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# Dixon Independent Voice

VOLUME 29 • ISSUE 34

AUGUST 20, 2021

PO Box 1106 • Dixon, CA 95620 • (707) 678-8917 • email: staff@independentvoice.com • Independentvoice.com

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## AND BABY MAKES THREE

By Dave Ramsey



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## Finding Love in a Service Club



Mike and Patti Liu delivering a Kiwanis grant check to help support Serenity Saddles, a non-profit Therapeutic Riding Program geared towards children & adults with various mental and physical abilities. Courtesy Photo

By Debra Dingman

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - You never know where you're going to find love. For Mike Liu and Patti Sousa, it was at a Kiwanis International Convention held in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Kiwanis is a global organization dedicated to improving the world one child and one community at a time. Its annual conventions take place around the world to grow awareness about the needs of children everywhere, inspire ideas to serve, and train leaders.

Both from Northern California, Mike was serving his second year as president of Kiwanis of DeAnza/Cupertino Club as was Patti of the Dixon club.

Although Mike had no children and Patti had only one grown son, both had a faith-filled heart for children and each had several years already behind them for serving their communities.

In the lunch break of a day full of workshops at the conference, Mike was sitting at a Burgers & Brew bar when Patti also came in to eat. The place was packed but there was a seat next to a man wearing a Kiwanis shirt.

There were introductions and chat about the workshops in between glimpses of personal life where Patti mentioned she was single after noticing Mike wasn't wearing a wedding band.

"We found out we were both going to the Kiwanis International-sponsored 3-Dog Night Concert later that night. We both went, separately, and even though we discovered later that we were both looking for each other at the front of the stage, we never saw each other," Patti explained as if she just experienced the disappointment again.

She hoped she'd see him before she left the next morning but boarded her plane not even remembering

what club he was from; only that it was somewhere in the Bay Area.

"I remembered she lived in Dixon and that she owned a pet grooming business," said Mike as the couple sat leaning into each other at a nearby Starbucks. "So, I found her website and waited a week and then wrote her a note via email," the quiet-mannered engineer said smiling broadly when admitting he didn't want her to think he was too anxious.

"At first I thought 'who is this?'" Patti giggled. "I was excited and pleased that he left his email and phone. She told him about Grillin' & Chillin' that she and a friend were going to that weekend and invited him to come over and join them. He did.

At the end of a "wonderful day" at the street fair, they learned they were both going to a Kiwanis District Conference a couple months later in Hawaii. Until the trip came, they

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## Janisch and Ceremello Will Vie for City Clerk

By Debra Dingman

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - Appointed City Clerk Kristin Janisch, who moved to Dixon two years ago and former Councilman and long-time community activist Michael Ceremello both pulled candidate nomination papers the day before the deadline. Both turned them in on the last day they could, hinting at a planned campaign strategy where the winner will only be in place one year until a regular election cycle rolls about in 2022.

In January, and after a 57% vote for support of Measure T where a "yes" vote supported changing the position of city clerk from an appointed position to an elected one, the Dixon City Council voted to separate the duties of the City Clerk into two positions; one elected and one administrative.

After that, the new City Council of which none supported the Measure, voted to transfer most of the duties of the long-time City Clerk position to a newly created Administrative City Clerk position, leaving minimal duties for the new Elected City Clerk position.

The proponents of Measure T decried the action as subverting the initiative's intent.

In February, after a report by City Attorney Doug White on nearby cities' compensations for that office, it was voted to give that elected person a stipend of \$250 per month until November. Janisch was nominated by Dixon Mayor Steve Bird and confirmed by the Council as a temporary Elected City Clerk in March from a selection of three candidates including current Administrative City Clerk Lupe Ruiz.

Janisch works for District 3 Councilman Kevin Johnson in the REMAX Gold office. Ceremello was a proponent of Measure T. Registered Dixon voters will choose one on November 2. Ballots are expected to go out mid-September. ★

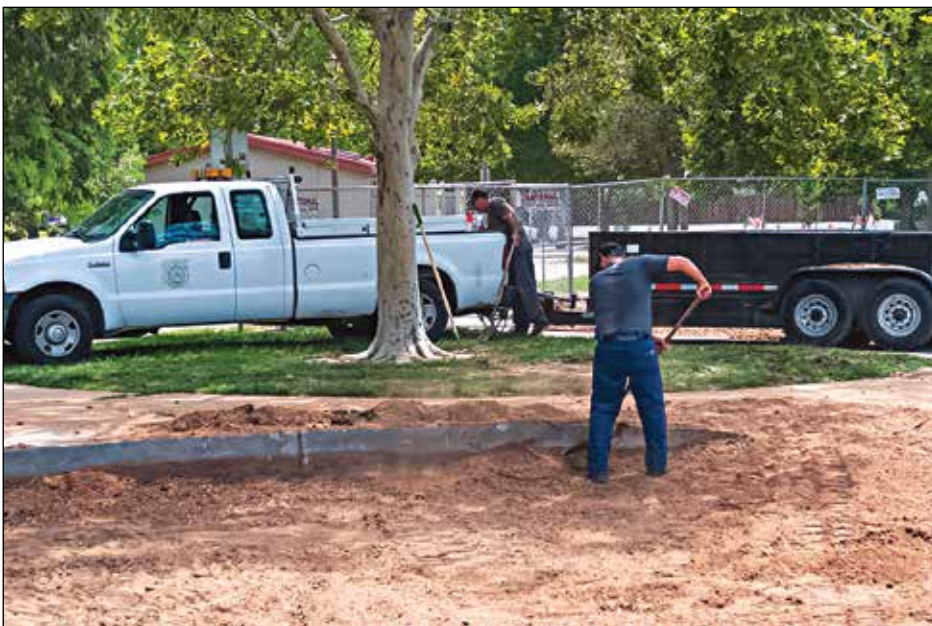
## Park Commissioners Updated; User Fees Raised

By Debra Dingman

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - After hearing a park facility fee proposal "with a built-in escalator" from Public Works Director Louren Kotow who emphasized they had not been raised in 12 years the motion was unanimously approved by Parks and Recreation Commissioners at their last meeting last week.

"It is common knowledge that fees are for reservations but anyone can use the park free any time if not reserved," Kotow explained. Commissioner Charles King asked why other communities that were much larger than Dixon were used in the study and if the public was aware of what was going on. Commissioner Angelic Villalpondo asked about the bottom line deficit.

"Every category is running at a deficit and that is



Demolition of the playgrounds at Northwest Park has taken place and new equipment will be installed this week or next according to the City of Dixon. Photo by Nicolas Brown

absorbed into the General Fund," said Kotow. There are increased costs for extra hours at time and a half, emptying trash, cleaning restrooms, etc. she explained. "We are talking about resident user fees, not non-profit or

group user fees. Every city around Dixon has increased their fees. It is more about the market value than what it costs you," she added.

"This is the third time this has been brought forward due to Covid, we hit

'pause.' Every April, there is a Public Hearing with notices before increases are effective in July," Kotow explained. The motion was carried unanimously.

In other news, the playground at Northwest Park

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# School Started; Dixon Traffic and Downtown Flashback!

By Debra Dingman

Dixon has started a new school year so here's your annual reminder to NOT be on A and First Streets around 8 am to 8:30 in the morning. That is when you will meet Dixon gridlock as many parents are getting their students from all sides of town to Dixon High School and now, when parents are getting their middle school students to the new John Knight Middle School.

Also new is the location of Neighborhood Christian School out at Dixon Community Church and the new Catholic School at St. Peters.

In case you missed my article on the schools gearing up to start a couple editions ago, that is more than 2,000 students.

If you add a train through that time period which happens pretty often, you really can see a mess. If you're just trying to get to work on the other side of Bud's and Dawson's – like those folks who commute in from other cities to work at City Hall, forget it; there's no shorter route.

There are side streets and very quickly, locals learn which ones might be helpful and which ones aren't. Some new folks will discover, for example, the Chamber of Commerce and that going that route only leads one to the other side of North First Street by Aggie Animal Clinic that will also be in gridlock.

Some will discover the rural areas out on Midway when they try the Porter Road route.

The Parkway Boulevard overpass is still a long way out – and I think that will help people getting out of town to work more than it will help getting students to school in the core of downtown--so I suggest you bring an inspirational little book in the car with you and read to your students aloud while waiting... Yes, that could make them more likely to ride their bikes, but that is okay because there are marked safe routes for bicyclists.

