



Style Over Security for Capitol Annex Project?

PAGE 6

Highlights of Dixon Fire Dept.'s 150th Anniversary

PAGE 3



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SEE INSIDE

THE BEST THING I'VE DONE TO RESTORE MY FAITH IN HUMANITY



PAGE 10

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PAGE 3

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On Track for the Treat Trail



Downtown Dixon Business Association President Jill Orr, Susan Motley, Nicolas Torres (back) and Armando Gonzalez load up pumpkins, gourds, and cornstalks to decorate downtown, the beginning of what Orr hopes is the beginning back into "normal DDBA greatness." Photo by Debra Dingman

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - The Downtown Dixon Business Association has had its share of setbacks since March 2020 with almost all its small businesses getting shuttered from the pandemic but restarted in August 2021 with plans to roll out its Wine Stroll and Beerfest. Just one week later, plans were cancelled due to the rising cases of the Delta Variant.

Hoping this restart doesn't meet a similar fate, an email was sent out to past DDBA members asking for half the membership fees recently so the group could move ahead with fall festivities and the annual Christmas Tree Lighting Festival slated for Thursday, Dec. 2.

"We are back on track now and

all working hard to help make Downtown Dixon vibrant and a place to come," said Uptown Collective business owner Rebecca Robinson who reminded members of the year's efforts to feel the love in February, St. Patrick's lucky sidewalk sales, and how businesses supported the 2021 Dixon High School grads with decorations stretching from the corner of downtown all the way to Aggie Animal Clinic and on to Schmidt's Cabinet Company. "It was festive this year, including our 'Happy 4th of July' signs at the 4-way stop downtown," she added.

"In order to continue DDBA's efforts and good will, we need to ask that everyone contribute half their membership dues for 2021 activities," she said in an email, adding

that the Halloween Treat Trail and the annual Christmas Tree Lighting are around the corner. "We did not collect any dues for 2019 or 2020, so we need – and very much appreciate – everyone's efforts and membership dues to help us again be successful and vibrant in 2021." Unfortunately, the email list had several changes or closures in business and not all current supporters received it.

But, the group's endeavor has spread word-by-mouth and a meeting was held last week with about a dozen participants including City Councilman Kevin Johnson and City Economic Development/Grants Manager Larry Burkhardt.

Orr, who owns Dawson's Bar and Restaurant and who is acting

Continued on page 2

Life Legal to Defend Pro-Life Speech Against Power Grab

Commentary by Life Legal Defense Foundation

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Life Legal filed a lawsuit in federal court today challenging a new California law that will suppress pro-life speech outside abortion mills. Using the threat of COVID as an excuse, the Legislature enacted a breathtaking restriction on speech that will ban core First Amendment activity in numerous locations across California.

The law, SB 742, was signed by Governor Newsom on Friday. While SB 742 started out as a bill to restrict protests concerning COVID vaccines, it was amended to cover every location where any type of vaccine is provided. Planned Parenthood, Family Planning Associates, and other abortionists dispense STD vaccines, including Gardasil, which makes them "vaccination sites" for the purpose of the law.

The law makes it a crime to approach within 30 feet of another person who is within 100 feet of a "vaccination site" for various purposes, including obstructing, which is already illegal, and "harassing" – a term the legislature has redefined to include everyday free speech activity.

SB 742 defines "harassing" as "knowingly approaching, without consent, within 30 feet of another person or occupied vehicle for the purpose of passing a leaflet or handbill to, displaying a sign to, or engaging in oral protest, education, or counseling with, that other person in a public way or on a sidewalk area."

This contorted – and unconstitutional – definition of criminal harassment is only found in this statute. Other California laws define harassment as "seriously alarming, seriously annoying, seriously tormenting, or seriously terrorizing." This is what most people think of when they think of harassment – NOT handing a leaflet to someone, providing education and counseling, or holding up a sign.

Life Legal is filing the lawsuit on behalf of pro-life sidewalk counselors who regularly speak with women entering "vaccination site" abortion clinics, and who provide literature and display signs offering help with abortion alternatives – all activities that may be illegal under the new law.

"Creating no-approach zones around every

Continued on page 2

Mike Liu to Lead Kiwanis

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Mike Liu, who is fairly new to Dixon but certainly not to Kiwanis International, is taking the lead for the Kiwanis Club of Dixon. The retired engineer is a 14-year member of Kiwanis and recently served as Division 34 Lt. Governor, past President of the De Anza Kiwanis Club and as Treasurer of the Dixon Club. A new slate of officers and Board members were installed last week at the Dixon Kiwanis Installation Dinner held at Bud's Pub & Grill.

"We have a bright future ahead of us. I am looking forward to this upcoming year as we continue to resume our club's traditional activities including Festival of Trees and Breakfast with the Bunny," he told the room full of guests. "In addition, we will look for new fundraising ideas and community service projects, and we will work to gain new club members along the way."

The club reviewed the

prior year extolling their endeavors despite lingering Covid restrictions. The first thing after last year's October installation was Kathy Wallace getting on the front page of the Vacaville Reporter because she was volunteering at the supplies and clothing giveaway for families affected by the fires. Then, club members embarked on a cleanup project at a church that had been shuttered since the shutdown.

In November, and after being forced to abandon hopes of the Festival of Trees, they started the Holiday Ham Drawing and raised more than a thousand dollars with special thanks to Patti Sousa-Liu.

December was busy. Thanks to Kiwanis Club Member Karstin Feinhandler, the community experienced a lift in spirits thanks to her Christmas Parade – an event she almost

single-handedly organized. The Dixon Kiwanis participated by setting up a large Christmas display and distributed hot chocolate packets and granola bars for families driving through it. One member helped decorate downtown for Christmas and New Year's. The club also held a first-ever Christmas Party by Zoom which included a Mafia Gift Exchange. Finally, they donated \$500

Continued on page 3



Division 7 Lt. Gov. Kirsten Ireton (left) installed the 2021-2022 Kiwanis Officers and Board last week. They are (L-R) President Mike Liu, Board Members Patti Sousa-Liu and Kathy Wallace, Secretary Brandi Proffitt, Treasurer Rich Ferguson, and Immediate Past President Debra Dingman. Photo by Ed Ireton

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Decorating Pride



This courtship between two Halloween pals is happening atop hay bales at the corner of Adams and North First Street at the Motley Realty Building. Photo by Debra Dingman

By Debra Dingman

Blink! And downtown welcomes fall! As I was driving down A Street to get home to a shower, my face felt sweaty and I was wearing dirty sweatpants but I was feeling really good. I decided that my morning experience was another reason I think Dixon is a very special community. Where else can you actually decorate a large area – in this case it was downtown Dixon – with just a bunch of women friends?

First there was the annual donation by Mark Cooley of Cool Patch Pumpkins and World's Largest Corn Maze of a large trailer and a truck full delivered and unloaded by Nicholas Torres and Armando Gonzalez at Susan Motley's Realty office.

Then there was Jill Orr's husband, Greg, and his son, Brandon, hitching up their trailer and loading them up to get them downtown in the morning. Some of those pumpkins seemed the size of Volkswagens!

Jill asked some women friends to help decorate downtown with pumpkins, gourds, and cornstalks. She brought the black Zip Ties and instructed us how to tie the corn stalks to the light poles so they wouldn't slip or blow loose – only an

experienced downtown decorator would know about these things.

So, the group showed up and tied corn stalks to lamp posts and some grabbed corners of a tarp to haul the extra-large ones into place with the teamwork only women used to having many cooks in the kitchen would know how to do. Within an hour, downtown was looking like fall just landed on it.

There is a wonderful sense of satisfaction when you can work together for a common goal. The Renaissance gals included Jill, Kathy King, Anna Henry, Kristin Janisch, Fran Boon, Liz Fuller and maybe a couple others I might have missed. I just know it was an amazing transformation and one that makes you feel good that you live in a town you can still impact.

On Saturday, on my way to the pinball event at the May Fair, a mother and her young children were using the corner of Frosty's pumpkin display for a photo op. Nice!

