



Mandated Masks Again

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New Home Sales Continue to Increase

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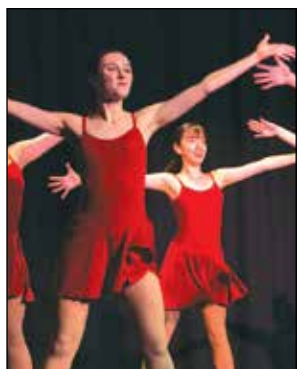
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GRADUATE TO SERVE AS MISSIONARY



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DANCE PRESENTS WINTER SHOWCASE



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Shop Dixon for Christmas



Above: Tianna Ching shows one of the gift boxes the company staff has put together to help make holiday shopping easier. Right: Lisa Frank of Pip Wine Bar will help patrons select wines or point them toward gift baskets assembled for Christmas shoppers by owner and wine connoisseur, Amy Grabish. Photos by Debra Dingman

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Inside the Mother Houseplant Boutique where one would expect to find healthy green foliage to make great gifts, one will find Tianna Ching displaying hair scrunchies, stationary, art, jewelry, designed T-shirts, ornaments, and beautiful scarves among the plethora of plants.

"We created holiday boxes, too, that sell for \$25 for small and \$35 for large," she said. "It makes gift-giving easy." There's even unique macramé plant holders if you're wanting

to dress up a simple plant.

This company at 350 West A Street is one of dozens across town that has sprouted new retail. In the past few years, Dixon entrepreneurs have increased their retail footprint and today, almost every place open for business has created walls, racks, or cupboards brimming with perfectly wonderful gift ideas.

Cheery and bright colored-door mats with matching garden flags

are new at Solano Baking Company in the Safeway Shopping Plaza. Kara Benz, daughter of owner Kendra, was busy filling the racks with charming cookie cutters with recipes attached, aprons, coffee sets, honey, and wine glasses.

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CHP Helps Prepare Senior Drivers for Years to Come



The Age Well, Drive Smart class is an education program specifically designed to help seniors tune up their driving skills, refresh their knowledge of the rules of the road. Photo courtesy Dreamstime

California Highway Patrol Press Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The California Highway Patrol (CHP) is determined to help drivers age 65 and older maintain their driving independence through the support of a yearlong federal grant, *Keeping Everyone Safe (KEYS) XIII*. The CHP will continue to offer this in-person and virtual traffic safety program emphasizing roadway safety and mobility for California's senior drivers.

The Age Well, Drive Smart program is an education program specifically designed to help seniors tune up their driving skills, refresh their knowledge of the rules of the road, and discuss normal age-related physical changes and how they affect driving ability. Since 2015, the CHP has conducted over 1,800 senior driver traffic safety presentations, reaching more than 100,000 people.

"The CHP is committed to helping seniors drive safer," said CHP Commissioner Amanda Ray. "This course is designed to assist the state's most experienced drivers in refreshing their driving skills and ultimately saving lives."

The CHP invites California's older drivers to attend a free two-hour Age Well, Drive Smart class that provides senior drivers the tools to driving safer and driving longer. The class is offered at local CHP Area offices as well as many community centers. It is a great way for seniors to educate themselves, evaluate their driving abilities, and improve their driving skills.

To attend a class, either in person or virtually, contact a CHP Area office near you for available dates and times.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The mission of the CHP is to provide the highest level of Safety, Service, and Security. ★

A Christmas Celebration Guide

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - While some Dixon churches have returned to hosting special Christmas programs such as a children's Christmas play or musicals, not all have returned to pre-pandemic operations. Nonetheless, the spirit of Christmas is being celebrated in some way by all of them.

St. Peter's announced confessions will be heard Dec. 20 through 23 from 6 to 7:30 pm. They will hold its Christmas Eve Mass in both English and Spanish with the English Mass at 5 pm and the Spanish one at 7 pm. They are located on the corner of A and Second Streets and will also have a Christmas Day Mass at 11 am in English and 1 pm in Spanish.

St. Peter's Catholic Church is located at 105 South 2nd Street and for more information, the phone is (707) 678-9424.

Candlelight services are always very precious and offer a time to reflect



Don & Shirley Ree from Cornerstone Baptist Church promoted the Christmas Eve service at the recent Christmas Car Cruise. Photo by Liz Robben

on the true reason for the season. They will be happening at Cornerstone Baptist on Christmas Eve, Friday at 6 pm, at 185 West Cherry Street.

"It is always such a wonderful program with songs and scripture readings with a short sermon from Pastor Frank," said Monica Sepulveda.

Grace Fellowship

will also be celebrating Christmas with a Candlelight Service by Pastor Paul Sheldon on Dec. 24 at 7pm. The church is located at 535 West H Street and one can see more on their Facebook page or call (707) 678-5700.

Living Hope started its Christmas series this past Sunday and it is called

'Christmas Playlist'. The talks focus on a different carol each Sunday with two services offered: at 9 am & 10:45 am. They will hold a Christmas Eve Service on Dec. 24 at 7 in the evening.

"Our Sunday services on December 26 and also on Jan. 2 will just be one service at 10 am," said

Continued on page 2



Prevent Math Problems: Let Babies Crawl!

By Debra Dingman

The pleasure of my 7-month-old grandson was mine this last Saturday as I watched him “scoot” across my living room to get closer to big brothers and their game. It reminded me that I wanted to write about this special development in a baby’s life.

I figured out about ten years ago that I had a problem when it came to numbers only because other people close to me didn’t have a problem. But about five years ago, it seemed I was having to work super hard at getting dates and times right. I joked that if I was ever on time, I was on the wrong day.

When I started back at the newspaper a year and a half ago, I realized I was actually mentally challenged with timing. When I say struggle, I mean I have to go VERY SLOW when scheduling stories on my Story Lineup each week because there is news that is going to happen, news that is happening, and news that happened.

When I received an email reminder about the then-upcoming Thanksgiving week publishing schedule, my mind went like a broken spring then it shut down entirely. I could not make sense of what that actually means to my story line up. Did it mean I’ll be working on two editions at the same time?

I pulled out my calendar and literally struggled for several minutes trying to figure out the upcoming stories I had planned. Panicking, I called my husband in fear I was having a stroke—or maybe I already had one and the part that deals with numbers and dates was damaged.

Now if you’ve never had any body or brain deficiency, you might not understand the feeling I had but it is one that you become somewhat like a child and

need your mommy to hold your hand and say that Aunt Fern had this issue also and we’ll check it out. Or, your spouse could say, honey, I’ve heard you complain about this before and we’ll make that doctor’s appointment right now and finally get this figured out. But no, instead he said, “So you have to turn in your stories a week early, what’s the problem?”

It is very difficult as a wife to face serious issues of life alone when one is happily married... Knowing I wasn’t going to get any help from my partner on this, I started researching and discovered this: *dyscalculia*.

Yep, there really is a condition that hinders the mathematical processes and it’s because I didn’t spend enough time crawling around the floor as a baby. Okay, a bit oversimplifying but yep, I know it’s hard to believe but it was there in print in research papers. I remember teaching this in my infant development classes but that was for reading skills—you know the one-side-back-to-the-other-side movement somehow sets babies up for best reading skills and apparently math skills, too.

I was the third child. We were a year apart. That means I had two older siblings racing around the house trying to trample me. I can imagine why I didn’t crawl much. Probably just watched a lot now that I think about it. So there you have it. A real reason I have to move slow with numbers and dates but oh dear, what about the aging factor moving in? Yikes!

So, attention parents, care providers, and grandparents: Let your babies crawl. Don’t always put them in the various pieces of infant equipment that keeps them off the floor, rug, or grass. ★

Dixon News Briefs

MPG Staff

City Clerk Sworn In

Kristin Janisch was officially sworn into the office of Elected City Clerk by City Mayor Steve Bird at the last City Council Meeting. Janisch won by nearly 60 percent of the votes last November after serving a year as a temporary Elected City Clerk. She will receive a \$250 monthly stipend and will have to campaign again in 2022 if she seeks a 4-year term. Janisch is a realtor working for District 3 Councilman Kevin Johnson in the REMAX office.