As for the new young drivers or



Students swarmed Frosty's after getting out of school on a perfect summer day. Photo by Debra Dingman

impatient parents you may face, no need to roll down your window and give hand signals. Remember that there is nothing better than experiencing a teaching moment so when one flips that U-turn across the double yellow lines on A Street, there are a host of new officers on duty that will oblige with an expensive ticket.

You will also want to avoid the area when school lets out and definitely on Wednesdays at noon because that's when the middle school has a half day.

On a more positive note, I finished my volunteer docent time at the wonderful Dixon History Museum, leaving from the back and came around to the First and A Street intersection when I came across an amazing scene. Children – the elusive capital we've missed for the last year and a half has returned full force! Students were everywhere.

We haven't had youth downtown like this since Heidi and George Palchik owned a bike and skateboard shop where the real estate office is now across from Pardi Plaza. The high school moved to its new location in 2007 and the youth vanished downtown other than their cars trailing in and out from the far out newer campus.

Now, they were here again on bikes, on skateboards, walking in groups, and solo. I had to grab my camera. It was beautiful. ★

# Dixon News Briefs

MPG Staff

## Vet's Fish Fry

The monthly Fish Fry dinner at the Veterans Memorial Hall, 1305 North First Street is this Friday, August 20 at 6 pm. Cost is \$10 and the meal includes hush puppies and coleslaw. The bar will be open and the meal is complemented by cold beer and music by Roger Schaller. There are plenty of tables to bring your friends. Just think, you could treat several of them at this price or plan a birthday bash!

## Seniors Up and Alive!

Bunco is just one of the activities that is re-awakening after the pandemic shut down at the Dixon Senior Center, according to one enthusiastic President: Phyllis Nixon. Cost is \$1, she said, adding they are all "up and alive!"

They're now meeting in person and are in the process of gathering volunteers to open 'the very affordable Bingo,' the Lunch Bunch, and the other activities. Bingo will be Mondays and Wednesdays at noon beginning next month.

"We want to encourage people to get together and get out of the house," she said. They are still going to space out for good safety and plan to put on the Senior Resource Fair in October but will be limiting the number of vendors to follow safety precautions.

If you'd like to serve on the Resource Committee, help schedule First Friday Lunch Bunch or help somewhere else, please contact Recreation Manager Jean Houseman at (707) 678-7022 or call Nixon at (707) 678-2782.

## Parks & Rec

The Dixon City Parks and Recreation Commission will be meeting in person (as of press time) this coming Tuesday, August 24, at 7 pm inside the Council Chambers. Now, you know with the

crazy numbers of the Delta Variant of the Covid virus going up in Dixon, this newspaper cannot say for 100-percent there isn't going to be a change back to the Zoom platform so check the City of Dixon on the day of the meeting to be sure if you are planning to attend.

## County Appoints Local

Solano County Board of Supervisors recently approved the appointment of Dixon's Ginger Emerson to the Measure L Library Sales Tax Measure Independent Oversight Committee for a four-year term to expire on June 30, 2025. Others appointed were: Carolyn Cadloni, Dotty Schenk, Ron Heinrich, Ariel Ortila, Bruce DuClair and Kathryn Clark Silveira.

Also worthy of note on the Solano County Agenda was item 21-623, which will help get homeless people with mental illness off our streets. Approved was a Design/Build agreement for \$10 million with Flint Builders, Inc. of Roseville for the Mental Health Diversion and Adult Board & Care Facilities Project at Beck Campus, in Fairfield.

## British Cars at May Fair

If you're not a fan of British cars, just watch an old 007 Goldfinger movie and mark your calendars for Saturday, September 19. That's when the Dixon May Fair will fill up with great cars for the United British Car Show, postponed due to the pandemic in May. There is free admission to the public and it will be held rain or shine.

Vendors and participants set up at 7 am and gates open to the public at 8 am. Final registration is by 10 am. Voting closes at noon and the awards presentation will be at 1:30 pm. This is not a "concours" but a chance for British vehicle lovers to get together, display their vehicles and have a good time. Any vehicle could go home with a trophy so come and see who wins! ★

# Only DHS Varsity Game Friday, 7 pm

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- 10/15 @PIONEER
- 10/22 MESA VERDE\*
- 10/29 CASA ROBLE\*

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\*Home games will be played at 5 & 7pm

Dixon High School Junior Varsity Football will NOT play this Friday due to Covid-19 complications, but Varsity will start at 7 pm at Dixon High School for their first official game of the season. It will be against Union Mine High School from the El Dorado School District. Tickets are at the gate but CASH only (no cards.)

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## Park Commissioners Updated; User Fees Raised

*Continued from page 1*

has been demolished but one will see new equipment installed in about three more weeks, according to reports.

“We did surveys on Facebook and there was a resounding 38.6% of people who wanted the forest green roof with brown trim so the shade structure will match that,” said Kotow in a report to the commissioners. The equipment is supposed to last 30 years but the parks have experienced “substantial vandalism,” she added.

Other improvements discussed was the digging of a new trench at Hall Park so that drinking fountains could be installed. The new drinking fountains at all parks will also feature water bottle fillers and a dog bowl at the bottom.

The group also heard recreational updates from Recreation Manager Jean Houseman, who shared the success of the four tennis camps as well as 25 children at the STEM Lego Camp. They are working on a Memorandum of Understanding with Youth Football and Cheer and hoping for a fall league MOU

with Dixon Girls Softball.

Chair Yoga is seeing eight to 10 participants every Monday and the Dixon Senior Club and Senior Advocates are planning to start an activity calendar in September which should feature a monthly Bunco, Out-to-Lunch Bunch, and a new sewing and craft class.

There are plans for a Senior Resource Fair in October and a Senior Holiday Lunch.

“It’s good getting the planning [calendar] back,” Houseman said. In another report by Recreation Supervisor Austin George, the swim lessons are going very well.

“Lap Swim was very popular this summer and I think it is because of plenty of time options,” he said. Dixon High School will start Water Polo August 9 and run through November, he added.

New Commissioner KC Baltz was welcomed onto the team.

For more information, go to CityofDixon.us/ParksRecreationCommission or call Houseman at (707) 678-7022. ★

## Finding Love in a Service Club

*Continued from page 1*

regularly sent emails and the two had phone calls back and forth.

Mike had been married 27 years and lost his wife to cancer a few years earlier. He was getting ready to retire from the aerospace industry. Patti had been single for as many years, raising her son alone, but finding fulfillment in her work and Dixon social life.

“We were just two friends getting to know each other,” said the outgoing red-haired Patti. He would come over on weekends and help do things around her house, work with her son on projects, and meet her son’s family.

Their first date was dinner at the end of the conference in Hawaii. He gave her a kiss on the cheek good night.

“He was leaving the conference a day earlier than I and I was all a twitter!” she said. “I felt like

a teenager.” They shared a love of dogs, traveling, the 49ers, and they both loved to dance. They even share a native-American heritage. Everything seemed too good to be true when Patti’s son had an accident and she worried it would break their relationship. She talked with Mike genuinely and told him if it was too much, she would understand him leaving. But he reassured her, and it only made them stronger, she said.

“What I love about Mike is that he saw my son at his worst and at his best,” said Patti, starting to tear up.

“We met in Kiwanis. We both joined Kiwanis Special Games for special needs children and adults, and I learned what the Dixon Festival of Trees was all about,” Mike said, so he knew what Patti was all about, too, and his affection and commitment grew.

“I love how she cares

about other people,” said Mike.

Mike retired and sold his home in the Bay Area and bought a home on West A Street in Dixon to start a new life. After 18 months, they were married on August 22, 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, the LMU Fires, and on the hottest day of the year. The wedding originally planned for 150 at the Veterans Memorial Hall, went down to 50 in the backyard of their A Street home and after a calamity of errors including the reception food getting delivered to Patti’s old address, Mike kissed his bride.

It is fair to say Mike loves Patti but really, he super likes Dixon, too.

“I dreamed of traffic like the traffic we have here,” said Mike with a laugh. “My doctor and dentist are a 5-minute walk from our front door.” This is their first anniversary. ★

## Strong Demand in Home Sales Begin Shift Towards Normalized Market

**NBSIA News Release**

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento-area new home sales continued moving toward more normal patterns in July but still reflect continued strong demand, the North State Building Industry Association reported.

Area builders reported selling 501 homes during the month in the seven-county region. That was the lowest number reported so far this year and appears to reflect that the market is continuing to shift into its normal pattern – sales peak in the spring, plateau during the summer and then continue drifting lower during the rest of the year.