If you don't drive downtown very often, I do hope you'll get by to see what a festive look we have, especially at the front of the Motley Realty building where – thanks to a very-creative Suzie Motley, two

full-size skeletons dressed in western garb appear to be enjoying a beer while perched atop hay bales.

There's something wonderful about decorating and here in Dixon we do it well – from painting rocks to spiffing up cars, there's something almost spiritual when you can put your own unique spin on something and make others happy looking at it.

On that note, it is a good time to sign up for decorating a Christmas tree for the 12th annual Kiwanis Festival of Trees slated for Saturday, Dec. 4. Some teams have done it year after year and look forward to the fun, but we also have newbies from company teams, church groups, friend teams, or someone who just has that very special gift of seeing colors and designs in a way others cannot.

Please give me a call if you are interested in supporting this tree auction and enjoying this tradition. Proceeds go back into the community to help fill or support various children and youth services. You can get more information by emailing dixonkiwanis@hotmail.com or by calling the event Chair at (707) 676-5413. ★

Life Legal to Defend Pro-Life Speech Against Power Grab

Continued from page 1

abortion facility, drug store, stand-alone health clinic, and supermarket in the state is unconstitutionally overinclusive and overbroad," said Life Legal Chief Officer Katie Short. "In an age of un-precedented incursions on freedom, this law is an un-heard-of restriction on core First Amendment activities, and we are confident that the federal court will strike down SB 742."

About Life Legal De-fense Foundation: Life Legal was established in 1989, and is a nonprofit organization composed of attorneys and other concerned citizens committed to giving helpless and innocent human beings of any age, and their advocates, a trained and committed voice in the courtrooms of our nation. For more information about the Life Legal Defense Foundation, visit www.lldf.org. ★

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Dixon News Briefs

MPG Staff

City Council

At the last City Council Meeting, Deborah Barr, a 6-year senior engineer for Dixon was promoted to City Engineer/Director of Utilities with unanimous approval by the Council. City Manager Jim Lindley reported there were 11 applicants that were interviewed by two departments and Barr was "the best candidate." Congratulations to Barr!

The next City Council Meeting will be on Tuesday, Oct. 19, and will be inside the Council Chambers at 655 West A Street beginning at 7 pm. If you are one to schedule your calendar way in advance, you can mark that Dec. 21 Dixon Council Meeting will not be happening in exchange for a Merry Christmas.

Hybrid meetings have not been worked out completely yet, but one can still watch the meeting live online through the City of Dixon's website which uses the Granicus system.

Agendas for city meetings are usually posted on the city website, cityofdixon.com, on Thursdays before the meetings. You can also view minutes of previous meetings on that site.

Seeking Student Reps

The City of Dixon is currently accepting applications for one (1) vacancy for a Student Representative and one (1) vacancy for an Alternate Student Representative on the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Commission is an advisory body to the City Council on matters pertaining to recreation programs and parks facilities. The student representative is expected to attend all Parks & Recreation Commission meetings. The alternate representative will fill in for the student representative, when the representative is unable to attend Commission meetings. It is expected that the alternate representative will apply to become the student representative the following school year. The term to be served is July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022.

The Commission meets in the Dixon City Council Chambers at 7 pm on the fourth Tuesday of every month. City residency is required. Interested students may obtain an application by contacting Stephanie Marquez at Dixon High School. The deadline for filing applications is 5 pm, Friday, October



Deborah Barr was promoted to City Engineer/Director of Utilities with a 5-0 approval from City Council. Photo by Debra Dingman

15, 2021. If no applications are submitted by the deadline, the City will accept applications until the vacancy is filled. See the City of Dixon's website at www.cityofdixon.us to view past Commission meetings and agenda packages.

New Business Construction

You've probably seen the construction going on next to the Napa Auto Parts business on North First Street. The concrete pad was laid last week and soon it will be the home of Import Master. Since 1989, Import Master has provided motorists in the Vacaville and Solano area with a full automotive repair facility providing services.

The company is a family run business, located in Vacaville, and started by Ralph Perkins whose goal has been to provide honest and straightforward service to all his customers.

Since 1992 Wally Gibson has been working side-by-side with Ralph and now joined by sons Joey and Eric, Import Master is expanding into Dixon, expecting to be open before winter or in the early part of next year. For more information, call (707) 448-7676.

For months, the major overhaul of the Far West Equipment Dealers Association Building that was on the corner of North Lincoln and North First Street that backs up to Dutch Bros. has been seemingly slow but steady. It is becoming Sunrise Dental. Calls have not yet been returned. ★

On Track for the Treat Trail

Continued from page 1

President, gave a financial report while Donny Everhart from Dixon Financial Insurance Services reported on tax requirements being completed on time and assuring that the organization is in good standing.

The organization plans on taking nominations for officers at their next meeting and have plans to elect new officers soon after a review of the bylaws requirements. Volunteers are needed to update emails as some folks went out of business and new businesses have moved in the area.

The downtown core includes businesses in the surrounding area of First and A Streets, but the website showing the defined area and information on membership is currently inaccessible.

Historically, there have been DDBA meetings monthly, free DDBA maps in downtown businesses, and the website was updated regularly.

"The goal is to return to the greatness we were," said Orr. "We want fresh blood and ideas." She gave a brief update on the Pardi Plaza that Burkhardt confirmed would probably not be open till early 2022 but

all wanted to remain optimistic for an earlier date.

Robinson reported that the DDBA annual Halloween Treat Trail will be happening from 2 to 4 pm when merchants will hand out treats on Friday, October 29.

"Then everyone can go through the tunnel leading over to the Chamber of Commerce's 'Trunk & Treat' event that is happening from 4 to 7 pm in the haunted train tunnel and their parking lot," she said.

For anyone interested in DDBA, another meeting is scheduled soon. Call (707) 678-8400. ★

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Public-Service Workers Rejoice as Feds Forgive Student Debt

By Suzanne Potter, California News Service

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Hundreds of thousands of teachers, nurses, social workers, military officers and others in public service can breathe a sigh of relief as the Biden administration announced major reforms to the public-service loan forgiveness program.

Miguel Cardona, U.S. Secretary of Education, said the program will be streamlined so about 550,000 more people will qualify.

“In 2007, Congress made a pledge to forgive loans if you serve the community for ten years, and we’re going to make that right,” Cardona remarked.

The program is supposed to pay off remaining loans for people who have made payments for ten years while working in a

qualifying profession, but you had to have a certain type of loan. Now, people can get a waiver and be able to count payments on other types of student loans toward the forgiveness program.

Merrie Wolf, a longtime math teacher from Tulsa, was told after a decade of payments that she would have to convert to a different type of loan and start the clock all over again.

“The student-loan process has been a nightmare, to say the least,” Wolf asserted. “I was led to believe a whole ten years that I was headed toward Public Service Loan Forgiveness.”

According to the Institute for College Access and Success, in 2018-19, the most recent year from which data is available, 48% of California college

graduates had student loan debt, with an average debt load of more than \$21,000.

A GAO report found 99% of the people who apply for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program are denied.

Jesse Yedinak Gray, research director and assistant professor at Brown University School of Public Health, said the changes are a light at the end of the tunnel after years of crushing debt.

“It’s a lot of money that you don’t get to use to save for retirement, or save for, say, my son’s education either,” Gray pointed out. “It’s ending up costing so much more than I ever thought it would.”

The changes mean more military officers will qualify, and the feds are going to review all applications that were previously denied. ★

Mike Liu to Lead Kiwanis

Continued from page 1

to Dixon Family Services, gave to Kiwanis CNH District Children’s Fund, and to the Kiwanis Family House Thanksgiving Dinner.

In January, leaders attended Regional Training and members heard Estate Attorney Barbara Sonin talk about legal papers needed in case of Covid hospitalization via Zoom.

In February, Kiwanis took over the Mother of the Year Essay Contest in conjunction with the Dixon Independent Voice Newspaper and started publicizing while Board members Patti & Mike Liu delivered bags of Valentine’s Candies to the Fire Dept., the Police Dept., and the Solano Life House.