Mayor Steve Bird swears in Elected City Clerk Kristin Janisch at the last Council Meeting. Photo by Debra Dingman

Maine Prairie Drive

The students of Maine Prairie High School are doing a food and paper product drive before their winter break and are inviting members of the community to join them through today by noon.

“This is the time of year that reminds us that there are always others that are in greater need than ourselves,” the leadership wrote in their announcement. They are donating their collection to Dixon Family Services, an organization that helps the needy with food, rent, utilities, and other services. “Please consider donating canned or dry goods along with women’s hygiene products or toilet tissue since these items or not usually contributed yet are part of a dire need,” they wrote.

The MPHS Leadership Team is appreciative of all help in their endeavor. The school is located at 305 East C Street in Dixon or contact Kathy Lewetzow, School Site Coordinator at (707) 693-6340, ext. 7501.

No City Meetings

The City Council Meeting normally held on the third Tuesday of the month has been canceled (Dec. 21.) Enjoy your Tuesday night with wrapping, listening to carols, eating Christmas cookies, or if none of those fit you; pet the dog. There will be no Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting on Dec. 28 as they met on a special day of Monday, Dec. 13 earlier this month.

Pickleball Anyone?

A local community group is hosting Pickleball in the Park Sunday, Dec. 26, 2 to 4 pm and Monday, Dec. 27, 10 am to noon, according to the City of Dixon Recreation Department. They say it is fun and easy to learn so come out to Hall Park to learn how to play—free instruction and paddles and balls will be provided.

The City will be renovating Hall Park this summer including new tennis courts and possibly pickleball courts. ★

Vehicle Burglaries!

The Dixon Police Department is investigating a series of vehicle burglaries which occurred on 12/8/2021 between 6 PM and 7 PM. The suspect vehicle is a recent model year blue Ford Explorer with chrome grill and rims. The suspect is a black male adult wearing a yellow sweatshirt or jacket. The vehicle had a license plate of 5EGW563 which was later found to be stolen from a different vehicle but may still be on this one.

Anyone with information regarding this investigation is asked to call Detective Oliveira at the Dixon Police Department at (707) 678-7070 x3110.

Santa’s Fire Engine

When you hear those loud sirens and see those flashing fire engine lights, do not be afraid. It’s the annual Professional Firefighters Association Local 4665 escorting Santa through town Dec. 21-23 to wish everyone a happy holiday season. The firetruck will be roving through neighborhoods from 6 to 8 pm.

The area of North Lincoln and West Street that includes Gretchen Higgins Elementary School, Cornejo Park and Northwest Park will be on Tuesday. The area of West Porter Road, Patwin Park and Tremont Elementary will be on Wednesday and lastly will be the area of West A Street and East Parkway, Valley Glen and Veterans Park on Thursday.

Winter Pruning

That new lemon tree you planted last spring now has a dozen heavy lemons hanging on it and your avocado tree has run amuck. Want some help? A winter Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop will be hosted by Sustainable Solano with the City of Dixon on Sunday, Dec. 19 from 10 to 11:30 in the morning. For more info and to register, visit bit.ly/1219pruningworkshop ★

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

A Christmas Celebration Guide

Continued from page 1
Pastor Jeff Myers. Living Hope is located at 410 Gateway Plaza.

At Dixon Community Church on Sunday, Dec. 19, the congregation will hear the Neighborhood Christian School Children’s Choir. DCC is located at 955 East A Street and the phone is (707) 678-1981.

The Dixon United Methodist Church at 209 North Jefferson will host Christmas Eve Services at 5 pm, 7 pm, and 11 pm. All three of those will be a candlelight service

with favorite hymns like Silent Night. The phone is (707) 678-2191.

Freedom Church and Pastor Joe Mejia are going to have a Christmas Gift Giveaway on Sunday, Dec. 19 at the 10 am service. In getting ready for celebrating Christ’s birth, the church youth are selling shirts that say, “Jesus is the reason for the season,” and “Happy Birthday, Jesus.”

“We will be wearing these for the children’s presentation on Dec. 19 so make sure to pick one up right after service,” said

Erica Mejia. “We are collecting gifts and monetary donations and distributing them. Whoever is here from the community, we will make sure they are going to get a gift. We are also blessing a couple families with these donations because they have really been struggling,” she added. The church is located at 470 East H Street and the phone is (707) 693-1774.

Every attempt was made to get a hold of all churches in Dixon over the past few weeks. ★

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Dixon High Graduate to Serve as a Full-Time Missionary



Cameron Kersey. Photo courtesy of Michael Kersey

By Michael Kersey

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Cameron Kersey, son of Michael and Dee Ann Kersey was called and accepted the call to serve as a full-time missionary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints based in Hungary and Romania. He will begin early this next year and serve there for two years.

Hungary is a nation of about 10 million people in central Europe with its capital of Budapest. Hungarian is the language of the nation. Romania is more southeastern Europe, of almost 20 million people, known for its fortified churches and castles and the

Dracula legend. Bucharest is its capital. Romanian is the language spoken.

Cameron has begun an intensive study of the languages and cultures of these two nations and will soon fly to Utah for some more specific language study and missionary training, and then will fly to Europe to live among the people and to teach and invite all people to learn of Jesus Christ and improve their lives through His Gospel message of love and hope and peace.

Cameron graduated Dixon High School locally with honors, top of his class, earning straight A's in all subjects, throughout his whole life. He swam for DHS and enjoyed robotics and computer languages and programming. Cameron was accepted and attended his first year at Brigham Young University-Idaho in Rexburg, Idaho, getting good grades while starting his general education and studying Computer Programming. Cameron is an Eagle Scout and enjoyed leading a team of volunteers in installing two wonderful park benches at the northern end of Northwest Park in

Dixon a couple of years ago as part of his Eagle Scout community service project.

Since declaring his intention to serve a mission, Cameron has also been regularly working locally at Walmart, and most recently as a host at Denny's restaurant, as well as mowing and core aerating lawns for his father's landscaping company Dreamscapes. Cameron has been earning most of his needed funds for his two-year volunteer mission expenses. Generous donations from family and friends should make up the difference.

After completing his missionary service, Cameron plans to return to the university, and finish studying Computer Science, earn his degree, find meaningful employment, and later plans to marry and have a family.

As his parents, we are pleased and proud of his decision to serve and cheer him on in all his amazing decisions. If anyone wishes to send him a note of encouragement or any kind of financial donation, please send it to Cameron Kersey, P.O. Box 1085, Dixon, Ca, 95620. Thank you. ★

Shop Dixon for Christmas

Continued from page 1

Still boasting a large variety of pretty doughnuts or Christmas cookies, the muffin loaves of banana, apple, or cinnamon bread with pretty ribbon are always a great way to say you care. Their friendly staff is happy to help.

We're not forgetting the do-it-yourselfers in town as we found Amos Metz Equipment and Rentals had a selection of safety glasses, Fastenal had a huge selection of tools, and there's Carhart jackets, gloves, and great work boots at Tractor Supply not to mention grills, shop-vacs, and lots of lawn and yard equipment at Ace Dixon Hardware and Lumber.

For the outdoorsy folks, there is the spacious showroom of Pacific Flyway Outdoor Sporting Goods and KUIU High Performance Hunting Gear stores at 1690 and 1920 North Lincoln Street respectively. For the car enthusiasts, check out Napa Auto Parts, O'Reilly's, or AutoZone even for simple pleasures like fur steering wheel covers.

Algood Ink offers gift certificates for a tattoo in downtown plus he has a unique idea of etching wine bottles that can be personalized for someone special.

For the real Holly-Jolly Christmas types, there are these: Pip Wine Bar that also does gift certificates and put together nice Christmas baskets, Michael's Market with a huge selection of hard



Susan Rosten of Susan's Jewels of the Sea created necklaces and other pretty pieces of jewelry from ocean finds and they are for sale in the Uptown Collective on North First Street. Photo by Debra Dingman

liquor, and even Ruhstallers for some of the best tasting beer brewed locally.

