being creative,” Jackson said. In her ceramics class, she gave the students a large chunk of clay and they had to divide it into three “forms” then put them together. Those were the only rules.

“They had the freedom to do whatever,” she said as she walked through dozens of strange and colorful ceramic designs. “It is interesting to see how they interpret and it’s fun to watch how their mind is going to work. They don’t have much experience in being creative.”

In ceramics, students not only are getting a painting class, but they have to learn to build with a whole new material.

“Most have never used clay and then there is the glazing that affects the color,” she added. Sensing her genuine passion for art, this writer asked about the colors in her home.

“Colors are everywhere. Colors mean something,” she said. “I have no normal dishes. They are all hand made.” ★



This gender dysmorphia sculpture by 9th grader Jovanni Domingo was one of a classroom full of unique designs with vibrant colors. Photo by Debra Dingman



This was another painting depicting perhaps an inner struggle students may be dealing with over pandemic issues. In this case, between what is and what might be, created by Arianna Barajas. Photo by Debra Dingman



Plenty of the art exhibited at last week’s high school art show appeared to have a dark nature of anxiety and depression, which is indicative of what students have been going through this last year. This painting is by Jose Gamez. Photo by Debra Dingman



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NATIONAL NEWS *courtesy of* THE EPOCH TIMES

Texas Republicans Urge Court to Reconsider Decision That Stripped AG of Power to Prosecute Election Fraud

DARLENE MCCORMICK SANCHEZ

At least 100 Texas Republican lawmakers and party leaders are urging the state’s highest criminal court to revisit a decision that they say dealt a major blow to the state’s ability to prosecute election fraud and jeopardized election integrity laws.

A friend-of-the-court brief filed by 14 Republican state senators on Jan. 19 called on the state’s all-Republican Court of Criminal Appeals to reconsider a decision that stripped the attorney general of the ability to unilaterally prosecute election fraud.

“There is no question it’s a huge case,” state Sen. Paul Bettencourt, a Republican, told The Epoch Times. “I hope this gets their attention.”

Other friend-of-the-court briefs filed this month include one by the Texas Republican Party and another signed by 85 U.S. and state House GOP lawmakers and prominent party leaders such as Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller and Texas gubernatorial candidate Don Huffines.

Matt Rinaldi, chairman of the Republican Party of Texas, called the court’s decision “incomprehensible.”

“If this decision is allowed to stand, it will cause irreparable damage to the integrity of elections in Texas,” Rinaldi told The Epoch Times in an email.

Bettencourt added that the justices ultimately listened to an attorney for the Democrats arguing the case.

“They found a weak spot,” he wrote.

Harris County Attorney Christian Menefee, a Democrat, applauded the court’s decision in a tweet.

“This is a big win for local government and Texans who are tired of state officials exag-



Poll workers help voters inside a polling location in Austin, Texas, on Oct. 13, 2020.

gerating voter fraud claims to undermine elections,” Menefee wrote.

In December 2021, with little fanfare, the Criminal Appeals Court struck down the Texas attorney general’s authority to prosecute criminal election law violations granted by legislation some 70 years ago, saying the provision violated the separation of powers clause in the state’s constitution.

The legal decision involved a case against Jefferson County Sheriff Zena Stephens. After the county district attorney declined to prosecute Stephens over campaign-finance allegations stemming from the 2016 election, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton stepped in and obtained an indictment from a grand jury in neighboring Chambers County.

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals opinion overturned a lower-court ruling that said the election code “clearly and unambiguously” gives the attorney general power to pros-

ecute criminal laws prescribed by election laws. In light of the appellant ruling, the attorney general must now be asked to be involved in a case by a district or county attorney.

Bettencourt said he believes the court should revisit the issue, based on provisions in the Texas constitution that require legislators “to detect and punish fraud” in elections. The senators’ brief further states the state constitution gives the Legislature the power to assign duties to the attorney general.

“Poof, it’s gone,” Bettencourt said of the long-held law, adding that the attorney general is an important tool in prosecution. “They need to rethink what they have done.”

The Texas Supreme Court is the highest civil court in the state but doesn’t have jurisdiction over most criminal cases, making the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals the highest criminal court in the state.

Paxton, a Republican who has been keen on rooting out voter

fraud, wrote on Twitter that the ruling could be “devastating” for future elections in Texas and filed a motion this month seeking a rehearing with the Court of Criminal Appeals.

“The court’s decision to suddenly remove our authority to prosecute election fraud can only empower dishonest campaigns to silence voters across the state,” Paxton said in a statement. “Last year’s election cycle shows us that officials in our most problematic counties will simply let election fraud run rampant.”

State Rep. Steve Toth, who signed on to the Jan. 14 brief, said he doubts the court will revisit the issue even with overwhelming Republican support.

The Republican lawmaker called for an immediate fourth special session to draft new legislation to allow a neighboring district attorney to prosecute alleged election fraud, if the official in the county in question doesn’t, as a potential solution to the ruling.

“No one saw this coming,” Toth said in an interview. “The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals said it’s basically OK to cheat in Texas.”

State Rep. Cecil Bell, who signed the brief as well, agreed that the state Legislature must act if the court doesn’t.

“What it does, I think that is so problematic, is it means there are no checks and balances,” Bell, a Republican, said of the ruling in an interview. “If we learned nothing else about the election in 2020, people can be very blatant in what they do.”

Bell pointed to election issues in Harris County in 2020, which includes the Democratic stronghold of Houston. That county sent applications to vote by mail to nearly 377,000 registered voters 65 years of age or older, according to news reports. The county had planned to mail out unsolicited applications to all of its 2.4 million voters, although the effort was blocked by the Texas Supreme Court. Harris County also allowed for controversial drive-thru voting during the 2020 election.

The first phase of a Texas forensic audit, which focused on four of the state’s largest counties, found thousands of possible non-U.S. citizens and deceased persons registered to vote statewide. However, the state didn’t find problems on a scale large enough to alter the election, according to the Texas Secretary of State’s Office. Overall, Donald Trump carried Texas with 52.1 percent of the vote to President Joe Biden’s 46.5 percent.

The Texas Legislature approved legislation last year in an effort to stop drive-thru voting, mass distribution of unsolicited mail-in-ballot applications, and to require ID to vote by mail. The law also provided for election audits of select counties.

Antifa Shuts Down College Event as Administrators Blame Republican Students

ALICE GIORDANO

Republican students at a New Hampshire Ivy League college say the school’s administration has deserted them and has made false and embarrassing allegations against them in order to avoid bad publicity by canceling an event under heavy protest by far-left extremist group Antifa.