March saw members David Dingman and Jim Ward collecting plywood, volunteers painting back drops, and everyone including Chris Wallace and Rich Ferguson helping stuff Easter eggs for their first-ever ‘Hippity Hop Photo Op.’ They also heard Trina Shaw, Director of Solano Kitten Rescue, and donated \$400.

In April, the Easter Bunny photo op was in the parking lot of Almond Tree Mortgage and club members met numerous happy families.

In May, Diane Schroeder



Mike Liu. Courtesy photo

was honored as Mother of the Year and at the club meeting, heard from Court Appointed Special Advocates Director Candy Pierce, then donated \$500.

Two Dixon High School students received \$500 scholarships in June and the monthly meeting was a fun Ice Cream Meet-up.

In July, Mike & Patti met with Serenity Saddles that provides a calming horse experience for special needs children and the club awarded a \$500 grant. Numerous members also spent an afternoon at Walmart fundraising for the Miracle Children’s Network Hospitals, giving \$415 to the cause.

In August, incoming officers went through Club Leadership Training and members started the

Adopt-a-Poll Training also to prepare for running the polling place at the Veterans Memorial Hall for the Recall Vote.

They put that to the test and succeeded in September with e-Ballot Clerk extraordinaire Tye McDaniel. This task doubled as a service project and a fundraiser, raising about \$1,500 for our club.

“I look forward to continuing to support the Dixon High School Key club as they are our future leaders,” Liu said. “Our club will continue to support our community and most of all we’ll have fun doing it! Kiwanis Club serves our community.” The club welcomes new members. Call Membership Chair Patti Sousa-Liu for more information (707) 635-3303. ★

Cost-of-Living Crisis Continues to Drive Up California’s Poverty Rate

California Business Roundtable News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - According to data published by the U.S. Census Bureau, California continues to have the worst poverty rate among all states when adjusted to account for government programs designed to help low-income families and necessary expenses for critical goods and services.

“More people live in poverty in California than in any other state because of our high and rising costs of living. More than 16 percent of Americans living in poverty live in California, despite being home to just 12 percent of the population,” said Rob Lapsley, president of the California Business Roundtable. “Driven by our housing and overall cost-of-living crisis, more Californians struggling to make ends meet are falling into poverty.”

California’s cost-adjusted poverty rate (2018-2020 average) was 15.4 percent, while 16.5 percent of all Americans living in poverty live in California. Rates among the other states ranged from 5.9 percent in Minnesota to 14.5 percent in Mississippi (16.5 percent in DC), with the US average at 11.2 percent and the average among all



More people live in poverty in California than in any other state because of our high and rising costs of living. Photo by Anna Shvets, Pexels.

states other than California at 10.6 percent. For the first time, California residents paid more for electricity in March 2021 than the average for all other states in the nation. They also continue to pay the highest gas taxes and prices in the country and for the ongoing housing crisis through increased housing costs. As tracked by the Center for Jobs and the Economy’s Affordability Index, nearly all necessity costs for the average California family continue to increase.

“Unfortunately, it is likely that our poverty crisis will continue to get worse,” Mr. Lapsley continued. “We are seeing a

significant increase in inflation, which will drive costs up even higher. At the same time, a series of new and expensive energy mandates are being implemented, which will drive up the cost on home electricity, gasoline, goods and services, and housing. And let’s not forget the more than \$200 billion in new and higher taxes introduced by the California Legislature in 2021 alone. Without prioritizing focus on affordability and honest discussion of the price Californians are paying for new and expensive regulations, fees and mandates, we will never address the growing poverty crisis in our state.” ★

Highlights of Dixon Fire Dept.’s 150th Anniversary



Dixon’s 150th Anniversary of the Fire Department on Saturday was a big draw for children who enjoyed getting inside helicopters, on top of fire trucks, do pretend rescues, and put out fires on plywood houses. Visitors got to see a couple antique fire trucks, demonstrate emergency procedures on mannequins, and explore other emergency vehicles including fire trucks, ambulances, and even helicopters. Photos by Nicolas Brown

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October DWIC Meeting to Discuss Elder Abuse



Dixon Women's Improvement Club officers (L-R) Pat Inderbitzen, Chairperson/Telephone Committee, Corresponding Secretary Phyllis Quiring, and President Jewel Fink, plan to hear Elaine Perry, who retired from the Dixon Police Department, talk about Elder Abuse at their October meeting. Photo by Loran Hoffmann

By Loran Hoffmann

DIXON, CA (MPG) - How do I respond to someone saying they are calling from my bank and requesting my personal information to verify my account number? How can I determine if my grandson really does need bail money to get out of jail in Mexico? Could I be so lucky to have a relative whom I have never heard of leave me a gift of \$5 million dollars that I can collect by sending a \$100 Walmart Card to someone in Cincinnati, Ohio? Jewel Fink, President of Dixon Women's Improvement Club, announced that Elaine Perry, from the Solano County District Attorney's office, will be the guest speaker at the October meeting of the Dixon Women's Improvement Club.

Elaine Perry is no stranger to Dixon nor to crime! She started her career as a fire/police dispatcher in Dixon, later attending the Police Academy, followed by working in a variety of law enforcement capacities for the Dixon Police Department until her retirement in 2008. Elaine opened a new door in 2016 with the District Attorney's office as an investigator for Elder Abuse cases. She will be presenting crucial information about Elder Abuse including things to watch for and informing the members on whom to contact in the event they or someone they know may be experiencing verbal, physical, or

economic abuse by a relative, caregiver, or unknown party.

At the September meeting, the members approved naming the scholarship awarded to local high school students pursuing a college degree in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and/or Math (STEM) to the Shirley Humphrey Memorial Scholarship due to her personal devotion to higher education as well as dedication and commitment to establishing a Dixon Women's Improvement Club STEM scholarship. Anyone choosing to make a donation to the Shirley Humphrey Memorial Scholarship is asked to write the name of the scholarship on their check and submit it to the Dixon Women's Improvement Club, P.O. Box 25, Dixon, California, 95620. Any questions can be directed to the DWIC Scholarship Chairperson, Diane Schroeder, at (707) 685-0802.

The club is meeting on Wednesday, October 20, at 1 pm, at the Dixon Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 209 North Jefferson, across from the Chamber of Commerce. Proper COVID-19 guidelines will be followed, including mandatory mask wearing unless you are speaking to the entire group. Guests are always welcome. Please contact DWIC Membership Chair, Mary Kay Callaway, at (916) 541-0417, for more information and let her know you will be attending. ★

Caltrans Finalizes Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan

Caltrans News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)

- Caltrans this week released the final version of its 2021 Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan (ITSP), a highway and rail improvement plan to prioritize and develop transportation projects that connect the state's different regions and move people and goods more safely, efficiently and sustainably.

"Caltrans envisions a transportation system that fits the unique needs of all areas and people of our state," said Caltrans Director Toks Omishakin. "Forward-thinking plans like this provide a roadmap to meeting our


sustainability and equity goals while safely and efficiently getting both people and goods where they need to go."

Updated every five years, the 2021 ITSP focuses on enhancements to key highway and rail corridors connecting different regions throughout the state to expand travel options, improve safety and accessibility, ensure the efficient movement of goods, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and fortify transportation infrastructure to be more resilient to the impacts of climate change. These policies and goals align with other recent statewide plans - including the Climate Action

Plan for Transportation Infrastructure, California Transportation Plan 2050, California Freight Mobility Plan 2020 and the 2018 California State Rail Plan - to form a comprehensive strategy for a safe, equitable, sustainable, accessible and resilient transportation system.

Caltrans will implement the 2021 ITSP to guide investments and prioritize interregional projects while coordinating with local agency partners and public stakeholders.


The adopted 2021 ITSP, along with responses to public comments on the draft plan released in August, can be found at the Caltrans ITSP home page. ★



Publisher,
Paul V. Scholl

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Will New Measures Fix California's Colleges?



By Dan Walters
CALMatters

As California's population swelled in the post-World War II era, thanks to a flood of newcomers from other states and the postwar baby boom, it had a major impact on the state's colleges.

