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for Seniors**
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**Dixon
Independent Voice**

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STOPS BY THE
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**Kai Peris Wins VFW's
Voice of Democracy**



VFW Commander Cecil Dennings, Kai pictured with his Dad, Claus, and Kai's little brother. Photo by Nicolas Brown

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Removing the stigma surrounding mental health issues and recognizing that "COVID doesn't discriminate; we shouldn't either," may be the reasons Kai Peris, a senior at Davis High School who lives with his family in Dixon, won this year's VFW Voice of Democracy audio-essay contest.

This year's theme was "Where do we go from here?" and Kai entered a 3-minute speech giving statistics about COVID deaths and a variety of pandemic-induced stress and depression that has forced mental health issues into the public's eye.

"The pandemic brought forward issues that are forcing us to stop

stigmatizing mental health," he said. "We need to stick together, reunite, and come together. We must recover from the devastation and the isolation. It's taken more than lives. With such a sudden imbalance in life, the mental health of millions has undoubtedly been thrown into chaos. It's important we recognize that everyone experiences tough times. We should take proactive action."

Established in 1947, the Voice of Democracy audio-essay program sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars provides high school students with the unique opportunity to express themselves regarding a democratic and patriotic-themed recorded essay.

"Kai's was excellent," said VFW Post Commander Cecil Dennings. "To

me, it was inspirational."

Kai has always had a strong sense of patriotism according to his father, Claus Peris, who attributes that to Kai growing up with both parents serving in the U.S. Air Force. Claus just retired a year ago after 26 years.

"We as a family have all struggled, each having specific instances that were challenged whether it was me retiring, or my wife at home now with all of us and experiencing the pandemic. I've been very open about mental health with my children; all had some form of therapy or counseling. "Kai has a younger brother who is autistic and a 16-year-old sister.

"Moving around in the Air Force and having to stop and start

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**"Secure
Disposal"
Approved, for
Schroeder Road**

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Solano County Department of Resource Management recently held a public hearing by the Zoning Administrator to consider a use permit revision from an agricultural zone to a zone that allows toxic waste with plans to establish a site at 8028 Schroeder Road in Dixon. It was approved.

Solano County Planning Services Division meets twice per month, and they moved their meeting scheduled for Dec. 23 to December 16 to avoid a conflict with holiday plans and all were notified of the meeting date one week prior. There were 10 people at the public meeting in Fairfield, according to local citizen Jim Schneider who lives on Reddick Road near Schroeder Road.

"They wanted to ram it through, and it seems like short notice plus it being over the holiday, that they would get the change in land use approved," said Schneider who has filed an appeal with the County this week. "The public needs to be informed. It was pretty disheartening. They basically blew us off," he said.

EQ Industrial Services, a hazardous waste disposal company wants an exemption to Ag zoning to an Industrial zone.

"The words 'hazardous waste' were never mentioned in the notice," Schneider said. Upon checking with the county, originally the county used "waste, disposal" terms but they have only so many terms to choose from off their list.

The property owner, Sandy Betschart, reached out to all of the nearby residents and property owners and invited them to a meeting at the subject property that was held on Tuesday, Dec. 14, where a US Ecology representative described the business in detail and answered questions from neighbors and all interested parties.

"This meeting was held by the property owner to make sure everyone had time to learn about the business before the formal meeting and then gather their thoughts that could be presented at the public meeting on the 16th," said Terry Geis, Senior Vice President of the West Region for US Ecology that acquired EQ Industrial Services in 2014, creating a leading North American environmental and industrial services provider. "It is my understanding that every concerned

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**Bulkley Donation Keeps
Small Town Spirit Bright**

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - When the land around the railroad tracks downtown were level with the rails and there was no hint of train warnings, a slip of a girl considered a Tomboy by most, would enjoy running around barefoot in the summertime with other children in the small town of 1,000 population.

Barbara Foth-Bulkley grew up on B Street where several other relatives also resided; She remembers her mother placing their Christmas tree in the large round window and decorating it with homemade paper ornaments. Her mother would spread out apples and oranges underneath as the presents would not come out until Christmas, she said.

Her grandmother (Haas) lived across the street and her mother's



Barbara Bulkley is the reason Dixon has a beautiful Christmas Tree in the Women's Improvement Club Park and will for many years. Photo by Debra Dingman

sister (Sommers) lived a few houses down and there was her mother's brother who also lived a few houses down.

She attended Dixon Grammar School and met her husband-to-be, Robert Bulkley, in 8th grade where he pitched baseball for a team. Both of them were born and raised here. There was no entertainment so their world was their family and their Dixon friends. Both Bob and Barbara graduated from Dixon High School and happily married soon after producing their only child, Kathy,

three years later. She readily offers that she's always wanted four children but after a miscarriage and medical issues that wasn't ever going to happen.

She busied herself as wife while Bob worked long hours seven days a

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Mistletoe and the 7-Year-Old

By Debra Dingman

“Why let a perfectly good bunch of mistletoe go to waste?” I asked my husband as I stood on the small ladder in my kitchen trying to tack up a small bunch of mistletoe I had bought from the Dixon Key Club. I stood very still underneath it and he just stared at me for a moment before I pointed up and reminded him we weren’t dead yet. He laughed and then kissed me.

Several days later and after I had forgotten it was up there, the grandchildren visited. After my 9-year-old granddaughter explained to her 7-year-old little brother what mistletoe was all about, I heard this: “Nnnaaannnaa, look where I’m standing...” I looked at my kitchen doorway.

There he was with a huge grin on his face—you know the one filled with overly-large teeth that are adorable on elementary-aged children. When I followed his eyes up to the bough, I left the sink full of dishes and ran to him, wrapped my arms around him and smothered him in kisses while he giggled.

Needless to say, that happened another half dozen times before we had to return him to his parents the next day. I just love having the grandchildren around even though they can be exhausting.

Instead of baking cookies this year, I decided we’d do a Christmas craft and did the tissue-paper-mosaic-candle-craft. Covering the table with a plastic tablecloth, I got out 3 jars, 3 votives, sand, tissue paper, paint brushes, and glue (watered-down.)

The children tore squares of tissue paper and glued them down on the jars using their

small paint brushes until the whole jar was covered. After we let them dry for a few hours, we poured sand on the bottom and placed the votive half in the sand. We tied a ribbon around the edges of the rim and they looked beautiful! I lit mine so they could see how it would look once lit. When they were ready to leave the next day, we wrapped them in tissue and put them in gift bags.

This is a craft anyone can do and they turn out so pretty. One year, our Bible Buddies at the church we attended made dozens in purple and then they were lit/ placed all along the pathway from the parking lot to the front doors. The children were thrilled with their work and so was everyone who attended the Christmas Eve service.

Now, it’s time to get organized and set goals for 2022. Because of so many unknowns about mandates and wellness, I decided to set small ones. Instead of trying to lose 20 pounds, I’m aiming for ten. I joined Excel Fitness and although my hubby goes regularly, I’ve not been in 30 days.

I know you’re going to think I’m making excuses but really, I don’t like leaving hubby’s warm arms in the morning; I’m so tired at the end of my work day that I FEEL like I’ve run a marathon; and, I can’t get their TVs to work. I also haven’t downloaded podcasts yet which I enjoy while running on a treadmill.

But what I really want to do at Excel is use their saunas. That just sounds sooo relaxing. Whoever thought of going to a gym so you could sleep? I may be the first. Happy New Year! ★

Kai Peris Wins VFW’s Voice of Democracy

Continued from page 1

friendships gave him a wide aperture of his world view. He has resiliency,” said Claus who added that Kai was born in and also lived in Japan. “He is very accepting of cultures, religion, and people. He’s very open-minded.” That is why the second part of his speech dealt with people accepting differences.

“Noah is very high functioning but there’s definitely moments that we recognize his different ways of thinking. I treat him as if he’s as normal as me or my sister. But when I do think he is thinking differently, it makes me realize I have to be more patient,” Kai said. “He’s taught me that an event that means [something minor] to someone, may be a big event to him. You never know how the other person is thinking through their perspective. He reminds me that there’s different ways of thinking and it’s important to remember that instead of bashing heads.”

