



**Merchants  
Finally See State  
Grant Monies**

PAGE 3

**Council Pushes  
Forward on Pardi:  
\$1.5 Million**

PAGE 10



**Dixon  
Independent Voice**

VOLUME 29 • ISSUE 21

MAY 21, 2021

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**SEE  
INSIDE**



**FARM BUREAU  
PRESIDENT URGES  
ADDITIONAL  
FLEXIBILITY IN  
CONSERVATION  
PROGRAMS**

PAGE 3



**TIPS TO PROTECT  
AGAINST  
SCAMMERS**

PAGE 6

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**Robben Ranch Hosts Vaccination Clinics**



Clinic workers and volunteers prepare for giving vaccinations at Robben Ranch in Dixon. Photo by Liz Robben

By Debra Dingman

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - The Robben Ranch in Dixon recently opened their barn doors to more than cattle and tractors. They hosted a vaccination clinic and added a rummage sale and food give-away also.

Gene and Liz Robben have owned the ranch for 40 years and grow hay, alfalfa, tomatoes, sunflowers, and beans but they also have orchards and cattle. The Robbens--along with long-time ranch assistant Julie Berlin--share a motto of taking care of their 75 employees and went a step beyond when they organized the event.

"A lot of our employees were nervous and didn't know where to go. It

was so nice to be able to help provide this for not only employees but their family members over 18," said Liz who volunteers at the Cornerstone Church in Dixon and often helps with their food bank. "Robben Ranch felt it was important to educate and help all our employees get the vaccination."

They also extended the invite to nearby ranches and farms and their employees. Ninety people participated and 100 percent returned for the second dose. For the first shot clinic in April, the company held a "free" garage sale for all the workers that came.

"We received donations from Robben Ranch office staff and management," said Liz. "This went over

extremely well. We had household items and lots of clothes for all the families to choose from."

For the second shot clinic held just last week, Solano County Food Bank donated a box packed full of canned goods, pastas and treats for each person that received their shot. The County also provided \$20 Raley's gift card for each recipient.

"It is a great motto to value your employees," said Berlin about the Solano County Farm Bureau coordinating the vaccinations. "The majority of our workers have employee housing. We're part of a community and farmers give back. We hear good things about other farmers. If employees are happy

*Continued on page 3*

**Sen. Dodd  
Responds to  
Water Rate  
Relief Plan**

By Paul Payne,  
Office of Senator Bill Dodd

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - With two bills of his own on water access and equity pending in the Legislature, Sen. Bill Dodd, D-Napa, issued the following statement today in response to Gov. Gavin Newsom's announcement that he would invest \$1 billion to assist Californians struggling with water bills.

"I applaud Gov. Newsom for taking this critical step toward helping low-income Californians avoid being denied a basic necessity -- water," said Sen. Dodd. "It's something I've been advocating for a long time. It will be important to build on this action and continue to look for ways to address the long-term needs of low-income families facing mounting water bills."

Sen. Dodd has been fighting for better access to water for a long time. This year, he introduced Senate Bill 222, which establishes a water assistance fund for low-income rate payers experiencing economic hardship. He also introduced SB 223, which expands protections and protocols for customers who are faced with having their water shutoff because of an inability to pay their bills.

Together they build on Sen. Dodd's earlier legislation. His Low-Income Water Rate Assistance Act, or Assembly Bill 401, commissioned a study on how to address affordability. It resulted in recommendations including the proposed new fund. He also wrote The Water Shutoff Protection Act, or SB 998, which provided significant safeguards against water shutoffs.

This year's bills, which await a hearing in the Senate Appropriations committee, come as the State Water Resources Control Board heard results of a survey Tuesday that found water debt in California climbed to about \$1 billion. The survey estimated 12% of California households are behind on their water bills with an average debt of \$500 per household. Many of those people are at risk of losing service.

Gov. Newsom today also announced other measures to help California families including \$12 billion in tax rebates, a doubling of rent assistance and \$1 billion in relief for other utility bills. ★

**Construction Crew Contributes to Museum**

By Loran Hoffmann

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - A team from the Whiting-Turner Construction Company of Sacramento led by Senior Superintendent, Jeff Clay, arrived at the Dixon History Museum at 6:30 on a recent morning equipped with tools, knowledge, and manpower. The sound of power saws, hammers, and drills was all that could be heard when the crew went to work insulating and constructing a wall from recycled lumber at the soon to be opened Dixon History Museum.

The museum is located at 125 West A Street, between Bud's Pub and Grill and the Community Medical Center known as Dixon Family Practice.

Opening day for the new museum is Thursday, June 3, at 10 am followed by a Ribbon Cutting at 10:30 am. The museum will remain open until 3:00 pm that day for visitors. The museum will be open to



Standing in front of the completed wall with President of the Dixon Historical Society, Bill Schroeder, are: (L-R) Carson Burand, Bill S., Jeff Clay, Senior Superintendent, Tyler Randall, Val Kim, and Price Gillium. Photo credit by Loran Hoffmann

the public after that from Tuesday through Saturday each week, from 10 am to 3 pm.

"These young fellas really know what they are doing," commented Bill Schroeder, President of the Dixon Historical Society as he watched from the

ground as the scissor-lift raised team members 16 feet in the air to work on the wall. The entire crew labored tirelessly and was able to finish work by 2:30 pm.

The job included attaching a windmill blade assembly that had been

brought to the Schroeder Farm by Joachim Schroeder, Bill's great-grandfather, more than 140 years ago.

A few weeks ago, local Dixon resident and Senior Superintendent, for the Whiting-Turner

*Continued on page 3*





Yes, Change is Hard but So Worth It!