New Californians, many of them veterans seeking education under the GI bill, and, eventually, the baby boomers sought college degrees as tickets to prosperous futures. Meanwhile, the state's economy needed educated workers as it evolved from agriculture and other resource-based sectors into manufacturing, logistics and technology.

There was, however, little or no logic to how the University of California, state colleges (later universities) and an expanding array of locally governed community colleges met the demand. Each segment, and often each college, decided which students would be admitted and what courses would be offered.

As the collegiate chaos worsened, Gov. Pat Brown, elected in 1958, proposed that the three be folded into a single higher education system, as other states were doing. However, his proposal didn't sit well with those running the schools and the upshot was a compromise called the "Master Plan for

Higher Education."

Adopted in 1960, the plan sought to define each segment's role, minimize competition for students and money, and make movement of students from one level to another seamless.

The University of California would take in the brightest 12.5% of high school graduates, conduct research and award doctorate degrees in a variety of fields. State colleges would admit the top 33% of high school grads, train professionals such as teachers and engineers and award master's degrees. Community colleges would handle anyone else "capable of benefiting from instruction," award two-year associate degrees and prepare students for transfers into four-year schools.

That was the theory, anyway, and it kind of worked for a decade or two, but began to fall apart for many reasons - demographic, economic, financial and political - and has largely existed on paper during the last few decades.

Periodically, politicians and educators have toyed with the idea of overhauling the master plan, but in higher education, as with other public programs, inertia reigns. Those who wield authority, however flawed, are generally unwilling to risk it via systemic change.

Occasionally, the Legislature has tinkered with aspects of the plan but the three sectors have steadily become more competitive and the theoretically seamless pathway for students to climb through the systems has often been choked. The state universities

sought, with some success, to penetrate UC's monopoly on doctorate degrees and the community colleges, likewise, gained the experimental ability to offer four-year degrees in a few fields.

Last week, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a sheaf of higher education bills, some of which purport to shore up master plan weaknesses.

"We're turning commitments into reality by ensuring that our students have more access to high-quality educational opportunities, creating a change of course for generations to come and bolstering California's innovation economy," Newsom said. "Californians have thrived at our world class universities for decades, but not everyone has had similar access. Today that's changing."

The most important measures, Assembly Bill 928 and AB 1111, are aimed at making it easier for students to begin higher education in low-cost community colleges and transfer into UC and the state university systems by eliminating petty curricular conflicts.

Another important one, AB 927, extends the experimental ability of community colleges to award baccalaureate degrees in technical fields that the four-year colleges have shunned.

We don't know whether the package will improve California's lagging ability to provide the highly trained workforce that its economy needs. But it's a commendable, long-overdue effort.

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

Drought-stricken Farmers, Ranchers Have Time to Replace Livestock

IRS Media Relations News Release

WASHINGTON, D.C. (MPG)

- Farmers and ranchers who were forced to sell livestock due to drought may have an additional year to replace the livestock and defer tax on any gains from the forced sales, according to the Internal Revenue Service.

To qualify for relief, farmers or ranchers must have sold livestock on account of drought conditions in an applicable region. This is a county or other jurisdiction designated as eligible for federal assistance plus counties contiguous to it. Notice 2021-55, posted today on IRS.gov, lists applicable regions in 36 states and one U.S. territory.

The relief generally applies to capital gains realized by eligible farmers and ranchers on sales of livestock held for draft, dairy or breeding purposes. Sales of other livestock, such as those raised for slaughter or held for sporting purposes, or poultry, are not eligible.

The sales must be solely due to drought, causing an area to be designated as eligible for federal assistance. Livestock generally must be replaced within a four-year period, instead of the usual two-year period. The IRS is authorized to further extend this replacement period if the drought continues.

The one-year extension, announced in the notice, gives eligible farmers and ranchers

until the end of their first tax year after the first drought-free year to replace the sold livestock. Details, including an example of how this provision works, can be found in Notice 2006-82, available on IRS.gov.

The IRS provides this extension to eligible farmers and ranchers who sold livestock on account of drought conditions in an applicable region that qualified for the four-year replacement period, if the applicable region is listed as suffering exceptional, extreme or severe drought conditions during any week between Sept. 1, 2020, and Aug. 31, 2021. This determination is made by the National Drought Mitigation Center.

As a result, eligible farmers and ranchers whose drought-sale replacement period was scheduled to expire on Dec. 31, 2021, in most cases now have until the end of their next tax year to replace the sold livestock. Because the normal drought-sale replacement period is four years, this extension impacts drought sales that occurred during 2017. The replacement periods for some drought sales before 2017 are also affected due to previous drought-related extensions affecting some of these localities.

More information on reporting drought sales and other farm-related tax issues can be found in Publication 225, Farmer's Tax Guide, available on IRS.gov. ★

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
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179 Elmira Road, Suite D, Vacaville, CA 95687
Vinh Hoang, 39 Drawbridge Court, Sacramento, CA 95833
Date Filed in Solano County: September 30, 2021
The Registrant commenced to transact business under the above business name on: February 1, 2015
This Business is Conducted by: An 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 SEPTEMBER 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: October 15, 22, 29, and November 5, 2021 (The DIXON INDEPENDENT VOICE)



FOR THE LOVE OF
BOOKS
By Amy Shane

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

Haunting October Reads

The Haunted Mustache
by Joe McGee,
illustrated Ted Skaffa

When Parker, Lewis, and Samantha von Oppelstein head out to discover the truth about a century-old legend in their town, Wolver Hollow, they uncover more than they ever expected. Can a town really be haunted by a mustache? You will have to read to find out.

Delightfully fun and mildly spooky, The Haunted Mustache is the perfect reading tempo for the younger audience, balancing a little humor with a few haunting vibes. Engaging and entertaining, this book will have readers flying through it, wanting to know how these kids will rid their town of a haunted mustache.

Mary, Will I Die?
by Shawn Sarles

When four friends play Bloody Mary, they believe it is a harmless game. After all, Bloody Mary is supposed to show you your soulmate. While they all think they saw someone in the mirror, they simply laugh it off. Years go by, and they all forget about their childhood games until the day the mirror breaks, and the new girl Mary arrives at school, and terrifying events begin to unfold.

Shawn Searles is back, delivering a new terrifying young adult story, keeping his readers on the edge of their seats. This story takes the legend of Bloody Mary and elevates it into a terrifying adventure complete with a family mirror, old secrets, and unearthing old friendships. While this story takes its time to build in anticipation, it is still a creepy read



that is perfect for the season and one to make you believe in urban legends.

Every Line of You
by Naomi Gibson

Lydia believed that building her perfect AI boyfriend, Henry, would be the answer to her grief. But will Henry take a life of his own, delivering everything that Lydia ever desired, and at what cost?

A twisted take on coding and creating the person of your dreams. With characters you want to hate and ones you want to question, one thing stands true: Every Line Of You will keep you guessing throughout the book, while also wondering who to root for.

The Corpse Queen
by Heather Herrman

When Molly is sent to live with her aunt, she fears

it is as a laborer, but she is delighted to discover that her aunt is exceedingly wealthy-but wealthy at a cost. Her aunt is actually a grave robber, selling corpses for a hefty fee to medical students. When Molly learns of this, she is horrified but also genuinely intrigued by the surgical students practicing at the mansion. Now, all Molly desires is to be one of Dr. Lasalles' students, but becoming a student comes at a substantial cost.

Combining murderous plots, serial killers, anatomy, and strong historical elements, The Corpse Queen dangles on the edge of the macabre. Taking readers into the 1850's while also adding the element of a serial killer on the loose, this story is the perfect historical medical thriller. ★



We Should Arm Taiwan to the Teeth

We warned China to stop its incursions into Taiwan's air defense identification zone – and the Chinese responded by flying even more aircraft into the zone.

The 56 Chinese flights last Monday brought the total for October to 149, already the year's highest monthly total.

The flights have been steadily increasing in recent years, as Beijing harries Taiwan and demonstrates its discontent with the island nation's closer relationship to the United States. The Chinese may also want to wear down the Taiwanese by forcing them to constantly respond.