The live event scheduled at Dartmouth College was called “Extremism in America” and was to feature conservative personality Andy Ngo, who has been violently attacked by Antifa in the past.

Antifa and its sympathizers made several threats against the event, including offering money to anyone who assaulted Ngo. A local group known as Dartmouth Anarchists also posted violent insinuations about the event on social media.

“So long as we stand, Dartmouth will never be a safe space for [right-wingers] to spew their misinformation. Wear black to show your solidarity and hide your identity!” one member of the group wrote on Twitter.

The event was hosted by Dartmouth College Republicans. Club President Griffin Mackey told The Epoch Times



Independent journalist Andy Ngo, in an undated photo.

that local and state police were well prepared for any violence from the group and had a SWAT team in place before the event began.

“Moore Hall may have been the safest place in all of New Hampshire,” Mackey said.

Just hours before Ngo was about to take stage, school administrators ordered the live event to be transitioned to a virtual-only event. The university later issued a statement blaming the move on failures by the College Republicans.

“In light of concerning information from Hanover police regarding safety issues, similar

concerns expressed by the College Republican leadership, and challenges with the student organization’s ability to staff a large public event and communicate effectively (including dissemination of the visitor policy and a prohibition of bags in the building), the College has requested that the Extremism in America panel be moved online,” the university said in a statement.

However, emails exchanged between Anna Hall, senior assistant dean for student life at Dartmouth, and the College Republicans show that the student group had sent out emails to registered attendees days be-

fore that emphasized that backpacks wouldn’t be allowed at the event and that student ID would be strictly required. The group also posted notices on the college’s online bulletin and around campus, the emails show.

Mackey told The Epoch Times that he believes the real reason the college canceled the event was to avoid “bad publicity” and any potential fallout from it.

Chloe Ezzo, vice president of the Dartmouth College Republicans, noted that Hall made an arbitrary last-minute request for the group to provide additional staffing, as if she was trying to create “reasons” to cancel the event.

After the cancellation, members of Dartmouth Anarchists took to social media and declared “victory.”

“By going virtual on such a short notice, they seriously disrupted our event, embarrassed our organization, and created a roadmap for derailing these kinds of activities,” Mackey told The Epoch Times.

New Hampshire State Police, Hall, and other college administrators didn’t respond to requests for comments.

In a 2021 evaluation of free speech on college campuses, the Foundation for Individual

Rights in Education (FIRE), gave Dartmouth College a “C” in Free Speech.

Despite protests, the school didn’t cancel a scheduled live appearance in 2021 by Madison Cawthorn, who would later become the youngest U.S. Congressman to be elected. During his speech, the Democratic Socialist Club at Dartmouth College chanted obscenities at police.

However, Antifa and its sympathizers made it clear that it was prepared to wage an aggressive protest against Ngo.

A couple of days before the event, the Green Mountain John Brown Gun Club posted on social media that it had “called up reserves” of “Antifa super soldiers” to be present for it.

And in a Twitter post just a few days earlier, Antifa member Jonathan Dylan Chase offered money to anyone “who managed to assault Ngo” during his Dartmouth appearance.

Chase is a member of the Portland, Oregon-based Rose City Antifa, charged with violently attacking Ngo in 2019. In a video captured by a local reporter, a group of demonstrators can be seen dousing Ngo with a milkshake, punching him, and yelling at him in an unprovoked attack.

“I PASS ON YOUR ARTICLES TO ENLIGHTEN SOME OF THE UNENLIGHTENED.” —Philip Lewis

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THE EPOCH TIMES

TRUTH and TRADITION



Could DeSantis Beat Trump?

It was only a matter of time before Ron DeSantis’ rising star ran into the unmovable object of Donald Trump’s will to continue to dominate the GOP.

A spate of recent news stories has focused on the proto-feud between the past president with future ambitions and the protege who rode his endorsement to victory in a Florida GOP gubernatorial primary and has big ambitions of his own.

The level of the clash shouldn’t be exaggerated – so far, it mostly consists of muttering from Mar-a-Lago.

Obviously, it’s also insanely early. But the Trump-DeSantis storyline is inherently alluring, given the chances of a collision between two men who have been allies and the possibility of the subordinate in the relationship eclipsing the figure who helped to elevate him.

Whether that ever happens is unknowable, yet the spat is revealing, nonetheless. Some version of what DeSantis represents has the greatest odds of coaxing the party away from Trump and forging a new political synthesis that bears the unmistakable stamp of Trump while jettisoning his flaws.

There’s simply never going to be a GOP

revelation in which the rank-and-file suddenly decides, “It was a mistake to ever embrace Donald Trump, and now we want to be the party of Adam Kinzinger.” There will be no Bourbon Restoration.

The challenge to Trump will have to come from the Trump wing – at this point, more like the Trump fuselage, wing and landing gear – of the party. After Trump’s presidency, the party is more populist, focused on the culture war, resistant to media narratives, and skeptical of business – and would it remain so if Trump retired tomorrow.

Although in many ways an orthodox conservative, DeSantis covers these bases. Importantly, he’s a lightning rod for criticism from the left – now a major plus for Republican voters – and gives as good as he gets in clashes with the media. There are few causes that light up the Republican base that he doesn’t find a way to address, whether on big tech or critical race theory, and he has emerged as the party’s exemplar on the pandemic, with his strenuous opposition to lockdowns and mandates. This gives him credibility with Trump voters and the foundation to compete with Trump, not as a critic or scold but as someone who can do it better.

In fact, it is likely that the most telling line of attack against a potential candidate Trump would come from the right.

That he elevated Dr. Anthony Fauci early in the pandemic and listened to his advice for too long.

That despite all his talk

of building the border wall, he didn’t get it done and left intact a desperately flawed immigration system.

That he rattled China’s cage but didn’t make fundamental changes to the trading relationship and was too complimentary of President Xi Jinping.

And, finally, that he lost to Joe Biden, a desperately flawed candidate who only made it into the White House because Trump made himself so unpopular.

Would DeSantis be audacious enough to run against Trump in 2024? The case against waiting is that that it’s extremely unlikely that the governor can maintain his exalted status in the party until 2028.

On the other hand, the case against running in 2024 is that it involves the enormous risk of encountering the business end of the Trump buzzsaw, which could change DeSantis’ image in the party forever.

Trump took a not-so-veiled shot at DeSantis in a recent interview, hitting unnamed “gutless” politicians who won’t say whether they’ve gotten a COVID-19 booster shot or not. DeSantis has been notably evasive on this question, and Trump was giving him a hint of things potentially to come.

