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# Dixon Independent Voice

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INSIDE

## THE SCOOP ON ICE CREAM DAY



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## Flourishing Fields for Now



This farmer just past Runge Road in rural Dixon is harvesting Sudan grass, one of the top selling crops in Solano County. Photo by Debra Dingman

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - There are a few sun-bleached tomatoes peeking out of the deep green shrubs that create row after row of the crop. I'm in search of a fish farm and know it is out on the edges of Solano County so I've travelled past the tomato fields at the end of West A Street where I noted the sunflowers are still green and have their chunky heads still bowed. But, I also know how fast they will change.

California is grappling with a drought and dangerous heat waves. I'm taking this field trip while it appears Dixon farmers are prevailing both.

As I pass the long white chicken coops on my left, I can see the

chickens with their red tops vying for more space from each other. I think of how interesting the egg farm story was when I wrote about it decades ago and took mental note to add it to my list of stories to write about again soon.

A hawk's sudden drop from the sky grabs my attention and I know some small critter is becoming a morning meal. But I can't think about that long because in the next field, the swirling and darting black dots outside the bee boxes make me wonder if people really get how miraculous nature is.

Now left on Robben Road past a humming water pump, I'm reminded of a history piece about irrigation local writer Bil Paul wrote.

"When gasoline engines and

electric motors became available for use, the amount of available well water increased tremendously, so that farmers could begin to irrigate new kinds of crops during the hot, dry summer," he wrote. Alfalfa was one of the first crops to use this irrigation and he said that locally grown alfalfa enriched the soil and was used for cattle feed.

I've turned right on Hackman and see the large black animals huddling in the middle of the acreage just after an expansive sod farm which I learned has increased demand right now because of all the new homes being built. Dragonflies race back and forth in front of my Toyota pick up that hubby said I should drive since I'd be out *Continued on page 3*

## Planning Commission Seat Opens



MPG Staff

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Planning Commissioner Joe Quinn, who has served as Chair for the past couple years on the City of Dixon Planning Commission said his good-byes to fellow Planning Commissioners at the last Planning Commission Meeting via Zoom.

Quinn was in the middle of his 4-year term but has served on the Commission before. A new commissioner is needed to complete the rest of his term. Quinn happily announced that he was moving to Tennessee where a daughter already resides and his family is relocating, he said. He was wished well by the other commissioners and given much appreciation for his work chairing the group as they delved into many large and complicated projects submitted for the community in the past years.

Commissioner Jack Caldwell will be the new Chair and Commissioner; Janet Koster will serve as Vice Chair.

The City of Dixon is currently accepting applications for that vacancy on the City Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is an advisory body to the City Council on matters pertaining to zoning, subdivision and land use. Commissioners serve four-year terms, with a maximum of two consecutive terms. However, this vacancy would fill Quinn's unexpired term through June 30, 2023.

The Commission meets at 7 pm on the second Tuesday of every month. City residency is required. A stipend of \$100 per meeting is paid to each Commissioner.

Interested Dixon residents may obtain an application at City Hall, 600 East A Street, by calling 678-7000, or by visiting the City's website at [www.cityofdixon.us](http://www.cityofdixon.us). The deadline for filing applications is 5 pm, Monday, August 2, 2021. Mayor Steve Bird will make the selection. ★

## Parkway Gets a Date!



The John Knight Middle School is one of five schools that adds to traffic congestion on Highway 113 and East A Street daily during school hours. There is now a scheduled completion date for the Parkway Overpass. Photo by Debra Dingman

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Five schools, five churches, a medical center, and Dixon's downtown, the cultural center of our community, all congest traffic on Highway 113 and east A Street. Plus, there is no designated emergency responder access due to railroad tracks. If there is ever a traffic jam in our town, it is coming and going to school hours, May Fair events, and funerals.

The solution was seen in 2004 when plans were made for the Parkway Boulevard Overcrossing. It was supposed to be finished in 2007, allowing traffic to get across town without going all the way out to Midway Road. It's been in and out of local news for years. At the first council meeting in July, and under pressure from residents to complete the project, P.E. Senior Civil Engineer Deborah Barr set a new date: 2025.

"Is that the first time we've seen a slide with a completion date?" asked Dist. 3 Rep Kevin Johnson. "However fluid that date might be, I love that I'm seeing a date!" he said.

With the significant growth on Dixon's Southside of 1400 new family homes, 130 multi-family units, and 900,000 sq. ft. of commercial development, Parkway Boulevard Grade Separation project funding looks promising reported Barr.

*Continued on page 3*

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# Let in Fresh Energy and Ideas!

By Debra Dingman

We have a lot of new people moving into town and I hope we succeed at making them feel welcome. We need their energy and service in our civic clubs. We need them active in our children’s schools, aware of city government, engaged in their neighborhoods, and we need their love in our churches.

I remember volunteering at a non-profit organization when I first moved here and I didn’t feel my input was valued despite the fact that I came from a town three times the size of Dixon and had years of experience.

There’s nothing worse than going to a meeting thinking you’re going to help and discovering you’ve been put in a box and told “don’t touch the sides.” I didn’t understand why they wouldn’t try something new that had proved successful somewhere else but the leaders wanted to keep doing what they’d always done. So, I slipped quietly back into just helping where I could. I’m hoping the new residents in Dixon experience a greater welcome.

“Younger people and new people come into Dixon and get squashed,” said a younger person to me recently. “They would be happy to do stuff but every time they get beaten down by Boomers.” To be clear, Baby Boomers were born after World War II and are characterized by their independence, confidence, achievement orientation, and are well known for their narcissism. I always like to say that is because our parents were from the Greatest Generation who told us to go out and work hard to make the nation great again which meant we strived to be the

best at anything we did. Boomers are now retiring, and they volunteer to leave a social legacy.

For a lot of our aging (club/organization) members, they’re hanging onto whatever smidgen of control they can possibly have and it’s true our volunteer work can lend great feelings of relevancy. But in truth, one can be relevant without being in control and without being a naysayer.

On the other hand, it is equally important for someone new to respect that we’re a city full of folks who haven’t been sitting on our laurels either. We’ve done more fundraisers and events in this small town over the last 30 years than anyone new to the scene can imagine and that deserves respect and honor.

We have a choice. If you’re older, you can step aside and let NEW people of any age and/or younger people who have more energy and much more electronic capabilities take us into the next decade of Dixon growth or we can squash them with nay-saying.

When I knew we couldn’t safely do the Breakfast with the Bunny this past year due to the pandemic, I asked my daughter for ideas. She had mentioned the idea of a photo op before but I was reluctant. This year, I listened better and as her enthusiasm for the project started growing, mine did too, until I could see what she was seeing. So, I strapped on my seat-belt and Kiwanis Club worked alongside her to supply the tools and the manpower. It was a sweet success and we are set up for repeating it next year. Let’s let new ideas and new energy take Dixon into our future! ★

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

I was provided a sneak peek of a “Conversations” column regarding event parking downtown. I appreciated the recognition of my close involvement with issues impacting Old Town residents. I’ve lost count of the number of times, over the course of many years, that I have addressed the Planning Commission, the Transportation Advisory Commission and the City Council on a wide variety of Old Town concerns.

Parking is definitely a problem on numerous streets in the older neighborhoods. Many homes and multi-family complexes in Old Town have either inadequate or no off-street parking. Most residents with detached parking along the alleys have concerns about line-of-sight issues and do not use their garages for parking. If driveways exist along the alleys, they are not deep enough to accommodate parked cars.

Spillover parking into the neighborhoods from events downtown and at the fairgrounds seriously compounds the parking problems. Attendees at events park too close to the corners at intersections and even block driveways that front the streets. During events, residents don’t dare give up on-street parking spots because those spaces are at such a premium. Imagine carrying bags of groceries from whatever distance you can find a spot.

In reading the Conversations piece,

I question how the city considers one of the Plaza’s amenities to be “low impact development principles.” How can an entertainment oriented, special events venue be considered “low impact” for the people who live in close proximity? Wouldn’t that depend, in part, on the frequency and hours of events that generate traffic, parking and noise problems? Does the City plan to limit the number of events to mitigate those problems for the residents in the surrounding neighborhoods?

It is interesting that in recent years the high school parking lots have been opened during the May Fair; and, attendees have been shuttled to the fairgrounds. I understand that the Country Faire neighborhood just south of the fairgrounds has been restricted to “resident only” parking during the fair. Shouldn’t something similar be done to accommodate the people living in the neighborhoods surrounding downtown during events?

Again, my thanks to the Conversations contributors for bringing the issue forward. I agree that the people living in the neighborhoods surrounding downtown deserve answers from their elected representatives. Why should the residents of certain neighborhoods in Dixon be the ones who are expected to “grin and bear” more than their share of traffic, parking and noise impacts?