“The ‘us vs. them’ mentality causes a

wealth of hatred and violence. All of that has added to the social turmoil,” Kai said. “It should be people working together. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that we need other people. We need each other. We all bleed red. COVID doesn’t discriminate, we shouldn’t either.”

Each year, nearly 64,500 high school students from across the country enter to win their share of more than \$2 million in educational scholarships and incentives awarded through the program.

“I’m very proud of him,” said Claus.

“It’s always fun to encourage writing outside the topics that I normally explore in school. I like to write about different things,” Kai said. Last year he entered the VFW contest and had to write on “Was this what the founding fathers envisioned?” I delved deeper into the history and looked at things from a veterans standpoint.”

For more information on Dixon’s VFW chapter, contact Commander Dennings at (209) 395-8019. ★



The Dixon Chamber of Commerce wishes everyone a safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy Holiday Season!



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



Thank A Veteran Today

Dixon News Briefs



A big gift is handed over by new Dixon Walmart Manager Mike Spencer, to Herb Cross for the Dixon Rotary Club. The grant will be put toward the club’s scholarship fund. Photo by Janice Bearman

MPG Staff

Walmart Donates

Dixon Rotary Club member Herb Cross gives a grateful welcome to Mike Spencer, new Dixon Walmart Store Manager, after accepting a check Spencer awarded to help with this spring’s Rotary scholarship fund for Dixon High School graduates.

The \$2,000 community grant will go to support the \$12,000 Dixon Rotary gives out in scholarships annually.

Cat Show

Save the date for Saturday, Jan. 22, for the Poppy State Cat Club for their All Breed Cat Show at the Dixon May Fair, starting at 9 am. It is the first time in about a dozen years that Dixon has had one. They are affiliated with the Cat Fanciers Association which has the largest registry of cats.

This show even has a category for the “Household Pet”. No, they don’t parade cats around a ring but they do have them come out of their decorated crates and are judged on things like health and presentation.

Like dog shows, this cat show will give plenty of opportunity to learn about specific breeds such as Siamese or Persian by talking to breeders. But, this group is all about cats—like, ANY cat—and even will have a cat rescue organization on site.

For more information, contact Linda Ahrens via email at kat-attack@msn.com.

Babysitting 101

A course for youth wanting to learn how

to be a great childcare provider is going to be happening in February through the City of Dixon Recreation Department and in collaboration with the American Red Cross. The course is designed to provide youth who are planning to babysit with the knowledge and skills necessary to safely and responsibly give care for children and infants.

Participants will: Develop leadership skills; learn how to develop a babysitting business; keep themselves and others safe; help children behave; learn basic child care and first aid; and will receive a Red Cross Babysitting Certificate upon completion.

The cost of the course is \$100 per class, ages 11-15 years old. The date is Saturday, Feb. 26, and will be all day from 9 am to 4 pm at the Dixon Senior/Multi-Use Center. Register online or at city hall. For more information, call Recreation Supervisor Austin George at (707) 678-7441.

Sandbags

If you have a need for sandbags or sandbags are available at the Dixon Fire Station, 205 Ford Way in Dixon but you’ll need to get the sand from across the street at the post office. Sand is available on the northwest corner of A Street and Jackson Street.

City Council

The next City Council Meeting is this coming Tuesday, Jan. 4 at 7 pm in the Council Chambers, 600 East A Street. Agenda will be available online the Thursday before the meeting at cityofdixon.com ★

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Bulkley Donation Keeps Small Town Spirit Bright

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week in farming and mother to Kathy while working as an Executive Assistant to the President of Weinstocks in Sacramento.

“I just loved every year and have no regrets,” said Barbara from her spacious Marvin Way family room where the large connected kitchen sported windows lined with Christmas cactus plants in bloom. Barbara has proved her love for Dixon many times over. “I used to do more. I was at every function where food was involved because I’m a pretty good cook. I’ve enjoyed the small town feeling all these years and I want to keep it.”

As a dedicated Soroptimist and with Bob in Lions, they have more than served—on Boards and for organizations like Dixon Family Services, the May Fair, Women’s Improvement Club and others for decades, she and Bob sat down about five years ago with Downtown Dixon Business Association

President Jill Orr and decided they could do more. They could fund the Christmas tree for their beloved town.

They started with high hopes of planting a live tree they thought would root and grow into their dream vision. They purchased it and had it delivered and planted in time for the DDBA downtown tree lighting but that didn’t seem to work. Nor did others.

“For many—at least the last five or six years—this is the person who has always paid for the live downtown Christmas tree. It is a big deal for our community. We’ve tried for years to buy one and plant it but then it would look like a Charlie Brown tree and die,” said Orr. “This year, we had a hard time trying to even locate our people after the fires and pandemic. “So, the DDBA volunteers began to look at artificial trees, although more expensive, and found a company that serves many communities.

“It means a lot to her so we decided to look at purchasing one. It looks real, it’s beautiful and comes fully lit, and the company comes to set it up as well as break it down plus preserve it till the following year,” said Orr. The price tag was in the thousands, but Barbara even added the purchase of a huge star at the top. It should last for years. After this year, the DDBA will foot the annual set up and take-down fees.

“It is beautiful,” said Barbara who added that her daughter will continue their “spirit of Dixon” after she’s gone.

“Bob passed just this past fall and so this is a gift from them both to the community for the town to enjoy it for years to come,” said Orr. “We’re very lucky to have this kind of person in our community. DDBA couldn’t be more grateful for their generosity and for what she’s done. She has grandchildren and great grandchildren here. They’ve left a legacy.” ★

Santa Stops by the Museum



Erika Dennis, 5, seems delighted to chat with Santa under her grandmother’s (Carol Abrams) watchful eye while at last week’s first Christmas at the Museum. The event was attended by about 75 Dixon Historical Society members and featured a group sing-along of Christmas carols; the story ‘Twas the Night Before Christmas’ read from an antique book by bil paul; delicious appetizers and hot wassail; and a surprise visit from Santa Claus. Photo by Debra Dingman

Travis Credit Union Announces President and CEO Retirement



Barry Nelson

Travis Credit Union Press Release

VACAVILLE, CA (MPG) - Barry Nelson, Chief Executive Officer and President of Travis Credit Union (TCU), announced his retirement effective April 15, 2022. From the onset, Barry believed in providing value-added guidance that would build the community and enrich members’ lives. Following the credit union philosophy of financial People Helping People he embraced the Awesome Cause initiative, focused on changing lives and lifting communities through wellness.

“We wish Barry a joyful, healthy, and well-earned retirement. Barry has been an outstanding leader with a strong commitment to our organizations vision and goals,” said Deborah Aspling, Chair of the TCU Board of Directors.

“Barry has played an important role in Travis Credit Union’s 70-plus years of quality services, products, and free financial education aimed at enriching the lives of members and the community. Throughout his career, Barry has served our members and community through COVID 19, an upgrade of our core systems, created a foundation to promote financial wellness, and kept the credit union fiscally strong, garnering countless recognitions along the way. The board has a plan and will continue to focus on serving the membership with the same passion and commitment to our mission that has been demonstrated over the past 70 years.”

Barry began his career at TCU in January 2000 as Assistant Vice President of Finance. He was promoted to Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer in 2001, Senior Vice President Chief Operating Officer in 2006, and became Executive Vice President in June 2013. In August 2014, he was promoted to President and CEO. At that time, the credit union had \$2.3 billion in total assets and 163,000 members.

During his tenure, Barry supported the creation of the Travis Credit Union Foundation in 2018 with the vision of creating more opportunities for free financial programs for the residents of TCU’s core counties, providing financial education,

financial advocacy, and financial literacy. Under his pioneering leadership, Travis Credit Union is now the 12th largest credit union in California with 24 branches, \$4.7 billion in assets, and more than 217,000 members.

Under Barry’s skillful leadership, Travis Credit Union has been recognized at the state and national level for continuously delivering more than expected by seeking new ways to help the members and community.