For your 4-legged family, there is Higby's at 8470 Currey Road with all kinds of supplies specific to horses, but livestock as well—same as Tractor Supply.

Gift certificates are available at all our restaurants and there's just too many too list but certificates are also great for classes like at Busy Bee Yoga, In Stitches, It's All About the Scrapbook, Ramtown Karate, Every Baking Moment cake Decorating, and even Pip's Wine Bar Pairing Class or excursions. Even Bangkok Garden is now offering a Thai Cooking Class.

For herbal enthusiasts, there are a variety of goodies including cookies at Dixon Wellness and Highway Dispensary.

For clothing, you'd be surprised how many places Dixon now sports and all within easy walking distance downtown. There

is Bella Moda inside the Linde Lane Tea Room, the A-List on the corner of A and First Streets, Kula's Tanning Salon (yellow door on B Street) and Uptown Collective on North First Street which offers men and women's clothing and accessories in addition to scented soaps, candles, baby items, and more.

Sweet children's hats, gloves, and scarves are found inside Cynde's Salon & Boutique along with home decor items and a nice selection of classy jewelry.

For the western or old-time toys and clothes, check out Robben's Department Store which, by the way, is the oldest department store in California last we checked.

With cloudy skies and more rain forecast for this coming week, why brave I-80 when all your Christmas shopping can be done right here in Dixon where your sales support your local business owners and the community? ★

Heeney's History

Commentary by Ed Heeney

Pearl Harbor

The Pastor was just winding down from his sermon when Henry Dodson, the local postmaster, came bursting in the front door. Henry usually left church 10 minutes early so he could open the post office for us rural people, but this day he had returned all flustered and out of breath.

"The Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor," he announced. There was quite a hubbub as most adults had an opinion or two. And, us kids had no idea where or what was a Pearl Harbor.

The rest of the Sunday was spent discussing how strong the U.S. was and how soon the war could come to an end. There were a whole bunch of tough old country boys "chompin at the bit" to get "over there" and end this foolishness. Our family visited my uncle's who had a radio; we still had no electricity in the country. We learned that President Roosevelt was to declare war on the radio the next day.

The next morning we were getting ready for our trek down the dirt road to our one

room schoolhouse, my Dad hollered to tell the teacher to bring the classes down to our home and we would listen to the President declare war. He had rigged up a radio with some car parts.

The teacher and two girls rode in the car and us boys ran along behind. As we entered the driveway, my Dad hollered that he needed to borrow the car battery since his old 6-volt had run down. Up came the floorboard and battery connected to the radio. We heard the President loud and clear in this "Day of Infamy" speech.

Editor's Note: Ed and Mary Heeney are long-time Dixonites. They first moved to Dixon in 1971 and raised three children here and now have seven grandchildren. Ed reported how he first learned to write. "I was in the Air Force for 25 years and I never got high enough to have a secretary, so I learned to write because I had to. After that, I've written directives and so on for my work and in almost every assignment, I've done a newsletter. I also followed Mary around the circuit—Mary was the Editor of the Dixon Tribune for 10 years. I had the privilege of proofreading." ★

Dixon Dance Presents Winter Showcase



Students from Dixon Dance rehearse for the upcoming Winter Showcase at the Dixon High School Theater. Photo by Morgan Hicks

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - For a festive, bustling, and energetic view of fancy feet, you might want to slip into a seat at the Dixon High School Theater to watch Holla Holla Holidays! by the young performers of the Dixon Dance Studio on Sunday, Dec. 19. They are celebrating their 20th year.

Dixon Dance Studio offers classes ages 3 & up. Styles offered are Tap, Jazz, Ballet, Hip Hop, Modern Contemporary, Acro Jazz, Musical Theater, Pre Ballet, Pre Hip Hop, Tap/Jazz Combo, and more.

"Our Spring 2022 season will begin Monday, Jan. 10 and new students can try

out their first class for free," said Teacher and Choreographer Morgan Kate Hicks. More information regarding tuition, calendar, competition team, and more can be found on their website: dixondancestudio.com

Tickets are available now online at <https://ddshollaholidays.eventbrite.com> and there are two performances to choose from: One at 1 pm and the second at 6 pm. The theater is located at 555 College Way in Dixon.

Owned by Amy Forrest Stokes, the studio is located at 1910 North Lincoln, next to KUIU. Phone is (707) 789-8881. ★

Merry Christmas

FROM

Chandon Champagne sounds good for a Christmas Breakfast at Dawson's Bar & Grill

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Mandated Masks Again



The first statewide mandate was imposed in 2020 and lifted last June. Photo courtesy Pixabay

By Ana B. Ibarra, CALMatters

Starting Wednesday, (December 15, 2021) Californians will once again be required to wear masks indoors in public places regardless of vaccination status, state health officials announced today.

The renewed masking requirement follows a 47% increase in COVID-19 case rates since the

Thanksgiving holiday and the arrival of new variant, said Dr. Mark Ghaly, the state's health secretary.

The mask mandate will run through January 15 and is specific to public settings, not private gatherings. Nevertheless, health officials recommend people get tested ahead of holiday gatherings and consider better ventilation by opening windows or convening

outdoors when possible.

The mandate will mainly affect about 50% of the state population that lives in counties that currently don't have their own mask mandate, Ghaly said. Los Angeles and several Bay Area counties already have mask mandates for public settings in place.

Along with renewed mask rules, the state will also require that attendees at mega events

– those of 1,000 people or more – who are unvaccinated show proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within one day, if an antigen test, or two days for PCR tests. The state is also recommending that travelers get tested before and after trips.

The first statewide mandate was imposed in 2020 and lifted last June.

After the state's June 15

reopening, vaccinated people were allowed to return to grocery stores, retail and other public settings without a mask – at least under state rules. People who were not vaccinated still had to adhere to indoor masking. Telling the difference, however, was tricky: Ghaly acknowledged today that throughout the pandemic enforcement of these rules has been a challenge. ★

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Dare to Live Without Limits
 by Bryan Golden
Doing More than is Expected

When you are short on time, and overloaded with tasks and obligations, it's tempting to do just enough to get by. Thinking, "why do more than necessary," is common. An all-too-common standard is that good is good enough. This low bar of mediocrity limits your achievements.

Instead of doing just enough, try doing more than is expected. This approach yields amazing results. Going beyond what people expect leads to incredible results because they are pleasantly surprised.

How much you do determines how you are perceived. Those who do more than is expected significantly enhance their reputation. Ralph was hoping to get a raise and promotion. He was a diligent employee who always completed whatever tasks he was given. When Ralph was done with an assignment, he would wait to be given whatever was needed next.

Carol worked for the same company as Ralph. However, Carol went above and beyond what was required. When all of Carol's projects were complete, she would look for what needed to be worked on next. She always took initiative.

The next time a promotion became available it was given to Carol. Her boss appreciated that Carol was already performing at the level required by the new position.

Although Ralph was a solid employee, he didn't do more than was expected.

Have a standard of excellence where good is not good enough. Always do just a little extra without being asked. Although Ralph was reliable, he performed at exactly the level his current position required. However, Carol was always looking for extra ways she could be of value to her employer. Performing at the level you desire is an effective way to accelerate your progress to your desired goals.

Regardless of the work you are involved with, you have customers. You may have direct contact with those who patronize your employer. Even without direct customer contact, your boss is your customer, your coworkers are your customers, and any people you supervise are your customers.

Doing more than is expected means solving problems. Don't tell others what you can't do, always tell them what you can do. Be solution oriented. There's always a way to do something. This is the foundation of exceptional customer service.

People don't like to be told NO. In instances when you are requested to do something you can't do, instead of saying, "No, I can't do that," reply, "Here's what I can do for you." Using this approach shows that you are trying to help instead of being an impediment.