By Debra Dingman

The May 18, 2020 issue front page story had the Dixon Rendi-Ride on it with a large color photo of one of the buses. In the far right corner of that front page was a mini-headline that said, “Making Dixon Rock” with a picture of a colorful, painted rock that read “Joy” on it. I was amazed when I saw it and quickly turned to the back page where the entire top half was my story on Diane Wilson, a local lady who drops rocks of happiness around town via her beautiful painted rocks. I think it is an appropriate reminder of the fact I still feel joy in my job.

Interestingly, my name was under her picture and my balloon was deflated but only long enough for the phone call to where the MPG staff quickly responded, “we’ll change it right now.” I didn’t realize there was an online newspaper that could be easily updated. Sometimes, the newspaper is online even before our printed newspaper arrives in the office. (independentvoice.com)

The layout of the rock story was “magazine style”--my area of expertise as a feature writer for the Daily Republic Newspaper. It was the first time in 25

years I had seen a contemporary production design in Dixon--in full color no less--and was immediately impressed with the new owner of the Dixon Independent Voice. Maybe he was trying to impress Dixonites.

We had been talking back and forth since he took over the paper a few months earlier, but I was still leery of the reputation of the paper in town due to unedited columnists and wanted my work to be read. The 'rock' edition convinced me to leave a long-time columnist spot at another paper in town.

After he hired me, and as I got to know him better while learning of the seven other publications he runs, I took a “field trip” to the Messenger Publishing Group office. The wall of plaques of appreciation from numerous Chambers of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, and other civic clubs said a lot about him but the large frame of St. Mary above his desk said even more.

So, I settled in for a longer haul and have been writing like a crazy-woman this past year to bring you the great stories hiding behind people’s quiet or unassuming demeanors, heart-driven missions, thankless hours of service;

and interesting paths of business owners. He went to work making the newspaper a professional one. He has let me participate in promotions and get involved with the Chamber.

There have been many times I sought out the Publisher’s advice on how to handle something involving city government or about what to do when a large company won’t return my calls. He is helpful and has the experience this newspaper needs in almost every circumstance to keep moving forward. He is patient and handles employees with a true spirit of kindness--but he also knows how to spot an ugly intention.

For the first year of writing and taking on more responsibility for different areas of the work, he would call me after the newspaper arrived in the office to ask my opinion. This entire time, I have called it Christmas because the layout, the color pictures, even the jumps that are appropriately noted and placed where they belong, show that this MPG team is AWESOME and I’ve received a wonderful gift!

Please support our advertisers as they make it possible for this newspaper to tell Dixon’s stories every week. ★

Dixon News Briefs

MPG Staff

City Meetings

You can now view the last City Council Meeting online by going to cityofdixon.com and hovering your mouse over the “Government” tab, there will be a drop down menu and scroll to City Council, then click on it. Then you’ll go under the Council Agenda & Videos tab and another screen will open. You’ll click “Archived Meetings” then choose the date you want to watch. The video recording will take a few seconds to load, then you can watch it. Thankfully, in-person meetings are planned back in the official City Hall Council Chambers in mid-June.

This coming Tuesday, May 25 at 7 pm is the next Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting. It will be held via Zoom.

The meeting is not in-person but all members of the public may participate in the meeting via video conferencing by going to the city website and clicking on the zoom link and “raising your hand” for questions or comments. Or, by calling (669) 900-9128, meeting ID: 988 621 1137, passcode 604754 and you will be given the opportunity to provide public comment.

To speak during the public comment via video conferencing, press \*9 or you can email questions and comments to publiccomment@cityofdixon.us. Good luck!

**More Jobs!**

There are large banners outside Dixon McDonald’s, Taco Bell, and Habit Burger shouting the need for workers. McDonald’s starts at \$15 an hour and will pay up to \$22 an hour for an Assistant Manager depending on experience. There are actually banners and signs just about everywhere in Dixon as businesses compete with unemployment benefits, according to news sources. These are incredible opportunities for teens but also for any age wanting to have some extra spending money in their pocket or for someone who just always wanted to know what it was like to work in the fast food industry.

Eight new employees are being sought by the Solano Resource Conservation District. They are looking to hire seasonal “Program Educators” for the 2021-22 school year. The staff supports the mission by providing water

focused environmental education programs to school age youth throughout Solano County. The work of the Program Educator is to ignite curiosity and inspire children and teens to explore, understand, and care for their local watershed. Visit their website for the full job announcement: <https://www.solanorcd.org/employe.../job-opportunities.html>

**Drive & Dine Friday**

If you see a bunch of extra vehicles in the Dixon Family Services parking lot Friday, it’s because Dixon Family Services is having its drive-thru BBQ in their back parking lot May 21, from 4 to 6:30 at 155 North Second Street in downtown Dixon. Tickets are \$35 and include a chance to win a door prize, a fantastic BBQ dinner, and ten raffle tickets. Donations are always welcome to this organization that helps children and families struggling in our community. Call (707) 678-0442 or email [cookie@dixonfamilyservices.org](mailto:cookie@dixonfamilyservices.org).

**Sober Grad Night**

Students are invited to celebrate the class of 2021 with a festive night from Saturday, June 12, starting at 8 pm and going to Sunday, June 13, 1 am at the high school. Dixon Sober Grad Night is a fun filled night with games, music, casino games, rock climbing, a DJ, food and prizes. All of this included in the price of the ticket for \$40.

DHS is at 555 College Way located on the outskirts of Dixon. There is a form online at Eventbrite.com that must be completed to register one’s plan to attend.