But sales are still robust compared to historical averages. The average number of sales during July since the BIA began keeping records in 1997 is just 366, and July’s total was the second-highest recorded in the region since 2007. It was eclipsed only by the massive 888 sales that took place in July 2020 as the market rebounded from



Area builders reported selling 501 homes during the month in the seven-county region. That was the lowest number reported so far this year. Image by Paul Brennan from Pixabay

the huge drop-off in sales that spring due to the onset of the COVID-19 restrictions.

Michael Strech, the BIA’s president and CEO, said the gradual movement towards a more normal market is welcome but that builders will continue working to meet the strong demand shown by area buyers.

“There continues to be a strong demand for new homes in the region as buyers look for homes that have been designed with today’s needs for space and flexibility in mind,” Strech said. “Despite serious supply chain issues that are causing

construction delays, our members continue to work hard to find solutions and complete construction as quickly as possible.

“The continued strong market for new and existing homes also provides even more proof that the supply of housing in the region does not meet the demand. Local governments need to work with builders to reduce fees and other costs and to allow the construction of more new housing to begin closing the gap.”

The report reflects sales in El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties. ★

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## Local SERVPRO Franchise Recognized for Outstanding Achievement

**Grassroots Newswire Press Release**

**VACAVILLE, CA (MPG)** - SERVPRO announces that SERVPRO® of Vacaville/Dixon received the CHAIRMAN’S Silver award at the company’s 52nd annual convention, held July 19-23 at the Walt Disney World Swan & Dolphin Resort in Orlando, Florida. Matthew & Shelley Elvis of SERVPRO® of Vacaville/Dixon joined the more than 650 franchise owners and key employees to receive recognition at the gala award ceremony. Forty-three of those award-winning entrepreneurs became first-time millionaires as SERVPRO franchise owners over the past business year. In all, SERVPRO boasts 663 franchisees who have attained the million dollar or more milestone through their franchise ownership.

“On behalf of the entire team at SERVPRO® of Vacaville/Dixon, I’m proud to accept this award,” said Matthew J. Elvis, owner of SERVPRO® of Vacaville/Dixon. “Throughout the difficult year when there were no models to follow, SERVPRO continued to provide the service, expertise, and emergency response that has helped us become the trusted specialists for residential and commercial disasters. I’m especially proud of our team of dedicated remediation professionals. They stand ready to provide prompt, professional fire and water cleanup and restoration, mold mitigation and remediation services to home and business owners in our community – whatever the challenge and whenever it happens.”

In an effort to accommodate all members of the SERVPRO franchise family, SERVPRO planned a high-tech “hybrid

convention” event this year, encouraging franchise owners and key personnel to access the convention events in-person or virtually, according to their preference. The event theme, “Game On,” characterized the excitement and determination that has energized the company and its franchise network as the world begins to reopen and return to normal. All attendees benefitted from three general sessions, including a keynote presentation by well-known motivational speaker Molly Fletcher. More than 40 workshop topics informed and educated attendees on the latest trends and innovations in the disaster restoration and remediation industry.

“We are always excited and proud to recognize our high-achieving franchisees and to share the latest in SERVPRO innovation and business support with our entire network, but the real ‘win’ this year was simply being able to get our franchise family together,” said Rick Isaacson, CEO of Servpro Industries, LLC. “Our annual convention is designed to encourage an open exchange of knowledge – franchise-to-franchise and franchise-to-headquarters. This sharing of hands-on best practices and real-life experiences benefits our entire company. I congratulate our winners for their outstanding achievements this past year and offer my sincere thanks to the entire SERVPRO family for a job well done in a time of unprecedented challenge.”

For more information about SERVPRO® of Vacaville/Dixon, an award-winning member of SERVPRO’s team of dedicated disaster remediation professionals, please contact Matthew J. Elvis at (707) 724-8977 or melvis@servprovovacaville.com or visit www.SERVPRO.com. ★

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## Back To School Reads For Adults

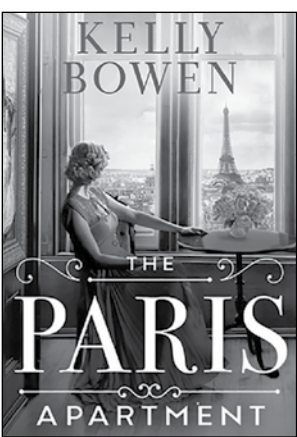


Now that the kids are back in school, this is the perfect time to sit down and relax with a great read. Whether you are looking to get lost within a story of romance, history, discovery, or even a dark, twisted thriller, these new releases are here to take you away.

When Larisa Pearl walks by a little French bridal shop, she allows herself a moment to indulge in the fantasy. Forgetting the emotional stress of her life, she tries on the perfect dress. Now, Larisa is caught within the town's enthusiasm for her upcoming wedding. The only thing she is missing is the groom. Will her secrets be exposed, or could this be the very thing that brings an old love back into her life? Find out in, *The Little French Bridal Shop* by Jennifer Dupee.

When Aurelia Leclair inherits her grandmother's Paris apartment, she opens the door to a mysterious and

glamorously hidden past. Filled with famous art and couture gowns, Aurelia sets out to uncover her grandmother's secret past. It's 1942, and Estelle Allard will do anything to help those she loves, without knowing her choices will affect generations to come. Fall into a world of history, discovery, and love in *The Paris*



*Apartment* by Kelly Bowen. When Amelia Montgomery gets fired as a litigator for not backing down on her laurels, then punching her partner, she decides it's time to take a look at her life and make amends. Will making one apology at a time be enough to change her life? Find out in, *The Apology Project* by Jeanette Escudero.

Ved Mehra has it all, status, money, good looks, and a lovely soon-to-be wife, but he is hiding a huge secret. Will Ved be able

to find the strength to the truth, or will it be too late. In a story that promises to be a heartwarming romantic comedy, *The Other Man* by Farhad Dadyburjor is sure to capture the hearts of its readers.

Get lost in two twisted thrillers that are sure to snare you within their deceitful and thrilling webs. Brad Parks returns with his newest twisted thriller, *Unthinkable*. One man will have to weigh the unthinkable - can he kill one to save billions? However, there is always more than meets the eye. Will Nate Lovejoy be able to cipher the truth and make a choice before it's too late?

When Detective Frankie Loomis investigates the death of Taryn Moore, she knows there is more to the story. Then, when new information comes forward, the case opens up to more than Frankie ever expected. Hidden behind the young girl's life is a dark, dangerous side, opening the case to a whole new suspect. But is the man in question guilty of murder, or is there more to Taryn Moore that needs to be uncovered? *Choose Me* by Tess Gerritsen and Gary Braver is sure to be the edge of your seat thriller that will leave you scrambling to try and solve the crime. ★

## CDFW Reminds Big Game Hunters to Test Deer, Elk for CWD

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - With California's Big Game Drawing complete and big game hunters planning in state and out of state hunting trips this fall, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) reminds hunters once again to be vigilant in helping to keep Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) out of California.

CWD is a fatal neurological disease of deer, elk, moose and reindeer. It has been detected in captive or free-ranging deer in 26 states and two Canadian provinces. The disease spreads through contact with infected animals, tissues and environments. CDFW has been testing and monitoring for CWD in California deer and elk herds for more than 20 years with no detections to date.

"Our big game hunters have been incredible partners in this effort and should be proud," said Dr. Brandon Munk, CDFW wildlife veterinarian. "The potential for this deadly disease to spread to California remains very real. We all need to remain vigilant and adhere to CWD best practices. That includes testing harvested animals, following safety recommendations when cleaning and handling game, knowing and abiding by state regulations when transporting harvested deer or elk meat into California from out of state."

### Get Your Animals Tested

CDFW will once again staff voluntary CWD sampling and hunter check stations throughout the state during upcoming deer seasons. At these locations, hunters can have their deer tag validated while contributing to CWD surveillance. A list of sampling locations and dates will be available at CDFW's CWD web page. If hunting out of state, be sure to check with that state's wildlife agency for any mandatory CWD testing or handling requirements in the area you will be hunting. Some states may restrict the movement of an animal carcass or other parts in CWD zones. CDFW recommends testing any deer or elk harvested

in a CWD-positive area, whether there is a mandatory test requirement or not. Most states will have information on how to get a deer or elk tested for CWD. CDFW does not routinely test out of state animals.

### Use Caution When Handling Game

Hunters are advised to wear gloves when field dressing and processing their animals. A best practice to prevent the movement of CWD is to bone out meat from harvested animals, leaving brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen and lymph nodes where the animal was harvested. Hunters should wash hands and instruments thoroughly after field dressing and avoid eating meat from sick or CWD-positive animals.