For the moment, though, DeSantis should take the grumbling from Trump as a compliment -- the past and current master of the GOP sees a future threat arising.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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Heeney’s History

Kansas Seasons; D U M Think Tank

Commentary by Ed Heeney

It may seem from my writings that I was pretty much raised in a dust storm back in Kansas. This is not all true, for we enjoyed a great family life and felt pretty much part of a big rural family.

Even though we had no swimming pool out on our farm, we had the Chikaskia River to cool off and no lifeguards to pester us for being too noisy or splashing too much water. A real treat at the end of a dusty day in the harvest fields was to get turned loose early, head for the river, and by the time the river was in sight, most trousers and socks were shucked and boys were in mid-air diving for the swimming hole. This made it kind of worthwhile.

Summer seemed to go by too fast and school time was upon us. The old river seemed at rest just waiting for winter and ice. About mid-December, all the kids began to shine and sharpen their ice skates and get ready for amateur hockey on the old Chikaskia. It was always a challenge to see who would test the ice. It was always too early and two or three boys would arrive at the house with wet boots and pant legs. But, it did finally freeze enough to support the neighborhood kids and a great time was had by all. It was especially fun at night when we would fill 5-gallon buckets with sand, pour kerosene on them and light them for heat, light, and a celebration atmosphere.

Spring arrived along with rain and thunderstorms and the old river did several dances. Sometimes flood, sometimes calm, sometimes almost ready to welcome swimmers. As nature was waiting for the old swimming hole to open, the boys would get barefoot, take off their shirt and lie on their backs looking up and daydream about

the white fluffy clouds lazing by.

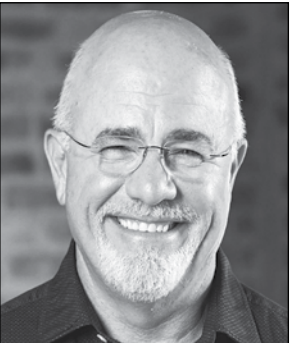
Think Tank

Nearly 10 years ago, about a dozen Sr. men (we called them “the old guys”) decided to meet at the Methodist Church for coffee and conversation. And since they had so much wisdom to impart, they called their group the Think Tank. Now when you use the initials of the Dixon United Methodist it causes a chuckle to use the name DUM Think Tank.

All walks of life are represented each Monday morning as the members pour their coffee and enjoy left-over donuts from the church Social Hour the previous Sunday morning. Occupations vary such as fertilizer dealer, IBM typewriter technician, backhoe operator, jet pilot, TV shop owner, farmer, butcher, teacher, Internationally acclaimed dairyman and a whole bunch more experiences.

There are so many topics, that frequently there are three or four conversations going on around the table. It is also not unusual for a couple antique tools or gadgets to appear mid-table in what we call our “show and tell” corner.

When the COVID shut us down a couple years ago, we were quite put out about losing our time together. We grumbled for a couple of months and then I realized I needed to do something. Instead of being able to converse each week, I wrote each a letter and included in each envelope a small pkt of instant coffee... best I could think of. We all seemed to enjoy this exercise and soon had several “think tankers” taking to the pen. Even though we are back in Branscomb Hall regularly on Monday mornings, a new letter surfaces every once in a while. Wouldn’t the English teachers of some 70 years ago be surprised... and even a little pleased. ★



Dave Ramsey Says

Where Should he Park the Money?

Dear Dave,

Our son is 13, and he has been doing some part-time work for a friend of the family. He makes \$40 to \$60 a week, and he would like to begin investing the majority of what he earns. Do you have a suggestion for a good place he could put his money?

– Lindsay

Dear Lindsay,

Well, here’s the thing. At this point in his life, the goal of this investment isn’t wealth. Number one, it’s not a lot of money. Number two, well, it’s not a lot of money. The goal is to create

knowledge, reward his interest in the subject and teach him how to handle his finances when he’s an adult.

I’ve got no problem with you helping him open checking or savings accounts at a local bank or credit union. There are lots of good lessons to be learned in reconciling a bank statement, and the value of spending, saving and giving. Then, you could get with a good financial pro, one with the heart of a teacher, and let him open a mutual fund for \$50 a month with you as the custodian. He could learn about compound interest, how to calculate the value of his shares and other things, and all that would be a good learning exercise, too.

We did these things with our kids. But keep in mind that over the course of a year – and when you’re 13, that’s an eternity – there’s not going to be a lot of

action on the investing side of things. It could be kind of boring for him at times. But he’s better off to learn now that good things don’t always come with flashing lights and whistles.

When it comes to wealth building, things aren’t sexy. Slow and steady wins the race!

– 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. ★

NRA Release

FAIRFAX, VA (MPG) - The Ninth Circuit sided with the National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action (NRA-ILA) on Thursday, January 20th, 2022 when it struck down a Los Angeles County order that forced gun stores and shooting ranges to close in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. NRA-ILA originally challenged this order in March of 2020, and filed an appeal a year later.

“The court today rightfully recognized that Los Angeles County violated Second Amendment rights when it shut down gun stores and ranges in the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Michael

Jean, NRA’s director of the Office of Litigation Counsel. “This is an important decision. It ensures that California—or any state—cannot use a crisis to trample on the Constitutional rights of citizens.”

The decision highlights that these orders, which prevented the exercise of basic constitutional rights like acquiring and practicing with firearms, could have been “perpetually extended if the County so decided.”

Given the current state of the world and the periodic resurgence of COVID-19 continuing to affect daily life, this decision ensures that states cannot restrict the fundamental rights of Americans for any reason. In this spirit, the decision

concludes by citing Justice Gorsuch’s words: “Even in times of crisis – perhaps especially in times of crisis – we have a duty to hold governments to the Constitution.”

NRA-ILA also challenged overbearing COVID-19 restrictions in New Mexico and New York. In addition to Los Angeles County, NRA-ILA challenged four additional counties in northern California.

The case is captioned *Martinez v. Villanueva*. NRA-ILA was joined by local gun stores and ranges, the California Gun Rights Foundation, the Firearms Policy Coalition, and the Second Amendment Foundation in this lawsuit.

Visit <http://nra.org>. ★



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Weighing Job Risks

By Ana B. Ibarra,
CALMatters.org

Look no further than your favorite restaurant, your kid’s school or your local hospital to see the effect of California’s latest bout of infections.

Cases have skyrocketed since the holidays, reaching nearly 7 million people infected since the pandemic began. That means so many workers are calling in sick that many businesses and offices are left understaffed and fellow workers are stretched thin.