**Wine & Cheese**

Love cheese? Love wine? You need this! On Sunday, May 23 from 4 to 6 pm, a cheese and wine tasting experience is offered at the Pip Wine Bar & Shop, 116 North First Street in downtown Dixon.

They’ll be tasting four different cheeses alongside six different wines; all from different parts of the world. They’ll talk about the dairies and creameries, types of cheese, and how each cheese works (or doesn’t) with the wines. Custom cuts of cheeses will be available for purchase at the end of class. Co-hosting the tasting and discussion with shop owner Amy Grabish is Cheese Specialist, Tracy Hoepfl of Cream and the Crop. Registration is online via Facebook for \$40 per person. ★



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Business Roundtable Calls on Governor and Legislature to Prioritize Unemployment Insurance Fund Debt

**By Brooke Armour, California Business Roundtable**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The U.S. Treasury released its guidance on how states can use their share of the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, which were part of the American Rescue Plan passed by Congress earlier this year. Under the guidance provided today, states can use their portion of the more than \$350 billion allocated by Congress on myriad COVID-19 related activities, including paying down a state’s Unemployment Insurance (UI) Fund debt.

“While we are all celebrating a record \$75.5 billion surplus, we cannot forget the state also has a \$20 billion UI Fund debt. Now that we have clear guidance from the U.S. Treasury how the \$26 billion in unallocated federal aid California will receive can be used, the California Business Roundtable is calling on Governor Newsom and state leaders to prioritize paying down the state’s record UI Fund debt with these federal funds,” said Rob Lapsley, president of the California Business Roundtable.

California’s UI debt is now more than \$20 billion, and it is growing at approximately \$1.2 billion per month. The current debt is more than double the debt the fund incurred during the Great Recession. That

debt took more than 10 years to pay off. Given the boom-bust cycle of the California budget, it is likely the current debt could not be paid off at our existing pace before another recession would drive the fund into further debt. This situation would result in constantly rising employment taxes just as businesses are struggling to rehire their workers, and undermines the fiscal integrity of a key element in California's income safety net.

“Addressing the UI Fund debt is a critical part of the state’s economic recovery. The massive debt is a looming threat for every business in California. If unaddressed, the debt will lead to an automatic tax increase on every business in the state at a time when they can least afford it. California businesses already pay the highest UI Fund payments, plus a 15 percent premium that was added to pay off the last debt. Businesses did not cause this recession and should not bear the burden of paying off this debt,” Lapsley continued. “Businesses need certainty more than ever right now, not even more threats of higher taxes. The governor and Legislature should take action now and help ensure businesses reopening after more than a year of closure can afford to stay open well into the future.” ★

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# Robben Ranch Hosts Vaccination Clinics

*Continued from page 1*  
and healthy at home, they will do that much better at work.”

Schene Enterprises, E and H Farms, and Lowrie Trucking employees and their families participated as well.

"It has been very hard to find farm labor in recent years," said Liz. "We have started bringing workers here on the Federal Government H2A Temporary Worker Program. They are here for anywhere from six months to three years and live in employer-provided housing. A lot of them get off the plane with just one backpack," she added. That's why they wanted to help more.

"We thank Cornerstone Church here in Dixon as they have a local pantry that has been very generous to the migrant community here in Dixon," said Liz. "This is another great resource our community provides." ★



**A vaccine is given to a male farm worker at Robben Ranch. The clinic was organized and coordinated with Solano County Health Department and ranch owners Gene & Liz Robben.**  
Photo by Liz Robben

# Merchants Finally See State Grant Monies

***By Debra Dingman***

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - Blessings flowed freely this past week when seven local merchants received COVID-Relief grants hand-delivered by Mayor Steve Bird and Community Development Director Larry Burkhardt after more than a year's wait from the State of California.

The funds, which totaled more than \$250,000, are part of the federal CARES Act, distributed by formula to California's non-entitlement cities – those with less than 50,000 population.

"I feel so blessed to have been awarded the community development grant," said Lindsey Hickman, owner of the Barn & Pantry in downtown Dixon. "With this we have been able to hire additional employees and offer more than minimum wage for all of our staff. This is a really big deal being in a small town that is often difficult to get a large enough staffing pool from."

Hickman was one company who pursued the grant advertised through Burkhardt. The City's Small Business Support Program objective is to assist local small businesses significantly impacted by the pandemic to retain jobs – particularly those within the low and moderate income categories. The City invited local businesses to apply for the Program in February.

“Program funding is made available in the form of forgivable loans,” explained Burkhardt. “If the business is successful in meeting its job retention goals after 120 days, the loan is forgiven.”

"They could apply for up



**Mayor Steve Bird and the City's Community Development Director Larry Burkhardt hand over grant money to Diane Long, Dixon's BurgerIM Restaurant Owner. Photo: City of Dixon**

to \$10,000 per employee for full time equivalents. For example, if a business owner had four employees, he could apply for \$40,000. The requirement is that they have to retain them for 120 days and the loan is forgiven. If they only retain two at the end of 120 days, they are responsible for paying back half of that loan. It's a percentage," Burkhardt explained.

"When the State announced it, they said it would be a streamline process but it has taken a year and I yelled a lot and got the attention of the state and frankly, I think we were the first one," he added. "They had released the funds last June but it got hung up. It's a very bureaucratic process."

Businesses receiving funding include The Heritage Pantry , Punjabi Dhaba, Country Inn & Suites, Schroeder Laundry, BurgerIM, Supercuts and Subway.

"We will be extending our dinner hours as soon as we feel like the new staff members are fully trained and we

can fill the schedule," said Hickman. "With the extra funds we have also been able to improve some of our equipment, put on a fresh coat of paint on the building, and continue to bring the community next level service."