Ginger Emerson  
Dixon, CA

# Dixon News Briefs



Cindy Krieger, owner of the Dixon Baskin Robbins for the past 15 years is looking forward to Vanilla Ice Cream Day this Friday, July 23. The store is one of the few locations that still serves Soft Serve ice cream cones, and you can buy yours anytime 11 am to 10 pm at 1440 Ary Lane next to Taco Bell. Photo by Debra Dingman

### Ice Cream Day

We feel it is imperative we remind all readers that Friday, July 23, is Vanilla Ice Cream Day. In honor of the special day that was actually recorded with the National Holidays Bureau, we encourage you to visit Dixon’s Good Scoop, Baskin Robbins, or McDonalds for the wonderful treat. It is actually the country’s most popular flavor and that’s why it got special attention over, say, Rocky Road.

Interestingly, our 3rd President, Thomas Jefferson discovered vanilla while in France and brought the recipe back to the colonies in the 1780s. He handwrote the recipe and experts say there were only ten of them, one of which made its way to the Library of Congress. If you flip the paper over, he had a cookie recipe on the back.

### City Meeting

Parks and Rec Commission will be meeting this coming Tuesday, July 27, via ZOOM at 7 pm maybe just one more time due to more time needed to repair air conditioning issues. In August, City staff is hopeful to return all city meetings to inside the City Council Chambers at 600 East A Street, across from the new John Knight Middle School athletic field.

### Plunge Into Pool

Bring the family and take the plunge! The City of Dixon Recreation Department announces Rec Swim is back starting Saturday, July 31 from 11 am to 2 pm.

All children under 14 years of age must have a parent present with them on the pool deck. All non-swimmers must be within arm’s reach of an adult. Participants must pass a swim test to use the diving board. Cost is \$3.50 for Youth under 18, \$5 for adults, and \$3.50 for seniors.

Don’t think of bringing pool toys though as they are not allowed. Also, the other standard no-nos are: Glass, alcohol, smoking or vaping. For more information, contact ageorge@cityofdixon.us or call (707) 678-7441.

### COVID Vaccines

COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective and safe at protecting people from getting sick. The more individuals get vaccinated, the closer we get to progressing beyond this pandemic. And, the more people are vaccinated in any given setting, the safer that setting becomes.

For more information, visit: [www.solanocounty.com/covidvaccine](http://www.solanocounty.com/covidvaccine) or [www.myturn.ca.gov](http://www.myturn.ca.gov) or [www.vaccines.gov](http://www.vaccines.gov)

### Pardi Continues

In case you were wondering why the corner of the center of town was closed up again, it’s because the City has begun Phase 2 of Pardi Market construction. The parking is impacted so consider that when doing business downtown.

Barring adverse weather or unforeseen conditions the scheduled work should be complete by November 13, of this year. Regular construction working hours will be between the hours of 7:30 am and 5 pm weekdays, except holidays.

### Fundraiser Dinner

Tickets are now available for the American Legion Post 208 and North Bay Operation Hand Up fundraiser dinner on Saturday, September 25. This is to benefit the North Bay Stand Down for homeless Veterans and our local Veterans Building Post 208.

Dinner will be a choice of Tri-tip or Chicken with all the fixings. There will be no-host cocktails at 5 pm and dinner will be served at 6 pm at the Dixon Veterans Memorial Building, 1305 North First Street.

Cost will be \$45 per couple or \$25 per person or you can purchase a table of eight for \$160. There is also a raffle planned. For purchase of tickets, come by the hall on Fridays from 4 to 8 pm or call or text Leah Marlin at (530) 304-5385. ★



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# Sen. Dodd’s Broadband Connectivity Bill Advances

By Paul Payne,  
Office of Senator Bill Dodd

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Legislation from Sen. Bill Dodd, D-Napa, that would greatly improve internet connectivity by removing local government roadblocks to the expansion of broadband service – especially in low-income and underserved communities – passed its final policy committee on its way to the Assembly floor.

“Californians are now a step closer gaining more reliable and equitable access to high-speed internet service,” Sen. Dodd said. “This is so important when families are relying more on the internet for remote school and work. I applaud committee members for taking this action to remove unnecessary delays and help close the digital divide.”

The approval of Senate Bill 556, or the California Connectivity Act, follows the recent passage of the state’s \$262.6 billion budget, which includes \$6 billion for broadband expansion. SB 556 would make high-speed internet more widely available for schools and businesses by removing local discretion to put hurdles before small cell deployment – something that is critical for reliable high-speed internet. It builds on existing law setting timelines and reasonable fees for processing and approving broadband projects.

The bill was introduced as employers and schools across the state have shifted to virtual participation, highlighting disparities of access faced by low-income

families and people of color. Nearly 42% of California families said unreliable internet access was a challenge for them during distance learning according to a recent poll by Ed Source and FM3 Research.

Sen. Dodd’s proposal is widely supported by businesses, schools and equity groups. It passed the Assembly Communications and Conveyance committee with overwhelming support. The bill, previously approved by the full Senate, will now go to Assembly Appropriations before a final vote on the Assembly floor.

“SB 556 is long-term solution to remove barriers and expand deployment of wireless infrastructure, ensuring that families have options in affordability and service for accessing education, health and more,” said Sara Bachez of the California Association of School Business Officials. “This critical legislation will help school districts across California increase broadband access and services for students, families and staff as we continue to provide online learning opportunities.”

“This bill provides a framework for 5G deployment for the benefit of both our community as well as the overall state of California,” wrote the leaders of Tech Latino, a network of 15 nonprofit advocacy groups, in a support letter. “We would like to ensure that Latinos will be a part of the smart and connected society of the future. We strongly support enactment of SB 556 to ensure the efficient deployment of the next generation of wireless infrastructure.” ★

# Flourishing Fields for Now

Continued from page 1  
on gravel road.

My truck 'washboards' until I hit 30 miles per hour just like my son, who grew up on a farm, told me it would. Washboarding is when the vehicle vibrates with the undulations of the gravel. But, he didn't tell me it would fishtail when I braked for a stop sign.

The ditch on the left of me is full of water. I remember the many stories of people killed on these roads because they don't respect the whole equation of ditches, shoulder-less strips of worn asphalt, blind intersections, and swift changes to gravel.

For me, a turn on Hyde Road is a peaceful drive and I spot a large white crane standing at the edge of a small bluff.

A bright red tractor to my left grades a dirt strip around more sunflowers. I found what I was looking for and now the trip back into town provides almond orchards--a crop that was number one for Solano County in 2019, edged out one year by landscape plants but consistently at the top in Solano County



Red tomatoes peek out from under their lush green vines on the corner of West A Street and Pedrick Road. Tomatoes, another top growing crop in Solano County, are going into harvest season and Dixon will experience numerous haulers on the roads over the next few weeks loaded full of the bright red orbs. Photo by Debra Dingman

Ag reports just as tomatoes do.

A small flock of little black birds zip along the side of my truck as if they are racing what they think is an extra large crane. I pass so many fields with an amazing plethora of crops, orchards, and cattle but I know we have an Alpaca farm somewhere and now I know about a fish farm.

A field trip to the rural areas around Dixon will show one why Solano County ranked 27th out of California's 58 counties in agricultural production. We also ranked second in the production of Sudan grass and third in sheep and lamb, according to the County's website. It would also serve as a reminder to respect Dixon's strong agricultural heritage while we can. ★

# Parkway Gets a Date!

Continued from page 1  
This would be in addition to (1) Agency Collaboration/Regional Support, (2) Prepare Parkway Blvd. Project to State of Readiness, and (3) Obtaining Project Funding.

She gave a PowerPoint presentation showing the original cost estimate in 2016 was \$15.8 million. Then, allowing the cost index of 40 percent increase during 2015-2018 with 62 percent increase in 2019 and pending revised design and updated cost index, that budget jumped much more. There is a current projected shortfall of \$5M to \$9M. That is assuming local impact fees are increased and acquired for the current projected southern development (Parklane, Valley Glen, and Homestead.) And, that is also assuming Regional Transportation

Impact Fees are obtained for existing and future southern developments, she said.

The timetable is this:

January - March 2022: Bid Process - Construction of Western Embankment  
May - October 2022: Construction of Western Embankment  
July - Complete 100% Plans/Specs/Estimate based on re-design.  
2023-2025 - Completion of Construction (pending funding.)  
In another action at the City Council Meeting, the

Councilman approved the reclassification of the Deputy Public Works Director to a Public Works Director position and approved the appointment of Louren Kotow.