National winner of the Desjardins Youth Financial Education Award

San Francisco Business Times’ Top 100 Bay Area Corporate Philanthropists List Forbes Top Ten Credit Unions in California

Air Force Distinguished Credit Union of The Year

Military Saves National Campaign Designation of Savings Excellence

Solano County’s Annual Best Bank & Credit Union awards

Advocate Credit Union of the Year - CCUL

Best Practices Recognition for Service to Hispanics by COOPERA

110 Magazine Best of the Best Award

Deposit Accounts Top 200 Healthiest Credit Union

Recognitions and awards reflect Barry’s commitment to encouraging open communication with members, listening to their needs, and creating more opportunities for them to build strong financial foundations through various financial initiatives.

“As I close my chapter with TCU, I am proud that we are a healthy, high-performing Credit Union,” Barry said. “In my role as a leader, I am fortunate to have worked with so many talented employees and volunteers who helped create a forward-thinking organization focused on changing lives and lifting communities through financial wellness. I am confident that Travis Credit Union’s Board of Directors and executive team have a solid strategic plan and vision that will guide us through the next 70 years,” he said.

The Board has a succession plan to address the retirement. It includes the formation of a Search Committee, which ensures organizational sustainability by providing a proactive, orderly process for executive leadership transition. The Committee will establish a plan and time frame for executing the recruitment and selection process.

Headquartered in Vacaville, California, Travis Credit is one of the premier financial institutions in Solano, Contra Costa, Yolo, and Merced Counties, Travis Credit Union’s strength lies in its faithful commitment to its members, its solid, secure history, and its long-standing track record of dedicated service. ★

Melting The Coldest of Hearts with Disney’s Frozen, Jr.



Actors playing the younger Anna and Elsa characters and the older characters. Photo credit: Woodland Opera House

Woodland Opera House Press Release

WOODLAND, CA (MPG) - The historic Woodland Opera House is excited to open its next Theatre for Families production of the 2021-2022 season, Disney’s Frozen, Jr. Presented by Jennifer Goldman, D.D.S. and Amy Thu Tran, D.D.S. this show is perfect for the young ones with toe tapping music that only Disney can provide, a compelling story, and an approximate run time of 60 minutes in length.

Based on the 2018 Broadway musical and the 2013 movie, Disney Frozen, Jr. brings Elsa and Anna, and the magical land of Arendelle to life, onstage. The show features all the memorable songs from the animated film, with music and lyrics by Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez, plus five new songs written for the Broadway production. A story of true love and acceptance between sisters, expands upon the emotional relationship and journey of Princesses Anna and Elsa. When faced with danger, the two discover their hidden potential and the powerful bond of sisterhood. Loaded with magic, adventure, and humor, it is certain to thaw even the coldest of hearts!

Reserved Seating Tickets: \$16 Adults, \$14 Seniors (62+), and \$8 Children under 17. Balcony Seating Tickets: \$10 Adults and \$5 Children 17 and under. Purchase tickets online at www.woodlandopera-house.org or by phone / in person at the Woodland Opera House box office 340 Second Street, Woodland / (530) 666-9617). Box office hours are Tuesday – Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Woodland Opera House, 340 Second Street, Woodland, CA 95695 – Friday, January 7 - Sunday, January 16, 2022. Shows on Friday at 7:30 p.m., Saturday & Sunday at 2:00 p.m.

Please note our current COVID protocols: While the Woodland Opera House is back to 100% capacity, currently the Yolo County Health Department requires face coverings for all of our patrons regardless of vaccination status. And for an added layer of protection for our guests, Opera House staff will take the temperature of all theatre attendees upon their entry. In addition, masks and hand sanitizer are available to anyone in attendance at each theatre event. Thank you for understanding. Please know that your health, and that of our staff, is our priority. ★

DWR Announces State Water Project Allocation

Department of Water Resources Press Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Today, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced its initial State Water Project (SWP) allocation for 2022 along with several steps to manage the state’s water supply in anticipation of a third dry year with reservoirs at or near historic lows.

Given the unprecedented drought conditions, the SWP’s initial allocation for December 1 will focus on the health and safety needs for 2022 of the 29 water agencies that contract to receive SWP supplies. DWR has advised these water agencies to expect an initial allocation that prioritizes health and safety water needs and that the SWP will not be planning water deliveries through its typical allocation process until the state has a clearer picture of the hydrologic and reservoir conditions going into the spring.

DWR is focused on prioritizing water supply in four categories: water for health and safety needs and Delta salinity control; water for endangered species; water to reserve in storage; and water for additional supply allocations if the hydrology allows.

“Despite a wet start to the water year, conditions have dried out since that first storm, and we are still planning for a below-average water year. That means we need to prepare now for a dry winter and severe drought conditions to continue through 2022,” said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. “We will be working with our federal partners

and SWP contractors to take a conservative planning approach to balance limited water supplies with the needs of residents, businesses, and the environment.”

In addition to limiting the initial allocation to health and safety needs, DWR is making plans to adjust SWP operations this winter and spring. DWR is capturing and storing water when possible, in Lake Oroville and south of the Delta in San Luis Reservoir to increase available supplies for 2022 and will continue to do so throughout the winter. Health and safety demands for the Bay Area and Central and Southern California will be met with water available from the Delta as well as water stored in San Luis Reservoir. Water in Lake Oroville will be reserved to maintain Delta water quality, protect endangered species, and meet senior water right needs. Beyond minimal exports to meet South Bay health and safety needs, water stored in Lake Oroville will be used for south of Delta deliveries only if hydrology conditions improve. DWR plans to conserve as much storage as possible in Oroville in anticipation of a third dry year, and potentially a dry 2023.

Also, today, DWR along with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, submitted a new Temporary Urgency Change Petition (TUCP) to the State Water Resources Control Board. If approved, the petition would allow for the State Water Project and the Central Valley Project to operate under modifications to the water quality and water right permit requirements in the Delta from

February through April 2022, should conditions warrant. These modifications may be needed to conserve water in Lake Oroville to ensure minimum health and safety water supplies are available later in the year if dry conditions persist. If significant precipitation materializes in the next few months, standards may be met through natural means and modifications to SWP and CVP operations may not be necessary.

DWR is also delaying the removal of the Emergency Drought Salinity Barrier in the Delta. The rock barrier across West False River was scheduled to be removed by November 30, however drought conditions have persisted and leaving the barrier in place will enable a more efficient drought response in spring 2022 if needed. DWR plans to create a notch in the barrier in January 2022 to allow for fish passage and boat traffic until April 2022.

“It is going to take a multi-pronged approach to successfully respond to these unprecedented drought conditions,” said Nemeth.

Each year, DWR provides the initial State Water Project allocation by December 1 based on available water storage and projected water supply demands. Allocations are updated monthly as snowpack and runoff information is assessed, with a final allocation typically determined in May or June.

The lowest initial allocations were 5 percent in 2010 and 2014. Last year, the initial SWP allocation was 10 percent, however due to increasing dry conditions, the final allocation was lowered to 5 percent. ★

FDA Approval of Over-The-Counter Hearing Aids

Commentary by Sally C. Pipes

WASHINGTON, DC (MPG) - Millions of Americans may soon be able to hear a bit easier. The Food and Drug Administration just announced a new rule that would permit over-the-counter sales of hearing aids.

This move to liberalize the market for hearing aids is an unmitigated piece of good news. It recognizes that patients should have greater control over the care they receive and it promises to increase competition in the market for hearing aids, saving consumers money, and expanding access in the process.

Half of seniors over the age of 75 have what the National Institutes of Health classifies as “disabling hearing loss.” Younger adults can struggle with their hearing, too. The NIH says that around 14 percent of Americans aged 20-69 have some level of hearing loss.

At present, a person needs a prescription to get a hearing aid. That’s limited access

to – and the potential market for hearing aids.

These supply restrictions have elevated the prices of hearing aids. Professionally fitted devices seldom cost less than \$1,000, and sometimes more than \$6,000 – about 17% of the U.S. median income.

For the average senior, the outlook is even grimmer. The most expensive hearing aids would strip them of 22% of their annual income.

It’s no wonder, then, that many people who would benefit from hearing aids go without. Nearly 60% of people over 55 who have hearing loss don’t use them. And over three-quarters of those who do have the cash for hearing aids say they’re still too expensive.