The City has applied for round two funding for the Program and anticipates approval by the California Department of Housing and Community Development sometime in the summer. At that time, it will solicit applications for the second round.

"Huge thank you to Larry Burkhardt who really waded through a ton of paperwork and maneuvered through all the hoops that go along with pulling in a federal grant like this for our town," added Hickman. "The impact of his work is tangible for Dixon."

Businesses with questions about the program can contact Larry Burkhardt, Economic Development/Grants Manager at 707 678-7000, ext. 1126. ★

## Construction Crew Contributes to Museum

Continued from page 1

Construction Company, Jeff Clay, stopped by the museum to see what progress was being made and when the museum would open. He noticed the corrugated tin wall and commented on the heat transfer from the metal wall into the room.

"If you provide the insulation and materials, my crew and I can take care of that wall. Let me check with my boss," Jeff offered. The volunteers working on the museum were overjoyed as no one was sure, if and when, that wall was ever going to be improved. As it stood, it was challenging to work in that room in the afternoon because of the heat and it was only May. How would the museum volunteers function in the August heat?

Later Jeff called and said, "We will be there on Thursday with the tools and the team." The Museum volunteers went into high gear gathering the necessary materials. A phone call to Wes Standfill rendered some scrap fence boards, it took several trips to the Schroeder Ranch to pick up additional fence boards that had been donated by Nick Avila, owner of Dixon

Fence Company. A call was made to Hoffmann Fabrication for metal work that was completed by Jerry Swails. Then, President Bill made a trip to Vacaville Lowe's to purchase insulation and a couple of trips to Dixon Hardware and Lumber for nails as well as some bolts to hold the windmill blade assembly together.

The new wall is the focal point of the museum. The added insulation makes an incredible difference in stopping the heat transfer and the recycled wood wall truly looks better than anyone ever imagined it would, said volunteers. The Dixon Historical Society appreciates the generous contribution by Whiting-Turner Construction Company and each of the team members that shared their personal skills and knowledge to improve the Dixon History Museum.

The Whiting-Turner Construction Company has been contracted to build the multi-million dollar University of California, Davis, and City of Sacramento collaborative Aggie Square project in the Oak Park area of Sacramento near the UC Medical Center. ★



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A photograph of the exterior of a Central Auto Parts store. The building has a blue facade with large yellow lettering that reads "CENTRAL AUTO PARTS" and "Your Local NAPA Dealer". Below this, in even larger yellow letters, is "AUTO & TRUCK PARTS". A red horizontal bar runs across the front of the building. A yellow horizontal bar is visible below the red one. The entrance features large glass windows and doors. A red "OPEN" sign is visible in the window. Five people are standing in front of the entrance, waving. To the left of the entrance, the address "1205" is visible. To the right, there is a wheelchair accessibility symbol. The overall scene is bright and welcoming.

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# DWIC Awards \$1,500 in Community Grants

**Dixon Women's Improvement Club Press Release**

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - The Dixon Women's Improvement Club recognizes the need within our community to strengthen existing programs and expand learning opportunities by providing monetary grants to classrooms, programs, and non-profit organizations that serve the Dixon community.

Over the past three years, the Dixon Women's Improvement Club has given over \$5,000 in community grants to local programs such as TEAM Dixon that wanted to host a unique cookie Drive Thru during the COVID-19 pandemic for its high school age teen mentors and their special buddies; and to Anderson Elementary ASPIRE After school program to establish a comfortable reading corner for students to relax with a book; and funds for Dixon Family Services to provide 100 meals for additional needy families in Dixon. We are pleased to support our community in this manner.

Teri Brown, Chair of the DWIC Community Grant Committee, announced the recipients of the 2021 DWIC Community Grant Awards at the May meeting. Although COVID-19 impacted each and every community-based event and activity over the past year, this year was no different than previous years with requests exceeding the funds available. Four organizations serving different audiences were selected to receive awards this year.

La Bici Rosita LFL is Dixon's first mobile Little Free Library and is a pink three-wheeled bicycle piloted by RK Van Every that travels the streets of Dixon allowing children to select a book of their choice to read, and to keep or

return. Many books are donated; however, to keep the book baskets full \$500 was awarded to La Bici Rosita. Returned books are scanned with a UV wand before being returned to the basket, meeting COVID-19 requirements.

Pam Murdock, representing the Dixon Christmas Program, specifically the Senior Visit Program, requested \$250 to purchase fleece fabric that can be made into blankets and given to the 100 or more needy seniors in the community on Christmas Eve. Members of the DWIC and Women of the Methodist Church will craft the blankets from the materials provided.

The Dixon Historical Society received \$500 for the duplication and lamination of the Dixon California, Sanborn Fire Map Collection from 1884 through 1953 for permanent exhibit at the Dixon History Museum. The maps are valuable to historic research because they provide evidence of change over time. Property of the Library of Congress, the Dixon Sanborn maps will allow museum visitors to find out what buildings and properties comprised Dixon at various times through its history.

Dixon High School, Intensive Learning Center Teacher, Kevin Berg was awarded \$250 to help his students, with more difficult needs, learn independent living skills by using public transportation to shop and purchase food, prepare meals and snacks with the items purchased, and navigate their community.

The Community Grant Recipients will receive their awards at the Year End Celebration that will be held at the Dixon Women's Improvement Club Park on Wednesday, June 16t from 10:30 am – Noon. More information about the event will be available at a later date. ★

# Fire Safety Council Launches in Vacaville

**By Lisa Murray, Ag & Art Film Festival**

**VACAVILLE, CA (MPG)** - The Pleasants Valley Agriculture Association (PVAA) has launched the "PVAA Community Fire Safety Council" this month - at the start of the 2021 fire season.