“She has been operating at a very high level which warranted giving her an interim position which she has done successfully and performed admirably,” City Manager Jim Lindley said. Her starting annual pay will be \$150,000 and there is a built in 5 percent raise at one year and an additional 5 percent the following year. Between Senior Civil Engineer Barr and the financial expertise of Public Works Director Kotow, Parkway Boulevard will happen as they say in 2025. Keep your mechanical pencils crossed. ★

# Get the Scoop

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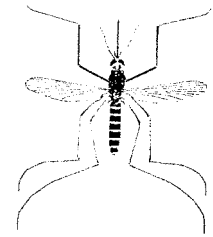
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TYPE OF SOURCE	WHAT TO DO...
Leaking faucets and broken pipes:	Repair or replace defective parts immediately.
Water under buildings:	Install sump pump and provide drainage if possible.
Roof gutters:	Maintain roof gutters and down spouts clear of debris.
Septic tanks:	Seal and cover all openings and screen vents.
Impounded water:	Fill if possible or provide adequate drainage.
Flower pots:	Drain-off excess water or invert if not in use.
Swimming pools & Hot tubs:	Use filter and skimmer daily to remove egg rafts and larvae. Chlorine will not kill mosquito larvae. Provide drainage for filter and sump pumps. When not in use, cover tightly.
Wading pools:	Change water weekly. When not in use turn upside down.
Swimming pool covers:	Tighten cover to prevent sagging.
Ornamental ponds:	Stock with mosquito fish and remove excess vegetation such as leaves, and thin pond lilies occasionally. Maintain even water level. Screen inlet on recirculation pump. When cleaning pond, transfer to glass bowl - chlorine kills fish. If pond is no longer desired, make holes in bottom and fill with dirt or sand.
Bird baths:	Change water frequently, preferably every 2-3 days
Lawns:	Avoid over watering.
Tree holes:	Fill with a polymer such as Soil Moist or Broadleaf P4 granules which absorb water - can last for years, available at garden supply stores, sand or dirt, drain if possible - when in doubt, call a tree surgeon.
Water troughs:	Change water weekly or stock with mosquito fish.
Boats:	Use a water tight cover or store upside down.
Containers:	Dispose of all unused containers that can collect rain or irrigation water such as tin cans, jars, barrels, buckets, old tires and tubs. Gardening containers such as vases and buckets should be stored upside down.

**Solano County Mosquito Abatement District**  
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# CONVERSATIONS

## Is it Pardi Market Plaza or Party Market Place?

By Shirley Humphrey

The Pardi Market Site at First and A Streets was part of the city’s Redevelopment Plan. When the Redevelopment Program was dismantled, the city decided to turn the city-owned lot into a focal downtown parking lot.

In 2016 it was proposed that the plaza have the following amenities: parking, environmentally low-impact features, a special event venue, sound walls, and associated utilities.

Currently, the city is working on Phase II which will consist of a bandstand and more trees. The city claimed that citizen participation was vital to the design process. Theoretically there is an opportunity to share suggestions at public meetings and thorough comments on the city’s web site.

While the design may be complete, citizen input is vital in terms of mitigating impacts, particularly related to special events.

The city council should schedule a public meeting to explain where visitors and residents will park for large events, to the extent that “large” events could fit or would be proposed at the busy, loud intersection.

Now that we are in districts, and residents have a district representative working for them, we should at least see representatives holding meetings with the folks in their district so they can understand how the residents who will be affected feel. That would be Dist. 4 Rep Don Hendershot.

Let’s assume hundreds of folks attend a music event hosted at the lot. What are the plans for parking? Will the downtown area be labeled as “permit” parking during Pardi Market Plaza events so that only residents can park in their area? And if not, what level of parking trade-offs are downtown residents inherently willing to take

on as they live within walking distance of the hopefully-one-day bustling downtown business district? Downtown Davis, for example, issues special parking permits for residents in their downtown.

Many areas in the downtown area could be available for nearby parking. For example,

--The May Fair Parking lot  
--The old City Hall building, now Dixon Family Services, during its non-business hours.

--The Anderson School, now the new Knight Middle School parking lot.

Concurrently the city could move forward with an ordinance to prohibit parking in the downtown residential areas during events, as some downtown residents have suggested. The streets could be posted with “Permit Parking Only.”

Then one must ask who will be hosting these events? As a pure music venue, the site, even as proposed, will leave much to be desired due to its exposure (next to a state highway) and noise pollution.

If non-profits want to host community events there quarterly or annually, will they be able to sell alcohol? (the life-blood of event fundraising). If they are allowed, will they be forced to buy outrageously expensive permits to do so on public property and end up competing with local bars struggling to get by?

Will local nonprofits be encouraged or discouraged by the price tags associated with holding events in the \$4 million lot? Who will pay for police services, insurance, and traffic or parking direction? It is important for the City Council to set policies for how to deal with these things ahead of time so that there is fairness in the permitting process and not a “case by case” mess and claims of unequal protection by various event hosts. ★

## Not A Warm Welcome



Vandals are at it again at the new Homestead Development between North Lincoln and Pitt School Roads, shattering the glass on barn lanterns hung above the rustic words 'Homestead,' marring pedestrian crossing signs with bright pink paint, and stealing the large metal letter 'H' on the welcome signs this past couple weeks. Officer David Thompson who cruises by regularly said there had not been an “uptick in crime in that area” but that could be because each of the Realtors handling the home sales thought someone else was calling in the trouble or hadn’t noticed. “It’s frustrating,” said Realtor Rick Plaster for Richmond-American Homes who did notice and said large rocks have been thrown by vandals through expensive windows in their area. Although he’s sure the wayward humans will calm down when people move in, they are now considering installing cameras like they have in their other communities that set high up and catch everything, he said. Photos by Debra Dingman

## Young Reader Enjoys Dixon Newspaper



When her grandparents from Oregon visited Dixon recently, 3-year-old Ayla Power was much more interested in the newspaper they had picked up, the Dixon Independent Voice. Her Dad is a contractor and that edition featured the beautifully restored McCune Mansion on the front page. Coincidence? We think not. Photo by Carolyn Ferguson

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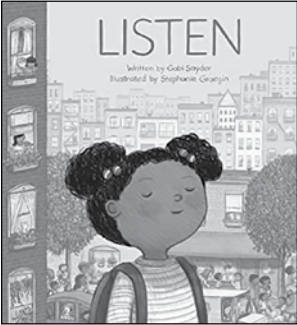




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# Summer Adventures: Listen and Explore



**Listen**  
*by Gabi Snyder,*  
*illustrated by*  
*Stephanie Graegin*

Sometimes all we can hear is the noisy world rushing by, but what if we stop and listen? What sounds can you hear? Can you hear a bird’s caw, a distant hello, or foot-steps on the pavement? When it is really quiet, can you hear the sounds of words? Do the words make you feel happy or even sad? Most importantly, can you hear the voice inside you?

In a world that is quickly racing all around us, *Listen* takes a moment to celebrate slowing down and listening to the world around us. Delicate, beautiful, and calming, this story is the perfect celebration of all the types of listening and the responses our body has to them.



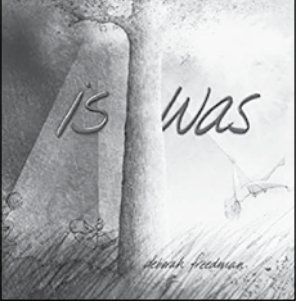
**Chirp! Chipmunk Sings to a Friend**  
*by Jamie A. Swenson and Scott Magoon*

Chipmunk longs for a friend and spends her days chirping out a song. Her rock is a great listener, but not the kind of friend who

will sing with her. So, Chipmunk heads off to find a friend. Along the way, she encounters loneliness and defeat but continues to sing.

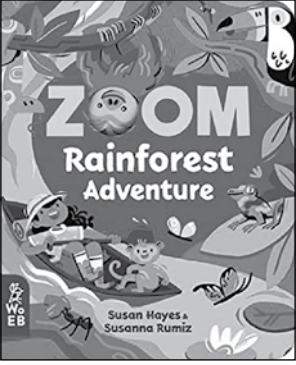
Will Chipmunk find the friend she has been searching for?

In a heartwarming story of perseverance and friendship, Chirp delivers a charming, sweet story and shows the rewards of true friendship and never giving up.



**Is Was**  
*by Deborah Freedman*

Readers can capture the beauty of nature’s transformation through is and was. Stunning watercolor art stretches across each page, showing how easy nature changes the colors and sounds of the day. Paired with simple text, teaching past and present tense will have young readers listening, looking, and learning.

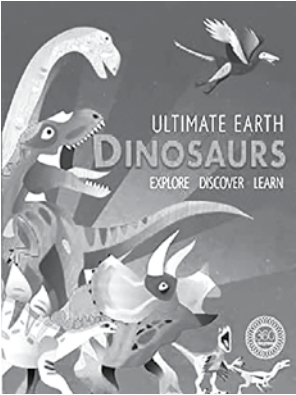


**Zoom Rainforest Adventure**  
*by Susan Hayes and Susanna Ruiz*

Follow Lin as she takes you on a

rainforest adventure. Paddle down the Amazon River and trek through the trees to see what animals you can find. With cutout shapes and surprises at every turn, young readers will be able to discover everything the Amazon has to offer. There is a whole world waiting to be explored from toucans, monkeys, butterflies, snakes, and jaguars.