Shifting to an over-the-counter model would erase one of the chief barriers to getting a hearing aid – the need for a prescription from a doctor or audiologist. By expanding the potential customer base for hearing aids, it could induce manufacturers to enter the space, and reduce prices for consumers.

A possible preview of what’s ahead – speaker and headphone manufacturer Bose already sells over-the-counter hearing aids. They cost \$850, which is much less than the thousands of dollars that prescription hearing aids can cost today.

Scrapping regressive FDA regulations on hearing devices also opens up the possibility for even more innovation. Imagine the possibilities. Wireless headphones that double as hearing aids or hearing aids that connect with a smartwatch.

Requiring people with common forms of hearing loss to jump through hoops to procure low-risk devices that can help them is a pointless burden – and a cruel one, too.

Sally C. Pipes is president, CEO, and Thomas W. Smith fellow in health-care policy at the Pacific Research Institute. Her latest book is False Promise, False Promise: The Disastrous Reality of Medicare for All (Encounter 2020). Follow her on Twitter @sallypipes. This piece originally ran in the Detroit News. ★

“Secure Disposal” Approved for Schroeder Road

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citizen had the chance to participate in either [of those meetings] and realized they were not going to be a bad neighbor,” said Geis.

EQ Industrial Services, Inc. has a nationwide network of Treatment and Disposal facilities that the company says, “offers safe, simple, and cost-effective solutions for all waste streams.”

It is an industry that is necessary due to the strict California laws to dispose of potentially harmful products legally and properly. And, it costs a large amount because of it being a specialized service. Companies pay huge fines for even a small infraction and that is why the cottage industry has boomed. State Attorney General Rob Bonta just announced a major lawsuit against Walmart for this very thing.

Items such as batteries, fluorescent lights, cosmetics, and even pharmaceuticals that have

expired, returned, or are damaged for whatever reason cannot be just thrown in a garbage. The State of California laws for disposing are detailed and specific.

The Schroeder Road facility will be a basic sort and transfer station where nothing can be stored for more than 10 days per law. It is not a landfill. The property was chosen because the company’s location in West Sacramento, which was just equipment storage for emergency response work, was sold and they already contracted with Solano County for emergency response work. At this site they will combine their equipment storage with the field services group (sorting) at the same location.

“It’s not as big of an operation as one might think. There will be 10 to 12 employees. We’ll have 6 or 7 retail technicians who go visit retailers and pick up 5-gallon to 55-gallon drums. They leave on a Monday and take a route through

the Bay area and come back on a Friday. Everything they’ve collected goes into a box truck and will be loaded into larger trailers that goes to Nevada,” explained Geis. “So, what we are doing is ‘secure disposal’ even though a lot of it is not toxic.”

Previously on this 8-acre section of the 26-acre parcel, there was a transportation facility so it was not used for an orchard or crops. There was previously stored pesticides and herbicides with trucks going in and out seven days a week.

“We are less hazardous and less noisy,” said Geis. “The county has done everything they can to be transparent and we’re more than happy with their services. It doesn’t benefit anyone to ‘shove something through.’ It went to a hearing and it was approved by the county. If there is going to be an appeal and the county decides we don’t fit, we won’t pursue it,” he said. ★

UC Davis Genome Center Sees Increase in Omicron Variant

Yolo County Press Release

DAVIS, CA (MPG) - The UC Davis Genome Center detected and confirmed 42 cases of the B.1.1.529 (Omicron) variant of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 in Davis, El Macero, West Sacramento and Woodland. The Omicron variant had previously been detected in West Sacramento, but this marks the first known cases of Omicron in the Davis, El Macero and Woodland communities. The Omicron variant has also been detected in trace amounts in the City of Davis’ sewage through Healthy Davis Together’s wastewater monitoring initiative.

The UC Davis Genome Center screens every positive COVID-19 test conducted by Healthy Davis Together for all currently known SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern so that action can be taken to alert and protect the community. The individuals who had a positive PCR test result for the Omicron variant were tested between December 12–18, 2021. Several of the Davis cases are associated with a single workplace holiday party. The party, with approximately 50 attendees, and subsequent workplace spread are associated with an outbreak of at least 16 cases, of which 10 are known so far to be Omicron. Of the 16 cases, all were fully vaccinated and eight had received their booster. Currently all known Omicron cases are in isolation or have completed isolation.

“The Omicron variant is spreading quickly in Yolo County, and accounted for 41% of new cases detected by the UC Davis Genome Center last week,” said Dr. Aimee Sisson, Yolo County Public Health Officer. “The spread of Omicron is coming at a time when many people are travelling and gathering for the holidays. Everyone, including fully vaccinated persons, should take additional precautions right now. Wear a mask that fits and filters well when you are indoors, improve indoor ventilation with portable air filters, and ask everyone attending a gathering to test right before the event. In addition, anyone who isn’t vaccinated or boosted should get vaccinated as soon as possible in order to protect themselves against severe COVID-19 illness.”

The detection of the Omicron variant through clinical testing comes as genetic markers of the variant have been identified in the city’s wastewater by Healthy Davis Together and its partner the Sewer Coronavirus Alert Network (SCAN). Davis

is one of eight sewage treatment plants that SCAN monitors by testing daily samples of solids in wastewater, which carry signs of the virus and its variants if present in a community. Wastewater monitoring is another tool that can be used as an early detection system for new strains and future spikes of COVID-19.


“The information collected through Davis’ wastewater monitoring program can be useful in our long-term community effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19,” said Brad Pollock, Director of Healthy Davis Together, and Chair of the UC Davis Department of Public Health Sciences.

The Omicron variant has been previously identified as a variant of concern by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The CDC is working with other U.S. and global public health and industry partners to learn more about this variant, including how severe its cases are compared to other variants and the amount of protection provided by existing vaccines. Until more is known, it is important to take every precaution to prevent the spread of the new variant.

Here are the most important things people can do right now to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including the Omicron variant:

Get vaccinated. With the recent approval of the Pfizer vaccine for children from 5-11 years of age, HDT strongly encourages everyone 5 years and older to get vaccinated; If you’re already vaccinated, get boosted 2 months after a J&J vaccine and 6 months after the 2nd Moderna or Pfizer vaccine; Get tested if you have symptoms or have been exposed to someone infected with COVID-19; If you are planning to travel or gather, it’s recommended that you get tested one to three days prior to and three to five days after traveling or gathering, even if you’re vaccinated. If you aren’t vaccinated yet, it’s important to get tested regularly; Follow local mask guidance. N95s, KN95s, and KF94s provide additional protection and are a good option for those more vulnerable to severe disease, for example, older adults and people with underlying conditions.


For current testing locations and hours in Davis, Woodland and throughout Yolo County, visit HealthyDavisTogether.org/testing/. Appointments are preferred, but walk-ins are accepted at most testing locations. Parking is free. ★



Publisher,
Paul V. Scholl

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CAGOP Statement on Redistricting Maps

**CAGOP Communications
Press Release**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - California Republican Party Chairwoman Jessica Millan Patterson issued the following statement in response to the maps that were approved by the California

Redistricting Commission:
“It is going to be tough running in 2022 with a D behind your name. Voters are fed up with California Democrats’ failed policies that are responsible for surging crime, sky-high unemployment, soaring inflation and a homelessness crisis. The California Republican Party’s role in the

midterms is to recruit and support great candidates and support our incumbents as we work to build on our historic victories from 2020.
“Republicans will field the most diverse and talented slate of candidates in California history, leaders who will offer commonsense solutions that contrast the

dumpster fire of Democrat policies on crime, job creation, unemployment benefits, wildfire protection, homelessness and nearly every other issue. The lines are drawn, and California Republicans are ready to fight for every vote reflecting the diversity of our great state. We are ready to win for our state’s future.” ★



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**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
OF THE DIXON PLANNING COMMISSION**

In accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act (Gov. Code, § 54950 et seq.), the Dixon Planning Commission (“Planning Commission”) will hold a **PUBLIC HEARING** to consider the following project:

PROJECT:

1595 Blossom Way (Lot 25 Homestead Phase 1/Village 3C) - Request for a Variance to allow a 1.1 ft. to 2.1 ft. reduction to the required 12 ft. side yard setback requirement for an new single family home currently under construction; APN: 0014-383-002; Zoning District: Single Family Residential (R1 & R1-10); Meritage Homes, owner/applicant; File No: PA21-35, V21-01

State law (California Environmental Quality Act) requires that this project be reviewed to determine if a study of potential environmental effects is required. It has been determined that this project will not have a significant effect on the environment and no environmental review will be completed. This project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines under 14 CRR Section 15305 (Minor Alteration in Land Use Limitations) for minor side yard setback variances not resulting in the creation of any new parcel. If the Planning Commission determines that this project is in an environmentally-sensitive area, further study may be required.