### Report Sick Animals

Report any deer or elk exhibiting abnormal signs via CDFW's online Mortality Reporting system.

### Know the Laws When Bringing Deer or Elk into California

The California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 712 governs the importation of hunter-harvested deer and elk into California. It is unlawful to import, or possess any hunter harvested deer or elk (cervid) carcass or parts of any cervid carcass imported into the state, except for the following body parts:

Portions of meat with no part of the spinal column, brain or head attached (other bones, such as legs and shoulders, may be attached); Hides and capes (no spinal column, brain tissue or head may be attached); Clean skull plates (no brain tissue may be present) with antlers attached; Antlers with no meat or tissue attached, except legally harvested and possessed antlers in the velvet stage are allowed, if no meat, brain or other tissue is attached; Finished taxidermy mounts with no meat or tissue attached (antlers in the velvet stage are allowed if no meat, brain or other tissue is attached); Upper canine teeth (buglers, whistlers, ivories).

For more information on keeping California's deer and elk herds safe and free from CWD, please visit CDFW's CWD web page. ★

## Food & Farm NEWS

### Farmers Fear Impacts of State Water Board Curtailments

Thousands of water rights holders in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta watershed are contemplating impacts of emergency curtailment regulations that may cut off farm water supplies. Organic nectarine farmer Al Courchesne says, "A curtailment would be disastrous for...farmers in California, but particularly for small, family farmers like myself." Water from the delta supplies two-thirds of Californians and millions of acres of farmland.

### Dixie Fire Prompts Urgent Efforts to Protect Livestock

California's biggest wildfire is leading to widespread evacuations of livestock and urgent efforts to care for animals left behind. The Dixie Fire is the second largest in California's recorded history and has destroyed thousands of acres of rangeland, including for migratory cattle. Farm Bureaus in Butte, Sierra and Plumas counties are partnering to help feed and maintain livestock. Similar efforts are underway in Nevada County's River Fire.

### Home Cooking During Pandemic is a Boon for Organic Market

As cooking at home spiked during the pandemic, that created a boon for organic farmers and producers. According to the Organic Trade Association, the U.S. market for organic products jumped by more than 12% to nearly \$62 billion in 2020. California accounts for 20% of America's organic farm acreage and 90% of shoppers in the Golden State buy organic products.

### Officials Impose Quarantine After Citrus Disease Discovery in Oceanside

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has imposed a 60-square-mile quarantine in northern San Diego County after a citrus disease was found in two residential trees. The detection of huanglongbing disease - or citrus greening - was made on a single property in Oceanside and there is no indication it has spread to agricultural orchards. The disease isn't harmful to humans but can have a devastating impact on agriculture, if allowed to spread. ★



### The Biden Blowout Is Just Beginning

A trillion dollars used to be a lot of money, even in Washington.

Now, a trillion-dollar spending bill is a trifle barely worth arguing over and the stuff of bipartisan consensus.

Oscar Wilde famously said that nothing succeeds like excess, but even he might blanch at the shameless profligacy that is America's new normal.

In their wisdom, Senate Republicans decided to help President Joe Biden pass a portion of his blow-out fiscal agenda, a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill that is a prelude to an even bigger, vastly more consequential \$3.5 trillion reconciliation bill.

The infrastructure bill itself is, as fiscal analyst Brian Riedl of the Manhattan Institute notes, "one of the largest non-emergency spending bills of the past 50 years."

Republicans told themselves that only about half, \$550 billion, is new spending, and that by going along they can take the heat off of Democratic moderates Kyrsten Sinema and Joe Manchin, who are being constantly pressured to ditch the filibuster.

Perhaps, but there's no doubt that the GOP has blessed, and lent a bipartisan imprimatur, to a portion of the president's hoped-for historic spending spree. In so doing, they have taken at least a little

ownership of an agenda they should want no part of.

Republicans will have much less influence, and perhaps none, on the next spate of spending, which is the so-called "soft" infrastructure (aka, a wish list of progressive social programs) after the "hard" infrastructure in the bipartisan bill (roads, bridges, rail).

Under the reconciliation process, tax and spending bills evade the filibuster in the Senate, so Democrats can pass whatever they want so long as they hold all 50 of their senators.

The sheer numbers here are jaw dropping. Including the \$1.9 trillion so-called COVID-19 relief bill from earlier this year, Biden wants to spend nearly \$6 trillion in three measures passed within months of each other. In 2019, by point of comparison, the entire federal budget was \$4.4 trillion (and at the time, President Trump wasn't exactly tightening the country's fiscal belt).

The tide of new spending will add to already extraordinary levels of red ink.

The White House projects that the U.S. debt will reach 109.7% of GDP this year, higher than at the end of World War II when we had abandoned all fiscal restraint to win an existential struggle against two expansionistic totalitarian empires.

The Senate instructions for the reconciliation bill say that only half of it has to be paid for. Democrats will claim a dog's breakfast of purported savings and painless revenue increases, but the bulk

of the new dollars will have to come from a tax increase that easily could rank as one of the biggest ever.

The parameters of the reconciliation bill were crafted by the socialist chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, Bernie Sanders, and it shows.

The priorities read like crib notes from his old presidential campaigns. The bill would add new government programs for the young and the old, from universal pre-K to tuition-free community college, to family and medical leave, to expansions of Obamacare and Medicare.

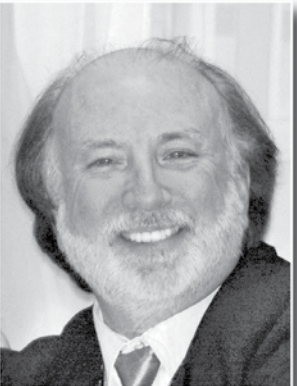
It would make a big nod to the Green New Deal with a slew of new clean energy initiatives, including "smart agriculture" and "environmental justice," and the creation of a Civilian Climate Corps, a climate-alarmist homage to FDR.

It is a sign of the insane ambition of Biden's Democrats that they hope as well to include a sweeping amnesty for illegal immigrants in the bill, a measure that is sure to be struck by the Senate parliamentarian on procedural grounds.

Relatively moderate Democrats in the Senate and the House, where the party also has little margin for error, have grumbled about the size of the reconciliation bill. It will be up to them to decide whether the party steps back from the precipice or goes all-in on Biden-Sanders fiscal radicalism.

Rich Lowry is editor of the *National Review*.

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**Publisher, Paul V. Scholl**

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Subscription rate is \$32 per year within Dixon and Solano County.

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# Garamendi Seeks to Expand Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument

By Nate Lillge, Tuleyome

WASHINGTON D.C. (MPG) - Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA 3rd District) released discussion draft legislation to add the Lake County portion of Walker Ridge to the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. This tract of nearly 4,000 acres, was within the original Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument boundary but was excluded before President Obama signed the Presidential Proclamation on July 10, 2015. Also included in the draft legislation is the requirement to complete a Monument Management Plan within a year.

Located north of San Francisco and Sacramento, Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument is a rugged and diverse landscape. The region is culturally significant to numerous Native American tribes and is also notable for its variety of habitats including grasslands, old growth conifer forests, and woodlands. It hosts imperiled wildlife such as northern spotted owls, Northern California steelhead, martens, and fishers.

Walker Ridge, approximately 10 miles east of Clearlake, is a jewel of biodiversity. The area hosts of ancient blue oak woodlands, rugged rock outcrops, precious meadows, rolling hills of chaparral and extensive stands of McNab cypress. It is home to more than 30 species of rare plants. "We have long fought for the appreciation and protection of this irreplaceable region, which is a mecca of botanical richness within the biodiversity hotspot that is California," said Nick Jensen, Conservation Program Director for the California Native Plant Society. "We are overjoyed that Congressman Garamendi has introduced draft legislation to expand Berryessa Snow National Monument to include the Lake County portion of Walker Ridge."

"Permanent protection of this extraordinary place has been a personal priority since before the Berryessa Snow Mountain campaign began," emphasized Lake County resident and Tuleyome board member, Victoria Brandon. "I'm thrilled that my own Congressman John Garamendi has stepped up to save it for posterity by adding it to the Monument."