*Zoom Rainforest Adventures* is a colorful board book adventure for any curious child. With interactive pages, cut-outs, pop-ups, and over 25 different animals and insects, there is something to be discovered on every page.



**Ultimate Earth: Dinosaurs**  
*by Miranda Baker and Amanda Shufflebotham*

Explore the world of Dinosaurs with colorful illustrations, facts and lift the flaps. From the Biggest Beasts to the Fast and Furious and even the Weirdly Wonderful, each page is an explosion of exciting facts. A completely interactive book with surprises on every page, any young dinosaur enthusiast will be thrilled to add this to their library. ★



## Broadband Access is Crucial to Success of Farm Technology

Farmers and ranchers are increasingly adopting technology designed to improve their understanding of crop and soil conditions and run their businesses more efficiently. The challenge is that, in many rural areas of the state and the country, broadband access is spotty – if it’s even available. That affects not only farming, but rural residents’ access to health care and education. State and federal leaders are working on ways to help fill the gaps.

## State Almond Crop to Drop from Record High

The 2021 California almond crop is expected to produce 2.8 billion pounds, a 10% decrease from last year’s record crop of 3.1 billion pounds, according to a survey of state almond growers. This is due in part to the ongoing drought and record-high temperatures in June. Popular for snacking, as an ingredient or made into almond flour or almond butter, almonds remain in high demand throughout the U.S. and the world. California farmers grow about 80% of the world’s almonds.

## Grants will help Prepare more Teachers in Food and Agricultural Sciences

New federal grants will help teachers across the country integrate food and agricultural sciences into their classes. Funds will also encourage students to explore career paths in food and agriculture and help them find mentors. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has invested \$6.2 million in these professional-development agriculture grants for teachers in kindergarten through grade 14.

## Rural Areas Will Receive Water-System Upgrades

Residents of San Andreas will soon get an upgrade to the area’s 40-year-old water-supply system, thanks to loans and grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This project will resolve an issue with high arsenic levels dating back to 2011. The USDA is investing \$307 million to modernize rural drinking water and wastewater infrastructure in 34 states and Puerto Rico, as part of the largest investment in clean drinking water in American history. ★



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# “Roaring Back” is just a Campaign Slogan, Not Reality



**By Dan Walters**  
**CALMatters**

Virtually every day, Gov. Gavin Newsom shows up someplace in California to proclaim, for the umpteenth time, that the state is “roaring back” from the COVID-19 pandemic.

These highly orchestrated events are billed as official state business, but in fact are merely political campaign appearances aimed at persuading voters to support him in the Sept. 14 recall election, mostly by touting one of the multi-billion-dollar giveaways in his new state budget.

“As the state comes roaring back from the pandemic, we’re laser-focused on getting this assistance out the door as quickly as possible and providing supports across the board to help Californians get back on their feet,” Newsom said at a stop in Southern California last week to highlight a new program to pay overdue rent.

One could conclude that Newsom, in parceling out cash from an unexpected windfall of revenue, is trying to buy votes with taxpayer money.

There are three troubling aspects to that self-serving effort.

One is that blatant campaigning under the guise of

official business is unsavory. While not uncommon in other states, until now California governors have been fairly meticulous about separating official business from their re-election campaign events.

The second is that in spending so much money so quickly Newsom may be endangering the state’s fiscal health. His predecessor, Jerry Brown, who preached frugality and was wary of launching new programs that could mushroom out of control, warned of the danger in a television interview this month.

Brown said the state faces “fiscal stress” in the years ahead as revenues return to more normal levels. “The word is volatility,” Brown said. “Money comes and money goes. The federal government is going deeper into debt, they are spending money wildly. The state is now spending money. It is not sustainable.”

Brown noted that the state is highly dependent on a relative handful of high-income taxpayers for its revenue, saying, “the growing utter inequality of the economy because the rich people make so damn much money and California happens to tax the rich people disproportionately... we need a more frugal, sustainable, more prudent way of doing business.”

Finally, Newsom’s “roaring back” mantra sidesteps the state’s very real socioeconomic problems which, if anything, have worsened during the pandemic. California still has one of the nation’s highest unemployment rates with well over a million jobless workers.

We had the nation’s highest level of poverty before the pandemic and it has surely increased.

The major factor in California’s high poverty is the state’s very high cost of living, particularly for housing, but for other necessities as well, such as gasoline and utilities.

Newsom has offered only token and/or short-term responses to those costs, such as rental and utility bill assistance and cash payments to low-income families that probably, as Brown warns, cannot be sustained.

The state’s housing shortage continues to put upward pressure on rents and home prices and the \$3.5 billion that Newsom’s new budget contains for affordable housing would build fewer than 10,000 units in a state that’s at least 80,000 units short of meeting its own housing quotas each year.

The key to the housing dilemma is making California more attractive for private investment, but Newsom and legislators have ducked the difficult policy choices to encourage such investment, such as reforming the California Environmental Quality Act and rebuffing efforts by construction unions to claim jurisdiction on housing projects.

California will be truly roaring back when unemployment decreases, housing construction increases, the poverty rate declines, and educational achievement rises. Until then, it’s just a campaign slogan.

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



**Joe Biden’s Afghan Withdrawal Folly**

Barely a day passes without additional news of Taliban gains in Afghanistan.

Perhaps the Afghan government and its forces will prove more resilient than many expect, but if the country continues its slide toward chaos or, worse, the Taliban rapidly take Kabul, President Joe Biden’s decision to withdraw a residual U.S. force will look like an amateurish, unforced error by a man who prides himself on his foreign policy experience and acumen.

With his top military leadership opposed and credible warnings that Kabul could fall within months after a withdrawal, Biden went ahead with it anyway on the basis of what an aide has called “his gut.”

So far, indications are that the president would have been better off heeding his military advisers than his viscera.

The Afghan war has, of course, stretched on for two decades and become a holding action satisfying to no one. But the cost to the U.S. of sustaining 3,500 troops in the country without losing anyone in combat for more than a year hasn’t been high compared with the entirely plausible downside of Islamist extremists allied with al-Qaeda sweeping to power

again in Afghanistan.

The desire to pull out of Afghanistan has been an area of rare Biden-Trump agreement. Then-President Donald Trump’s foolhardy ceasefire deal with the Taliban in February 2020 set the predicate for Biden’s withdrawal. It would have taken some determination for Biden to reverse the U.S. promise in that deal to withdraw its forces by May 2021, although the Taliban’s transparent bad faith provided plenty of occasion for it.

Biden says not to worry. The U.S. will continue to provide “over the horizon” support, i.e., from a distance, for the Afghan government.

This is likely a pipe dream, and nothing about Biden’s poorly thought-out drawdown lends any more credibility to it.

The CIA has been struggling to figure out how to maintain intelligence-gathering capabilities in Afghanistan. There will be no targets to strike from “over the horizon” if we don’t have the assets on the ground to find them.

Ideally, the U.S. would locate some other base next door to Afghanistan, but there are no good options in the neighborhood.

Conducting operations from the Persian Gulf eight hours away isn’t much of a substitute. In congressional testimony, Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, the head of Central Command, said the long-distance missions would be “extremely difficult to do,” but “not impossible.”

The U.S. withdrawal has had other troubling loose ends.

The contractors who

have worked with the Afghan Air Force to maintain its planes are leaving, too, potentially stripping Afghan forces of air support.

The fate of the Afghans who have assisted U.S. forces is uncertain, although under political pressure here at home, Biden has committed to getting them out.

Biden wants to provide \$3 billion in security assistance to the Afghans, but who will do the training with that money?


The allies are leaving, with the administration anxious to get the Turks to stay to secure Kabul International Airport, without which we won’t be able to maintain our embassy.

As the bad news has piled up, the Biden administration has tried to provide reassuring signals. But are the Afghans, and the Taliban, not supposed to notice that nearly all of his forces have already withdrawn?

One justification for leaving is that it will free up resources for us to concentrate on the growing threat from China. It’s not as though the 3,000 ground troops are going to relocate to East Asia, though, and make a difference in the balance of power there. On top of this, if there is an unraveling in Afghanistan, controlling the fallout will become a consuming issue for the U.S. military.

Biden has gotten his drawdown. Now, he may reap the whirlwind.

*Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review. (c) 2021 by King Features Synd., Inc. ★*



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# CLG NEWS UPDATES

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**Twitter sees jump in government demands to remove content of reporters, news outlets** | 14 July 2021 | Twitter Inc saw a surge in government demands world-wide in 2020 to take down content posted by journalists and news outlets, according to data released by the social media platform. In its transparency report published on Wednesday, Twitter said verified accounts of 199 journalists and news outlets on its platform faced 361 legal demands from governments to remove content in the second half of 2020, up 26% from the first half of the year.

**FBI Tells Americans to Report 'Family Members and Peers' in Tweet, Gets Blowback** | 12 July 2021 | The FBI is receiving criticism for a tweet it posted on July 11 that suggests Americans should monitor "family members and peers" for signs of "mobilization to violence" and report "suspicious behaviors" in an effort to prevent extremist activities. "Family members and peers are often best positioned to witness signs of mobilization to violence. Help prevent homegrown violent extremism. Visit [here] to learn how to spot suspicious behaviors and report them to the #FBI," the tweet read. It also included two photos of an individual highlighted in red accessing a computer... Rep. Dan Bishop (R-Texas) wrote: "These people protected Hillary, abused NSA surveillance databases against Americans, used known, unreliable DNC-funded propaganda to spy on Trump, perpetuated the Russia hoax, & lied to the FISC repeatedly. And now they tell you that you should spy on your family."

**Parents Sue City of Washington, D.C., for Vaccinating Minors Without Parental Consent** | 14 July 2021 | A recent District of Columbia law, the D.C. Minor Consent for Vaccinations Amendment Act of 2020, allows kids aged 11 and up to get any vaccine recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), including COVID shots, without parental consent or knowledge. The bill passed the D.C. Council on a 10-3 vote last November, and was signed into law by Mayor Muriel Bowser (D) in December. It went into effect on March 19, 2021. On Monday, the Children's Health Defense (CHD) and the Parental Rights Foundation filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for D.C., seeking a court order to rule the law unconstitutional.

**CDC sued for withholding records between top personnel and teachers' unions on school reopenings - The CDC allegedly failed to 'completely fulfill' the records request** | 15 July 2021 | A watchdog group is suing the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention over its failure to produce communications between top agency brass and teachers' unions over school reopenings. Americans for Public Trust (APT), a D.C.-based ethics nonprofit, filed suit Thursday after failing to receive complete records the group says could show "undue political influence" of outside groups over the CDC's decision-making process shaping its school reopening guidance. "A few months back, Americans for Public Trust requested documents from the CDC. However, the CDC released only a handful of pages out of hundreds of documents received," said Caitlin Sutherland, executive director of APT. "And that small portion revealed the teachers' unions influenced the CDC to keep our schools closed."

**Three Countries on Earth Declined the COVID Vax. All Three of Their Presidents Are Now Dead** | 10 July 2021 | There are only three countries on this planet whose government officials refused to accept the COVID-19 vaccine from the World Health Organization: Burundi, Tanzania, and Haiti. The officials in those countries who declined the vax were presidents in each of those countries. In Burundi, it was President Pierre Nkurunziza. In Tanzania, it was President John Magufuli. In Haiti, it was President Jovenel Moïse. All three of those presidents are now dead. To many people, their deaths look like murder; although the one in Haiti was straight-up murder, he was assassinated by men with guns.

**AZ Audit Finds 74,000 Ballots Returned and Counted in 2020 Election with No Record of Being Sent** | 15 July 2021 | Audit expert Doug Logan noted that the auditors reported that there were 74,000 ballots that were received and included in the 2020 Election in Maricopa County, Arizona, that were never mailed. Logan reported this along with other issues already identified per their work. 74,243 mail-in ballots found where there is NO clear record of them ever being sent. ★

## Child Tax Credits are Coming, and so are the Scammers

By Alma Galvan, Sacramento Better Business Bureau

**OAKLAND, CA (MPG)** - As of July 15 and through December 15, if you qualify for payments through the American Rescue Plan Act, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced it is sending monthly payments direct deposit, paper checks, or through debit cards. These payments are an advance on the child tax credit, which means eligible people will get up to half of their child tax credit in these monthly payments and the other half when they file their 2021 taxes. You can go to IRS.gov to see who qualifies, how much you may receive, and how to address any problems. You will also have the option of unenrolling from the Advance payments program.

According to the Federal Trade Commission, when it comes to the government being in the news, the scammers will likely use their standard playbook, meaning impostor scams may appear, with con artists pretending to "help" you get your

payments earlier, get more money, or commit identity theft.

**BBB and the FTC share these tips:**  
Avoid Impostor scams - Government agencies like the IRS or Social Security Administration will not call, text, DM, or email you; Do not give out any personal information, like social security numbers, bank account information, or credit/debit card numbers; Eligibility requirements and payment disbursements are monitored by the IRS only; When someone is requiring payments by gift card, wire transfers, or cryptocurrency, it is likely a scam.

**For More Information:** Learn more tips on how to avoid scams by reading 10 Steps to avoid scams. If you have been the victim of this or another scam, make others aware by filing a report on BBB.org/ScamTracker.

You can also report scams to the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

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The Registrant commenced to transact business under the above business name on: N/A  
This Business is Conducted by: an Individual

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Publish: July 16, 23, 30 & August 6, 2021 (The DIXON INDEPENDENT VOICE)

## New Home Sales Becoming More Seasonal but Still above Average



**Demand for new homes in the Sacramento region remains extremely strong but it appears that sales are beginning to settle into a more normal seasonal pattern.** MPG file photo

By John Frith, The Write Stuff Communications

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - New home sales in the greater Sacramento region remained robust in June as 625 homes were sold, the North State Building Industry Association reported. However, that figure was lower than the 655 sales reported in 2020 -- the first time since May 2020 that sales were lower than in the same month the year before.

Michael LaFortune, the BIA's 2021 Chairman, said it appears the market is returning to a more normal pattern after the tremendous increase in sales during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Demand for new homes in the Sacramento region remains extremely strong but it appears that sales are beginning to settle into a more normal seasonal pattern, unlike the sharp jump that occurred during the second half of 2020," La Fortune said. "June's sales were slightly lower than they were last year, but still well above the monthly average for June."

Since 1997, an average of 392 new homes were sold in June in the region, including Sacramento, Placer, El Dorado, Yolo, Sutter, Yuba and Nevada counties. This year's June total was lower than sales in January through April and slightly higher than in May -- a more normal seasonal pattern than found last year when sales dropped off sharply during the early stages of the pandemic but then hit totals during the latter part of the year not reached since the early 2000s housing boom.

North State CEO Michael Strech said while the economy is beginning to return to normal as pandemic restrictions are eased or lifted, the sales numbers show that there is still a strong demand for new homes in the region, which give families the space and amenities they're looking for.

He cautioned that supply constraints, similar to those being faced in many industries, are causing some delays in construction but that builders are working hard to address them and to keep buyers fully informed of any issues.

And he again called on local governments to take a hard look at the high level of development fees that are ultimately paid by new-home buyers.

"The fee study we released last month shows that government fees average \$95,000 per home in our area -- \$40,000 more than comparable fees in the Central Valley and the Inland Empire region in Southern California. We are continuing to work closely with local officials around the region to find ways to reduce these fees and still ensure that new communities include needed amenities."

The North State BIA is the leading advocate for the home building industry in the greater Sacramento region. Representing more than 500 members who provide 55,000 industry jobs, the North State BIA is committed to preserving and furthering the economic interests of its members, while also working to enhance the industry's standing as a significant contributor to the regional economy. For more information, visit [www.northstatebia.org](http://www.northstatebia.org). ★

## Motorists Cut Driving Nearly in Half

By Sergio Avila, AAA

**WALNUT CREEK, CA (MPG)** - New research from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety's New American Driving Survey (2020) showed the average number of all daily car trips at the start of the pandemic dropped by 45% as COVID-19 and associated restrictions led to a drastic drop in road travel. Daily trips rebounded in May and June but remained 20-25% below their 2019 levels during the remainder of 2020.

According to the research in April 2020: Trips by all modes of transportation plunged by 40 percent; The average number of daily trips for all modes of transportation fell from 3.7 trips per day (2019) to 2.2 trips.

**Other key findings:**  
**Daily Car trips:** Fell from 3.2 pre-pandemic to 1.8 in April 2020, before rebounding slightly to 2.6 trips for the rest of 2020; **Travel by Urban Areas:** Daily trips dropped 42% (compared to 25% for those living in Suburban areas), before leveling off to a 20%-30% reduction; Travel by transit, taxi, or rideshare: The proportion of people who reported making any trips by transit, taxi, or rideshare plummeted from 5.5% pre-pandemic to 1.7% in April of 2020, before leveling off at approximately 2.4% for the remainder of the year; **Commuter Travel:** Work-related travel by all transportation modes dropped by 40% in April 2020, likely reflecting a mix of layoffs, job losses, and telecommuting. Commuting trips made by workers on days when they worked decreased by approximately 22%. For the remainder of the year, commuting trips were approximately 26% below pre-pandemic levels.