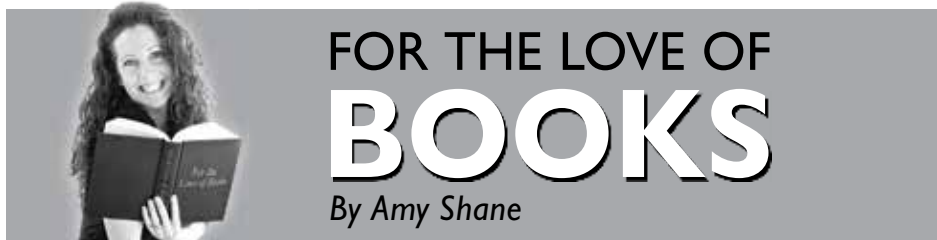
How you treat others has a huge impact. Too often

people are rude. Always be polite. Use please and thank you. Ask people for what you want instead of demanding. By being more polite than expected, you will have more productive, and effective interactions. People respond better to being treated with respect than being talked down to.

Showing your gratitude has a positive impact. Small gestures mean a lot. Let people know you appreciate their efforts. Say thank you with a phone call, text, email, or a hand written card. Surprise someone with a small, unexpected gift. You are more likely to be treated with respect when you treat others well.

Take pride in all you do. Always be on the lookout for ways you can improve. A little extra goes a long way. Utilize the principle of the slight edge which states: A small amount of extra effort produces results far in excess of the effort required. A horse which wins the Kentucky derby by a nose is proof this works. The first place finisher can be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars more than second place. It pays to do more than is expected.

NOW AVAILABLE: "Dare to Live Without Limits," the book. Visit www.BryanGolden.com or your bookstore. Bryan is a management consultant, motivational speaker, author, and adjunct professor. E-mail Bryan at bryan@columnist.com or write him c/o this paper. © 2021 Bryan Golden ★



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

Top Holiday Children's Books from Penguin Random House Publishers

The Holidays are nearly upon us, and Penguin, Random House Publishing, has a bounty of children and young adult books that will bring cheer throughout the year. These top titles are perfect for gift giving for any reader on your list.

Let the nostalgia of the holidays fill your Holiday shelves with, **The Little Engine That Could Delivery Day** by Matt Mitter. Readers young and older will love the adorable story as well as the nostalgic feel of the illustrations. With six envelopes to deliver, little readers will delight in reading the mail as well as looking for each person they are addressed to.

With the **Who Was** board books, **The Who HQ** delivers age-appropriate biographies to the young reading audience. With stories about influential figures such as Martin Luther King Jr, Walt Disney, and Jane Goodall readers will get an inside look into their lives with easy-to-follow stories and engaging illustrations. Also included on the last pages are a full biography and notable notes perfect for the older audience. This is a treasured series perfect for adding to any library.

Give that young adult reader on your list exactly what they are looking for with this year's top titles. **Vespertine**, delivers a thrilling new fantasy story that combines ancient spirits, magic, mythical powers in a fight to save the world. As a Gray Sister, Artemisia will be trained to cleanse the bodies of the recently deceased, but when the covenant is attacked, and an ancient spirit is awakened, it will be up to her to try and save her world. Margaret Rogerson takes her readers on an unforgettable journey that will take them by storm.

The fantasy reads continue in the lush powerful story of two teens who enter a magical jungle on a hunt for the Shetani, a monstrous and murderous creature. Debut author Ayana Gray took the world by storm as she delivered a powerful, emotional, and imaginative story, **Beasts of Prey** that is bound to pull any reader under her spell.

For the young adult reader looking for thrills, chills, and mystery, these two titles are the top of the list. **The Taking of Jake Livingston** by Ryan Douglass blends prep schools', ghosts, and a threatening game of survival. For Jake Livingston living his life is exhausting. As a medium, Jake sees ghosts everywhere, but when one ghost has



his own ghostly intentions, Jake's life takes a drastic and deadly turn.

They'll Never Catch Us by Jessica Goodman will have readers ready to lace up their running shoes and chase the truth. The Steckler Sisters are known for being the top runners on their cross-country team, but everything gets shaken when new girl Mila shows up vying for the top spot. Then Mila disappears right before regionals; and everyone is quick to blame the Steckler sisters. Are the Steckler sisters to blame, or are there other sinister reasons at play? ★



The IOC Is a Craven Handmaid of Beijing

It should be a rule of thumb that the Olympic Games shouldn't be held in countries that operate concentration camps.

If this strikes you as a reasonable demand, you aren't suited to serve on the International Olympic Committee. The IOC has doggedly defended Beijing as the host of the 2022 Winter Olympics even as the Chinese Communist Party pursues its campaign of unrelenting barbarity against the Uyghurs.

The Biden administration just announced a so-called diplomatic boycott of the games, a gesture of disapproval that won't dent the propaganda coup the IOC is handing the most dangerous regime in the world.

The IOC is the World Health Organization of sports. When China disappeared female tennis star Peng Shuai for the offense of making an accusation of sexual assault against a former high government official, the IOC happily assisted in the regime's crisis PR, lest the shocking incident derail the games.

The president of the IOC, Thomas Bach, had a video call with Peng where she said all was well and Bach pretended to take her assurances at face value. Of course, Peng wasn't free to speak her mind, but part of Bach's job now is to look the other way at China's

blatant abuses.

China has the great fortune to deal with international organizations – except the Women's Tennis Association, which is suspending tournaments in China – that lack all self-respect.

The IOC is following in the well-trod footsteps of corporations, financiers and sports leagues that start out wanting to do business with China and end up complicit in the regime's crimes by staying silent or explaining them away.

The difference is that the IOC claims to be acting in support of high ideals. Bach likes to quote the Olympic charter that says Olympism exists "to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity."

Placing sport at the service of China does the opposite on all counts. China's autocrat, Xi Jinping, has been open about the political importance of the Olympics, "Hosting an excellent 2022 Games is a major task of the Party and the country, and it is a solemn commitment to the international community." Here, the interests of the CCP and the IOC – as well as the corporate sponsors of the games – coincide.

The last time China hosted the Olympics, the Summer Games in 2008, it used the opening ceremony to stage a gigantic and memorable regime-enhancing spectacle. Beijing promised reforms to get awarded the games and

then, true to form, engaged in yet more heavy-handed repression.

If the 2008 Beijing Games were ill-advised, next year's Winter Olympics are a complete travesty. The atrocities in Xinjiang province are a matter of public record and the quashing of Hong Kong proceeds apace. No one who crosses the regime is safe from imprisonment or worse. China openly menaces Taiwan with an invasion. Indeed, China could conceivably be in a shooting war with the United States within a year or two of using the presence of our athletes, among others, to enhance the rule of its dictator-for-life.

Bach insists that the IOC must always be politically neutral. As Michael Mazza of the American Enterprise Institute points out, though, the IOC banned apartheid-era South Africa from the games. There is no such thing as neutrality when dealing with an all-encompassing police state for which politics is a life-or-death matter. The games aren't being hosted by Switzerland or Norway – nice, law-abiding countries with good ski slopes – but a revanchist power that tramples on human dignity and is a clear and present danger to international peace.

The IOC could have taken an off-ramp from these games at any point. Instead, its attitude is going to be, "Enjoy the snowboarding, never mind the concentration camps."

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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Hey, This Is My Story!

Dr. James L. Snyder

Nobody wants to admit they have narcissistic leanings in their life. And yet, if you listen to them, and even to yourself, you will see it. I did not know how aggravating it was, but I was to learn pretty soon.

Recently I had a heart attack and had a stent put in one of my arteries, the widow make her. It was this experience that showed me the level of narcissism in my own life.

When anybody would call me and ask how I was, I would mention that I recently had a heart attack and had a stent inserted in one of my arteries. Before I can even get to the end of that sentence, the person on the other end of the line will say, "Oh, a couple of years ago, I had a heart attack and had two stents put in." And then they would go on and on and on about their condition and experience.

Coming to the end of this conversation, I said, "Well, I hope you're doing well." To which I got the reply, "Thank You, I appreciate that."

Hanging up the phone, I thought a bit that the person on the other end of the

phone did not allow me to tell my story.

The one thing I have learned about this narcissistic virus is that there comes a point where it explodes. I didn't know that before, but I found out just recently.