The farmers and rural area landowners in Vacaville were hit hard last August, 2020, when the LNU Lightning Complex Fire burned 350,000 acres, destroying nearly 1,500 structures and killing six people. A handful of those most affected where farmers - some losing everything.

"After the devastating fire of August 2020, it has become apparent to many of us that for our own peace of mind and the safety of our community,

it is more important than ever to join together and discuss the benefits of a fire preparedness plan." - Rose Loveall, PVAA Founding Member & Co-Owner of Morningsun Herb Farm in Vacaville.

The fire council members are inviting the public to the Community Fire Preparedness Kick-Off Meeting on Sunday, May 23rd at 2:00 PM at the Moose Lodge, 6585 Gibson Canyon Rd, Vacaville.

The speakers for the afternoon will be Aaron Latta of Cal Fire Battalion, Chief Tim Walton, Vacaville Fire Protection District, Jim Currie, Solano County Deputy Sherriff, Don Ryan, Emergency Service Manager, and Chris Rose, Executive Director of Solano RCD. These gentlemen represent

key agencies in dealing with and preparing communities to withstand fires. They will be speaking on establishing local fire safety councils and answering questions from the attendees.

Rochelle Sherlock will also be speaking. She is the President of the Green Valley Fire Safety Council. Rochelle will be talking about how Green Valley created its own fire safety council with the participation of Green Valley residents.

The discussion and work to build a Community Fire Preparedness structure will help community members be organized as a region and community when facing another fire crisis.

Face coverings will be required, and social distancing will be strongly encouraged. ★

# Governor's Actions Point to Need for Long-Term Water Investment

**By Dave Kranz, California Farm Bureau**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Actions in a widened drought emergency order issued by Gov. Gavin Newsom will provide some short-term benefit through voluntary water transfers and exchanges in parts of drought-stricken California, the California Farm Bureau said, while the organization expressed concern about emergency powers granted to the state water board and re-emphasized the need for significant, long-term investments to secure future food production in the state.

The pandemic has reinforced that farming is an essential business and the drought has reinforced that water is essential to farming," California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson said. "We appreciate any effort the state can make to provide more water in the short term to farmers who need it. At the same time, we must not lose sight of existing water-rights priorities and the need to balance supplies for food production, fisheries and cities.

"By widening the drought emergency, the governor has recognized the reality facing much of rural California: Our future is not guaranteed," Johansson said. "By proposing to invest in canal repairs and other projects, he has shown a willingness to address part of that longer-term problem, but where are the projects the voters invested in when they

approved a water bond seven years ago?

"Following a year of economic shutdown for our communities, record wildfires, blackouts on the state's electrical grid and soaring home prices, it is apparent Californians face a quality-of-life issue. We hope this is a watershed moment in which we realize that building, not just planning, will preserve that way of life," he said.

"In addition to longer-term infrastructure needs, we also need to ensure family farms – and the people, communities and businesses that rely on them – are able to survive this year. We urge the governor to engage with family farmers, at the local level, to understand how best to ensure that our farms and the food they produce will be available to Californians for years to come," Johansson said.

"Water to farms means food for families, jobs for farm employees and much-needed help for rural economies," he said. "With predictions that climate change will lead to even less certainty about precipitation and water supplies, California must commit to a full-scale program to increase storage, enhance efficiency and create new supplies through water recycling and desalination."

The California Farm Bureau works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of nearly 32,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of nearly 5.6 million Farm Bureau members. ★

# Inaugural Water Institute for Teachers Coming to Solano County

**By Allison Martin, Solano Resource Conservation District**

**SOLANO COUNTY, CA (MPG)**

- This summer the Solano Resource Conservation District will be hosting the inaugural Solano Water Institute for Teachers, an intensive three day educator workshop featuring Solano County's water resources and open spaces. The free workshop will be held August 4-6 and will include visits to various Solano County parks and open spaces as well as a boat tour of Lake Berryessa, one of the county's primary sources of drinking and irrigation water. The goal of the Water Institute is to provide K-12 educators with new knowledge, skills, and tools to help them effectively teach watershed science and land preservation from a perspective that is locally relevant to their students.

Participants will begin on Wednesday, August 4 at Rush Ranch Open Space near Suisun City to learn about the importance and challenges of managing the Suisun Marsh as well as local open spaces from both Suisun Resource Conservation District's Executive Director Steve Chappell and Solano Land Trust's Executive Director Nicole Braddock. Additional opportunities like the Solano County Office of Education's Explorer Quest program launching this month will

also be integrated into the first training day.

Registrants will spend the morning of Thursday, August 5 boating on Lake Berryessa and hearing from Solano County Water Agency's Senior Engineer Alex Rabidoux regarding the complexity of Solano County's drinking water resources. Solano County Parks Supervisor Chris Drake will close out Wednesday with a tour of Lake Solano Nature Center and an overview of learning opportunities in Solano County's Parks.

Friday's training at the City of Fairfield's Dunnell Nature Park and Education Center will feature the award winning environmental education curriculum Project WET, an innovative, locally relevant water education resource for K-12 teachers. Project WET curriculum aligns with the state mandated Next Generation Science Standards and the Environmental Education Principles and Concepts outlined by the California Environmental Education Initiative, and is a valuable teaching tool for both classroom teachers and informal educators.

"The place-based learning experiences offered as part of the Solano Water Institute will help educators teach environmental science that is relevant to where their students live, hopefully inspiring youth to explore

more on their own as well as feel more empowered to protect their local natural resources," explained Marianne Butler, education director for Solano Resource Conservation District.