**Car fatalities rise despite less travel in 2020**  
Despite fewer cars on the road and more people staying home, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recently estimated that 38,680 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2020 — an increase of about 7.2% over 2019 and the largest projected number of fatalities since 2007.  
The most recent AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety Traffic Safety Culture Index (TSCI) found that drivers perceive distracted, aggressive and impaired driving as



**The average number of all daily car trips at the start of the pandemic dropped by 45% as COVID-19 and associated restrictions led to a drastic drop in road travel.** Photo by Vincent Gerbounin

dangerous. Yet, many drivers admitted to engaging in at least one of these behaviors in the 30 days prior to the survey.

"As the U.S. climbs out of the COVID-19 pandemic, highway safety officials will need to double down on curbing speeding, substance-impaired driving, and failure to buckle up," said Sergio Avila, AAA Northern California spokesperson.

AAA urges drivers to keep everyone safe on the roads and warns drivers against falling back into bad driving habits.

Methodology: This study examined data from the AAA Foundation's New American Driving Survey (New ADS), which surveys a representative sample of U.S. residents ages 16 years or older to collect detailed information about all of the travel they did on the day before the interview. The current study examines the mean daily number of trips made by U.S. residents each month among 7,873 respondents who were interviewed between July 1, 2019 (start of data collection for the New ADS) and December 31, 2020. In the New ADS, a trip refers to any travel from one place to another.

About the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety: Established in 1947 by AAA, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety is a nonprofit, publicly funded, 501(c)(3) charitable research and educational organization. The AAA Foundation's mission is to prevent traffic deaths and injuries by researching their causes and by educating the public about strategies to prevent crashes and reduce injuries when they do occur. ★



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**Crossword Puzzle on Page 7**

E	C	A	S	H		P	A	L		C	U	B	E
M	E	R	C	Y		O	B	I		H	O	R	U
S	P	I	R	E		S	A	M		A	R	G	O
	S	L	I	N	K	Y		B	A	R	N	E	Y
		P	A	Y		I	O	T	A				
B	O	P		S	O	F	T		E	S	C	H	E
E	A	R	S		T	O	A	D		S	H	A	M
A	T	O	P		O	W	L	E	T		A	V	O
R	E	V	U	P		L	I	A	R		R	E	T
S	N	O	R	E	S		A	R	U	M		L	E
			S	H	U	N		E	E	L			
		S	T	R	E	E	T		A	R	C	A	D
W	H	E	A	T		I	T	D		C	R	A	P
A	O	R	T	A		C	O	D		A	C	H	E
G	E	M	S			A	M	Y		S	H	L	E

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**Sudoku Puzzle on Page 7**

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

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6. Pen  
9. \*Rubik's  
13. Bryan Stevenson's "Just  
14. \*\_\_\_\_\_-Wan Kenobi  
15. Egyptian falcon-headed deity  
16. Top of a steeple  
17. \*\_\_\_\_\_-I-Am"  
18. Vernacular  
19. "Walking" spring toy  
21. \*Purple dinosaur  
23. Foot the bill  
24. Smidgen  
25. \*KIDZ  
28. Like a mattress?  
30. Stay clear of  
35. \*Dumbo's were huge  
37. \*Arnold Lobel's "Frog and  
39. Emotional punishment  
40. At the summit of  
41. Young hooter  
43. Shakespeare's hometown river  
44. Increase rpms (2 words)  
46. \*Pinocchio or Baron Munchausen, e.g.  
47. Retired, shortened  
48. Soft palate vibrations  
50. Bob of the boxing world  
52. Bovine hangout  
53. Give the cold shoulder  
55. Unagi on sushi menu  
57. \*Place called Sesame  
60. \*Place for Pong and Pac-Man  
63. Semolina source  
64. It would  
66. Mourning fabric  
68. Arterial blood vessel  
69. Atlantic catch  
70. Partner of pains  
71. Emeralds and rubies  
72. \*One of "Little Women"  
73. Haul something heavy  
DOWN  
1. German river  
2. Large edible mushroom, pl.  
3. Seed covering  
4. Substitute for tender  
5. \*Shenzi, Banzai and Ed in "Lion King"  
6. \*One in a pocketful  
7. Lawyers' league  
8. Horizontal bar dance  
9. It's knee high by the Fourth of July?  
10. Strong desire  
11. Channel marker  
12. Eastern Standard Time  
15. What bullies do  
20. City in Japan  
22. Past tense of eat  
24. Popular salad dressing  
25. \*Winnie and Paddington  
26. Derived from oats  
27. Utah city  
29. Thanksgiving turkey, e.g.  
31. Burn to a crisp  
32. Václav of Czechoslovakia  
33. Be theatrical  
34. \*One of the Darling children  
36. Horse prod  
38. Letter opener  
42. More true  
45. Bygone Spanish money  
49. "He said, \_\_\_\_ said"  
51. Place that attracts visitors, pl.  
54. Ancient city in Africa  
56. Cooler clime conifer  
57. \*"One, two, buckle my \_\_\_\_"  
58. Four years in the White House, e.g.  
59. \*\_\_\_\_ of NIMH"  
60. \*\_\_\_\_ Walker, American Girl  
61. \*"Matilda" and "The Gremlins" author  
62. \*"The Three Musketeers" sword  
63. Tail action  
65. \*Huck's friend  
67. Sixth sense

**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				
			23				24					
25	26	27		28		29		30		31	32	33
35		36		37		38		39				
40				41			42		43			
44				45		46			47			
48				49		50			51		52	
			53		54			55		56		
	57	58	59				60			61	62	
63					64	65			66			67
68					69				70			
71					72				73			

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**Solutions on Page 7**



# DWR to Use Airborne Technology to Map State’s Groundwater Basins

Department of Water Resources  
Press Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is using an innovative, helicopter-based technology to gather information about the state’s groundwater aquifer structure to support drought response and the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). DWR’s use of airborne electromagnetic (AEM) surveys advances Governor Newsom’s Water Resilience Portfolio goal of using technology to support the State’s understanding of groundwater resources. “The data collected during these surveys will provide a better understanding of California’s groundwater systems, and in turn support more informed and sustainable groundwater management and drought preparedness and response approaches,” said Steven Springhorn, DWR’s SGMA Technical Assistance Manager. Beginning this month, DWR will conduct AEM surveys of groundwater basins in the Salinas Valley, Paso Robles and Cuyama Valley. During the surveys, a

low-flying helicopter tows a large hoop with scientific equipment approximately 100 feet above the ground surface. The helicopter, flown by experienced and licensed pilots, will make several passes over the survey areas and may be visible to residents. Surveys will be conducted over the next several years in high- and medium-priority groundwater basins around the state, where data collection is feasible. Survey data creates an image of the subsurface down to a depth of about 1,000 feet below ground surface and provides information about large-scale aquifer structures and geology. This information supports the implementation of local groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs), which can help local agencies sustainably manage groundwater during drought. For more information, please watch DWR’s short 2-minute video on the introduction to the AEM method, provided in both English and Spanish. For more information about the AEM surveys, visit DWR’s AEM project website. For questions, please email AEM@water.ca.gov. For more information visit www.water.ca.gov/News/Blog



A Film and TV Review by Tim Riley

**“DR. DEATH” ON PEACOCK**  
The premise of many horror stories in film and television come from the active imaginations of talented writers, but sometimes the source material is based either on real life events or by conflating fiction with a measure of factual occurrences. As is the case with programs based on real events, Peacock’s “Dr. Death,” an eight-episode series on the terrifying true story of neurosurgeon Christopher Duntsch, notifies the viewer that certain parts have been fictionalized solely for dramatic purposes. In the case of Dr. Duntsch, once considered a rising star in the Dallas medical community who was building a flourishing neurosurgery practice, the awful truth of his malpractice is stranger and more frightening than fiction. An Internet search of Duntsch reveals many sordid details of his surgical errors and his ultimate fate. The telling of this story in dramatic form presents the viewer a series that is more disturbing and unnerving than a horror movie. Joshua Jackson’s Duntsch, who could boast that he mastered a medical degree as well as a PhD, is seen as charismatic and ostensibly brilliant as he promises patients with back and neck pain that he has pioneering ways to render them whole again. The opposite of his assurances to perform minimally invasive spine surgery and his claim that every surgery was perfect is revealed over a short period time to have resulted in 33 surgeries where the patient was either maimed or paralyzed and in a couple of cases died. As the victims pile up, two fellow physicians, neurosurgeon Robert Henderson (Alec Baldwin) and vascular surgeon Randall Kirby (Christian Slater), find themselves in the unenviable position of going up against a colleague. The limited series evolves in a non-linear manner, which requires the audience to keep up with the timeline but allows for flashbacks that unpeel the layers of Duntsch’s sociopathic history and the gall of his narcissistic and unfounded belief in his skills. In college, Duntsch was unable to grasp basic plays on the football team. As he made his way through medical school and his early career, he exuded an arrogance of confidence he could not back up. Duntsch possibly thought that as a surgeon he was the next Christiaan Barnard or that in his research he might be just as important as Madame Curie or Louis Pasteur. The truth of the matter is that his arrogance and malicious incompetence belied any measure of medical genius. Dr. Henderson, discreet and cautious, and Dr. Kirby, impetuous and bold, may be an odd couple offering up some comic relief