Another friend called and asked about me, and I said I just had a heart attack and had a stent implanted in my artery. Again, before I could get to the end of that sentence, they began explaining how they also had a heart attack several years ago, and they had four stents put in. Then they went on and on about their heart attack and how it changed their life, and what they did to keep from having another one.

I don't know what triggered my explosion, but all of a sudden, I heard myself saying, "Hey, stop right there. This is my heart attack, not yours. This is my story, not yours."

Just before I hung up, the person on the other end said, "Well, I'll be praying for you, and I hope you get better." Then there was that infamous "click." And the conversation was over.

I hung up the phone and turned around only to see

the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage staring at me with one of her "stares," and I heard her say, "What in the world did you just say?"

At that moment, I knew I was in for some trouble, so I said, "I'm not sure; what did I say?"

I knew she would tell me what I said, so I didn't need a recording of it. But I kind of lost control because of that narcissistic virus that has infected me.

A verse of Scripture came to my mind at this time. "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

Probably the hardest thing in this verse is when Jesus says "Let him deny himself." My narcissistic virus fights against that all the time.

Dr. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, 1471 Pine Road, Ocala, FL 34472. He lives with his wife in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 352-687-4240 or e-mail jamesnyder2@att.net. The church web site is www.whatafellowship.com. ★

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

UC Davis Vandalism and Riotous Activity

On November 18th, there was an anti-police riot on the University of California, Davis, campus. A group called *UC Davis Cops off Campus* led the riot, which involved vandalism, threats, intimidation, and the use of a smoke grenade and/or a flare.

The Yolo County Republican Party condemns the riot, as we condemn all political violence. Unfortunately, UC Davis Chancellor Gary S. May has not condemned the riot. He sent out an email on November 19th, the day after the riot, mentioning COVID-19, Fall commencement, and an interview he conducted with San Francisco London Breed, but not the riot. It is verifiable that Chancellor May knew about the riot. Why? Because, on an Instagram post on his Instagram account, he disabled comments after some students asked him what actions the University will take against the perpetrators.

Like these students, we too wonder what actions will be taken against the perpetrators of the political violence on November 18th. Will UC Davis file charges against those who committed crimes? Unfortunately, we are doubtful that they will, as a lack of acknowledgement points to an unwillingness to take any action. The likely prospect of inaction makes us, as taxpayers and law-abiding citizens, angry; after all, we are the ones who subsidize education at UC Davis and will have these criminals in our communities when they get out of the University.

We hold it evident and true that all who engage in political violence should be condemned, that all who engage in political violence should be punished, and that without law-enforcement, nobody is safe. Does Chancellor May?

Dan M. Brown, Chair
Yolo County Republican Party

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Serving Dixon and Solano County since 1994

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Communism and Christmas

Liberty Counsel Press Release

ORLANDO, FL (MPG) - This Christmas season when the Biden administration is desperately trying to control Americans by denying their religious beliefs and forcing them to inject experimental shots into their bodies, it is important to examine how communism can quickly eradicate the Christian faith in a nation.

Before Ronald Reagan became president in 1981, he gave more than 1,000 daily radio broadcasts from 1975 to 1979, including one in which he shared a story about the history of Christmas in the Ukraine before and after communism.

In an effort to resist Christians, communist leaders secularized a favorite Ukrainian Christmas carol, "Nova Radist Stala" (Joyous News Has Come to Us). The original song began with these words: "The joyous news has come which never was before. Over a cave above a manger a bright star has lit the world, where Jesus was born from a virgin maiden." Communists feared the public outcry that would follow a complete ban on Christmas, so they began to slowly secularize the holiday. The first rewrite of the song began: "The joyous news has come which never was before, a red star with five tails has brightly lit the world." The second rewrite went further: "The joyous news has come which never was before. Long-awaited star of freedom lit the skies in October [the month of the Revolution]. Where formerly lived the kings and had the roots their nobles, there today with simple folks, Lenin's glory hovers."

The former Soviet Union eventually began banning Christmas commemorations. St. Nicholas was replaced with "Did Moroz," or Grandfather Frost. This Stalinist creation wears a red cap and long white beard of Santa Claus, but he delivers gifts to children on New Year's Eve. Christmas trees were also banned, but people continued to trim their New Year's trees. Communism folded all Christmas celebrations into a New Year's celebration.

Christians in the former Soviet Union exhibited bravery and courage in confronting communism's anti-Christmas campaign. One person recalled how the young people would go out in the streets and sing Christmas carols, knowing that if police heard them, they would be arrested. In communist Romania, Rev. Geza Palffy, a Roman Catholic priest, delivered a

sermon in 1983 protesting that December 25 had been declared a workday instead of a holiday. The next day he was arrested by secret police, beaten, imprisoned, and died. Inside and outside the Iron Curtain, Ukrainians never stopped singing: "We beg you our Lord, we pray to you today. Grant us freedom, return glory to our Mother Ukraine." Reagan ended his broadcast: "I guess we all hope their prayer is answered." Indeed it was.

The secularization of Christmas is nothing new. Christianity Today in 2002 reported that in the Vietnamese province of Dak Lak, children's choirs were forbidden to sing "Silent Night." From 1969 to 1997, Christmas was banned in Cuba.

Legal challenges to Christmas and holiday displays have been ongoing for decades. The challenges to Nativity displays expanded to the public schools and even to nursing homes and assisted living centers. In some schools, students were told that Christmas cards, Merry Christmas greetings, singing religious Christmas carols, and even the colors red and green were not permissible. Some senior living centers prohibited residents from placing Christian or religious symbols on Christmas trees or decorating with any religious imagery. Around 2003, the censorship of Christmas entered the retail market. Christmas trees were renamed "Holiday Trees," Christmas decorations were referred to as "Holiday Decorations" or "Holiday Lights." In response to this trend, Liberty Counsel launched the annual Friend or Foe Christmas Campaign, which is designed to educate and, if necessary, litigate, to ensure that the religious and Christian viewpoints of Christmas are not censored.

Learn here about some of the numerous Christmas-related issues in which Liberty Counsel has been involved. Liberty Counsel Founder and Chairman Mat Staver said, "The war against Christmas is nothing new and it is certainly evident today in the form of religious discrimination and hostility. Repressive forces have always had the same goal to first secularize and then to eliminate Christmas and Christian symbols, celebrations, and speech. In America, the First Amendment is a guard against censorship and religious hostility. In the retail market, the consumer can decide to patronize stores that recognize Christmas and avoid those that profit from Christmas while pretending it does not exist." ★



Farm Bureau President Calls for Climate-Smart Approaches that Protect Farmers

The California Farm Bureau, the Golden State's largest agricultural organization, is holding its 103rd Annual Meeting in Orange County this week. The session opened with President Jamie Johansson calling for policies that support climate-smart agriculture but don't compromise farmers' ability to bring crops to the market. Johansson said farmers must be allowed to undertake conservation efforts without harmful government interference. "It's not a climate solution," he said, "if you make farmers less efficient."

Farm Bureau, Immigration Forum Partner on Citizenship Effort

The California Farm Bureau and the National Immigration Forum announced a partnership to support farmers and ranchers wanting to help their employees become U.S. citizens. The organizations are creating an online portal to encourage eligible workers to apply. The Farm Bureau will pay for immigration services member farmers and ranchers request on behalf of employees. The program applies to farm employees who already have legal status but are seeking citizenship and stability in the workforce.

Christmas Tree Farmers Serving Holiday Rush, While Preserving Evergreens for Future

A steady flow of customers is flocking to California Christmas tree farms. But current supplies of the evergreens are tighter than normal. Tree farmers say they're trying to manage crowds and their Christmas-time crop to ensure there will also be sufficient trees to sell in future years. Supplies have been impacted by California's population and steady demand for trees as some farmers retire and there are few new ones to replace them. The drought is also making growing harder.