Health officials are walking a fine line between keeping essential services and the economy afloat and controlling the spread of the virus. But a labor shortage has noticeably influenced national and state COVID-19 policies – even temporarily allowing for health care employees to continue working despite a positive test as long as they feel no symptoms and wear an N95 respirator. These guidelines have prompted questions about safety and whether public health is being jeopardized.

Since the start of the pandemic, California’s top officials have been adamant that the state’s COVID-19 response is based on science. But these policies also have to be flexible, Gov. Gavin Newsom recently told reporters.

“It’s called dealing with reality,” the governor said in defense of recent health workplace guidelines during his Jan. 10 budget briefing. “The pragmatism – not what you want, but what you need to do at a time of challenge.”

Experts note that the virus and the pandemic environment are fast-changing, and policies in response have to adjust quickly.

But labor needs and politics aside, when it comes to returning safely to work, what are experts and research telling us about omicron? When is it safe for an infected employee to return to work and how dangerous is it to shorten that period? What if you have no symptoms? And what should your employer be doing to keep you and your coworkers safe? Here’s what you need to know.

A red flag with omicron is that early research suggests that the incubation period – the time between when one becomes infected and when one starts to show symptoms – is shorter with this variant – about three days, compared



Health officials are walking a fine line between keeping essential services and the economy afloat and controlling the spread of the virus. Photo: Pixabay

to the four to five days of earlier strains.

Usually, the day before symptoms start and the day symptoms appear are when people are the most infectious, said Sanghyuk Shin, director of UC Irvine’s infectious disease science initiative.

That means people can become highly infectious faster with omicron than with the previous variants. For example, if person A is infectious and A infects B, person B can then infect person C quicker with omicron than they may have with delta.

“This creates epidemic dynamics that are really hard to get in front of,” said Andrew Noymer, epidemiologist and professor of public health at UC Irvine. “Because it’s so rapid.”

Here is how fast omicron is moving: It was first identified in late November; in the week ending on Dec. 18, the omicron variant was responsible for about 38% of the cases in the U.S., according to the CDC’s variant monitoring system. By the week ending on Jan. 15, omicron made up 99.5% of cases.

In late December, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shortened the recommended isolation period for a person who tests positive but no longer has symptoms from 10 days to five. Those who were exposed but haven’t tested positive should also quarantine for five days, the agency said.

The CDC said the change

was motivated by growing data showing that much of the transmission was occurring earlier “generally in the one to two days prior to onset of symptoms and the two to three days after.”

But this move came with quite a bit of pushback and criticism from some in the public health and medical communities who deemed it too lax, especially because the federal rules don’t require a negative test to leave isolation. California updated its guidance to align with the CDC’s, but the state does ask that people remain isolated until they receive a negative test.

Some research has shown that people can still be contagious after five days of testing positive. A small study from Harvard, for example, took a look at infected NBA players and found that 25% of players infected with omicron were still infectious on day six after their first positive test and 13% were still contagious on day seven. The study has yet to be peer-reviewed.

“Having people who might still be infectious return to work, could of course lead to more people getting infected and additional workers being forced to isolate,” Shin said.

While recommendations about isolation and quarantine can be hard to keep up with, the bottom line is that people should test negative before returning to work and gathering with others, regardless of symptoms, Noymer said.

Asymptomatic transmission does occur and it’s a big reason why the pandemic has been so difficult to control.

“We can tell everyone who feels sick to stay home, but not everyone feels sick,” said Shin.

Experts say the best public health practice is for anyone who tests positive to isolate, regardless of how they feel.

Studies – albeit, many conducted pre-omicron – have shown that a large percentage of COVID-positive people show no symptoms. Research published in December reviewed 95 studies consisting of about 30 million people worldwide. Of those who tested positive, 40% had no symptoms at the time of testing. “The high percentage of asymptomatic infections highlights the potential transmission risk of asymptomatic infections in communities,” the research authors concluded.

Meanwhile, separate studies show that the viral loads of asymptomatic patients were comparable to those who had symptoms.

Trying to calculate the odds that you’ll contract COVID at work is not really possible because there are so many factors to consider, experts say.

Research has shown that wearing masks indoors can substantially cut transmission, and with omicron, a high-quality mask is more important than ever. N95 masks are the gold standard, especially with a variant as contagious as omicron,

Noymer said. Cloth masks are much less effective unless they have multiple layers and a nose wire. And it’s essential for masks to fit snugly around the mouth, nose and chin.

“A well-fitting N95 mask should do a pretty good job. But nothing is guaranteed,” he said. “Surgical masks do something, but they’re not great...and some masks are just pure theater.”

N95 masks can filter about 95% of particles in the air, according to the CDC. Experts at UC Davis say it is OK to reuse an N95 mask, but they recommend waiting one to two days between uses so that viral particles can die off.

How crowded a room is also plays a big role. If you’re in a busy kitchen or warehouse without many windows, the risk will be greater, Shin said.

A molecular PCR test is the most sensitive and most likely to capture an infection, but rapid antigen tests are effective tools too, experts say.

Antigen tests are often used for routine screening of people who are not sick. If being used as a precaution for an in-person gathering, for example, Shin says a repeat test could help rule out a false negative ----- a test the day before and a test the day of an event.

However, given the shortage of rapid tests, this could seem like a luxury. People with symptoms looking to confirm whether they’re infected or not, ideally would seek a PCR test,

Shin said. But with a backlog in testing, results are sometimes taking more than three days.

Because of the heightened demand for testing, some California counties have come out with new recommendations. Some have urged residents to only get tested if they have symptoms and others have asked people to first seek tests from their health care provider rather than county-ran testing sites because they are overwhelmed.

In an ideal world with no supply shortages, workers who come in contact with large numbers of people, such as those who work in customer service or in grocery stores, would be able to access testing easily and test repeatedly and routinely, experts say.

That said, routine testing of essential workers should go hand-in-hand with adequate paid sick leave, Shin said. “I’ve definitely known people who have said they don’t want to get tested because they don’t know what to do if they test positive. They can’t not go to work, they need to pay rent.”

California’s COVID sick leave expired in September and legislators and labor unions are negotiating how to reinstate it.

Shin said there is room for more education of workers on how the virus spreads. For example, if someone is in an office space alone, they might think it is safe to take their mask off, but if that same space is occupied by others throughout the day, then people should keep their masks on because COVID-19 is airborne and infectious respiratory particles can remain in the air for up to three hours.

Improving ventilation helps, too.

“Opening windows seems like a no-brainer, but opening windows reduces risk,” Shin said.

Workplaces should also consider investing in high grade filtration systems or high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters, experts say. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, filters need to be able to remove small air particles in the size range of 0.1 to 1 microns to help remove viruses.