# Riley Reviews

## THE HORROR STORY OF “DR. DEATH” ARRIVES TWO WAYS ON PEACOCK

in their banter, but their dedication to stopping Duntsch gets an ally in equally dogged young prosecutor Michelle Shughart (AnnaSophia Robb). While watching many of Duntsch’s distressing surgeries and the resulting grief for the victims is deeply troubling, the emotional core of the story really belongs to the two doctors so excellently portrayed by Baldwin and Slater. In the end, viewers are left to ponder whether Duntsch was grossly incompetent or maliciously evil. We may never know for sure, but “Dr. Death” is a compelling story of a broken system that failed to protect the most vulnerable from an ego-driven sociopath. **“DR. DEATH: THE UNDOCTORED STORY” ON PEACOCK**  
The case of Dr. Duntsch is so unsettling that Peacock follows up its eight-episode series “Dr. Death” with the four-part docu-series “Dr. Death: The Undoctored Story” that starts streaming on Thursday, July 29th. The docuseries will offer audiences the chance to hear and see the whole story, told by the real people who survived it. Central figures to the doctor’s downfall are interviewed, so naturally that includes the real-life doctors Robert Henderson and Randall Kirby. On the legal end, the key player, assistant district attorney Michelle Shughart who had the most challenging task of convincing the jury to convict Dr. Duntsch for a life sentence, is also interviewed. Of course, the “Dr. Death” series prominently featured the two respected surgeons and the prosecutor, while the docuseries will also feature conversations with others closest to Duntsch and his criminal case. Shedding light on his relationship with the disgraced doctor would likely come from an interview with Jerry Summers, Duntsch’s best friend who was paralyzed following two surgeries. Wendy Young, the former stripper and ex-girlfriend of Duntsch and mother of his two sons, will offer her story. Both Summers and Young are portrayed by actors in the “Dr. Death” series. Meanwhile, “The Undoctored Story” brings others to light who were not portrayed by actors in the series. Dr. Joy Gathe-Ghermay was the anesthesiologist during Jerry Summer’s horrific surgery. Dr. Mark Hoyle, a Texas who physically tried to stop Duntsch during a surgery, and Tex Muse and Pamela Trusty, two of Duntsch’s victims, are also part of the program. Interestingly enough, the Duntsch story came to light in 2019 on Oxygen’s “License to Kill” series on an episode appropriately titled “Deadly God Complex,” in which Dr. Robert Henderson and Dr. Randall Kirby were featured for their perspectives.

# SCWA Rebates to Boost Water Efficiency

By Julie Roberts,  
Solano County Water Agency

**VACAVILLE, CA (MPG)** - The Solano County Water Agency (SCWA) Board of Directors met and discussed the many programs and rebates available to help our region’s water users conserve water. SCWA and partner agencies offer many rebates to help local residents and businesses use water efficiently amid a second consecutive dry year. Some of the many rebates available include: Smart sprinkler timers act like a thermostat for your sprinklers, turning them on and off according to weather conditions; Water-efficient landscape rebates provide cashback for replacing thirsty turf with beautiful, low-water plants; High-efficiency washing machines are

designed to get your clothes cleaner while saving both water and energy; Flume smart water sensors connect to your smart phone or tablet to detect leaks in your home and alert you if a hose or faucet has been left on; Pool covers which reduce water evaporation and keep backyard pools a welcoming temperature for swimming. “The extremely dry weather is a reminder that droughts are a part of life in California,” said Water Conservation Coordinator Andy Florendo. “Even small changes can help our homes and businesses use water more efficiently.” A complete list of rebates available for homes and businesses is available on the Solano County Water Agency website at https://www.scwa2.com/water-efficiency/rebates-programs/.



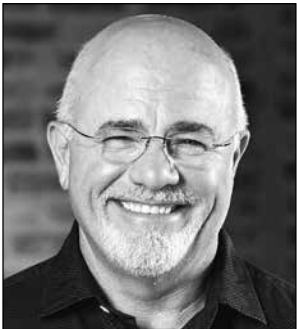
## Dare to Live Without Limits

by Bryan Golden

### *It All Starts with a Dream*



Dreams precede everything; all actions and all creations. Truly, everything does start with a dream. Dreaming is not an idle activity. It’s not an escape from reality. Dreams are the foundation of all creativity. The type of dreaming I’m talking about doesn’t just occur while you are sleeping. The thoughts occupy your mind constantly, while you are awake as well as resting. These types of dreams stick in your mind. They become a mental obsession. When your mind is focused on a specific detailed dream, it will lead you toward a path that will transform your dream to reality. Dreaming is healthy, allowing you to explore different scenarios and options. Without dreams, you can’t venture beyond your perceived limits. For maximum effectiveness, a dream should be as detailed as possible. It shouldn’t be conceived in general terms such as, “if I were rich,” or “if I only had this,” or if I only had that.” Without dreams, people would still be living in caves. Every element of society is the result of dreaming. Our country is the product of a dream. Dreams precede reality. There are no limits to what you can dream about. Health, relationships, success, finances, career, and lifestyle are all valid topics. Your dreams shouldn’t be a passing thought or whim. They should embody specifics you have a burning desire for. They should be something you are willing to work for and expend whatever effort is required. Dreams can and do come true, but not by themselves. You have to make them happen. There are those who have a lotto mentality for their dreams. They are only willing to invest a dollar in the hopes of winning millions. Sure, there will be a winner, but the chance is one in millions that it will be you. When people have this lotto mentality, they are constantly disappointed. As a result they wind up jaded and give up on their dreams. They become resigned to their lot in life and disconnected from the infinite potential that resides within. People who have given up will try to discourage others by using their own disappointments as evidence that dreams are a waste of time. Typically, being labeled a dreamer has a negative connotation. The implication is that a dreamer is not grounded in reality and is wasting their time chasing rainbows. The dreamer will often be ridiculed and chided. Without a solid understanding of the value of dreaming, the dreamer runs the risk of abandoning their dreams in the face of peer pressure. Should this happen, it would be a real waste. Without dreams, one is in jeopardy of squandering their future. Dreams have no constraints. Dreams are the seeds from which you can create a robust life. Guard your dreams. Don’t allow others to influence you to relinquish your dreams. You don’t have to share your dreams nor do you need the approval or acceptance of others. Turning your dreams into reality requires action, determination, and perseverance. If not for dreamers our country never would have been founded. We would have no telephones, no electricity, no cars, no TV or radio, and no medical breakthroughs. In short, if people throughout history had not pursued their dreams we would still be in the dark ages. Go ahead and dream. Picture your life any way you would like it to be. Don’t put any limitations on your vision. Keep your dream in the front of your mind and review it daily. Take action and turn your dreams into reality **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**



## Borrow your Own Money?

Dear Dave,  
I have a question about self-banking with whole term life insurance. The way I understand it, you can accrue a cash balance, borrow against it, and then pay interest to yourself. Is this worth it, or should I stay away from it and continue using a bank?  
– Kunal  
Dear Kunal,  
Actually, it’s a whole life policy, not a term policy. And it’s an absolute scam. Basically, with whole life you pay about 20 times more for the same amount of insurance that you would with a term policy. The extra money goes into a savings account, and you earn next to nothing on it, even after you finally start to build it up. One of the ways they’re pitching

# Dave Ramsey Says

it now is the self-banking concept, where you can use your own money. It’s nothing magical or anything, because with a regular checking account you use your own money. My advice is to stay away from the company that’s offering it and anything else they have. It’s a really bad product, and it’s a scummy way to sell whole life insurance – which is an awful product to begin with. No one, except for folks in that business, believes in it or talks positively about it anymore. Being able to borrow your own money? Really? Why on earth would anyone want to borrow their own money? It’s ridiculous!  
– Dave  
**Should I Tithe on my Business?**  
Dear Dave,  
My wife and I are Christians, and we own a successful small business in our town. Should businesses tithe?  
– Barker  
Dear Barker,  
This is a good question. Giving is never a bad idea unless you do it irresponsibly and to the point of putting your family in financial danger. To the best of my knowledge, the Bible only addresses the topic of tithing by individuals – not businesses. Personally, I don’t give a tenth of my business gross or net until I receive my paycheck. When that happens – meaning it’s profit that I’m going to pay taxes on, or it’s salaried income out of my business – I tithe on the profits. So, I can’t really tell you I’ve found Biblical instruction to give a tenth of your business. Hope this helps! *Dave Ramsey is a seven-time #1 national best-selling author, personal finance expert, and host of The Ramsey Show, 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.*



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# Charity and Politics?