Legal disputes over biological decisions affecting management of Delta

A federal judge is reviewing biological opinions that could affect agricultural water users relying on irrigation supplies from the Central Valley and state water projects. U.S. District Judge Dale Drozd in Fresno has received legal briefs from the Biden administration that argue for water management approaches to protect fish and wildlife in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The issue has been bogged down in lawsuits over 2019 biological opinions issued under the Trump administration. ★

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SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE

Notice is hereby given that the Dixon City Council adopted Ordinance No. 21-007, amending Chapter 9.06, Garbage and Refuse, of Title 9, Health and Safety, of the Dixon Municipal Code ("D.M.C.") to regulate the disposal of recyclable and organic materials.

Recently, the State passed Senate Bill 1383 ("SB 1383") that requires the City to reduce organic waste in landfills. In compliance with SB 1383, the Ordinance will regulate the disposal of recyclable and organic materials in the City. Specifically, the Ordinance will require contractors providing solid waste collection services within the City to comply with standards for the disposal of recyclable and organic materials. The Ordinance will also establish standards for the disposal of recyclable and organic materials by City residents and businesses.

This Ordinance was introduced at a regular meeting of the Dixon City Council held on the 16th day of November 2021, and adopted at a regular meeting of the Dixon City Council held on the 7th day of December 2021, by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Ernest, Hendershot, Johnson, Pederson, Bird
 NOES: None
 ABSENT: None
 ABSTAIN: None

A copy of the full text of the adopted ordinance is available for public review at City Hall, 600 East A Street, Dixon, CA 95620 or at www.cityofdixon.us.

Kristin M. Janisch
 Elected City Clerk

Date: December 10, 2021

Dixon Independent Voice 12-17-2021

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO. 2021-002253

The following persons are doing business as: : OMBRE NAILS
613 Tennessee Street, Vallejo, CA 94590
Dan Lam, 1593 Gardner Boulevard, San Leandro, CA 94577
 Date Filed in Solano County: November 15, 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 14, 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: November 26 & December 3, 10, 17, 2021 (The DIXON INDEPENDENT VOICE)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO. 2021-002326

The following persons are doing business as: : TRAVEL DOG
1875 Margurite Drive, Dixon, CA 95620
Tim Erskine, 1875 Margurite Drive, Dixon, CA 95620
 Date Filed in Solano County: December 1, 2021
 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

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 5. King trump-er, sometimes
 8. Cuckoo bird
 11. ___ weevil
 12. Smelting waste
 13. Kitchen-wear
 15. Coke or Pepsi
 16. Check-in via text, email, etc.
 17. Settler transport
 18. *2021 Super Bowl winner, two words
 20. Before long, to Shakespeare
 21. Jeopardy
 22. Auction action
 23. Puts down
 26. Coroner's performance
 30. Band booking
 31. Snicket of "A Series of Unfortunate Events"
 34. Stravinsky's "The ___ of Spring"
 35. Mine passages
 37. *Build Back Better ___
 38. Eucharist plate
 39. Table hill
 40. Good review
 42. "Tit for ___"
 43. Buck feature, pl.
 45. *First female VP
 47. Evergreen creeper
 48. It goes with gin, according to Snoop Dogg
 50. Mongolian desert
 52. *COVID-19, e.g.
 55. Poison ivy or Poison oak
 56. International Civil Aviation Org.
 57. Distinctive smell
 59. Asian coat
 60. Asian cuisine food thickener
 61. Pelvic parts
 62. Gallery display
 63. Self-proclaimed greatest boxer
 64. Count on
- DOWN
 1. "Monty Python" broadcaster
 2. Rioter's take
 3. Cantina pot
 4. Fasteners or holders
 5. Cover story
 6. *Suez ___, too tight for Ever Given
 7. Like custard
 8. Mythological ship
 9. "High" time
 10. Wayside stop
 12. Thinly spread
 13. Look forward to
 14. * ___ Papers, leaked offshore account information
 19. Banana refuse, pl.
 22. Exchange for money
 23. Old World lizard
 24. *January 20th honoree
 25. Anti-elderly one
 26. Those not in favor
 27. Pita, alt. sp.
 28. Take without asking
 29. Gossiper, Yiddish
 32. *Perseverance landing spot
 33. Edible tuber
 36. *Kabul's organization in power
 38. *The Nobel ___ Prize was awarded to Ressa and Muratov
 40. Snoop around
 41. Snowmobile brand

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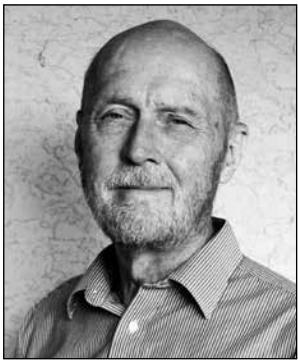
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CLUES
 44. Give the boot
 46. "Stronger" by Cindy McCain, e.g.
 48. Southwestern hut
 49. Sushi restaurant staple
 50. ___ gum, food additive
 51. Leave out
 52. Home to the Leaning Tower
 53. Not in use
 54. One in mattress
 55. Spot for a facial
 58. *Actor Liotta, star in "The Many Saints of Newark"

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Dixon Seeing Slow Uptick of Covid Cases



Commentary
by bil paul

In looking at COVID stats from the county's Department of Public Health, we're seeing a definite, but gradual, uptick in cases in Dixon. The city had 19 new COVID cases last week. Compare that to 120 new cases in Dixon in one week after Christmas a year ago (prior to vaccinations being available).

Also last week, the county saw six COVID deaths and the number of active COVID cases increased by 50.

The number of American COVID deaths is reaching 800,000. A quick use of a hand calculator reveals that one out of every 411 Americans has died of COVID – there's no denying that's a catastrophe. Applying that ratio to Dixon, one could guess that about 43 Dixonites have died of the disease.

The public health people say that fully vaccinated people exposed to someone with COVID should be tested for the disease five to seven days after exposure and should wear a mask in public indoor settings for two weeks.

There are two nearby testing sites if you're looking for one. The CVS drug store chain offers a free

drive-through testing site at 191 Depot St. in Vacaville, which requires making an online appointment at www.cvs.com/minuteclinic/covid-19-testing. Results are provided one to two days later. It's also possible to buy home testing kits at CVS stores. The home tests don't have to be mailed in; the results are shown in a few minutes.

Another free test is being provided at Solano Town Center in Fairfield at 1350 Travis Blvd. between 10 and 7, Tuesday through Saturday (across the street from Applebee's). The results are available after 15 minutes.

Remember that holiday get-togethers offer the COVID Delta Variant an excellent chance to spread, plus the new Omicron Variant is entering the picture. My suggestion: if you're not vaccinated, avoid the parties and get-togethers altogether, or at least mask up. If you're vaccinated, mask up, even if no one else is. Being in great health now doesn't build a wall of immunity around you.

Americans older than five are now eligible for vaccination. Those 16 and above are now eligible for booster shots if sufficient time has passed since the previous shot. Getting a booster shot increases your body's defenses against COVID tremendously.

Looking back in history, here are some of America's worst disease outbreaks prior to COVID:

Cholera, in the 1880s. California's legislature refused to appropriate money to prepare for it. Some suggested that Chinese and

European immigrants brought the disease into the country;

The Bubonic Plague in 1899 and 1907. It probably came from Hong Kong via ships. Teams were sent out to kill rats (the disease carriers) by the thousands. California's governor and business leaders worried more about the economic impact than deaths, which amounted to about 178 in San Francisco;

The Spanish Flu, from 1918 to 1920. Officials in Los Angeles told people to stay home and away from crowds. Questions of safety versus freedom cropped up. More than 500,000 Americans died, especially young people. In 1957 the so-called Asian flu spread widely, killing 100,000 Americans;

The AIDS epidemic, beginning in 1981. Caused by a virus, it was first depicted as a gay men's disease, though later it was apparent anyone could get it. Governor Reagan didn't pay much attention to it, not even mentioning it until 1986. To date, over 700,000 Americans have died of AIDS/HIV.

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



A Film and TV Review by Tim Riley

"WEST SIDE STORY" Rated PG-13

Sixty years ago, the 1957 Broadway musical "West Side Story" was adapted to the big screen starring Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer in the roles of star-crossed lovers Maria and Tony as a modern-day Romeo and Juliet couple.