HEARING DATE & LOCATION:

Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at 7:00 pm at City Council Chambers at Dixon City Hall, 600 East A St, Dixon, CA.

MORE INFORMATION

Contact **Scott Greeley, Associate Planner** at (707) 678-7000 x1115 or sgreeley@cityofdixon.us. The office is open weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. You can view the staff report after 12:00 p.m. on the Friday before the meeting at <https://www.cityofdixon.us/MeetingAgendasMinutesVideos>.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN:

All interested parties are invited to attend the public hearing to express opinions or submit evidence for or against the proposed application. Testimony from interested persons will be heard and considered by the Planning Commission prior to making any decision on the application.

The meeting will be physically open to the public and all persons attending the meeting must abide by all State rules and public health guidelines, regarding masking and social distancing in City Council chambers.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

You may attend the public hearing at the time and location listed above, and provide comments during the public speaking period. Written comments can be: 1) emailed to PlanningCommission@cityofdixon.us or 2) mailed/dropped off to: City of Dixon, Planning Commission, 600 East A St, Dixon, CA 95620 and must be received by 4:30pm on the day of the hearing. Copies of written comments received will be provided to the Planning Commission and will become part of the official record, but will not be read aloud at the meeting

At the above time and place, all letters received will be noted and all interested parties will be heard. If you challenge in court the matter described above, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered at, or prior to, the above referenced public hearing (Government Code Section 65009 (b)(2)).

Appeals of decisions by the Planning Commission to the City Council shall be made in person at Dixon City Hall by completing the appeal application and submitting the required fee, within 10 calendar days of a decision (Dixon Municipal Code Section 17.01.050).

Upon request, the agenda and the documents in the meeting agenda packet can be made available to persons with a disability. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City encourages those with disabilities to participate fully in the public meeting process. Any person requiring special assistance to participate in the meeting should call (707) 678-7000 (voice) or (707) 678-1489 (TTY) at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Dixon Independent Voice 12-31-2021

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
OF THE DIXON PLANNING COMMISSION**

In accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act (Gov. Code, § 54950 et seq.), the Dixon Planning Commission (“Planning Commission”) will hold a **PUBLIC HEARING** to consider the following project:

PROJECT:

2355 North Lincoln Street - Request for a Design Review to change the façade of the existing building. The changes involve lowering of the grade of the westerly side and also replacing the existing brick and replacement with stucco and horizontal siding. No changes to the building footprint are proposed; APN: 0108-291-350; Zoning District: Service Commercial (CS); File No: PA21-32, DR21-10

State law (California Environmental Quality Act) requires that this project be reviewed to determine if a study of potential environmental effects is required. It has been determined that this project will not have a significant effect on the environment and no environmental review will be completed. This project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines under 14 CRR Section 15301 Class 1 (Existing Facilities) for minor exterior modifications of an existing building. If the Planning Commission determines that this project is in an environmentally-sensitive area, further study may be required.

HEARING DATE & LOCATION:

Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at 7:00 pm at City Council Chambers at Dixon City Hall, 600 East A St, Dixon, CA.

MORE INFORMATION

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Dixon Independent Voice 12-31-2021

Farm Bureau, Immigration Forum Partner on Citizenship Effort

California Farm Bureau News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The California Farm Bureau and the National Immigration Forum announced a partnership today to support California farmers and ranchers wanting to help their agricultural employees become U.S. citizens.

Under the program, the Farm Bureau will contract with the National Immigration Forum to provide naturalization application services and counseling. The Farm Bureau will pay for immigration services that California farmers and ranchers request on behalf of their employees.

The services will include citizenship eligibility reviews, application preparation and case management. The partnership will also provide referrals for legal reviews of citizenship petitions as well as non-citizenship-related immigration inquiries.

Farm Bureau and the Immigration Forum will create an online portal to encourage eligible immigrants to apply for U.S. citizenship.

According to recent Department of Homeland Security estimates, an estimated 13.9 million green card holders lived in the U.S. with lawful resident status in 2019. As many as 9.2 million were eligible to apply to become naturalized U.S. citizens.

California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson praised the partnership as an important step for farmers, ranchers, and agricultural employees.

“Farm Bureau has long supported measures to improve the lives of California’s farm employees, including furnishing opportunities for those who are present in the United States with legal status as they engage in the critical work of producing food for California and the world,” Johansson said. “Offering farm employees who are eligible for U.S. citizenship a low-cost means

to access citizenship puts them on a path to fully share in the American bounty they work every day to create.”

Since 2013, the National Immigration Forum has worked with some of America’s largest employers to help more than 10,000 employees and their family members become citizens.

“We value our relationship with California Farm Bureau, as the largest general membership agricultural organization in California,” said Emily Foster, vice president of corporate engagement at the National Immigration Forum. “The mission of the National Immigration Forum and New American Workforce is to assist immigrants who are eligible to access the benefits of full U.S. citizenship, and we are grateful to California Farm Bureau for giving us access to nearly 31,000 Farm Bureau members whose employees can benefit from the services we offer.”

The California Farm Bureau is a supporter of the federal Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2021, which would reform the agricultural guest worker program and provide a path to legal status for farm employees.

“We have joined with worker advocates like the United Farm Workers calling for this program because we know that workers who are working legally in the U.S. or who have gained citizenship are empowered workers who can make choices for themselves and their families,” Johansson said. “Giving California agriculture’s employees legal status and citizenship gives them a full stake in the American dream, and that’s good for our farms, our communities and for America.”

The California Farm Bureau works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of nearly 31,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of nearly 6 million Farm Bureau members. ★

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Tim Erskine, 1875 Margurite Drive, Dixon, CA 95620
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The Registrant commenced to transact business under the above business name on: 09/01/2021
This Business is Conducted by: Individual

NOTICE: In Accordance with subdivision (a) of section 17920 A Fictitious Name Statement generally expires at the end of five years from the date on which it was filed in the office of the county clerk, except as provided in subdivision (b) of section 17920, where it expires 40 days after any change in the facts set forth in the statement pursuant to section 17913 other than a change in the residence address of registered owner. A new fictitious Business name statement must be filed before the expiration November 30, 2026. The filing of this statement does not itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business and professions code.)

Publish: December 10, 17, 24 & 31, 2021 (The DIXON INDEPENDENT VOICE)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO. 2021-002321**

The following persons are doing business as: : MOM EXECUTIVES
274 Sunset Avenue, E, Suisun City, CA 94585
Katrina Garcia, 506 Gadwall Drive, Suisun City, CA 94585
Date Filed in Solano County: November 30, 2021
The Registrant commenced to transact business under the above business name on: N/A
This Business is Conducted by: Individual

NOTICE: In Accordance with subdivision (a) of section 17920 A Fictitious Name Statement generally expires at the end of five years from the date on which it was filed in the office of the county clerk, except as provided in subdivision (b) of section 17920, where it expires 40 days after any change in the facts set forth in the statement pursuant to section 17913 other than a change in the residence address of registered owner. A new fictitious Business name statement must be filed before the expiration November 29, 2026. The filing of this statement does not itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business and professions code.)