Walker Ridge notably provides easy access to a variety of recreational users including mountain bikers, hikers, OHV riders, and equestrians. Don Amador, a

long-time trail recreation and resource management professional, noted that, "As one of the OHV recreation partners that helped in the creation of the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, I want to commend Congressman Garamendi for his proposal to adjust the Monument boundary to include Walker Ridge and the many trails that exist in that area. The boundary adjustment also makes a lot of sense given the BLM has started its travel planning effort within the Monument and this plan will make it easier for the agency to designate routes that provide connectivity to increase public access and enhance recreation opportunities for all user groups." By completing a management plan, all user groups will be able to enjoy the many wonders of this remarkable region.

"The Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act will safeguard Walker Ridge's natural beauty, wildlife, rare plants, and indigenous treasures," said Tuleyome Executive Director, Sandra Schubert. "It will also secure continued recreation opportunities in the area while providing a boost for the economy and local communities that have long called for permanent protection of the area. We support this legislation and commend Congressman Garamendi for protecting Walker Ridge and all of the Monument's treasures."

"Conservation Lands Foundation celebrates and supports Congressman Garamendi's goal to expand the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument and ensure this special landscape has a robust management plan," said Elyane Stefanick, California Program Director for the Conservation Lands Foundation. "The addition of Walker Ridge will help protect the area's rich biodiversity and is a step toward helping the State of California and the Biden Administration meet the important goal of protecting 30% of U.S. lands and waters by the year 2030."

"We're very grateful that Congressman Garamendi introduced this critically important bill," stated Ryan Henson, Senior Policy Director for the California Wilderness Coalition. "Walker Ridge is a natural extension of Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument with its critical habitat, rare species and thousands of years of history in its lands. Walker Ridge belongs in the Monument." ★

# CONVERSATIONS

By Shirley Humphrey

## Explaining Landscape and Lighting Districts

In last week's Independent Voice, a citizen wrote regarding Dixon's Landscape and Lighting Districts (or Community Facilities).

For those not familiar with this, a 1972 Landscaping and Lighting District became a flexible tool used by local government agencies to pay for landscaping, lighting and other improvements and services in public areas. It is based on the concept of assessing only those properties that benefit from improvements financed, either directly or indirectly through increased property values. Assessments levied under the 1972 Act are not subject to Proposition 13 limitations.

Dixon has community parks (i.e. Hall and Northwest) which are financed through the General Fund. All neighborhood parks (i.e. Patwin, Cornejo, Veterans Memorial) are financed through Landscape and Lighting Funds which are an assessment against property owners in 10 districts.

Fees are often used to plant and maintain trees, shrubs, turf or other ornamental vegetation, related plumbing and irrigation facilities, fences, walls, public lighting facilities including lights, poles,

standard overhead or underground wiring, etc.

In a few new subdivisions, a decision was made to face the houses away from main streets. For example, in riding along West A Street after Pitt School, you will find a fence of wood facing West A. In this L&L district, the folks owning houses, the backyard faces West A. This meant that bushes and other plants were planted along this fence and had to be maintained. In these L&L districts (Pitt School for example), medians were placed as a street divider and trees were planted.

Currently the L&L budget is \$371,379. The city contracts for some services and uses city staff for some maintenance. Fees collected from L&L Districts are \$175,625; the General Fund contributes \$197,515. Since the city has been using General Funds to pay for some maintenance in L&L districts, a past practice may have been established.

"Is Dixon keeping up with the times?" Plants, shrubs and trees may not be the best solution in a time when California is in a severe drought. Who has talked to Landscape & Urban design or Sustainable Communities professionals? Would Dixon be better off if the

bushes, plants, and trees were removed and replaced with medium size rocks which would have to be cemented to the ground so that rocks could not be thrown around. But long term, water would not have to be paid for, maintenance staff would not be needed, etc.

The city does not indicate if they have a sustainability plan. Are they considering using on-site solar systems to reduce costs? Can federal solar benefits be incorporated into saving money?

A quick review of social media, indicates a number of comments from residents who say our parks and land around subdivisions are not well maintained. But social media sites are often private so city staff does not review them and would expect residents that have comments on L&L districts to make them to City Council during the annual budget discussions.

Should a volunteer committee of citizens be appointed to oversee the L&L districts?

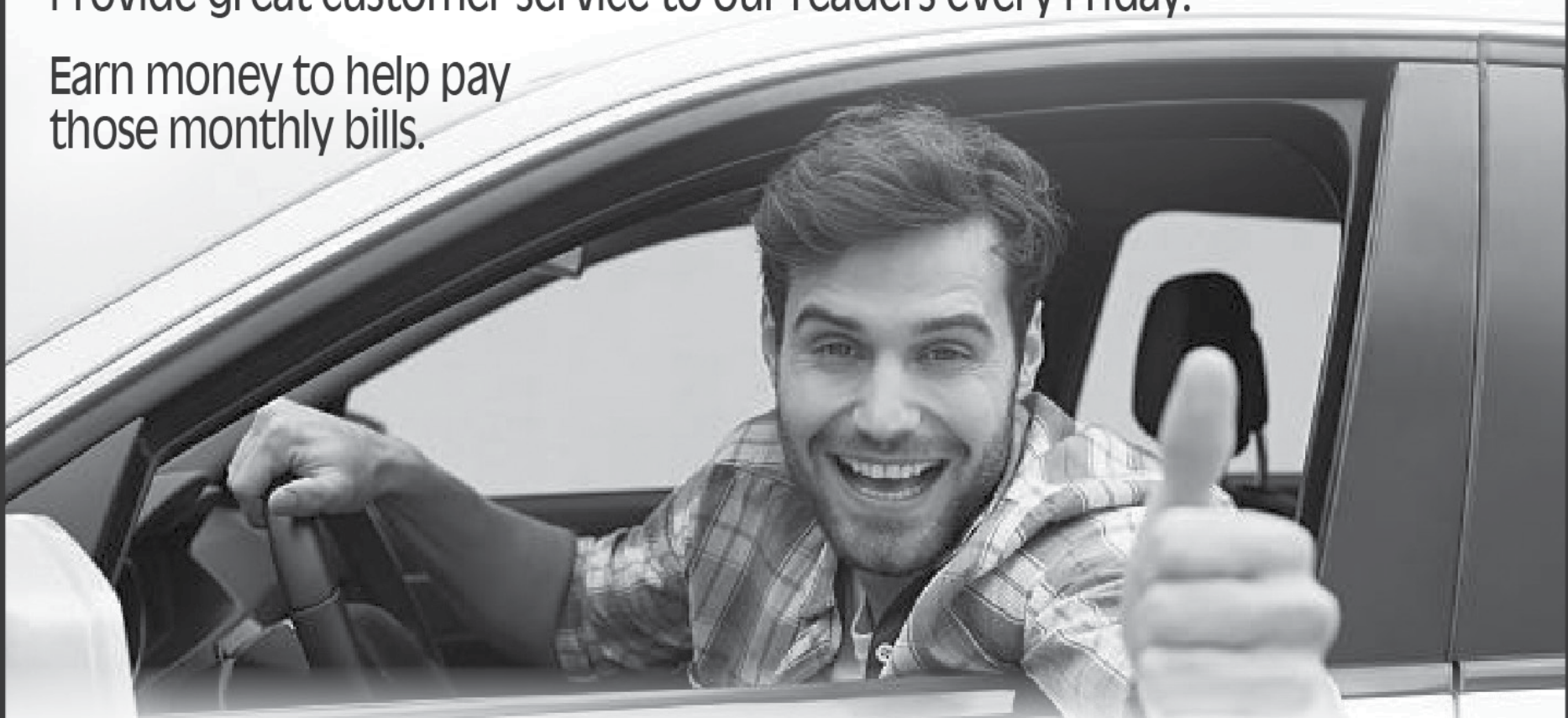
On the other hand, the home buyers of these homes knew that L&L fees would be assessed yearly. By buying a home in an L&L, they knew they would pay fees as long as they own their home. ★

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## Crossword Puzzle on Page 7

M	O	S	S		R	P	M		T	E	N							
E	P	E	E		T	A	R	E		S	H	O	T	E				
S	E	E	N		O	D	O	R		N	O	O	N	E				
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## Sudoku Puzzle on Page 7

9	4	7	5	8	2	3	1	6
6	2	1	9	3	4	5	7	8
3	5	8	6	1	7	2	9	4
2	8	5	1	9	6	4	3	7
4	1	9	3	7	5	6	8	2
7	6	3	4	2	8	1	5	9
5	9	4	7	6	1	8	2	3
8	3	6	2	5	9	7	4	1
1	7	2	8	4	3	9	6	5