Ana is a Sacramento-based health reporter. She joined CalMatters in 2020 after four years at Kaiser Health News, where she covered California health care and policy. ★

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ACROSS

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5. Shout from the bleachers
8. ____ and don'ts
11. Infamous Henry's number
12. One with COVID, e.g.
13. Fighter jet button
15. Resting stops
16. Not guilty, e.g.
17. One of Singapore's official languages
18. *Home of last year's Super Bowl winners
20. Armor chest plate
21. *Given name of 2011 Super Bowl MVP
22. African grazer
23. Greek woodland deities
26. Ramones' hit "I Wanna Be
30. Big fuss
31. Like certain Chili Peppers (2 words)
34. Cattle call goal
35. Scatterbrained
37. Bonehead
38. In a different direction
39. Jeté in ballet
40. More so than eggy
42. Conducted
43. Christmas firewood (2 words)
45. Annotator and commentator
47. Soda-pop container
48. Unpleasant and offensive
50. SWAT attack, e.g.
52. *Super Bowl I and II winning coach
55. Pertaining to a pope
56. Cain's unfortunate brother
57. Gives a hand
59. Anoint
60. Bébé's mother
61. Season to be jolly
62. *Most Super Bowl wins by one team
63. Snoop
64. Carhop's load

DOWN

1. *Roman number of this year's Super Bowl
2. * ____ Misbehavin'
3. Santa Maria's traveling partner
4. Despair in the face of obstacles
5. "The Hobbit" hobbit
6. "Caribbean Queen" singer
7. Colloquial approval
8. Cold cuts counter
9. South American tubers
10. Pig's digs
12. Not dense
13. Make corrections
14. *Florida team with no Super Bowl appearances
19. Return punch
22. Come and ____ it
23. Lamentably
24. Bye, to Edith Piaf
25. Bottom line
26. *2022 Super Bowl stadium
27. Upholstery choice
28. *Archie to Super Bowl MVPs Peyton and Eli
29. Exploits
32. *Super Bowl Halftime show Snoops's "last name"
33. Hardly a beauty
36. *Like some teams
38. Denophile's concern
40. Many, many moons
41. Empower
44. Big Dipper's visible shape
46. Oppressive ruler
48. On the wagon
49. Nail salon board
50. Feminine of raja
51. Mt. Everest to Earth
52. Aladdin's light
53. Christian of fashion
54. Result of a brainstorm
55. Rudolf Nureyev's step
58. Stallone's nickname

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FOR THE LOVE OF
BOOKS
By Amy Shane

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

Anatomy: A Love Story

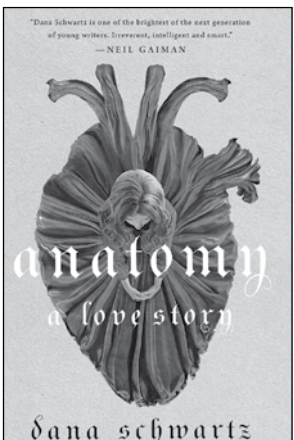
by Dana Schwartz

“Blood will stain your hands. You might find that that blood may even stain your very souls.”

Hazel always dreamed of a life within a surgical suite, scalpel in hand, but as a woman, this could only be a dream. For 1817 in Edinburgh, Scotland, it was unheard of to have a woman practice medicine, let alone ruin her pleasing countenance by reading such manner of topics as human anatomy. Yet, Hazel is determined, and when she sees an opportunity to study under the infamous Dr. Beecham, she grabs her brother’s clothes and jumps at the opportunity.

As medical advancements are expanding, so does the need for human corpses, making the need for resurrection men a monetary endeavor but also a deadly one. Although very good at digging up fresh corpses for the school, Jack is also very aware that something is amiss. Resurrection men are starting to disappear, and bodies labeled as Roman Fever victims aren’t showing the familiar lesions or boils.

But when Hazel’s disguise fails her, she is forced



- ◆ Publisher: Wednesday Books
- ◆ Intended Audience: Young Adult/Adult
- ◆ Rating: ★★★★★
- ◆ Release Date: January 18, 2022

to look at accepting the life that is delicately laid before her- a woman of high society and the wife of the future Viscount Almont. Then, Hazel dreams up another perfectly crafted scheme and hires Jack to provide her with bodies for her own medical advancement. Opening the door to more than just the study of human anatomy, but a darker and more profound mystery than one can fathom, leaving Hazel and Jack balancing on the edge

of life and death.

As swift and clean as a scalpel, Dana Schwartz pierces the hearts of her readers, opening the door to more than just a story of medical advancements and socioeconomic status, but one of dark and ill intent. *Anatomy, A Love Story*, is a rich historical story intricately researched dancing on the edge of macabre. Excerpts from medical textbooks and journals keep the aesthetic while also lending to the history and advancements of the time. Like looking into a deep, dark, empty grave the finality of truth, reality, and fiction all pressing against one another, leaves readers gasping for air.

This beautiful and stunning gothic tale blends forbidden romance with a gripping mystery that will keep readers on the edge of their seats. Where stolen kisses under the moonlight happen in the most peculiar spaces, yet don’t steal the spotlight. With a surprise paranormal twist that will keep readers guessing way past the closing of the last page, this book is sure to win over the hearts of anyone who reads it. ★



A Film and TV Review by Tim Riley

“RAY DONOVAN: THE MOVIE” ON SHOWTIME

Two years ago, viewers were left hanging after the conclusion of the seventh season of “Ray Donovan” when Showtime, to the consternation of the fan base, abruptly cancelled the series its creative team had planned to wrap up in a finale year.

Now comes the feature-length ending in “Ray Donovan: The Movie,” which picks up the storyline after the last season when the husband (Graham Rogers) of Ray’s daughter has been gunned down on a Brooklyn street and Ray’s father Mickey (Jon Voight) flees with purloined stocks.

Closure can be cathartic, and in the case of the saga of Ray Donovan (Liev Schreiber), a Los Angeles-based fixer skirting the law and ethics for his elite clientele during the first five seasons, the movie works its way to a fairly untidy and chaotic closing.

Not surprisingly, a day of reckoning is at hand in which the brooding Ray, conflicted in a series of flashbacks to his childhood clashes with his strutting younger father (Bill Heck), faces off with Voight’s aging ex-con Mickey, relentlessly sleazy and dangerous as always.

Throughout the series run, there was always a volatile relationship between the mobster father and son, stretching back to the first season when Mickey was released from prison and Ray was hoping recidivism would send his murderous father back to the slammer.