Regardless, the flights underscore why Taiwan is the most dangerous and potentially most consequential flashpoint on Earth.

If China can successfully absorb Taiwan while limiting the military, economic, and diplomatic costs, it would vindicate President Xi's vision of an ascendant China undoing past humiliations, represent a milestone in China's campaign to establish hegemony in the most important region of the world, and, perhaps, collapse the credibility and global position of the United States.

On the other hand, a debacle in Taiwan could have devastating economic and diplomatic consequences for China, threatening Xi's rule.

In other words, attention must be paid – the trajectory of the modern world is conceivably at stake.

The Trump administration began to reorient the U.S. defense posture toward this threat, and the Biden administration has followed up, most importantly, with the nuclear submarine deal with Australia.

It's been completely obvious for a long time that China has been preparing, if it so chooses, to take Taiwan by force of arms, and keep us from being able to do anything about it.

It has massively increased its force of ballistic missiles, better to target a wide array of ships and hold at risk U.S. ground units. Prior to the latest, more serious iteration of the missile threat, Tom Shugart of the Center for New American Security estimated that a preemptive Chinese strike on our bases in the region "could crater every runway and runway-length taxiway at every major U.S. base in Japan, and destroy more than 200 aircraft on the ground."

China has been churning out long-range strike aircraft and engaged in a historic naval buildup. It now has the largest navy in the world.

Nonetheless, invading and occupying Taiwan after launching a gigantic, logistically taxing amphibious operation across a 110-mile strait would be no small feat, to put it mildly.

It should be our objective to keep China at bay, toward the goal of keeping it from establishing its dominance over Asia, as former Trump defense official Elbridge Colby argues in his

compelling new book "The Strategy of Denial."

But the Taiwanese haven't exhibited the urgency one would expect of an island of 24 million people coveted by a nearby nation of 1.4 billion people that makes no secret of its compulsion to try to swallow it whole.

Until a few years ago, Taiwan's defense budget was shockingly inadequate. Its military reserves are lackluster. Its frontline units tend not to operate at full strength. It has often been seduced by the allure of so-called prestige weapons, such as top-end fighter aircraft that are irrelevant to its predicament.

We should be fortifying Taiwan and making it as difficult as possible for China to take. That means stockpiling food, energy and munitions against a Chinese blockade. It means making its infrastructure more resilient and enhancing its cyber capabilities. It means increasing its capability to detect an early mustering of Chinese forces. It means more mines, anti-ship missiles, air-defense capabilities and unmanned systems to frustrate a cross-strait invasion.

The Chinese have been focused on "area denial," missiles and the like to deny our access to Taiwan and its environs. But these capabilities can be turned against China, too.

If we are ever inclined to forget about how pressing the threat is, not to worry, the Chinese will have more flights or other provocations to remind us.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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California Budget Includes \$5.2 Billion for Emergency Drought Relief

California's state budget will allocate \$5.2 billion over three years to fund drought-relief projects. The money is intended to secure water supplies and implement the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. The funding will also go to a state water efficiency program as well as to the Healthy Soils program. That effort is intended to improve carbon sequestration in the soil and build up organic matter to help retain water.

California Rice Plantings Drop by 21% In 2021

Rice plantings in California are at the lowest level since 1992. Farmers are expected to harvest 405,000 acres this year. That's down 21% from 2020. Medium-grain rice remains the dominant variety grown in California, with much of that coming from the Sacramento Valley. All told, California accounts for nearly 70% of the U.S. medium- and short-grain rice supply.

Pistachio Harvest Nears Robust 1 Billion Pounds

Pistachios are called an alternate-bearing crop because they produce heavier yields one year and lighter yields the next. This was supposed to be an "off" year for California orchards. But the harvest has been robust. It is expected to meet or exceed 1 billion pounds. That's just below 2020's high-yield year total of 1.05 billion pounds. Pistachios rank fourth among California's agricultural commodities, behind milk, almonds and grapes.

USDA Earmarks \$100 Million to Support Loans for Meat and Poultry Processing

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is allocating another \$100 million in funding to promote community and private-sector lending to expand meat and poultry processing. The effort seeks to safeguard the food supply chain, which suffered serious disruptions during the pandemic. Overall, the Biden administration's Build Back Better Initiative plans to invest \$4 billion to strengthen the food chain and promote competition. ★

What Would Life Be Without Mistakes?

Dr. James L. Snyder

Let me be clear from the beginning. I have made a lot of mistakes during my life. I have made mistakes that I don't even know about to this day. Even the ones I do know about, I cannot remember very clearly.

Mistakes are a part of life. Unfortunately, some people believe they live their whole life without making any mistakes.

That's mistake number one.

I am where I am today because of the mistakes in my life. I have learned a lot from my mistakes, except I have not learned not to make any more mistakes.

If somebody has not made mistakes in life, I would have to give that award to the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Perhaps the closest she has ever come to making a mistake was in marrying me, but that certainly was not my mistake at all. Marrying her was the best choice I have ever made in life.

I suppose she does make mistakes, but she knows how to fix them before anybody notices them. I wish I knew how she does that.

Those who think they make no mistakes in life are just kidding themselves and are not really living.

I remember several years ago a mistake I made. I planned to fill up my truck with gas for the week. It was clearly on empty. I should never have let it get that low, but I did.

As I drove to the gas station, I thought of something I needed to pick up at Publix, which was on the way. So I stopped, went in and bought the item I wanted and then went out to get in my truck and go get some gas.

As I turned the key to start the engine, it did not start. I didn't know what to do at the time. I tried my

best to start it, but nothing I did managed to start it.

Then, I looked at the fuel tank gauge and saw that it had passed empty, and according to that, the truck was out of gas.

That was a big mistake. That mistake brought me a terrible consequence.

I sat in the truck for a few moments staring at my cell phone. I knew what I had to do, but I didn't want to do it. In a few minutes, I tried to start it again, and I had the same result.

Quietly sitting in the truck, I continued staring at my cell phone. I had no option at the time. I had to do what I had to do.

So, I called the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. "My dear," I said as sweetly as possible, which is above my pay grade, "could you get a can of gasoline and bring it to me? I'm over here at Publix."

I heard silence on the other end, and then I heard chuckling.

"Are you telling me," she said, trying not to chuckle, "that your truck is out of gas?"

Of course, she knew the answer to that question, but she used it to poke me.

"No," I said sarcastically, "I just want to know if you can bring me a can of gasoline to Publix."

I think she could feel the frustration in my voice.

That certainly was another mistake added onto the first mistake.

"Oh," she said, "I might be able to get over there in about three hours."

I did hear her chuckling over the phone. I pretended I did not hear her chuckling, which was another mistake.

I hung up the phone and sat in my truck thinking that I had a three-hour wait until she got there with the gas for the truck.

On my fourth deep sigh, I saw my wife driving her van and park right

next to my truck. I saw her through the window with the biggest smile I've ever seen her wear.

She got out of her van and said, "Is this the truck that's out of gas?"

At this point, I had exhausted all of my mistakes and just soberly nodded my head in the affirmative.

She got a can of gas out of her van and set it down next to my truck. I picked it up and emptied it into my truck's gas tank.

When finished, I put the can back in her van and closed the door. Then, I looked at her and simply said, "Thank you so much for your help."

She chuckled and said, "Do you think you ought to go and fill your truck up with gas now?"

Being all out of mistakes at this point, I told her, "I'm going right now and fill this truck up with as much gas as I can get."

I took my time going to the gas station and filling up my truck because I knew I would experience the next stage of my wife's giggling about my mistake as soon as I got home.

My biggest lessons have come from mistakes I've made. But the lessons only come when I deal with the error and make it right.

I like what David said, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Psalm 19:12).

It's one thing to deal with the mistakes at hand, but it's another thing to be cleansed from secret faults. So I'm learning to deal with the mistakes that I don't know I'm making each day.