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### CLUES

- ACROSS**
- \*Sports analyst, ex-wide receiver Randy
  - Dashboard acronym
  - \*Depth of an end zone, in yards
  - Fencing blade
  - Weight not charged for
  - Young hog
  - Witnessed
  - Aroma
  - Nary a soul
  - \*Line of
  - Spanish earthen pot
  - Pinocchio and the like
  - Bean house
  - Antonym of descent
  - Cycle taxi
  - Greek "L"
  - 50-50
  - Not happening
  - Newbies
  - Bert Bobbey's twin
  - Like a neon sign
  - "Clueless" catch phrase
  - Not a desktop
  - Metal-bearing mineral
  - "Chim Chim Cher-ee" setting
  - Relating to nose
  - Actors' group
  - Sink hole
  - Golf club handle
  - \*3-point score
  - Make a canyon, e.g.
  - Not written
  - Racing sled
  - \*\*Purple People
  - song, inspiration for Vikings defensive line name
  - Like H. C. Andersen's duckling
  - Poet Pound
  - \*AFC counterpart
  - Dreaming stage of sleep
  - Daytime entertainment
- DOWN**
- Hodgepodge
  - Oil cartel
  - Palm reader, e.g.
  - Old and mentally infirm
  - Weather-related Doppler tool
  - Programs, for short
  - Insignificant
  - Hammer or sickle
  - Europe's highest volcano
  - Born, in bio
  - Marinara fruit
  - Ornamental hair net
  - \*Grabbing penalty
  - Breath freshener
  - \*Pre-game encouragement
  - Rose oil
  - One's assertion
  - Collectible in a cabinet
  - \*Fourth down option
  - Colonoscopy tract
  - Ancient assembly area
  - B in IBS
  - \*Start of a football play
  - Go on a trunk
  - \*Scrimmage-related penalty
  - Plant louse
  - Yule firewood
  - By word of mouth
  - Candle shape
  - English in Spanish
  - Mourner's song
  - Camelot, to Arthur
  - Tennis great Steffi
  - College officer-training prog.
  - \*Number of downs to get a first

### Crossword Puzzle Solutions on Page 7

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10				
11					12				13	14					
15					16				17						
18					19				20						
					21				22						
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56									57				58		
59									60				61		
62									63				64		

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	4	5			1			
		1					7	8
			6		2			
2	5	1	6					
		9			6			
		4		1				
8	3				7			
	7				3	6		

Solutions on Page 7





## Dare to Live Without Limits

by Bryan Golden

### Keeping Your Life in Balance



Motion is required to maintain balance. In order to balance on a bicycle, you must be peddling forward. It's impossible to balance on a bike which is standing still. As soon as the bike stops, you have to get off, or put your foot down.

A spinning top appears to be perfectly still. But as it slows down it begins to wobble, ultimately coming to rest on its side. Spinning gyroscopes are used to keep ships and rockets stable. The faster they spin, the greater the stability.

While riding a bike, holding a heavy bag in one hand throws you off balance. Riding with your eyes closed ensures a crash. Facing backwards makes riding impossible. Letting go of the handle bars makes the bike hard to control.

Life is like riding a bicycle. If you don't keep moving forward, you'll fall. You can't sit still and expect to be balanced. At the very least, an unbalanced life leads to unpredictable gyrations, unexpected changes in direction, bumps, and falls.

There are some simple techniques you can use to maintain your balance. Keep your eyes open and focused on where you are headed. You are already past what's behind you. What lies in front of you is what matters.

Every aspect of your life is interconnected. Each component complements the others rather than being in competition. Work, personal time, family, social, and recreation are all intertwined. Balance is fluid, not

fixed. The amount of attention required by each element varies so you have to consider the overall balance.

Compartmentalization is essential for maintaining balance. When you're at work, focus on work. When at home, focus on your family. When you are resting, rest. Allowing the various aspects of your life to overlap interferes with each component receiving the proper attention. This results in everything being out of balance with nothing working right.

Get rid of any negative baggage which isn't contributing anything positive to your wellbeing. Worry, stress, anger, resentment, and bitterness all throw your life off balance. Negative baggage also taints every aspect of your life.

Eliminate activities which don't accomplish anything meaningful. Classify each task you are working on as either productive or just active. Productive behavior gets you closer to a specific objective. If you are just active, you are busy with nothing worthwhile to show for it. It's the equivalent of spinning your wheels without going anywhere.

Say "NO" to discretionary activities which don't add balance. Devoting time to anything which detracts from those things you should be doing throws you off. Declining an invitation without saying "NO" is very effective. For example you could say, "Thank you for asking, I'm glad you thought of me. Unfortunately, I can't

participate due to a prior commitment."

Take care of your physical and mental wellbeing. If you are off balance, everything around you will feel out of balance as well. Your perception, and therefore your reality, is skewed which negatively impacts your decisions.

Where possible, avoid toxic people. Complainers, whiners, and those with negative attitudes have an amazing ability to throw everything they touch off balance. Instead, look for and connect with others who are also striving for balance in their lives.

Observe all of the aspects of your life. Constantly monitor how balanced you feel. Balance must be continually maintained through positive action. Take immediate corrective action when a situation becomes unbalanced. A small issue can mushroom if left uncorrected.

Make a conscious decision to balance your life. Be willing to actively participate in maintaining that balance. Adjust your balance and rebalance as necessary. A balanced life takes less effort to maintain than one which is unbalanced.

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



## Riley Reviews

### "BECKETT" PARANOID POLITICAL THRILLER PBS FALL PREVIEW

A Film and TV Review by Tim Riley

#### "BECKETT" ON NETFLIX

Political intrigue thrillers rooted in paranoia made their mark in the late Sixties and early Seventies with films like Costa-Gravas' "Z," Sydney Pollack's "Three Days of the Condor," and Alan J. Pakula's "The Parallax View."

Netflix's "Beckett" captures the paranoid action thriller where the protagonist is a Hitchcockian "wrong man" caught up in a case of intrigue and deception for which he's as clueless as Cary Grant's character in "North by Northwest."

In the eponymous role of "Beckett," John David Washington is an American tourist in Greece, joined by his girlfriend April (Alicia Vikander) to explore the rural areas as political unrest in the capital caused them to take leave of Athens.

Driving late at night on backroads to a bed-and-breakfast, Beckett loses control of the vehicle, resulting in a deadly crash into an apparently abandoned house. April dies on the scene, while Beckett passes out after seeing what he believes is a woman and a young boy.

The thriller kicks into gear when Beckett after his hospital stay gets interrogated by a bearded cop. Deciding to revisit the scene of the crash, Beckett finds himself in the crosshairs of the same cop and a blonde woman. He escapes with a superficial gunshot wound.

Hence starts a furious run from his assailants who go to such great lengths to find Beckett that any of the locals that help him meet a terrible fate. In a strange land with a language barrier, Beckett must use his wits to get back to Athens for help from the American Embassy.

The journey is fraught with danger, but Beckett comes upon a pair of activists (Vicky Krieps and Daphne Alexander) headed to a rally in Athens. They believe that Beckett may have seen the kidnapped son of an opposition political leader and decide to help.

At under two hours "Beckett" may not seize the full spirit of a conspiracy thriller of the genre, and yet there is enough intrigue with corrupt government officials and an assassination plot to deliver satisfying enjoyment of the trickery that an everyman has to overcome.

#### PBS FALL PREVIEW

Documentary filmmaker Ken Burns has been a mainstay of notable documentaries that have aired on PBS, including "Baseball," "The Civil War," and "The Roosevelts: An Intimate History."

With his long-term commitment to PBS, it is not surprising that Burns would choose a subject for a biographical documentary who has been as controversial and widely acclaimed as legendary boxer Muhammad Ali.

The four-part series "Muhammad Ali" is set to air in September, and at the PBS press tour Burns observed that

"Muhammad comes to us first and foremost as the greatest athlete perhaps of all time, certainly of the 20th Century, and as the greatest boxer."

"Muhammad Ali" draws from an extraordinary trove of archival footage and photographs, contemporary music, and the insights and memories of eyewitnesses – including family and friends, journalists, boxers and historians, among others – to create a sweeping portrait.

While largely celebrated today as an icon of American sport and culture, Muhammad was at one time reviled by many in society for his involvement in the Nation of Islam and refusal to be inducted into the Army during the Vietnam War.

The draft dodging resulted in five years of legal jeopardy and a three-and-a-half-year banishment from boxing, and yet Ali captivated so many with his combination of speed, agility and power in the ring.