Publish: December 10, 17, 24 & 31, 2021 (The DIXON INDEPENDENT VOICE)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO. 2021-002386**

The following persons are doing business as: : THE BUZZ BAR
730 West D Street South Dixon, CA 95620
Kelsie Sorensen, 730 West D Street South Dixon, CA 95620
Date Filed in Solano County: December 10, 2021
The Registrant commenced to transact business under the above business name on: N/A
This Business is Conducted by: Individual

NOTICE: In Accordance with subdivision (a) of section 17920 A Fictitious Name Statement generally expires at the end of five years from the date on which it was filed in the office of the county clerk, except as provided in subdivision (b) of section 17920, where it expires 40 days after any change in the facts set forth in the statement pursuant to section 17913 other than a change in the residence address of registered owner. A new fictitious Business name statement must be filed before the expiration November 29, 2026. The filing of this statement does not itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business and professions code.)

Publish: December 24, 31, 2021 January 7, and 14, 2022 (The DIXON INDEPENDENT VOICE)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO. 2021-002449**

The following persons are doing business as: : CROCESSORIES
602 Humbolt Drive Suisun City, CA 94585
Shawntel Ridgle, 602 Humbolt Drive Suisun City, CA 94585
Date Filed in Solano County: December 22, 2021
The Registrant commenced to transact business under the above business name on: 8/26/2021
This Business is Conducted by: Individual

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Publish: December 31, 2021 January 7, 14, and 21, 2022 (The DIXON INDEPENDENT VOICE)

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12. Pomegranate seed
13. Actor Chris O'
14. Pacific Crest Trail walker
15. Country dance formation
16. Wished undone
17. Popeye's sweetie
18. "Sudden Impact": "Go ahead, _____"
20. Arm part
21. Gold unit
22. Parabola, e.g.
23. San Joaquin Valley city
26. Hangs out with
30. Unit of electrical resistance
31. "Star Wars": "Stay in formation"
34. Mr. Jinx's (of "Meet the Parents") cry
35. Clay and silt deposit
37. Camel debris
38. Japanese sword fighting
39. Was aware of
40. Come into sight
42. "Independence Day": "I belong in the _____"
43. "The Dark Knight": "Why so _____?"
45. Common allergen
47. Cup alternative
48. Bird-made fertilizer
50. Sketch
52. "On the Waterfront": "I coulda been a _____"
56. El Dorado-related
57. Tabernacle Choir's home state
58. Contributed
59. Star Wars attacker
60. Unidentified aircraft
61. Prep for publication
62. Ladder step
63. Tropical American cuckoo
64. Part to play

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DOWN

1. Precedes storm?
2. Soprano's song, e.g.
3. "Mean Girls": "On Wednesdays, we wear _____"
4. Makes smooth, as in hair
5. Dutch cheese
6. "Darkest Hour": "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and _____"
7. _____ Walker, American Girl doll
8. "Field of Dreams": "If you build it, he _____"
9. Related
10. Deity, in Sanskrit
11. "_____ he drove out of sight"
13. Fungus damage (2 words)
14. Meryl Streep's "The _____"
19. Supernatural life force, pl.
22. Query
23. "Who Framed Roger Rabbit": "That's all, _____!"
24. Côtes du _____, wine region
25. Mideast V.I.P.
26. Soreness
27. Kidney-related
28. "Princess Bride": "You killed my father. Prepare _____"
29. Bound by oath
32. "Lights out" tune
33. Nile reptile


36. "Finding Nemo": "Just keep _____"
38. Danish money
40. Two before Oct
41. Lack of enthusiasm
44. 1/16th of a pound
46. Not two years but three, e.g.
48. Coped (2 words)
49. Freshwater eel, in Japan
50. Comics character Little _____
51. Fe
52. Caribbean island country
53. Carpenter's joint
54. Like a fairytale stepmother?
55. Network of nerves
56. Acronym, abbr.

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FOR THE LOVE OF

BOOKS

By Amy Shane

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

Entertainment

for the Holiday Break

These titles are the perfect way to fill the time until children are back in school. These book swill provide hours of family entertainment, from DIY crafts, baking, or cooking in the kitchen to reading and watching the movies on Netflix.



Sew Mini Treats by Klutz.
Readers will become sewing chefs with over 18 food stuffies to stitch and stuff. Learn the basic skills of sewing, threading a needle, tracing and cutting patterns, and even using embroidery floss to make designs. Everything you need to complete the perfect set of smiling friends is included, from doughnuts to pop tarts, smiling fruit, and popsicles. Add little faces, bows, pink cheeks, and even sprinkles to make each piece uniquely yours. Stock any play kitchen with the essentials, fill a basket with these charming treats or make them as gifts. One of the best activity kits around, this kit includes a 48-page easy-to-follow instruction book, patterns, felt and embroidery floss, needles, and acrylic eyes.

DIY Barrettes Bows & Hair Ties
Another fantastic activity kit provided by the team at Klutz will have anyone creating fun and delightful hair accessories in no time. This kit includes everything you need to complete fifteen accessories with thirty-one pages of easy-to-follow-instructions, hair clips, letters, poems, rhinestones, glue, and fabric. Become a kitten cutie, or

razzle-dazzle your friend. Follow the pictures or be inspired to create your own beautiful masterpieces, then display them on the included display rack. This kit will provide hours of fun and creativity and can even inspire a fashion shoot when completed.

America’s Test Kitchen Cookbooks
Take the creativity into the kitchen with two new cookbooks for young chefs with The Complete Cookbook for Young Chefs and the Complete Baking Book For Young Chefs. With over 100 recipes in each book, young chefs will be able to jump right into the kitchen with simple baking and cooking tips. Mini classes at the beginning of each book will have young chefs measuring, mincing, melting, chopping, zesting, and juicing in no time, allowing each home chef to tackle and complete the recipes on their own.

“Make it your way” sections will help encourage and inspire kids to add their finishing touches or even alter some of the recipes to hone in their unique tastes and flair.

Each page is filled with pictures, highlighted steps, techniques, and the finished recipe. These books include all the keys to success while also providing a culinary explosion of new flavors and treats. With recipes including cake pops, cheesecake bites, tacos, burgers, and stir fry’s home bakers will be able to create a complete family meal in no time, making these cookbooks an instant favorite and a perfect gift.

Read and Watch
This is the perfect opportunity for the teens at home to read and watch. Follow Lara Jean on her journey to unexpected love and all the stumbles along the way. Netflix film has perfectly paired the New York Times bestselling series by Jenny Han – To all the boys I’ve Loved Before along with three coordinating films

Enrollment Declines Squeeze Local School Finances



By Dan Walters
CALMatters

The 1970s and 1980s were a tumultuous time for California’s public schools, to wit:

- A tidal wave of kids from the post-World War II baby boom pushed school enrollment to well over 4 million, but the end of the boom in the mid-1960s and a slowdown in overall population growth drove enrollment downward in the 1970s. Throughout the state, local school systems pared back school construction, sold off school sites and even closed some schools.
- At the time, schools were largely financed by locally imposed property taxes but in 1971 a successful lawsuit, Serrano vs. Priest, declared that widely varying taxable property values among the state’s school districts unfairly disadvantaged children in low wealth communities. In response, the Legislature began overhauling school finances to provide what was called “equalization.”
- Subsequently, however, in 1978, voters passed Proposition 13, which clamped tight limits on property taxes, compelling the state to assume the fundamental task of financing schools from income and sales taxes and thus shifting

wrangling over education finance to the state Capitol.

- California’s population soared in the 1980s due to high immigration and birth rates and so did school enrollment, eventually topping 6 million. In 1988, a decade after Proposition 13’s approval, the education community persuaded voters to pass Proposition 98, an extremely complex measure that dictates how schools’ share of state revenues is calculated. It has dominated the state budget process ever since.

This snippet of political history is offered because it could be repeated.

California’s once-soaring population has slowed to a trickle, or perhaps even reversed, due to sharp declines in immigration and birth rates. Also, school enrollment, which topped out at 6.2 million a decade ago and remained virtually unchanged until recently, is beginning what demographers believe will be a steady decline.

The COVID-19 pandemic is partially responsible for some recent declines but the state Department of Finance projects that underlying demographic trends will drop enrollment to 5.5 million by 2030, some 700,000 lower than the peak.