Dr. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, Ocala, FL 34472, where he lives with his wife. Call him at 352-216-3025 or e-mail jamesnsnyder51@gmail.com. The church web site is www.whatafelowship.com. ★



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State Lawmakers Choose Style Over Security for Capitol Annex Project

Commentary
by Michael Leighton

If we’ve learned anything from the January 6 insurrection, it’s that we can’t take security for granted. Unfortunately, it seems state lawmakers do not share that same sentiment. Why? Because they’re planning to build a new glass Capitol building with multiple weak spots, in stark contrast to all other state Capitols.

As a former Marine, current architect, and long-time Californian, I have concerns.

While there’s quite some irony that the convoluted Capitol Annex Project is destined to end with a “crystal palace,” that’s not where my concerns lie. They lie in the fact that no legislator or architect involved in the project discussed how an all-glass exterior poses security risks for state employees.

In these turbulent times when we are routinely reading news reports of attacks on our schools and government buildings, many in the architectural profession choose to increase our facilities’ security capacities to ensure the safety of our children and government workers. If it were up to us and security were the primary goal of the facility, we would put the buildings in an underground silo with only one entrance and exit. Considering most people would balk at all state facilities being built underground, we as architects must strike a balance between a fortress and a primarily glass structure with numerous access points, the latter of which is what is being proposed for the new Capitol Annex.

Short of cladding the structure in ballistic glazing, which is cost prohibitive, a glass exterior provides ample opportunity for foul play. Without any exterior walls, like the current granite



Proposed redesign of the Capitol Annex with an all-glass exterior. Image provided by Perry Communications Group, Inc.

and plaster walls of the Capitol and Annex buildings which block small arms rounds, the occupants near the exterior are unable to take cover from possible gun fire. In addition, all-glass walls would disclose the internal movement of law enforcement, such as escorting a high-ranking State leader to safety, as any efforts inside the building would be exposed to the attacker’s view outside the building.

As we saw from the January 6 attack, the ability to immediately seek effective cover saves lives while law enforcement tries to get the situation in hand.

Outside of the all-glass concerns, lawmakers are also planning to wrap the proposed Annex basement with a parking garage on three sides. This, too, poses security risks. Not only from vehicular laden bombs, but from aerosol toxic agents which could be released into the building



The proposed Capitol Annex would include new glass features with multiple weak spots surrounding the Capitol building. Image provided by Perry Communications Group, Inc.

through the parking garage, agents such as those used in the 1995 Tokyo subway attacks.

If you look at State Capitols around the country, you’ll find some similarities – they’re sturdy, tough buildings made out of materials such as marble, sandstone, granite, or brick. Why? Because the architects involved in each Capitol’s creation knew that a state’s legislative hub needs to be regal, functional and, most importantly, safe. Even today, the California State Capitol stands firmly with its Neo-Classical style; why would we weaken her by attaching a delicate glass building to the back?

Clearly, our lawmakers have forgotten about the 2001 incident where a semi-truck rammed into the south steps of the Capitol causing a large fire and \$13.5 million in damages. And, we know that the cost of the repairs from the January 6 attack has already exceeded \$1 million, primarily from busted doors and smashed windows – could you imagine how bad the damage would have been if the U.S. Capitol were made of glass instead of stone, marble, and iron?

California’s lawmakers are choosing a trendy design over the safety of staff and the millions of visitors who tour the Capitol each year.

It’s time to stop this wasteful, and now, dangerous project.

Michael Leighton is a California architect, former Marine, and the third Marine in history selected to attend the Army Special Forces Qualification Course; graduating with specialties in weapons and demolitions. He also spent six years in Northern Virginia as the manager of a large, highly classified security contract for a government agency. ★

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Crossword Puzzle on Page 7

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CLUES

ACROSS

1. Instagram handle, e.g.
6. Faux one
9. Floor cleaner or haircut, pl.
13. No such thing as a free one?
14. Middle-earth dweller
15. Like Halloween night
16. Binary digits code
17. Biathlon glider
18. Take without asking
19. *Hockey's ____ Cup
21. *Start of play
23. End of White House URL
24. 1,000 grams
25. Spot for a massage
28. Chemistry Nobel Otto
30. *The oldest U.S.-based team in NHL
35. Bar bills
37. Denials
39. Thin Mints group, e.g.
40. Just one of British Isles
41. Low landform
43. Not in favor of
44. Slap landing
46. Dutch cheese
47. Property right
48. Kismet-related
50. "All for one, one for all" sword
52. Shed tears
53. Old in Scottish
55. Time period
57. *Sandler as hockey player
61. **"The Great One"
65. Radio show host: "Hello, you're ____"
66. Sea in Spain
68. Witchy woman
69. Pore in a leaf
70. *1980 Olympic "Miracle" winner
71. Ringworm
72. Gardner's gear
73. Dashboard acronym
74. Same as sakis

DOWN

1. "Sad to say..."
2. A deadly sin
3. Ancient Peruvian
4. Brezing through
5. Civil War battle
6. Nosegay
7. Biblical boat
8. "The Terminator" genre
9. Dole out
10. Black and white treat
11. "La Vie en rose" singer
12. Ego's domain
15. Bodyguard, e.g.
20. *14-year NHL player, coached Whalers to playoffs, Jack ____
22. Priest's vestment
24. Worked the dough
25. *Hockey club
26. Ottoman title
27. More competent
29. *Great Gordie
31. Europe/Asia mountain divide
32. Not Doric nor Corinthian
33. Post-it user
34. Like a sea urchin
36. Give an impression
38. * ____ shot
42. Arabian chieftain
45. "Hats off," in New Zealand (2 words)
49. Mixed breed puppy
51. Builds
54. Madagascar primate
56. Skylit lobbies
57. "Geel!"
58. Keen on
59. Cambodia's neighbor
60. Marcel Marceau, e.g.
61. 1/1000 of #24 Across
62. Fall asleep, with 'out'
63. Between femur and tibia
64. Confirmations
67. Nile viper

Crossword Puzzle Solutions on Page 7





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| 8 | 1 | | | 3 | | 5 |

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

Solutions on Page 7

Covid and Beyond



Commentary
by bil paul

My wife visited a friend in the Bay Area who had a “cold,” and who tested negative on a home covid testing kit before they met. But two days later she called to say she had tested positive. So now my wife is wearing a mask when around me, anxiously awaiting her hospital covid test.

The article in last week’s IV about a Dixon woman who came down with a potentially fatal case of covid was very realistic. She hadn’t been vaccinated and apparently caught the virus at a dinner with relatives. It’s unfortunate that it often takes an awful bout with covid to change people from being a vaccine skeptic to a vaccine believer.

Covid continues to plateau in Dixon and the county. There were the same number of new reported cases in Dixon last week as the week before (26) and there were eight covid deaths in the county. The percentage of county people tested for covid who tested positive fell from about 8 percent to 6 percent.

I expect the number of new cases in Dixon to

remain stable – at least until Thanksgiving and Christmas, when there may be another spike. The sad fact is that, to date, only 56 percent of Americans have been fully vaccinated (while other countries beg for more vaccines). What does that say about us as a nation?

It’s a fact that areas with the lowest percentage of vaccinations have the highest rates of covid hospitalizations and deaths. More and more hospitalized people in those areas have been saying, “I should’ve had the shots.”

The week before last, a whistleblower revealed that Facebook ultimately cares more about profits than removing gross misinformation on their web sites. Facebook knows that when provocative rants and sensational false claims about covid and vaccines are posted, and get millions of views, all those “eyeballs” are looking at ads, too, generating billions of dollars for the company. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg is worth \$134 billion.

This even goes beyond profits. There are elements within the U.S. and in foreign countries who seek to widen the divisions between Americans for political purposes and to weaken the country. There are so-called “troll farms” in Europe and Russia, and perhaps in China, using sophisticated Facebook pages and web sites to exacerbate tensions between pro-vaccination and anti-vaccination groups, between Republicans and

Democrats, and between pro- and anti-abortion groups. They also seek to promote racial conflict and anti-immigrant fervor.

Part of the problem is the decline of honest, dedicated local journalism in cities and towns across America. That results in the rise of guessing, rumors, false theories and speculation in online media where oftentimes the more emotional and outrageous the accusations are, the more people “like” them. Polls say that two-thirds of Republicans believe the last presidential election was fraudulent and “stolen.”