"Muhammad Ali" also captures the three-time heavyweight boxing champion's charm, wit and outspokenness outside of the boxing ring. From his boastful claim of being "The Greatest" to his steadfast Muslim faith, there is much to learn about the greatest boxer.

The American Film Institute designates Orson Welles' "Citizen Kane" as the greatest film of all time, followed by "Casablanca," "The Godfather," and "Gone with the Wind."

What's notable about "Citizen Kane," a biographical story of fictional wealthy newspaper publisher and industrial magnate Charles Foster Kane, is that it is based on a composite of media moguls that included William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer.

PBS's "American Experience" will explore the story of America's first media baron William Randolph Hearst in the cleverly-titled "Citizen Hearst," an obvious nod to the Orson Welles masterpiece.

At an early age, Hearst forsake the family business to find the newspaper game irresistible, and by the 1930s he controlled the largest media empire in the country, using it attain political power.

A man with prodigious appetites, including his extravagant San Simeon castle, Hearst infamously carried on a decades-long affair with actress Marion Davies while remaining married to Millicent Hearst, the mother of his five sons.

During the PBS press tour presentation, author and San Francisco historian Gary Kamiya observed that we "can't separate our modern media and celebrity landscape from William Randolph Hearst. He created it in so many ways."

"Citizen Hearst" explores how everything the media mogul said and did was larger than life, taking note of his unorthodox approach to business as well as his complicated private life.

The two episodes air on September 27th and 28th. ★

# CLG NEWS UPDATES

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

**White House increases US troops to help with Kabul evacuation to 5,000** | 14 Aug 2021 | The State Department said Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani Saturday about the Taliban's violent offensive. The 82nd Airborne Division's alert brigade will send 1,000 paratroopers to Kabul next week to reach the White House's goal of 5,000 troops in the city to protect the evacuation of U.S. personnel, Fox News reports. There were already 1,000 U.S. service members on the ground, according to defense officials. Another 3,000 Marines and soldiers will be in place by the end of the week. The remaining two battalions of the 82nd Airborne Brigade Combat Team will stage in Kuwait as a ready reserve.

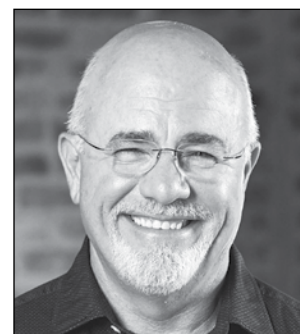
**Biden Weighs Mandating Vaccines for Interstate Travel** | 13 Aug 2021 | Joe Biden is weighing vaccines mandates for interstate travel, according to The Associated Press (AP) on Thursday. "Still, while more severe [coronavirus] measures – such as mandating vaccines for interstate travel or changing how the federal government reimburses treatment for those who are unvaccinated and become ill with COVID-19 – have been discussed," the AP writes, "the administration worried that they would be too polarizing for the moment."

**Forty percent of migrants released in Texas border city test positive for COVID-19, officials say** | 11 Aug 2021 | The city of Laredo, Texas, has refused to take in migrants who have been bused in from elsewhere on the border after discovering 40% of them tested positive for the coronavirus, according to two local government officials. "That was very high," Laredo Mayor Pete Saenz said in an interview, referring to the infection rate among migrants dropped off by the Border Patrol last week. Laredo health authority, Dr. Victor Trevino, confirmed the numbers. The 40% infection rate is the highest known positivity rate along the U.S.-Mexico border. Last week, McAllen, Texas, reported a 15% positivity rate among migrants released from custody.

**Marines Rebuke Def. Sec.: 'No Mandatory Vaccinations for My Marines'** | 13 Aug 2021 | Marine Corps General David H. Berger on Monday rebuked Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's edict requiring all Armed Forces personnel to submit to Covid-19 vaccinations under threat of court martial or discharge, said a source in Gen. Berger's office who overheard a heated conversation between them. Gen. Berger telephoned the defense secretary minutes after he said in a press conference that the Covid-19 vaccination is needed to maintain military readiness and that he would enforce the mandatory vaccination policy regardless of FDA approval status. "There will be no mandatory vaccinations for my Marines," Gen. Berger said. In a transcript of the call reviewed by Real Raw News, Gen. Berger lambasted Austin and branded him a traitor. "Under no circumstances will Marines be compelled to take a potentially hazardous vaccination that the FDA won't even fully endorse," Gen. Berger told Austin. "You are a coward and a traitor, manipulated by people pushing bad policy on the men and women who provide security to our nation. Neither you nor your puppet president has authority to enforce such a policy."

**Lawsuit involving 1,200 first responders targets state's vaccination policy for government workers** | 12 Aug 2021 | (HI) On behalf of 1,200 first responders statewide, a group of attorneys announced Thursday it is filing a lawsuit against the state over its vaccination policy for government workers. The group argued the mandate violates workers' constitutional rights and employers should not be able to decide how to grant exemptions for religion because it is a personal belief. The lawyers also criticized Gov. David Ige (D) and all four county mayors for not creating a uniform statewide plan – and claimed the governor did not give unions the opportunity to negotiate before the policy was announced.

**PhDs the most vaccine-hesitant group of all** | 12 Aug 2021 | In Germany and elsewhere, those who refuse the jab have been called "Covidiot" suggesting that such people are stupid. And the unvaccinated have not only been shamed, but bribed, excluded from participation in daily life or portrayed as victims of mis- and disinformation campaigns. According to a new paper by researchers from Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh, the unvaccinated are not the stupid ones... In the first five months of 2021, according to the study, the largest decrease in hesitancy was among the least educated – those with a high school education or less. Meanwhile, hesitancy never dropped in the most educated group – by May this year, Ph.D.s were the most hesitant group. ★



## Dave Ramsey Says

Dear David  
Congratulations! I know you two are excited to welcome a little one into the world.

In your situation, I'd advise pushing the pause button on the Baby Steps for now. Forget about paying down debt, until mom and the baby come home, and you're sure everyone's healthy and safe. You could even hang on to it all until she decides to start work. But the bottom line is if everybody's okay, the baby and all those connected expenses – like formula, diapers, and daycare – just become part of a regular monthly budget.

Your wife is going to be making pretty good money once she starts her job. And the truth is babies are not all that expensive. There are costs involved in having kids, but it's not like we're talking thousands of dollars a month out of your budget just because you had a baby. Can you buy lots and lots of things for a baby? Can

those things cost a ridiculous amount of money? Of course! The list of things you could buy goes on and on. But a healthy, new baby doesn't need much, and having one at home isn't going to break the bank.

I think any financial fear or uncertainty you may be experiencing right now will disappear once you've got a couple months of adjusting your budget and getting used to the new normal under your belt. Then, when you and your wife decide it's time to start her career, you can begin paying off debt in a really big way!

– Dave

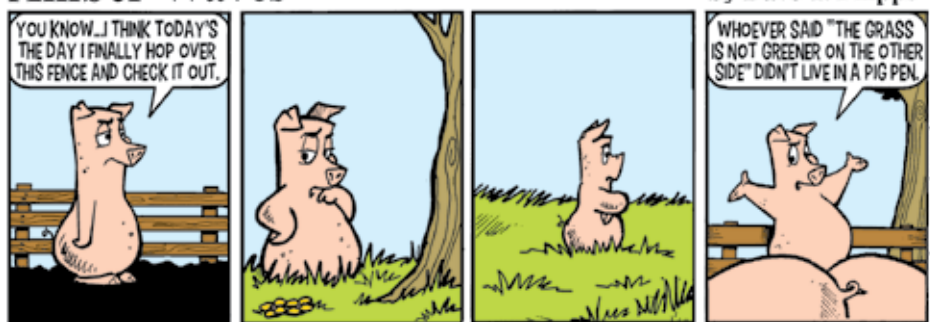
*Dave Ramsey is a seven-time #1 national best-selling author, personal finance expert, and host of The Ramsey Show, heard by more than 18 million listeners each week. Since 1992, Dave has helped people regain control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives.* ★