Participants will receive a \$200 stipend upon completion of the program and certified teachers can claim up to 21 hours of continuing education credit. Teachers will also be given time to work on integrating what they've learned into their yearly lesson plan. Registration is available on [solanorcd.org](http://solanorcd.org) under Educator Workshop. Space is extremely limited, so early registration is strongly encouraged. A waiting list will be enacted in the order of submitted registration.

The Solano Water Institute for Teachers is funded by the Solano County Orderly Growth Committee, the California Department of Water Resources, the Water Education Foundation, and the School Water Education Program including the cities of Vacaville, Fairfield, Suisun City, Vallejo and Benicia, Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District, and Solano Irrigation District. The workshop is hosted by Solano RCD with support from Brian Brown, Project WET Coordinator for California. For more information, please visit [solanorcd.org](http://solanorcd.org) or email [education@solanorcd.org](mailto:education@solanorcd.org). ★



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# California Still Mistreating Its School Kids



By Dan Walters  
CALMatters

The traditional school year will soon end, but the maltreatment of California’s 6 million public school students – especially those from poor non-white families – shamefully continues. Although on paper California’s schools have reopened their classrooms after being closed to battle the spread of COVID-19 infection, most pupils will close out the year still struggling to learn at home or, in too many cases, having given up for a lack of technical and human support.

EdSource, an online site devoted to California education trends, detailed the educational disaster in a recent article, having delved deeply into state Department of Education data.

“Although 87% of California’s traditional public schools have reopened for some form of in-person instruction, fewer than half of students have returned either full time or part time in a hybrid model,” EdSource revealed. “A total of 55% of all public school students, including those in charter schools, were at home, in distance learning, as of April 30, according to an EdSource analysis of new data released by the state.

Get a veteran journalist's take on what's going on in

California with a weekly round-up of Dan's column every Friday.

“EdSource found that two-thirds of students in district schools with the largest proportions of low-income families were in distance learning, compared with only 43% of students in schools with the fewest low-income families – a disparity that may partly explain a widening learning gap between wealthy and poor students that researchers and teachers suspect the pandemic has enlarged.

“Higher COVID rates in poor communities contributed to the disparity. Parents in highly infected areas have been reluctant to send their children back to school, and teachers in those areas resisted returning. Parents in low transmission areas, meanwhile, pressured school boards to reopen.”

California is something of an outlier, according to monthly surveys of school reopening by the federal government’s Institute of Education Sciences. With full classroom access available to only 11% of its students, the state is at or near the bottom, according to its March survey. Other states ranged to as high as 100%. In arch-rival Texas, 93% of students have full classroom access.

Months-long stalemates between teacher unions and local school leaders over the terms of reopening have been a major factor in California’s tardiness. Gov. Gavin Newsom and the Legislature’s dominant Democrats, who are politically allied with the unions, have been noticeably unwilling to intervene.

However, leaving reopening decisions in local hands has undermined the

promise of universal public education and led to the disparity that EdSource noted – classroom access for kids in upscale communities and homebound status quo in poor communities.

California already had an immense “achievement gap” before the pandemic flared and there’s absolutely no doubt that the disparity has widened over the last 14 months, as a December report from McKinsey & Co. on national school trends underscores.

“Educators, parents, and students know firsthand the high cost of this prolonged period of remote learning, from rising rates of depression and anxiety to the loss of student learning,” the report declared. “The COVID-19 pandemic has taken an especially heavy toll on Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous communities. Along with robbing them of lives and livelihoods, school shutdowns could deny students from these communities the opportunity to get the education they need to build a brighter future.”

Newsom, facing a recall election next fall, has been running around the state declaring that the worst of the pandemic is over, that California’s economy will soon fully reopen and that he expects that schools will return to normal schedules after summer.

Even if those predictions come true, California’s neediest children will have fallen further behind their peers with diminishing chances of ever catching up.

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

# CONVERSATIONS

By Loran Hoffmann and Shirley Humphrey

## Precipitation and Water Levels Down in California

Submitted by Liana Wolfe,  
UC Division of Agriculture and  
Natural Resources

**DAVIS, CA (MPG)** - California has faced many droughts in the past, and we have always been able to manage them to some extent. However, with climate change creating a new hydrologic regime with more precipitation falling as rain than snow and higher evaporative demand, the state may be more at risk for drought now than in year's past according to Safeeq Khan, Cooperative Extension Specialist in Water and Watershed Sciences at the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resource. Presently, the state is experiencing one of the driest years on record with only half of its average annual snow pack this past winter and appears to be heading towards another drought. Even more concerning is that this year's water and snowpack analytics are showing some resemblance to 2014 - the third year of California's most severe modern-day drought. With snowpack and precipitation beginning to decline, many Californians may be wondering whether there is anything California can do to prevent another stateside drought before it occurs.

In 2017, Khan wrote on the importance of groundwater storage infrastructure as a possible solution to make up for the loss of snow pack and build resilience to varying precipitation patterns experienced in California. Instead of continuing to rely on limited water stored in surface reservoirs, Khan suggested that the water from the wettest years, and wettest months, could be stored below our feet to help even out the cycles of drought and floods that California continues to have.

Based off of historical data combined with future climate projections, Khan has found the transitional precipitation zone (i.e., elevation range where phase of precipitation shifts frequently between rain and snow) in California to be shifting upward and estimated area with seasonal snow pack at the end of 21st century will likely decline by over 50%. The shift in precipitation phase will likely create average conditions being worse than the historical average conditions experienced in the 10 warmest winters. This loss of natural snow pack storage will worsen the

cyclical droughts California continues to have. This year, the California Department of Water Resources showed the state's average precipitation from October 2020 to January 2021 with nearly 50% less rain and snow pack than average. Additionally, evaporation appears to be increasing in conjunction rising CO2 levels and warmer temperatures, which may further contribute to reduced water resources.