Moving on once again to the climate – today there are five times more weather disasters per year than 50 years ago. Recently, the first flash flood ever happened in New York City. Water was gushing down into subways. One of the reasons is that when the air gradually warms, year after year, it can hold more moisture, making rainstorms and flooding of biblical proportions more frequent. In 2005, hurricane Katrina caused \$164 billion in damage and killed 1,800 people.

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 GLs in the Aleutian Islands during WWII. ★



A Film and TV Review by Tim Riley

“NO TIME TO DIE” RATED PG-13

Anyone who has watched the James Bond films over the course of time has a pretty good idea of how the storyline will play out when Agent 007 goes up against the latest megalomaniac villain.

With Daniel Craig in his fifth and final appearance as James Bond, “No Time To Die” picks up where “Spectre” left off, allowing for the spy’s romantic relationship with Madeleine Swann (Lea Seydoux) to mellow his usual sexual escapades.

With age and maturity, Craig’s Bond is no longer a womanizer, unlike Sean Connery’s apparent eagerness to bed any attractive female, including the distaff adversaries he hoped to convert to the right side.

Even though Bond loves Madeleine, he has trust issues that go back to his love for Vesper Lynd (Eva Green) in “Casino Royale,” who ultimately betrayed him. While the affair with Madeleine may be fraught with wariness, Bond is more restrained when it comes to the opposite sex.

Where once the James Bond films played as separate standalone adventures, linked by characters both malevolent and benign, the Daniel Craig series has unfolded as a unified whole. “Skyfall,” for one, revealed important aspects of the double-O agent’s early life.

“No Time To Die” begins in the aftermath of 2015’s “Spectre” where the film’s conclusion saw Bond and Madeleine drive away in the iconic Aston Martin DB5.

While the film opens with a flashback to Madeleine’s troubled childhood, Bond first makes his appearance when he and Madeleine are visiting a rocky, hilltop city perched atop southern Italy.

During the lengthy pre-credits sequence, the sojourn to Italy is charged with peril when the pair are trapped by an army of henchmen determined to kill Bond. What ensues is an extended action sequence with the Aston Martin delivering the necessary firepower.

When the dust settles on the ambush and subsequent shootout, Bond figures that Madeleine betrayed him and bids her farewell at a train station with the notion they will never see each other again.

Five years later, Bond has retired from MI6 and is living a blissfully peaceful single life in Jamaica, which is soon upended by the arrival of his old CIA pal Felix Leiter (Jeffrey Wright) seeking help for a mission to rescue a kidnapped scientist.

Leiter and his associate Logan Ash (Billy Magnussen), whose awkward grin suggests something more sinister,

Riley Reviews

A THRILLING NEW TWIST FOR JAMES BOND IN “NO TIME TO DIE”

dispatch Bond to Cuba, where he contacts CIA agent Paloma (Ana de Armas), so sleek in a black dress that she looks like a model.

There’s more to Paloma than good looks; she’s an actual dynamo in stiletto heels, punching and kicking goons with as much efficiency as Bond. Unfortunately, her screen time is limited to an explosive evening in Havana at a lavish ball hosted by the evil SPECTRE organization.

Meanwhile, there’s a new Agent 007 in Nomi (Lashana Lynch), an equal match to James Bond who is not about to give her license-to-kill digits to the retired veteran, until possibly convenient to do so.

Maybe it’s a matter of convenience, but the chief villain Safin (Rami Malek), a terrorist bent on destroying at least half of the globe with a deadly toxin, has a link to Madeleine that is anything but benevolent.

While his old boss M (Ralph Fiennes) seems cagey, Bond gets an assist from Money Penny (Naomie Harris) and gadget-whiz Q (Ben Whishaw) for the inevitable showdown at Safin’s remote lair and its underground laboratory with bio-weapons that must be destroyed to save the world.

At one point, Bond meets up again with his old foe Blofeld (Christoph Waltz), now caged like Hannibal Lecter but lacking necessary menace. It can also be said that Safin is a lightweight antagonist; his mechanical, muted manner does not convey the intended threat of real danger.

Inevitably, film buffs are likely to continue the debate over the finest actor as Agent 007 and the best of the official twenty-five films (not counting Peter Sellers and David Niven in 1967’s “Casino Royale” and Connery’s return in “Never Say Never Again”).

Nostalgia and an appreciation for the Ian Fleming novels may dictate Sean Connery remains the reigning champ. Arguably, “From Russia With Love,” the most pure spy story with minimal gadgets, and “Goldfinger” will rank at the top of the best entries.

Daniel Craig, for all of his weariness and emotional baggage never carried by the likes of Connery, deserves a spot near the top, if for no other reason than his first outing in “Casino Royale” was so spectacularly thrilling.

“No Time to Die,” which has emotional parallels to “On Her Majesty’s Secret Service,” is a fitting ending to the Daniel Craig era, with surprises that should not be spoiled.

A thrilling yet disturbing twist to the climax of “No Time To Die” is certain to engage some passionate discourse for the fan base. One can only wonder what will be the next character arc for a new Bond. ★



Dare to Live Without Limits

by Bryan Golden

The Ship of Life



Sailing provides a variety of valuable analogies to life. Virtually every aspect of sailing has a lesson to offer. Planning, preparation, and a specific destination precede any journey. The boat must be seaworthy and all of the equipment must be in working order.

Before leaving port you need to ensure all of the necessary equipment, the proper clothes, and enough food and water are on board. You want to feel confident in your ability to sail the boat in all conditions. Appropriate charts and navigation tools are essential.

Anticipating the unexpected, you need foul weather gear, a first aid kit, tools, a radio, life vests, and a life raft equipped with emergency rations. Skimping on the dockside preparation puts you at needless risk.

In life, you don’t want to begin a journey without being prepared. As with sailing, you need relevant skills, knowledge, and equipment. Although a mistake in life may not be as instantly catastrophic as a miscalculation at sea, preparation is as important for long term success.

A ship without a rudder lacks the ability to determine direction or destination. Without a rudder you are at the mercy of the wind and currents. If you don’t make decisions for yourself, you have no rudder. If you live your life based on the opinions of others, you have no rudder. If you change direction

in reaction to criticism, you have no rudder.

Intention and self-determination are your rudder. They enable you to stay on course and make course corrections as needed. With a rudder you can weather storms and overcome adversity.

A destination is your goal and the charts are your plan to reach it. Charts provide you with information to avoid crashing into rocks. Reaching your destination is more than simply sailing a straight line. It often involves many turns and course adjustments to arrive safely. If you encounter bad weather, you must make even more adjustments to keep on track.

To begin a journey without anticipating and preparing for adverse conditions is foolish. Just like the weather, you will encounter surprises and unexpected events. Anticipation and knowledge equip you to survive the worst storms.

Navigation tools are vital. Radar lets you spot hazards that are invisible to the naked eye. Radar functions in darkness, fog, and foul weather. Radar picks up hazards that are too far away to see. In life, education is your radar.

You study those who have gone before you. You study those who are successful. You study those who have failed. You study your competition. You stay abreast of trends and events that have an influence on you. Ideally, you want to become an expert

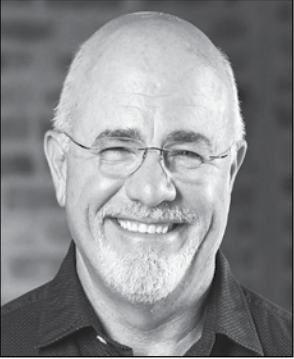
at whatever you do. If you stop learning, it’s like turning off your radar.

If you run out of food before you reach your destination, all of your other planning and preparation is for nothing. Because without food, you won’t make it. In life, adequate finances are the food for your journey. Many a venture has suffered a premature demise because of inadequate financing. Just as you must know how much food is required, you need an exact understanding of your capital needs. Ideally, you would like to have extra food and money just in case.

Many sailors perish needlessly because they neglected one or more areas vital to the successful completion of their journey. And many sailors survive horrendous journeys because they have been meticulous in their planning and preparations. On the sea and in life, failure is not an option. Regardless of what happens, you must reach your destination.