The entire Donovan family, with its roots in the working-class part of Boston, has issues. Ray’s older brother Terry (Eddie Marsan) is a former boxer suffering from Parkinson’s disease.

Ray’s younger brother Bunchy (Dash Mihok) has a substance abuse problem connected to molestation as a child. The movie brings out the truth of the death of Ray’s teen sister. Half-brother Daryll (Pooch Hall) has his own set of issues.

To say the Donovan family is dysfunctional is an understatement. With a father like Mickey, it’s little wonder everyone has problems. In his own inimitable way though, Ray goes about trying to clean up the messes of his clients as well as those of family.

Most satisfying for the hardcore fans is the movie’s sharp focus on the complicated Donovan family, most particularly on the troubling dynamic of Ray and Mickey being at odds over the history of a lifetime.

The younger versions of father and son in numerous flashbacks add needed texture to a relationship that deviated from the norms of social behavior. Chris Gray’s Ray displays a pragmatic maturity as opposed to Bill Heck’s charismatic yet irrational and impulsive Mickey.

To enjoy “Ray Donovan: The Movie”

it’s inevitable that the narrative elements of the travails of the complex characters are only fully understood with an appreciation of the seasons that preceded.

Discussing the undercurrents of intrigue and violence that plague the Donovan family risks revealing key points that are best to be discovered, though arguably “Ray Donovan: The Movie” does arrive at an ending that seems fitting and rather predictable.

Arguably, the “Ray Donovan” series had so many moving parts, chiefly when the focus was on family rather than Ray’s fixer role for private clients, that many fans may come away with the impression the movie does not suffice to tie up many unresolved plot elements.

NORDIC NOIR AND MORE ON VIAPLAY

Who can keep up with the ever-changing landscape of streaming services? Now along comes Viaplay, accessed through Comcast Xfinity, a streaming service that offers Scandinavian drama, crime and comedy programs.

Our winter television press tour will feature two Viaplay original productions. “Partisan” follows Johnny (Swedish-Lebanese actor Fares Fares), a mysterious man who enters Jordnara, a seemingly idyllic gated community running a thriving organic farm, to work as a truck driver.

He is actually a Swedish secret police agent assigned to infiltrate the community and unearth criminal activity. The mastermind (Johan Rheborg) of Jordnara is suspected of money laundering and embezzlement.

Johnny’s arrival at the farm coincides with two other new members: teenage sisters Nicole and Maria. The two seem out of place and it soon becomes apparent that young girls before them (and like them) who come for an elite gymnastics program vanish without a trace.

The intrigue of Nordic Noir in “Partisan” builds when the Swedish agent begins to suspect foul play and is driven by a mission that cuts deep into him. Johnny’s drive will push him to sacrifice everything for his beliefs.

The drama “Love Me” poses the question of how can love change life. Through a story of friendship, grief and romance spanning three generations of Stockholmers, this Viaplay series embraces one of humanity’s biggest questions in a way that is sometimes touching and often comic.

A Norwegian police procedural series, “Wisting,” starring Sven Nordin as senior police detective William Wisting, already has two seasons under its belt and will be a perfect fit for streaming.

As an aside, long ago I attended a Norwegian opera in Los Angeles which was so depressing that it made the darkest German opera of Richard Wagner seem a lighthearted romp. Here’s hoping Viaplay’s Nordic Noir is more thrilling than bleak. ★

Newsom’s Vacillation on Vaccinations, Phase 2



By Dan Walters
CALMatters

Is California – and its politicians – ready for VAX War II?

More pointedly, is Gov. Gavin Newsom ready?

Three years ago, the Capitol was wracked by one of the most heated conflicts in its history – legislation to make it more difficult for parents to exempt their children from mandatory vaccinations if they attended public schools. A bill sought to close a loophole that allowed doctors to approve exemptions without specifying reasons, leading to doctor-shopping by anti-vaccination parents.

Hundreds of opponents besieged the Capitol, claiming that the legislation would violate parental rights and require vaccines that could trigger autism or other adverse reactions. The measure’s author, Sacramento Sen. Richard Pan, and other backers were accosted and threatened and on the final night of the legislative session, someone in the Senate gallery threw a cup of what authorities said “appeared to be blood” onto the Senate floor.

Eventually, the bill passed and was signed by Newsom in his first year as governor, but he engaged in some bizarre political theater before finally acceding.

As the bill was moving

through the Legislature, Newsom suddenly demanded a number of changes that weakened its provisions. “I’m a parent,” Newsom said at one point. “I don’t want someone that the governor of California appointed to make a decision for my family.”

After two weeks of private negotiations, he finally accepted a revised version, telling a reporter, “All those amendments, if they’re made, stamp of approval.”

Two-plus months later, however, Newsom did another 180-degree pivot, demanding more changes. Eventually, a final compromise was reached, but Newsom had violated one of the Capitol’s unwritten rules of conduct: once you make a deal, you don’t renege. It drove a wedge between the new governor and lawmakers that affected other issues.

The possibility of renewing superheated vaccination warfare arose this week when Pan, a physician, introduced legislation to close what he regards as a huge loophole in Newsom’s promise to have all school children vaccinated against COVID-19 when vaccines are available for youngsters. “We have to be willing to take a stand,” Pan said. “We need to be able to respond to this pandemic and future pandemics, but there is this asymmetrical warfare going on right now, and we’re seeing the anti-vaccine movement trafficking in misinformation, threats, and violence.”

Once again, Newsom’s position is uncertain.

When he announced the school vaccination mandate in October, Newsom

boasted that California was the first state to impose such a requirement

“The state already requires that students are vaccinated against viruses that cause measles, mumps, and rubella (so) there’s no reason why we wouldn’t do the same for COVID-19,” Newsom said. “Today’s measure, just like our first-in-the-nation school masking and staff vaccination requirements, is about protecting our children and school staff, and keeping them in the classroom.”

That would seem to be a strong endorsement of mandatory vaccinations. However, Newsom subsequently watered it down, at least verbally, by repeatedly reminding parents that they could opt out under state law’s “personal belief” exemption. Pan’s new bill would eliminate that exemption, leaving only precise medical conditions as a way to avoid vaccination.

Newsom’s new fence-straddling is not going unnoticed.

“He’s trying to be comforting and non-confrontational, but it sends a message that if you don’t want to get the vaccine, don’t get it,” Catherine Flores Martin, executive director of the California Immunization Coalition, told CaliforniaHealthline. “Gov. Newsom struggles with this – he’s trying to have it both ways.”

Yes, he is.