Fast forward six decades and director Steven Spielberg brings his unique talent for a reimagining of the beloved musical that delights with a brilliant adaptation of the work of legends Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim, the respective creators of the music and lyrics.

Not only are the memorable songs so enticing and seductive, the choreographed scenes of the rival Jets and Sharks gangs prowling the rough streets of New York City's Upper West Side and shifting randomly into electric dance moves are something to behold.

Set in 1957 when urban renewal was replacing the neighborhood tenements to make way for the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and other developments, the streets are a battleground for the Jets, a white gang, and their Puerto Rican rivals known as the Sharks.

The putative leader of the Jets is rather bland Tony (Ansel Elgort), who comes across more like an Ivy League student than hardened street tough even though he served a prison term for nearly killing an immigrant.

The Sharks are under the command of Bernardo (David Alvarez), whose younger sister Maria (Rachel Zegler) becomes romantically linked with Tony in the Shakespearean-inspired young love that fuels a violent showdown of the opposing gangs.

While Tony is trying to go straight by working at Doc's Drugstore, which is now run by widow Valentina (Rita Moreno), the Jets find the volatile Riff (Mike Faist) more than willing to rumble for the sake of claiming turf that will soon be gentrified.

Speaking of Rita Moreno, she's a real treasure in this film, bridging the divide between the gangs as well as being an unrelated link to the past, considering she played the role of Bernardo's girlfriend Anita in the original.

The tragedy of the love story is obvious to anyone familiar with the Shakespearean source material. What works well here is a romantic fairytale told with superb passion and intensity.

Remember that the original "West Side Story" won ten Academy Awards, including Best Picture, and that alone is a reason to marvel at Spielberg's daring to take on the challenge of a remake, and yet the result is fits of apparent messaging that may diminish widespread appeal.

In a world where so many films are

Riley Reviews

"WEST SIDE STORY" GREAT MUSIC AND DANCE; "ONE SHOT" ON DVD

rebooted to dwindling acclaim, was a remake of the iconic "West Side Story" essential? Probably not, because the original remains so fantastic but at least the radiant choreography and music of this updated version provide great pleasure.

"ONE SHOT" ON DVD

Though he may not be a household name, Scott Adkins is making his mark as an action star in B-movies and that's a good thing. After all, guys like Steven Seagal and Chuck Norris are now too old, and Charles "Death Wish" Bronson is no longer with us.

With martial arts skills similar to those of more famous B-grade action stars, Adkins has had supporting roles in big pictures like "The Bourne Ultimatum" and "Universal Soldier: Day of Reckoning." Soon he'll be seen in the next "John Wick" sequel.

Punching above his weight to get to the next level of action stardom, Adkins portrays Navy SEAL Lt. Blake Harris as a fearless warrior reduced to a one-man army when faced with holding the line against cutthroat insurgents.

An emergency situation compels Harris to lead an elite squad of fellow SEALs and junior CIA analyst Zoe Anderson (Ashley Greene Khoury) to retrieve a detainee from a CIA black site on a remote island that resembles the Guantanamo Bay detention facility.

The mission appears simple enough. Disembark from the chopper and retrieve suspected terrorist mastermind Amin Mansur (Waleed Elgadi) for interrogation about the location of a dirty bomb set to destroy the three branches of government in Washington, D.C.

Yet, we know things won't go smoothly. First problem is the base's chief officer Jack Yorke (Ryan Phillippe) who refuses to release the detainee based solely on the intel provided by Anderson.

Before the internal squabbling subsides, a band of ruthless mercenaries led by particularly nasty and brutal Charef (Jess Liaudin), who looks like a UFC cage fighter, invades the island determined to kill Mansur and snuff out any chance he'll divulge terrorist secrets.

There's no way that Adkins would take a role where he would not shoot, stab, kick and punch his way to eliminating the hordes of villains armed with AK-47s and an endless supply of ammo.

Filed as a nonstop take, "One Shot" fashions a relentless battle with mercenaries where the tension continues to mount as Harris and the soldiers on the base face increasingly difficult odds for survival.

The perceptive B-movie aficionado who appreciates that Scott Adkins, who also appeared in "The Expendables 2," is hell-bent on delivering the goods will not be disappointed by the taut action of "One Shot." ★

California's 'Tort Wars' Heating Up Again



By Dan Walters
CALMatters

One of the Capitol's most enduring conflicts pits personal injury attorneys and their allies in consumer advocacy groups against corporate interests and their insurers.

The two factions clash incessantly over what events are deemed wrongful acts (torts), who can sue over those acts and what monetary damages can be awarded.

Dubbed "tort wars," the conflict has raged for decades in the Legislature, in the courts and occasionally via ballot measures, each side depicting itself as the good guys and the other as rapaciously evil. Millions of dollars are spent each year on lobbyists, media strategists, political campaign advisors and other tools of the political trade.

The intensity of the war varies from year to year, and 2022 is shaping up as one its hotter periods as the factions propose dueling ballot measures. One would effectively undo a 1975 law that limits damages for "pain and suffering" in medical malpractice cases, while another would place a new limit on the fees that personal injury attorneys can claim.

That 1975 law, entitled the Medical Injury

Compensation Reform Act (MICRA) and signed by Jerry Brown during his first year as governor, limits non-economic damages for malpractice to \$250,000. Its passage was not only a big win for medical providers and their insurers but the opening salvo of the war.

The attorneys not only have tried — very unsuccessfully so far — to repeal or modify MICRA but have sought to expand opportunities to sue and collect damages and fees, such as allowing them to intervene in cases that ordinarily would be handled by local or state legal authorities.

Business groups and insurers, meanwhile, have not only attempted to blunt the attorneys' expansive ambition but to carry the MICRA model of damage limits into other potential injury cases.

In 1987, 12 years after MICRA was enacted, the speaker of the state Assembly, Willie Brown, mediated extensive negotiations between the warring factions on a truce, culminating in the infamous "napkin deal" worked out in Frank Fat's restaurant near the Capitol with Brown hopping from table to table.

Quickly ratified by the Legislature, it gave lobbyists for every interest involved something to take back to their clients, including a slight modification of MICRA and new protections for the tobacco industry from lawsuits by smokers for cancer and other illnesses.

The napkin deal truce lasted for a few years, but tort wars resumed in the 1990s and have been waged ever since on specific

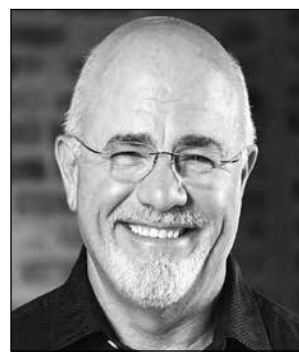
issues, including several unsuccessful efforts to change MICRA. One subset of the conflict, involving roughly the same interests, has been perennial jousting over workers' compensation, the employer-financed, multi-billion-dollar system that covers job-related injuries and illnesses.

A ballot measure that would indirectly but effectively repeal MICRA is already qualified for the 2022 ballot even though the anti-MICRA coalition has failed repeatedly in the past to undo what the Legislature and Jerry Brown wrought 46 years ago.

Meanwhile, the Civil Justice Association of California, an umbrella organization of business and insurance interests, has unveiled its own initiative measure that would limit lawyers' contingency fees in personal injury cases to 20% of monetary judgments, sharply lower than the traditional one-third or more. The goal, obviously, is to make attorneys less willing to take on cases.

The stage is set, therefore, for the competing factions to spend tens of millions of dollars to persuade voters, which would be a tiny fraction of the many billions of dollars at stake in the outcome. And regardless of what happens next year, the immense stakes mean tort wars will continue to rage indefinitely.

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



Dave Ramsey Says

Help your New Year's Resolutions Stick

Dear Dave,

I thought I was going to get control of my money and make a lot of other positive changes in my life this year, but very few of the things I wanted to accomplish happened. I started strong, and began with serious intentions, but somewhere along the way I lost focus. Can you give me some advice for making and sticking to my resolutions in 2022?