“Projected declines are greatest in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties – roughly 20% lower by 2030 – 31,” a recent study by the Public Policy Institute of California declares. “The declines in Los Angeles County are particularly noteworthy: county enrollment has already fallen over 10% in the past

decade, and enrollment in 2030 – 31 is projected to be 30% lower than it was in 2010 – 11.”

State aid to schools is largely driven by enrollment, so districts that are seeing major declines, particularly large urban systems such as Los Angeles Unified, are beginning to feel the financial pinch and confronting the unpopular task of shutting neighborhood schools.

At the moment, school finances have a respite. Gov. Gavin Newsom and legislators have decreed that state aid is temporarily based on pre-pandemic enrollment but the “hold harmless” gesture is due to expire next year. What happens after that is anyone’s guess.

Decreasing enrollment could be beneficial in the long run, because it could increase per-pupil spending. But that would depend on the willingness of state politicians to once again change the methodology of school financing, moving away from its enrollment base to some other model.

Given the tens of billions of dollars at stake, however, a major overhaul would be a tough political slog. Until and unless it occurs, the local systems seeing the most dramatic enrollment declines will have a difficult time balancing their budgets as their state aid shrinks and their fixed costs, such as pension fund contributions, continue to rise.

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



Riley Reviews

“BEING THE RICARDOS”
TV GOLDEN AGE;
“KING’S MAN” PREQUEL

A Film and TV Review by Tim Riley

“BEING THE RICARDOS” RATED R

Released theatrically, “Being the Ricardos” may now also be enjoyed from home on Amazon Prime Video. Watching this on television is fitting since this is the story of the production for the popular “I Love Lucy” series.

The Ricardos, of course, refer to the stars of the show, Lucille Ball (Nicole Kidman) and Desi Arnaz (Javier Bardem), real-life married couple in the parts of Lucy and Ricky Ricardo, respectively the quintessential dizzy redhead and the charismatic Cuban bandleader.

Written and directed by Aaron Sorkin as a behind-the-scenes drama, “Being the Ricardos” is structured to capture a single week of production from the Monday table read through the Friday live audience taping, interspersed with flashbacks of the couple’s fascinating history.

During the course of a week during a second season in 1952, Sorkin has crammed enough crises into the story that would under normal circumstances sink the careers and professional reputations of all parties involved.

As if the short window of producing one episode is not filled with enough predicaments, flashbacks and leaps into the future provide glimpses of the turbulent relationship of Lucy and Desi, from a whirlwind courtship to the burning ambition that made them leading television innovators.

Muckraking gossip columnist Walter Winchell drops a bombshell charge that Lucy’s past is linked to membership in the Communist party, while a tabloid spreads rumors of Desi’s alleged infidelity.

Meanwhile, Lucy reveals that she’s pregnant and Desi wants to incorporate her pending maternity into a storyline, but executives of Philip Morris, the show’s sponsor, object strenuously to changing the show’s formula.

Nevertheless, plenty of spectacle consumes the actual show, with J.K. Simmons and Nina Arianda bringing humor and tension to the set as actors William Frawley and Vivian Vance in the roles of Fred and Ethel Metz, the comic foils as Lucy and Desi’s neighbors.

The behind the camera action in the writers’ room adds another enticing dimension to the “I Love Lucy” saga. Tony Hale shines as producer Jess Oppenheimer, and the writing team of Madelyn Pugh (Alia Shawkat) and Bob Carroll Jr. (Jake Lacy) have standout moments of competitive banter.

One drawback to “Being the Ricardos” might be how Sorkin unpacks the storyline with an overabundance of subplots, which in reality did not converge during the same week. Liberties have been

taken with the chronology of events, as Sorkin shuffled the deck to make a better story.

To build the film’s narrative, Sorkin places obstacles in front of his characters with the end goal of informing and entertaining. As a result, there’s a case to be made here that Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz get their due as Hollywood pioneers in the Golden Age of television.

“THE KING’S MAN” RATED R

As is the case with most sequels in a franchise, the question is whether the latest installment is unnecessary or inevitably forgettable or just maybe a combination of both.

Reflecting upon the latest James Bond film “No Time to Die,” I now ponder the notion that the beloved spy series enjoyed for so many decades has lost its impetus. At least, 007 had a good run, but the same may not prove true for the “Kingsman” franchise.

Set at the turn of the last century leading up to World War I, “The King’s Man” can’t decide what kind of movie it wants to be. Is it a war drama or espionage tale? Does it expose Britain’s brutal colonialism? How does pacifism coincide with its violent action?

However, “The King’s Man” is a prequel to “Kingsman: The Secret Service” and the origin story for the autonomous intelligence agency designed to be cut loose from the bureaucracy of a government-run spy organization.

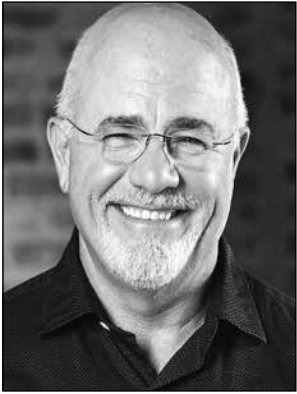
The leading character of the Kingsman organization, operating stylishly out of the eponymously-named gentleman’s tailor shop on London’s Savile Row, is Ralph Fiennes’ aristocratic Orlando, the Duke of Oxford.

For one running an elite espionage outfit, that the Duke of Oxford is so committed to pacifism in the face of the looming World War I seems incomprehensible without the knowledge of his past experiences and concern to keep his son Conrad (Harris Dickinson) from joining the Army.

As a trusted ally to King George (Tom Hollander, who also plays Tsar Nicholas and Kaiser Wilhelm), Oxford comes to realize that global conflict is inescapable and hence a clandestine group must be formed with the help of Shola (Djimon Hounsou) and Polly (Gemma Arterton).

Conrad defies his father’s wish and enlists with a desire to be sent to the front lines, ending up in fierce trench warfare that is as bleak and grim as anything seen in war movies such as “Saving Private Ryan” and more on point in “1917.”

For his part, the Duke of Oxford rises to the occasion for a mountaintop showdown with a Bond-like villain, parachuting from a plane and jostling with a mountain goat. “The Kingsman” allows for the erudite, polished Duke of Oxford to be a different yet rousing kind of hero.



Dave Ramsey Says

Teach them to be Givers ... and be an Example

Dear Dave,

With all the commercials and marketing that accompany the holiday season, how can parents teach their young children about giving and putting others first at this time of year?

– Maryn

Dear Maryn

The first thing you and your wife need to do is sit down and have a loving, but serious, talk with these kids. If they’ve asked for money before, and this is something that has turned into a habit, you have every right to know more about their spending and other circumstances.

Christmas is a traditional time to give and help others. But even for adults, it’s easy to get so caught up the glitz that we end up forgetting to teach our kids how to give and why it’s so important. How do

we make sure they learn the satisfaction of giving to others at an early age? Here are a few easy ideas.

Send an extra snack with them to school. Then, at lunch they can give it to a friend. When they get back home, find out who they shared the snack with and talk about what happened. It can be as simple as that. Also, encourage your kids to pass along compliments. Sharing a kind word with a classmate, or even their teacher, will go a long way toward brightening someone’s day any time of year.

When you’re involved in giving or helping others in any way, take your kids with you. If you’re sponsoring a family through your church, or participating in a charity drive, let your kids be part of the buying and delivery process. When you make giving memories together, they’ll stick with your kids for years to come.

If you really want to make the kids part of the process, you could let them pick a charity to help. If you give them a commission for doing jobs around the house, or if they’re older and have a part-time job, they can start saving a percentage to donate. Another idea might be giving away old toys. Take some time to

gather up all the toys they don’t play with and don’t want anymore. Search the closet together, and choose things to take to Goodwill or another charitable organization.

Remember, you’re the adult. That means it’s your job to set an example and create teachable moments. So, this year give your kids nice gifts within your budget. But take time to create situations that allow them to participate in wonderful giving experiences, as well – because giving truly is better than receiving.