# WEEKLY COMICS

## Amber Waves



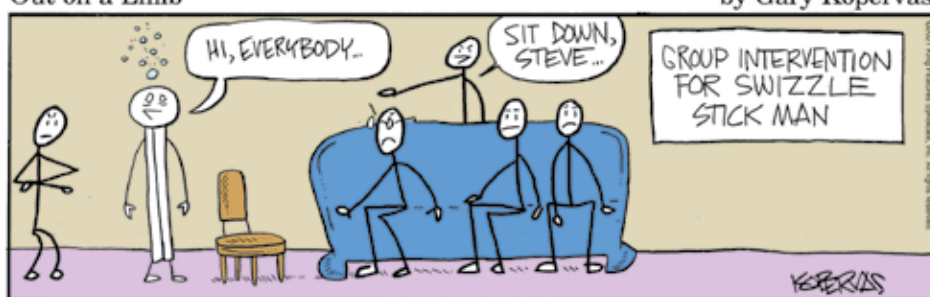
by Dave T. Phipps

## The Spats



by Jeff Pickering

## Out on a Limb



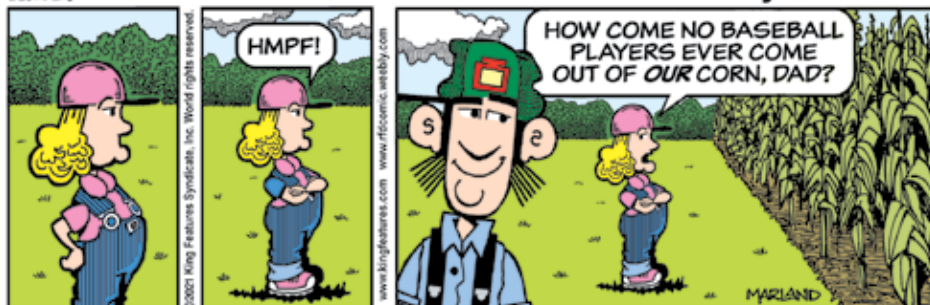
by Gary Kopervas

## THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



BY AL SCADUTO

## R.F.D.



by Mike Marland



## GRIN and BEAR IT



## LAFF-A-DAY

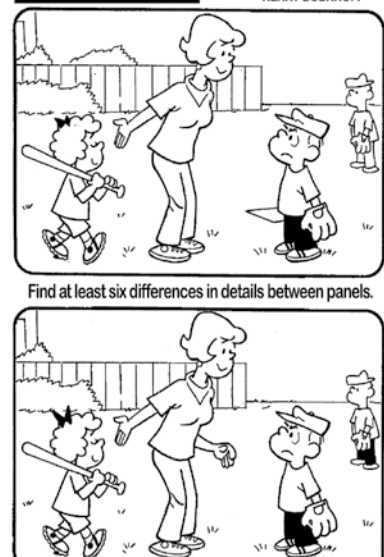


## Just Like Cats & Dogs



by Dave T. Phipps

## HOCUS-FOCUS



BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

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# Ford Driving Skills for Life Returns to California

**California Office of Traffic Safety Press Release**

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)**

The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), Ford Motor Company Fund and California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) are teaming up to provide free safe driving clinics for teens throughout August.

The hands-on Ford Driving Skills for Life (DSFL) program will launch in the Sacramento region Aug. 28-29. The program highlighting three key aspects:

**Hands-on driving** sessions focusing on critical factors influencing teen crashes: vehicle handling, hazard recognition, speed, space management, distraction and impairment; Ford Driving Skills for Life and the Governors Highway Safety Association have **invested more than \$1 million in 2021** to improve teen driving skills and reduce motor vehicle crashes, which are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens; During the pandemic, **traffic deaths surged reaching a 13-year high** even though there was a significant decline in driving. The Driving Skills for Life

event in Anaheim, which will include COVID-19 safety protocols, marks the first, in person hands-on training sessions since the pandemic began.

Driving Skills for Life will host 38 safe-driving training sessions as part of an eight-city tour, with other stops in Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, Nashville and Phoenix. Parents/guardians may register their teen(s) for a free training session at [drivingskillsforlife.com](http://drivingskillsforlife.com).

Now in its 18th year, Ford Driving Skills for Life pairs newly licensed drivers with professional driving instructors for next-level instruction. The program addresses the critical factors responsible for most crashes, including vehicle handling, hazard recognition, speed and space management, distracted driving and impaired driving. The clinics focus on skills and information not currently offered in standard driver education courses.

"We know that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens," said Jonathan Adkins, GHSA Executor Director. "Each year,

more than 2,000 teen vehicle occupant deaths occur. Speeding and inexperience are often critical factors in these accidents."

**The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)** reported that 38,680 people were killed on U.S. roadways in 2020, the highest number since 2007 and an increase of 7.2% from the year before. Alarming, traffic deaths surged in 2020, reaching a 13-year high even though there was a significant decline in driving during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, recent studies have revealed that parents are frustrated and concerned with the lack of in-car training offered to newly licensed teen drivers, especially during the pandemic.

"The lack of experience of newly licensed drivers remains a serious problem resulting in a disproportionate number of crashes for teens. We are grateful to be able to safely resume free, hands-on training that is so desperately needed," said Jim Graham, Global Manager, Ford Driving Skills for Life.

In California, drivers ages

16-19 are nearly three times as likely to be in a serious crash compared to other drivers. **In California**, 164 teens ages 16 to 19 were killed in crashes in 2019, with 354 drivers 20 and under involved in deadly crashes across the U.S. over the same time period.

"Experience and training make for better drivers, particularly newly licensed teens," OTS Director Barbara Rooney said. "We are thrilled to kick off this great program in California that puts parents at ease by providing teens with life-long safe driving skills."

Around the world, Ford Driving Skills for Life trainings are being resumed in many countries throughout North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Since 2008, the international Ford Driving Skills for Life program has grown and provided valuable insights into addressing road safety issues worldwide.

Ford Driving Skills for Life has invested more than \$60 million to provide free, advanced driver education to more than 1 million newly licensed teen

drivers in all 50 U.S. states and 46 countries worldwide since 2003.

For more information and updates on tour locations as well as COVID-19 safety protocols, visit [drivingskillsforlife.com](http://drivingskillsforlife.com).

Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/FordDSFL-CA>

*Ford Driving Skills for Life was established in 2003 by Ford Motor Company Fund, the Governors Highway Safety Association, and a panel of safety experts to teach newly licensed teens and parents the necessary skills for safe driving. Now in its fifteenth year, the premise behind Ford Driving Skills for Life is to provide a step in the learning process by providing new skills and information not currently shared with newly licensed drivers in the basic driver education courses. The program has trained more than 1 million individuals in safe driving practices. It is been offered in over 46 countries, and hands-on driving clinics have been conducted in all 50 U.S. states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. For more information visit [www.drivingskillsforlife.com](http://www.drivingskillsforlife.com).* ★

# Unemployment Insurance Fund Debt Undermines Safety Net Programs

**By Brooke Armour, California Business Roundtable**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The California Legislature has rejected efforts to begin to pay down even the smallest fraction of an estimated \$22 billion Unemployment Insurance (UI) Fund debt, undermining the long-term integrity of the program and guaranteeing that businesses of every size will be forced to pay higher taxes in an effort to pay off the debt.

"The UI Fund has been critically important during the recession, helping provide support for workers who lost their jobs due to government-mandated closures. But now the Legislature is refusing to provide the program critically needed funding that will help

alleviate the \$22 billion – and growing – debt the fund has accumulated after the fifth-largest economy shut down for 15 months," said Rob Lapsley, president of the California Business Roundtable.

Employers are paying higher taxes now and must be addressed now. While the state rates were on course to go down prior to the pandemic, the rapid deterioration of the state fund's viability means these higher rates are now likely locked in for another decade or more.

In addition, federal taxes on employment will go higher as well. As a participant in the federal unemployment fund program, the state cannot carry a UI Fund debt for more than 34 months. If the state continues carrying the debt, businesses will automatically

incur an annual payroll tax increase until the fund debt is paid off. Because of the size of the current UI Fund debt, it is unlikely that the debt will be paid off before the next recession hits, creating a permanent tax increase on all businesses while ensuring this critical safety net will not be there to help workers in the next economic downturn.

The current UI Fund debt is slated to grow to more than twice the debt the fund incurred during the Great Recession. It took nearly 10 years to pay off that debt, with funds coming from an increase in businesses' state and federal payroll taxes.

"California businesses already pay the highest unemployment fund tax rate, plus a 15 percent surcharge. Without a significant investment from the state to address the

massive UI Fund debt, businesses are now on the hook to pay for debt that they didn't create and cannot afford to pay back.

"There is no time to delay. This tax increase is hurting employment now, and even higher taxes will go into effect when the federal increases kick in as well. The troubling reality is that businesses will likely never be able to pay off this debt. The debt is so large that we will likely experience another recession before the current debt is paid, creating debt in the fund and erasing any progress businesses have made to pay off existing debt. Permanent insolvency of the state's most critical safety net program is probable if the state does not intervene," Lapsley concluded. ★

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