— Isaac

Dear Isaac,

Lots of people make big promises with the best intentions on December 31st. It seems everyone comes up with a laundry list of New Year's resolutions, but research shows very few people actually achieve their goals. If you're ready — and I mean really ready — to reset your life and succeed with your New Year's resolutions, here are a few simple, proven steps that'll help.

First, write down your top goal. Pick the resolution

that means the most to you and write it down. You're more likely to succeed if you can focus on a single goal, and you have a greater chance of achieving it if you write it down — on paper, on purpose.

And make sure the resolution you choose is very important to you. Writing down a goal just because it's what someone else is doing, or because it sounds like a good idea, isn't good enough. If your goal isn't yours, it won't happen.

Second, set benchmarks. Let's say you want to pay off your credit cards before July. You need to make that goal measurable throughout the year by setting benchmarks. If you owe \$5,000 on your credit cards and want to pay them off in six months, you need to pay about \$833 towards them every month. Write your benchmark down beneath your goal, and make a plan for how you're going to get it done.

Three, find an accountability partner. A great accountability partner isn't afraid to ask how your goals are coming along, and they'll call you on it when you're slacking. If you set a financial goal, a good accountability partner isn't going to be the friend who always asks you to go shopping. Studies have shown that having

a strong accountability partner increases the likelihood of achieving a goal dramatically.

And finally, make sure you reward yourself along the way. It's tough to stay motivated when hitting your goal takes a while. Lots of folks start out at full speed, only to see the momentum disappear over time. You might treat yourself to a night at the movies when you've paid off the first \$1,000 on your credit cards, or maybe a nice, new shirt when you've paid off half the card.

Sometimes life doesn't work out the way we think it will, Isaac. Our priorities can change, and our goals may change, too. If that's why you didn't make your resolutions happen this year, that's fine. Just don't make the mistake of thinking it's too late to change and improve your life!

— 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. 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



by Dave T. Phipps

The Spats



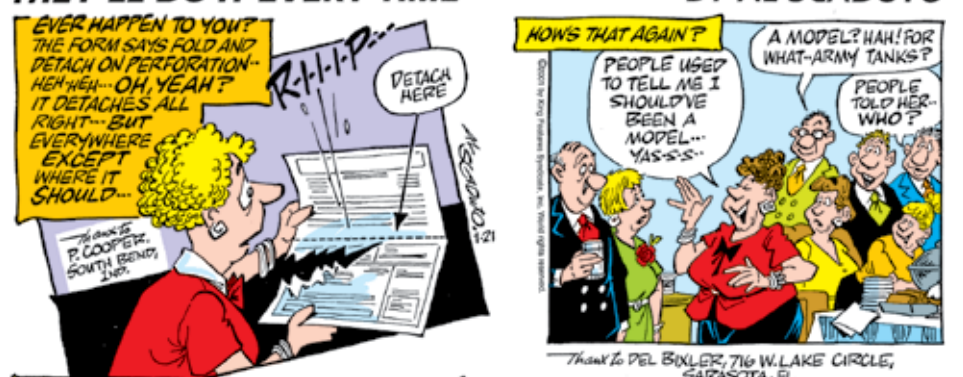
by Jeff Pickering

Out on a Limb



by Gary Kopervas

THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

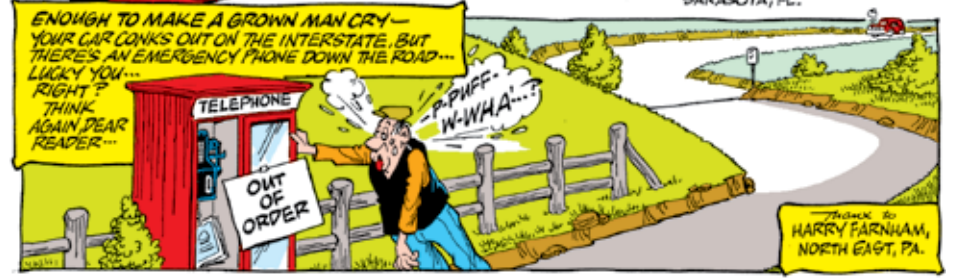


BY AL SCADUTO

R.F.D.



by Mike Marland



GRIN AND BEAR IT



LAFF-A-DAY

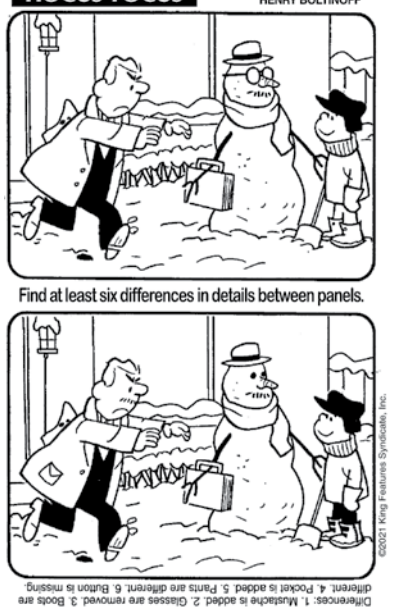


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New Home Sales in Region Continue to Increase

North State Building Industry Association Press Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - New home sales in the Sacramento region are expected to continue rising for the next couple of years peaking at around 8,000 in 2023 before dropping off slightly in 2024. But while those sales totals are higher than most years since 2007, annual sales will remain far below they were before the Great Recession and well below the amount of new housing needed to meet current and expected demand, a panel of economists and builders said at the North State Building Industry Association's annual Regional Housing Forecast presentation.

Dr. Sanjay Varshney with Goldenstone Wealth Management, Dr. Dean Wehrli with John Burns Real Estate Consulting and Denton Kelley with LDK Ventures, told nearly 300 participants in-person and virtual that despite inflationary pressures, mortgage rates are expected to remain at historic lows, which will help counterbalance rising housing prices and keep the market for new homes strong.

Wehrli said his firm projects sales of 7,200 in 2022 (14.3% above this year), 7,800 in 2023 (8.3% higher than 2022), and 7,400 in 2024 (a 5.1% decline from the prior year.)

We are projecting over the next four years for the Sacramento MSA to



Panelists Expect New Home Sales in Sacramento Region Will Continue Increasing Through 2023, the North State BIA Reports MPG File photo

do pretty well. My biggest worry is, do we have the land to do it? We do in some places, not so much in others. Do we have the labor to do it? Do we have the supplies to do it? You hope the supplies will shake out some time next year, but labor is going to be constrained for the foreseeable future," he said.

He noted that builders have ramped up production, with permits up 41% in the region year over year, the fourth highest rate in the country behind San Francisco, Jacksonville, Fla., and

San Antonio, but that still isn't enough to meet demand.

We have ratcheted up supply, but I'd argue in the long-term perspective that new-home sales in the 7,000s is at or below the organic demand," he said.

Wehrli said a major demand driver has been the revolution in working from home caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Varshney noted that Sacramento gained about 20,000 households from the Bay Area once tech workers didn't have to live close to their offices.

Many people have moved to Sacramento, along with places like Austin, Tex., Boise, Ida., Reno and Phoenix, where housing was more affordable.

He added that the region remains well-positioned even if companies adopt a hybrid schedule, where workers are in the office two or three days a week and work from home the rest of the time.

"People who moved to Phoenix or Reno or Boise would have to be closer to the Bay if that happens, and our competitors are Tracy,

Lathrop and Manteca – and Sacramento has a lot more (amenities) than they do," he said.

If Bay Area companies do implement hybrid schedules, he said Elk Grove would benefit due to being closer to Silicon Valley than South Placer County or Folsom, but he said those submarkets have more land available and will likely be major growth centers for the next 10- to 20 years.

Kelley, who is developing The Railyards and focuses more on multi-family than single-family

housing, said about 3,000 units of market-rate apartments are in the pipeline, which he said was more than usual but because relatively few apartments have been built in the urban core during this cycle leads him to believe we're not overbuilding.

Lots of people still want to live in an urban environment, so my general feeling is if the city improves the environment downtown it should all work out as long as we continue to invest in amenities people want, he said. ★

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