*Elected officials would have to disclose their connections under proposed rule*

By Laurel Rosenhall, CALMatters.org

In the months before California lawmakers in June granted prison guards a \$5,000 bonus and an 8% raise over the next two years, the guards’ union made a few charitable donations. The recipients included two nonprofits run by the very legislators who were preparing to vote on the pay hikes.

State senators who lead the Legislature’s Black and Latino caucuses asked the correctional officers’ union to donate to the foundations they run – and the union complied, state records show, giving \$15,000 in March to the foundation run by the Latino caucus and \$60,000 over February and March to the Black caucus’ foundation.

Donations like this –from groups that lobby the Legislature, to nonprofits controlled by legislators, their staff and family members – have been under scrutiny by California’s political watchdog since CalMatters reported last year that they’ve become an increasingly common way for politicians to raise and spend money outside the limits of the state’s strict campaign finance laws.

The investigation found a dozen nonprofits run by state lawmakers and their staffs had reported raising nearly \$3 million in 2019; that a nonprofit tied to the legislature’s technology caucus was keeping its donations secret; and that a lawmaker – now-Attorney General Rob Bonta – routinely asked interest groups to donate to his personal foundation as well as to nonprofits thatThe money largely comes from corporations and unions with business before the Legislature, who can get a tax break for giving to charity while also currying favor with influential politicians. While the nonprofit recipients may perform charitable work, they also pay for lawmakers to take trips abroad, enjoy steak dinners with tech executives in Silicon Valley and spend weekends schmoozing with lobbyists at the Disneyland Hotel.

Now, after a year of reviewing whether to change the rules governing the transactions known as “behested payments,” on Thursday the Fair Political Practices Commission is scheduled to discuss new regulations:

“These are relationships that raise concerns about the self-interest of the official and the possibility of undue influence or access for the payee as a result of the payment,” the commission staff wrote in a report explaining the proposed rules. “As such, these are relationships with a potential for influence or self-dealing that the public would want to have disclosed.”

The Fair Political Practices Commission is expected to vote on the proposed rules this fall. The commission is limited in how drastically it can change the rules on behested payments, which can only be banned or significantly overhauled with legislation.

The rule requiring disclosure of official decisions that impact the donor comes with a large caveat: It does not include legislation. That means the rule wouldn’t change anything for state lawmakers who routinely vote on bills affecting the businesses and unions they hit up for donations to their nonprofits.

Richard Miadich, chairperson of the Fair Political Practices Commission, said



Then-Assemblymember Rob Bonta, left, and his wife, Mia Bonta, at a press conference in March shortly before he was appointed attorney general. Funds from the Bonta California Progress Foundation are now prohibited from going to any organization that employs either Bonta. Photo by Anne Wernikoff, CalMatters

legislation should be treated differently because its impact is usually broad, not crafted in a way that bestows specific perks to individuals or interest groups. Asked about the example of the prison guards union donating to lawmakers’ charities just before lawmakers voted on their raise and bonus – a contract the Legislature’s own analyst described as providing “substantial compensation increases... without clear justification” – Miadich said existing disclosure is sufficient.

He does, however, want to see more transparency in situations where, for example, a city council is deciding the fate of a permit sought by a developer who makes donations to a council member’s charity.

“We need to have a balanced, deliberate approach,” Miadich said in an interview Monday. “I really believe that behested payments do a lot of good to a lot of worthy causes. And I do not want to inadvertently interrupt that, particularly coming out of a global pandemic.”

By contrast, the rule requiring disclosure of donations to nonprofits controlled by politicians and their family members would seem to impact several elected officials at the Capitol. Gov. Gavin Newsom has reported raising \$881,297 for the California Partners Project, a nonprofit run by his wife Jennifer Siebel Newsom.

Lawmakers routinely ask donors to give to nonprofits run by their legislative caucuses and in some cases, their family members. Assemblymember Blanca Rubio, a Democrat from Baldwin Park who wields significant power to kill progressive bills as the leader of a bloc of moderate Democrats, reported raising \$62,000 for the Rubio Foundation, which is run by her sister Sylvia Rubio. Donors include pharmaceutical, petroleum and dialysis companies that routinely lobby at the Capitol.

“When I vote, it’s about the issue, not about who’s giving me money or who hasn’t,” Rubio told CalMatters. “And I’m very clear with them... that the one does not have to do with the other.”

Rubio pointed out that most donations she requested went to other nonprofits that were not her sister’s. The money she raised for her sister’s foundation helped put on a turkey giveaway at Thanksgiving and fund field trips for kids from a low-income school, Rubio said. She had no objections to the political watchdog’s proposed rule that would require additional disclosure from her.

“I’m happy to follow all the rules,” she said.

Bonta, a Democrat who was appointed attorney general in March, formed his own nonprofit called the Bonta California Progress Foundation in 2017, when he was an assemblyman. He reported raising \$132,500 to it between 2017 and 2020 and said the money has supported dozens of scholarships for students in his district. Last year, CalMatters reported that Bonta paid \$25,000 from his foundation to the nonprofit where his wife worked, and helped her employers raise more than \$560,000, largely by soliciting donations from companies that lobby the Legislature. The practice is legal, but political ethics experts called it inappropriate.

Bonta’s wife Mia Bonta is now a leading candidate to replace Bonta in the Assembly in a special election on Aug. 31.

Earlier this year, Bonta stepped down from the board of his eponymous foundation and it made several new rules, said his campaign spokesman Nathan Click. “Both Bontas are prohibited by the organization from making decisions about how funds are expended,” Click wrote in a message. “Funds are prohibited from going to any organization that employs either Bonta.”

News reports in recent months have highlighted both the explosion of behested payments – with Newsom soliciting \$226 million in corporate donations to support the state’s pandemic response – and the proliferation of donations to nonprofits run by political spouses.

Charities run by Annie Lam, wife of Democratic Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, received more than \$500,000 from companies with business before the Legislature, the Sacramento Bee reported, and a nonprofit run by Newsom’s wife received more than \$800,000 from a dozen corporations that regularly lobby state government. However, those donations were not made at Rendon’s or Newsom’s “behest” so would not be covered by the new rules the FPPC is considering.

One thing the commission may consider changing is how donations are reported if they come through a donor advised fund. That’s because such funds can obscure the original source of a donation, the Los Angeles Times reported, raising concerns that donors trying to curry favor with politicians may have found a way to avoid scrutiny. The FPPC is also scheduled to discuss donor advised funds at its meeting Thursday.

The commission has not yet completed its investigation of Assemblyman Evan Low, launched after CalMatters reported that the Democrat from Silicon Valley had stopped reporting donations to the nonprofit affiliated with the Legislature’s technology caucus. rofits set up by California legislators and their staffers are testing campaign finance laws even as they underwrite good works by elected

*Laurel covers California politics for CalMatters, with a focus on power and personalities in the state Capitol.* ★

## Thompson Lauds Phone Act to Assist Disaster Survivors

By Alex Macfarlane,  
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WASHINGTON, DC (MPG) - Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-05) applauded the passage of the bipartisan PHONE Act, his legislation that allows survivors of natural disasters who lost their homes to keep their phone numbers at no cost to them while they rebuild. Often after homes are destroyed in natural disasters such as fires, the landline phone numbers need to be disconnected and if those numbers are offline too long, the service provider is required by law to reassign the phone number to other customers.

“It may sound ridiculous but under current law, disaster survivors can’t keep their phone numbers if they are rebuilding their homes and their phones are disconnected for more than three months. While survivors are recovering, the last thing they want to worry about is saving their phone number. That’s why I introduced the bipartisan PHONE Act,” said Thompson. “This important bipartisan legislation lets disaster survivors keep their phone numbers while they rebuild their homes. This gives them peace of mind and I’ll continue working to ensure this bill becomes law.”

Thompson first introduced this legislation in November 2018 after hearing from constituents who lost their homes in the Atlas and Tubbs fires in October 2017. He reintroduced in March 2021. The bill includes:

An automatic 1-year freeze on residential wireline phone number reassignment following a major disaster declaration; The option to extend for an additional year at customer request; And a requirement that states determine if this safeguard is necessary and in the public interest + coordinate with FEMA and consult with wireline service providers to reasonably limit the designation to areas that have sustained Covered Damage. ★

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