With the right knowledge, planning, and tools you can reach any destination under any conditions.

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@columunist.com or write him c/o this paper. © 2021 Bryan Golden ★



Hope is a Good Thing

Dear Dave,

What is the main difference between people who follow your plan, stick with it and succeed, and those who fall off along the way?

– Damon

Dear Damon,

I’ve walked with thousands of families through financial problems. Some of them were speedbumps that just needed to be smoothed out, while others seemed like mountains. The biggest factor I’ve noticed separating those who stick with it and gain control of their finances, from those who give up and go back to their old ways, can be boiled down to one simple word—hope.

Hope is stolen when we misunderstand failure and

Dave Ramsey Says

believe lies. One of the biggest lies that robs people of hope is the one that says failure is permanent. The moment we start seeing failures of the past as predictors of our futures, it extinguishes that ember of hope. Failure happens to all of us at times. It’s natural, and it is normal. The way to reach your goals, though, is to keep failure in its cage. And failure is caged when we begin to understand it isn’t permanent.

Winston Churchill once said, “Success is going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.” If we believe failure is here to stay, we lose enthusiasm. And that leads to an inability to re-focus on success. People often make dumb, short-term decisions when they’re in financial difficulty. If you talk yourself into believing you’ll never be able to save enough money to pay cash for a car, you’ll lose hope and borrow the money. Debt not only robs you of the ability to build wealth, but it’s also usually the result of losing hope.

Have you done something stupid or wrong in the past that you are still reliving daily? Is that memory haunting you, and stealing your hope? Remember, the past only has power over you if you let it have that power. Don’t get me wrong. The past can hurt, and it can be disappointing. But you can either give in to it and let it control you, or you can learn from it and make a conscious decision to keep moving forward.

The choice is yours!

– 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



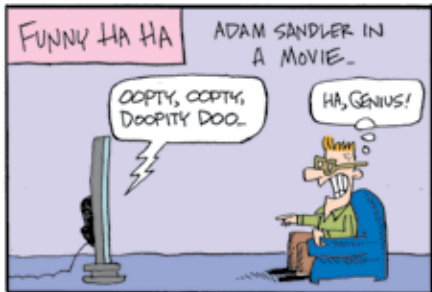
by Dave T. Phipps

The Spats



by Jeff Pickering

Out on a Limb



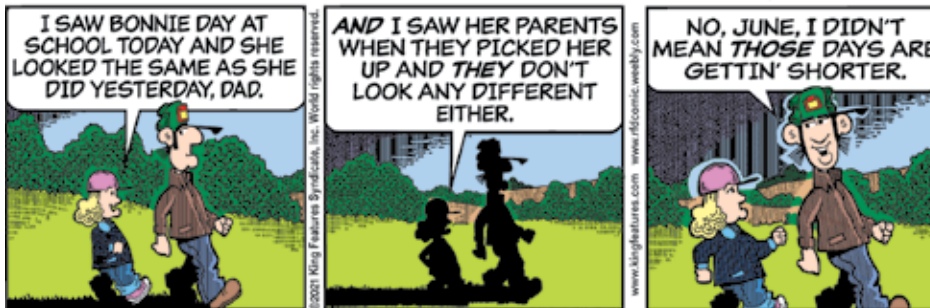
by Gary Kopervas

THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



BY AL SCADUTO

R.F.D.



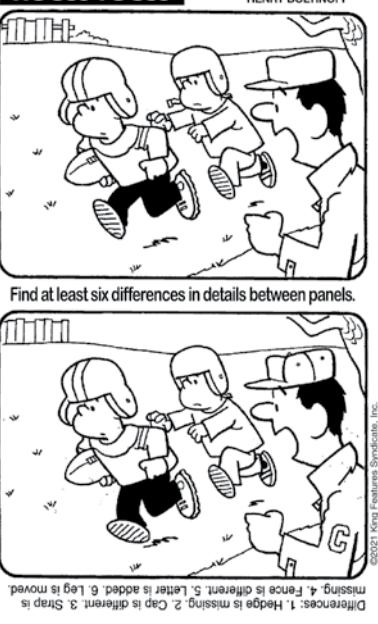
by Mike Marland

Just Like Cats & Dogs



by Dave T. Phipps

HOCUS-FOCUS



BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



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The Best Thing I’ve Done to Restore My Faith in Humanity

Attending the Local Fire Department’s Open House

Commentary
by Samantha Gassman

Selfishness.
Disunity.
Hate.
In a time when everything we hear about in the world is worrying and disappointing, I needed something to restore my faith in humanity.

When the Dixon Fire Department announced their open house, I was drawn to it. I couldn’t explain why, but I knew we needed to go.

No one in my family is a firefighter. But there’s something about the wailing sirens, the conspicuous, gleaming trucks and the brave souls who run toward danger that make my heart all twit-terpated. Especially here where every summer, there have been more frequent and ferocious fires, I have the greatest respect for those who battle them. Plus, my 3-year old son, Jacob, rushes to the window every time a blaring fire engine roars by the house.

To me, this open house represented more than a trip to the firehouse. I was looking for something positive to cling to and hold. Something to break up the monotony of work, worry, repeat. Something to show me that there are still good people and good causes in the world.

When my family and I arrived, Dixon FD did not disappoint. It was love at first sight – for the kids and for me.

The first thing I noticed was the bright red



Jake learns from a Dixon firefighter buddy. “The open house represented more than a trip to the firehouse... [it] was ... something to show me that there are still good people and good causes in the world.” Photo provided by Samantha Gassman

helicopter. Then, a ladder soaring 6 stories up, sticking out the top of a neon-green fire truck. Police cars. A K9 with his handler. An ambulance. Firefighters helping kids in and out of trucks.

“Can I go inside the fire truck, Mommy?” my son asked, pleading with his puppy-dog eyes.

“You have to ask the firefighters first, honey,” I said.

Before I knew it, he had scampered off, yelling at the top of his lungs, “Can

I go inside your fire truck, please? Can I? Please, please, please?”

As we were checking out the trucks, we heard a loud, whirring noise. My son sprinted to where the other families were gathered and pointing.

“The helicopter!” he screamed. He watched in awe as the blades spun faster and faster, then lifted off the ground. The down-draft blew a wave of dust and rocks, and we turned to shield our eyes.

After wiping the grime

from his face, my son peered up into the sky.

“Awesome!” he exclaimed, as he watched it thump-thump-thump away.

Jake chatted up every firefighter, police officer and medic in the lot. They patiently answered all his questions and let him explore the insides of the trucks he had only seen up close in their LEGO form. My son and the other kids were likely making hours worth of work and clean-up for these crews. They

didn’t seem to mind.

The giant garage doors to the station were open and inside there were several tables set up. On one, cupcakes. At another, smiling firefighters handing out goodie bags and plastic helmets.

“Would you like your very own firefighter helmet, buddy?” one of the firemen asked.

“Yes please,” he said, then paused thoughtfully, “and one for my sissy.”

My heart grew three sizes as he ducked

underneath the stroller canopy and attempted to place the helmet on his 1-year old sister’s head. She squealed with glee at the sight of her brother, then promptly put the helmet in her mouth.

My son glanced at me, then turned back to the firefighter.

“And one for my mommy too?”

“Sure!” he said.

I knelt down and let Jake place the plastic firefighter helmet on my head.

“There you go, mommy,” he beamed.

In that brief exchange, I was happy – warmed by my son’s compassion for his family and his enthusiasm for life. I’m guessing the firefighter didn’t join the department so he could entertain kids on a Saturday afternoon. Yet, there he was. Handing out stickers and helmets to kids. Answering their never-ending “why” questions. And letting them climb all over his equipment.

Generosity.

Community.

Love.

That’s what we found at the firehouse.

Samantha Gassman is a senior communications professional for Northrop Grumman. She is also a freelance writer and picture book author whose debut book, DEAR RAINBOW BABY, will be published in Spring 2022. She and her military family have lived in Dixon since Summer 2020 and will get to enjoy one more year here before the Air Force moves them again. ★

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