“How much rain we get in California really depends on where these atmospheric rivers hit the coast and how many we get in any given year. The majority of precipitation in California falls during these AR events so adding or missing one makes a big difference. Tapping on these extreme events and trying to figure out ways to store the water in the ground is one way we can prepare for droughts,” says Khan.

In order to prepare and preserve water available, Khan suggests California use a multi-pronged approach that, among other things, focuses on increasing storage, increasing efficiency, and maintaining watershed health. Although California has a tremendous amount of groundwater storage potential (between 850 and 1.3 trillion-acre feet) in comparison to surface water storage capacity (42 million-acre feet), it has yet to fill its potential. Therefore, according to Khan, directing water into subsurface water storage and aquifers might be our best option to help us prepare for future cyclical droughts. Many agencies and groups have already started on this endeavor, which is a good sign.

With less water coming in, California may soon be feeling the trickle-down effect when it comes to water distribution. Most likely the California agriculture industry may soon, if not already, begin to experience water allocation problems which could have an impact on California economically and ecologically. Moreover, dried forest fuel and prolonged dry season could not only create an additional impact on California’s water resources during wildfire season, it may also accompany further habitat deterioration and implications for wildlife within the state. Therefore, in order to prevent worsening deprivation, California may soon have to update its water storage tactics in order to adapt to the state’s changing climate. ★

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# PG&E Tips to Protect Against Scammers

By Paul Moreno, PG&E

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (MPG)

- With utility scams on the rise during the current pandemic, it is more important than ever for customers to be vigilant and to know what steps to take to prevent themselves or their families from falling victim.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, scammers have gotten deceptively creative with increased calls, texts, emails, and in-person tactics and are contacting electric and gas customers asking for immediate payment to avoid service disconnection. These impostors can be convincing and often target those who are most vulnerable, including senior citizens and low-income communities. They also aim their scams at small business owners during busy customer service hours. However, with the right information, customers can learn to detect and report these predatory scams.

As a reminder, PG&E will *never* contact a customer for the first time within one hour of a service disconnection, and will never ask customers to make payments with a pre-paid debit card, gift card, any form of cryptocurrency, or third-party digital payment mobile applications. Here are some steps customers can take to protect themselves and their families against being victimized: **Register for My Account** - PG&E reminds customers that they can visit PGE.com and register for My Account. Signing in will provide instant access to balance information, payment history and other account details and will provide a first line of defense against scam. If a customer receives a call from someone

requesting immediate payment, they can log in to My Account to confirm whether their account is in good standing. Customers can also call PG&E Customer Service at 800-743-5000 if they think that they are being targeted by a scam. **Add a Family Member to Your Account** - As an added layer of protection, customers can designate family members or another trusted individual to speak on their behalf to PG&E call center representatives. For example, an elderly parent could authorize an adult child to speak to PG&E on their behalf and make that person their first call should they receive a call threatening disconnection. The adult child could then call PG&E to confirm their account details. To designate an individual to speak to PG&E on your behalf, contact 800-743-5000.

“Scammers are constantly changing their tactics and tricks, so awareness is more important than ever to keep our customers safe,” said Melisa Munoz, PG&E Contact Center Operations Director. “If an email, visit to your home or phone call doesn’t feel right, don’t fall for it. Delete it, shut the door or hang up. And, as a reminder, PG&E will never ask for your financial information over the phone or via email.”

**Signs of a potential scam** - Threat to disconnect: Scammers may aggressively demand immediate payment for an alleged past due bill. If this occurs, customers should hang up the phone, delete the email, or shut the door. Customers with delinquent accounts receive an advance disconnection notification, typically by mail and included with their regular monthly bill. **Request**

**for immediate payment or a prepaid card:** Scammers may instruct the customer to purchase a prepaid card then call them back supposedly to make a bill payment. PG&E reminds customers that they should never purchase a prepaid card to avoid service disconnection or shutoff. PG&E does not specify how customers should make a bill payment and offers a variety of ways to pay a bill, including accepting payments online, by phone, automatic bank draft, mail or in person at an authorized PG&E neighborhood payment center.

**Refund or rebate offers:** Scammers may say that your utility company overbilled you and owes you a refund, or that you are entitled to a rebate. Again, customers should immediately hang up and call PG&E Customer Service to confirm details. **“Spoofing” Authentic Numbers:** Scammers are now able to create authentic-looking 800 numbers which appear on your phone display. The numbers don’t lead back to PG&E if called back, however, so if you have doubts or have seen any of the above warning signs of a scam, hang up and call PG&E at 1-800-743-5000. If customers ever feel that they are in physical danger, they should call 911.

Customers who suspect that they have been victims of fraud, or who feel threatened during contact with one of these scammers, should contact local law enforcement. The Federal Trade Commission’s website is also a good source of information about how to protect personal information.

For more information about scams, visit [www.pge.com](http://www.pge.com) and [www.utilities-united.org](http://www.utilities-united.org). ★



## Biden’s Child Care Folly

Joe Biden has a New Deal for America’s kids.

He wants to spend more than \$225 billion on child care for infants and toddlers, and \$200 billion for free, universal preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds.

This is being hailed as a social revolution that will finally bring the United States in line with other advanced democracies.