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



Proposition 12 Hog Requirements Could Complicate Junior Livestock Sales

The housing requirements for hogs under California’s Proposition 12 don’t apply to 4-H programs and exhibitions at fairs or rodeos. And yet the California Agricultural Teachers’ Association says administrative costs and burdens imposed by the law on meat processors will impact junior livestock exhibitors who want to sell project pigs into the general food market. That’s because those market hogs will need paperwork showing they come from farms certified as Proposition 12-compliant.

Citrus Farmers Face Rising Costs, Smaller Harvests

California citrus growers are facing increasing costs for bringing their crops to market. The California Citrus Mutual trade association says farmers are facing price increases in water, labor, fertilizer, pesticides and transportation. Amid drought and pandemic-related supply-chain challenges, 4% of last season’s citrus crop was neither picked nor sold. This year, a down-year growing cycle, the navel crop is expected to drop by 20% and mandarins by as much as 45%.

December Storms Deliver Modest Increase In Water Allocations

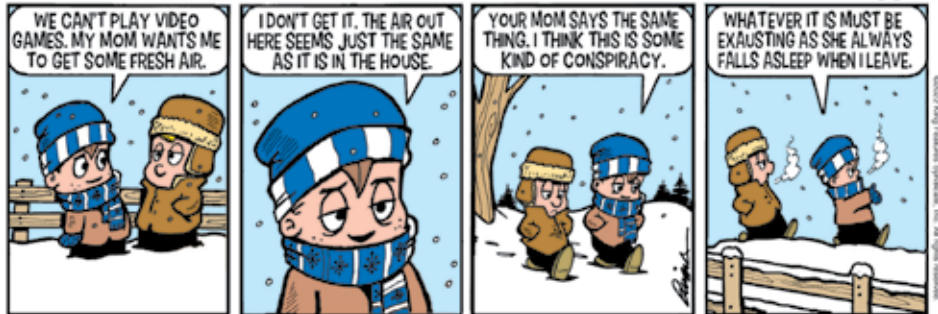
California farmers and ranchers may have some modest relief in water allocations this year due to December rains. The California Department of Water Resources is increasing deliveries from the State Water Project to 15% of requested supplies for 2022. That’s an improvement from last year when water officials provided just 5% of allocations. That was before the state cut off surface water supplies from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta in August due to severe drought.

Output Drops For Processing-Tomato Farmers Amid Challenges

California’s anticipated tomato production shrank last year due to water shortages and higher production costs, farmers say. Some processing-tomato growers who once paid \$3,000 per acre on their crop say they’re paying more than \$4,000. Last year, state processors intended to contract for 12.1 million tons of tomatoes. By the end of harvest, that figure had dropped by 1.3 million tons, as farmers adjusted production forecasts downward. ★

WEEKLY COMICS

Amber Waves



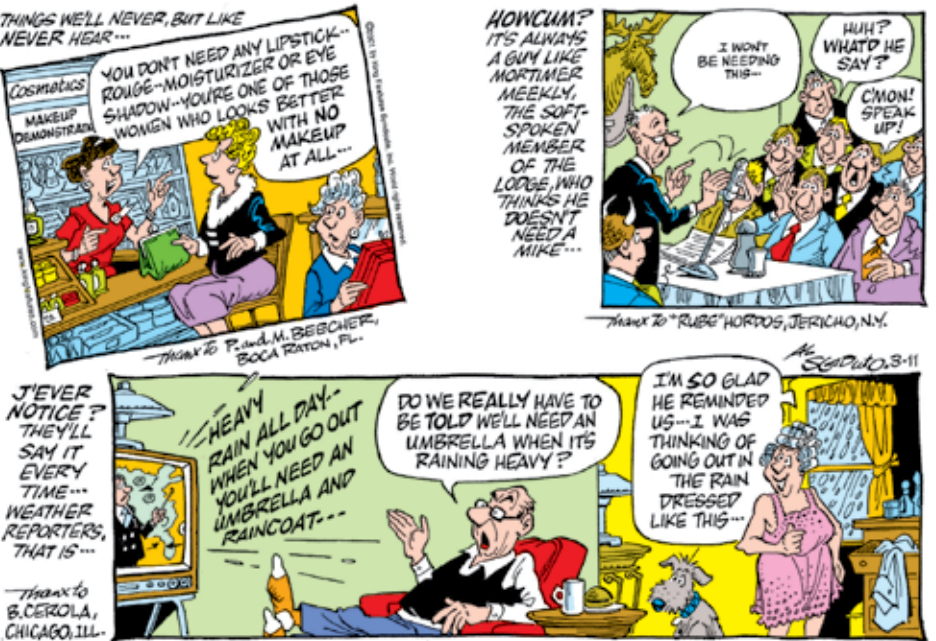
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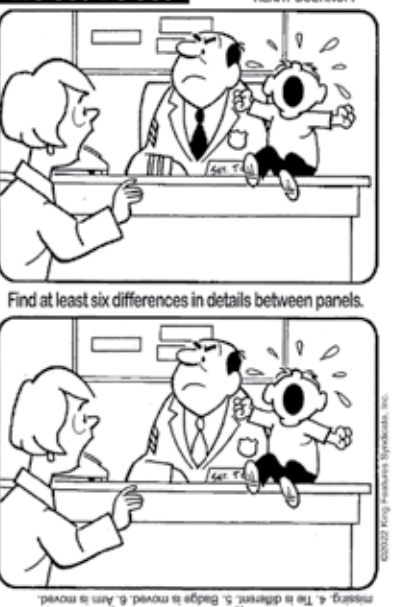
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Rewarding Failure in The K-12 System



Commentary
by Jon Coupal

California spends a lot on education. Ever since the passage of Proposition 98 in 1988, which guarantees to education a minimum of 40% of the general fund, per-pupil spending on K-12 has risen faster than any other category of state appropriations. And yet, for all that new money, the state's education monopoly continues its history of failure to deliver a quality product.

Just last month, this column cited the federal government's National Center for Education Statistics, showing that in 2017-2018, the most recent year for which statistics are available, per-pupil spending for the state's K-12 public schools was \$13,129 in inflation-adjusted

2019-20 dollars, the highest ever. Measured in the same constant dollars, per-pupil spending was \$9,594 in 1999-2000.

California is quickly rising in the ranks in spending according to multiple metrics and we are now at least 17th highest in the United States. And many of these statistics are pre-pandemic, before the state plowed even more money into the system.

Where it excels in spending money, California lags in educational outcomes due to a clear hostility to meaningful education reforms. For decades, reformers have unsuccessfully advocated for more school choice, merit pay for teachers, advancement based on merit rather than seniority and the ability to fire bad teachers including some credibly accused of crimes against children.