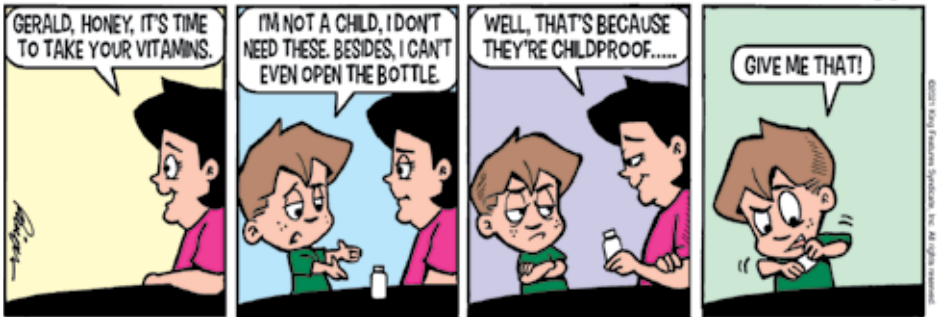
Merry Christmas, Maryn!

– Dave

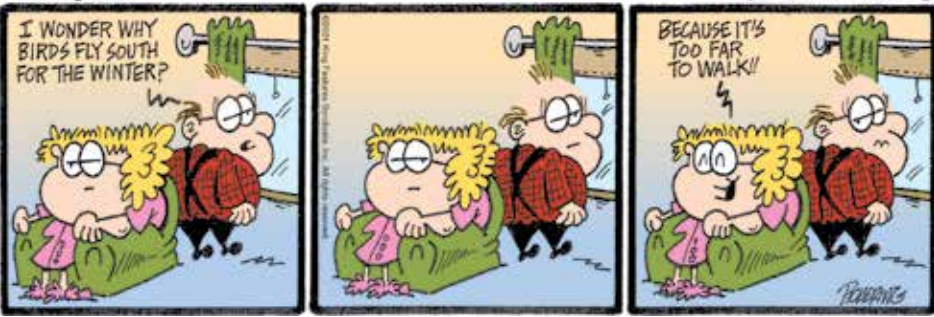
Dave Ramsey is a seven-time #1 national best-selling author, personal finance expert, and host of The Ramsey Show, heard by more than 18 million listeners each week. He has appeared on Good Morning America, CBS This Morning, Today Show, Fox News, CNN, Fox Business, and many more. Since 1992, Dave has helped people regain control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for Ramsey Solutions.

WEEKLY COMICS

Amber Waves



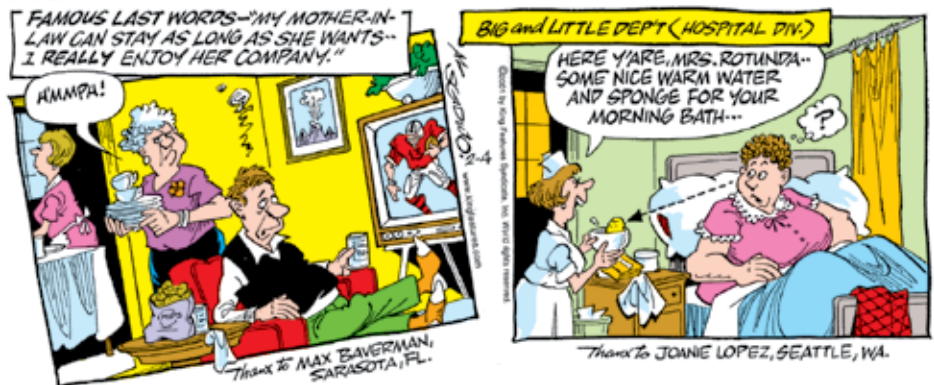
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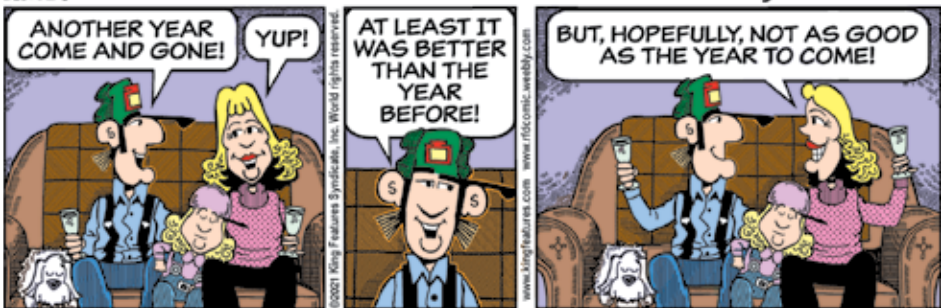
Out on a Limb



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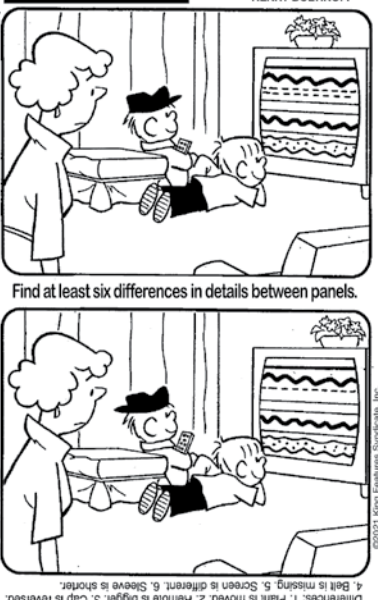
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Parkour for Seniors - More Exercise is Better as You Get Older

Commentary
by Nancy Lorentz

“Twenty-first century seniors live longer, healthier and more active lives. Sure, you’ll find some older folks who might prefer to sit out their senior years. But, for the most part, the elders among us – and there are a lot of them – choose ‘not to go gently into that good night,’ as poet Dylan Thomas put it,” says Rebecca Weber, CEO of the Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC].

The Census Bureau reports that when they conducted their 2010 head count the oldest Baby Boomer – the first of whom were born in 1946 – was not even 65 years old yet. But since then, a staggering 10,000 of them have been celebrating their 65th birthdays each and every day and the “gray tsunami” will continue for yet another decade.

Today’s life expectancy is about 79 years. It was little more than 68 years in 1950 and it will continue to increase well beyond the turn of another century. Medical innovations have a lot to do with it. In 1950, there were nearly 589 deaths due to heart disease per 100,000 population; today, the death rate due to heart disease has dropped dramatically to 167 per 100,000.

But, while medical interventions certainly allow more of us to have longer life spans, another important contributing factor is modern day lifestyles. We’re taking better care of ourselves, eating better, sleeping better and getting more exercise. According to the Centers for Disease Control [CDC], “Older adults should move more and sit less throughout the day. Keep in mind, some physical activity is better than none. Older adults who sit less



More exercise is better than less as you get older and a little known training regimen called parkour is, definitely, more exercise. Photo Alessandro Biascioli,Dreamstimecom

and do any amount of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity gain some health benefits. Your health benefits will also increase with the more physical activity that you do.”

AMAC’s Weber, meanwhile, is suggesting that more exercise is better than less as you get older. Taking long walks, participating in sports, climbing stairs, lifting weights, doing push-ups and sit-ups. In fact, a growing number of seniors have gone so far as to

engage in more extreme ways to get exercise, she says, warning us to make sure we don’t overdo it.

For example, an exercise regimen known as Parkour has been growing in popularity in the U.S. in recent years. To say that it is an extreme way for senior citizens to stay fit is an understatement; it involves a lot of jumping, climbing and vaulting over and around barriers. As a matter of fact, Sean Hannah president of PK Move, told U.S. News, “You say,

‘parkour for seniors,’ and it hits the brain weird, like that’s the absolute opposite of what seniors should be doing.” PK Move bills itself as “The WORLD’S 1st and ONLY evidence-based program for seniors based on modified parkour.”

Nancy Lorentz is executive director and co-founder of PK Move. In an interview with Northern Virginia Magazine, she described parkour training as “the art of moving through

your environment in a smooth, efficient manner. This art of movement requires and builds mental and physical strength to overcome obstacles in the path you have chosen. Generally, parkour involves crawling, running, jumping, leaping, climbing, swinging or diving. There are no set routines (such as in yoga or tai chi) for practicing parkour, although proper functional form is required to train safely.” ★

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