The "reforms" coming out of the union-dominated Legislature will only make matters worse. The latest iteration of this is Senate Bill 830 by Sen. Anthony Portantino, D-La Cañada Flintridge, that would change the way schools are funded. Under current law, schools get financial support based on a formula

that includes average daily attendance. This bill would eliminate daily attendance from the formula, and with it the financial incentive for school personnel to attempt to get students in the building.

This, mind you, comes after the state already froze funding to pre-pandemic levels to paper over historic declines in enrollment across the state these last two years.

But according to supporters of SB 830, the current system is unfair because it punishes low-income districts that have higher rates of absenteeism and truancy. It would seem to a rational person that, if a school is having a problem with absenteeism and truancy, it would be better to address those problems directly as opposed to hiding the problems and rewarding those schools with more money for fewer students.

As evidenced by the teachers' unions' hesitancy to return to the classroom, especially in the Los Angeles Unified School District, it is not a good idea to give teachers' unions a financial incentive to reduce their workload by rewarding districts with high truancy rates. ★

Dreams Being Realized Thanks to Soroptimist

Continued from page 1

for her Associates in Nursing to become a Registered Nurse.

She believes her education supports these goals by training her to be fully capable of taking care of people. Camesha realizes these tools and knowledge will complete her job efficiently and precisely.

She has had many challenges and obstacles in her life and while pursuing her educational goals she has learned that it is the only way to help herself and her children get out of poverty.

Her supervisor noted that Camesha is a very strong-minded person who works hard and is very dedicated to her reaching her goals. She prepares her work for the week ahead to focus on her schedule and keep her 4.0 GPA at school.

A friend writes that she is very organized and encourages her classmates to work hard, she is determined and detailed while being very humble and focused. Camesha has 3 children ages 9, 16, and 19 and believes as she works hard, she is showing them, their dreams can come true too.

Cindy Perez

Cindy is attending Sacramento State University and pursuing a degree in Sociology and her goal is to become a Social Clinician. She has 3 children ages 7, 9 and 12.

Cindy has been pursuing her educational dreams for a long time. She tried college when she graduated from high school and was disappointed with the results, so she decided to go to beauty school and has been "doing hair" ever since.

She started college in 2010, divorced and has been on her own since 2016. In 2020 she took over a beauty salon while continuing her education. She hopes to earn her bachelor's degree in Sociology and apply to become a social clinician and while still managing the salon.

Cindy once told someone that she "has been through so much, it's time for me to win, I need to feel like I have finally accomplished something that I have wanted for myself".

A coworker wrote that Cindy "is an incredible young woman and has many strengths. She is enrolled in college, takes care of her 3 children, and works very hard to manage her business. I have no doubt that she will do extremely well in the future."

A client writes, "Cindy has 3 children and has raised them as a single mom and tries to attend all their activities and keep up with all their schooling. She works to improve her business abilities and continues her own education." She is remarkable.

For more information on Dixon Soroptimist, email jr0904@sbcglobal.net. ★

More COVID Relief Funds Awarded to Dixon Businesses

Continued from page 1

Protection Program through the Small Business Administration. That program provided forgivable loans if jobs were retained; several restaurants also received money for COVID relief. According to

FederalPay.org, they were: The Frying Pan \$42, 405; Fanning's Pub and Grill \$142,105; Historic Dawson's Est. 1908 LLC \$87,878; Thai E-San Kitchen \$24,730; and Wienerschnitzel #874 \$26,700. ★

MPG Staff

Dixon Pardi No More

At a recent City Council Meeting, Dist. 2 Representative Jim Ernest read a letter explaining why Jon Pardi withdrew his permission to be featured on the Pardi Plaza Stage in downtown Dixon. The plans discussed at one City Council meeting involved 12x12 tiles that pictured Jon's guitar and several pictures of him growing up in Dixon.

"So it was a good statement and showed that we are proud of a kid that came from Dixon, who graduated from school here," said Ernest. There was additional discussion about adding more iconic images such as the Milk Farm, sunflowers, or a windmill for example, and a budget was set not to exceed \$15,000 for the additional images.

The topic took to social media where some negative comments were made.

"The comments were outrageous and it just went awful," Ernest explained. "I should have known Jon would never let his name go up for debate. He didn't want to be a source of anger in his own hometown or have his friends and family in a fight. We still have a mural and there'll be pictures but we won't have Jon on it."

To anyone with any length of residence in Dixon, however, the corner in downtown Dixon will be known as the Pardi Market Plaza.

Zoning Ordinances

The Planning Commission and City Council will both receive the same presentation on the Zoning Ordinance at their respective meetings on Tuesday, Feb. 1 at 7 pm at the City Council and Tuesday, Feb. 8 at 7 pm at the Planning Commission meeting also at City Hall, 600 East A Street.

This presentation will be an introduction to the project, with an overview of zoning, the scope of the project, next steps, and some preliminary discussion points. Please join in at the Council Chambers, on Zoom, or watch from home on Channel 20 or at www.cityofdixon.us/MeetingAgendasMinutesVideos.

The City hopes to have your participation.

Free COVID Tests

The City of Dixon has partnered with Kyla to offer FREE COVID-19 Testing. Testing is available to all members of the community Tuesdays and Thursdays 12 noon to 4 pm. To expedite your testing process, please download the KYLA app on your phone before arriving. Kyla is a HIPAA compliant medical provider, and the City will not receive your personal information, medical history or phone usage.

No appointment is necessary.

Testing will take place at 450 E Mayes Street, in the half dome drive through area near Hall Park and the Senior/Multi-Use Center. Kyla uses nasal swabs that are generally painless. Test results will be messaged to you within two days. The app can be downloaded from the Apple App Store or Google Play, click "sign up" and create an account.

Redistricting Process

Every 10 years, local governments use new data from the Census to redraw their district lines to reflect how local populations have changed. State law requires cities and counties to engage communities in the redistricting process by holding public hearings and doing public outreach, including to underrepresented and non-English-speaking communities. The City of Dixon is asking for your help to plan, draw, and redivide new City districts.

The finalized maps that you will help them create will define the four City of Dixon district borders, and these districts will impact how you elect your Councilmembers for the next 10 years. The primary goal when developing election districts is to draw lines that respect neighborhoods, history and geographical elements. So, they want to know: What do you consider the boundaries of your neighborhood?

How to participate? Share your specific thoughts, draw a map, or attend an upcoming workshop to get involved! Submit written testimony about the process or a specific map to luiz@cityofdixon.us. ★

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