In reality, it’s a program that shows a pronounced class bias. And since it is heedless of the experience of other such mass programs in the United States and around the world, the Biden approach is also likely to fail to achieve its goals.

It’s just not true, as the Biden program assumes, that parents of young children are eager to shuttle them off to industrialized daycare or pre-K programs.

An extensive survey for the populist thinktank American Compass found a stark class divide in how couples think about child care. The survey asked couples if they preferred to have one parent working full time while the other parent provides child care in the home, or to have both parents working and using child care full time. One parent working was the preference of strong majorities of working-class (68%) and lower-class couples (58%), with a plurality of middle-class couples (38%) agreeing. Only a plurality of upper-class

couples preferred the child care option (44%).

So, Biden is talking about using taxpayer dollars to create as a default an arrangement that most parents would rather avoid.

Then, there are outcomes. In a paper earlier this year for the Manhattan Institute, researcher Max Eden reviewed the literature.

The programs that have produced the most remarkable positive outcomes over the years tend to be small, expensive, and very difficult to replicate.

On the other side of the ledger, there’s the Quebec Family Policy. The Canada province developed a crash program in the late 1990s that rapidly expanded child care with generally deleterious effects. Researchers found increased behavioral, social, and health problems for the kids, and interestingly, worse outcomes for parents, too. The results were, in the words of one authoritative study, “striking in their consistent indication of a substantial negative impact of universal child care on children in two-parent families.”

The exception in Quebec, per another study, was children from single-parent families, where positive results were “particularly large for individuals at the very bottom of the distribution.”

The Quebec outcomes, as Eden notes, accord with what’s been found elsewhere – child care is best for disadvantaged children and worst for children from two-parent families.

As for pre-K, the largest study of Head Start, the federal program for low-income children, found

any early benefits faded by the third grade. Other research has been more encouraging. But a rigorous, randomized control study of low-income kids in an extensive pre-K program in Tennessee showed initial gains washed away and then, over time, participants had worse academic and behavioral outcomes.

The research of James Heckman, a Nobel Prize-winning economist at the University of Chicago who studied one of the most successful programs, is often cited by advocates of the Biden plan. In an interview last year, though, Heckman stipulated that he has never supported universal pre-K. He said the benefits of a loving, engaged family have never been adequately measured.

“Public preschool programs can potentially compensate for the home environments of disadvantaged children,” Heckman said. “No public preschool program can provide the environments and the parental love and care of a functioning family and the lifetime benefits that ensue.”

All of this would suggest taking a cautious approach focused on the least-advantaged kids rather than moving full-speed ahead on a massive federal expenditure to get as many kids into daycare and pre-K as possible, probably through the existing structure of public schools.

But, in a desperate rush to spend another \$4 trillion, Joe Biden wants his New Deal for kids – whether it’s good for them or not.

*Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.*

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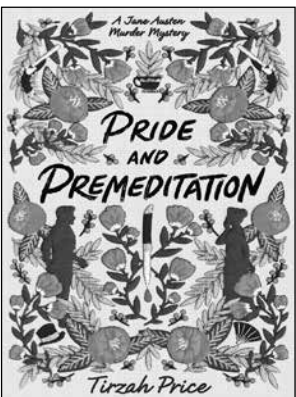
Pride and Premeditation

by Tirzah Price

“Pride and Prejudice gets a murder-mystery makeover.”

When a murder sends ripples throughout London, Lizzie knows that this could be the case to prove her standing as a female litigator. Without a moments hesitation, Lizzie forces her way into the Newgate Prison with her quick wit and cunning plan, determined to interview the accused. However, just as fate would have it, the accused man already has hired a solicitor, the dashing but presumptuous Mr. Darcy.

Convinced that everyone has it wrong, Lizzie knows what she needs to do, prove the man's innocence right under their noses, proving that she deserves a position at her father's firm. But Lizzie will quickly learn that trying to catch a murderer is a dangerous game, and it's not just finding her place in the firm that's in danger; it's her life as well. To complicate things even further, Lizzie begins to realize that her feelings for the insufferable Mr. Darcy are making things even more complicated. Now,



- ◆ Publisher: Harper Teen
- ◆ Hardcover, 368 pages
- ◆ Intended Audience: Young Adult
- ◆ Rating: ♥♥♥♥

Lizzie must quickly solve the murder- mystery before it's too late while also solving the most complex mystery of all, her heart.

In a delightful Regency-era-styled murder mystery, *Pride and Premeditation* will have readers flying through the chapters wondering who truly is the murderer and will Lizzie and Mr. Darcy ever realize their feelings for one another? *Pride and Premeditation* keeps the essence of Jane Austen's most familiar and popular work while also being truly unique. Bending social

and political statutes into a modern way of thinking creates a refreshing story that opens the door to endless possibilities for the main character. Tirzah Price indeed finds her place spinning a beloved classic into a new series that has its own reimagined, modern twist. Readers will instantly fall for the quick-witted, daring young Lizzie, who is decades ahead of the time, giving a heroine readers will immediately want to get behind and root for her all the way. While society would have never allowed Lizzie's ambitious stab at becoming a solicitor or approved of her frank forwardness, Tirzah Price creates a delightful new feminist spin that still stays true to the time, making this a reimagined delight. With this book being the first in the Jane Austen Murder Mysteries, readers can only be left wondering if the adventures of Lizzie and Mr. Darcy will continue, or if we will be introduced to a whole new cast of charters? Only time will unfold the mystery. ★



Water Shortages Prompt Orchard Removals

Productive orchards are being removed in the Central Valley, as farmers cope with severe water shortages prompted by drought and water-system limitations. One Fresno County farmer says he's pulling out almost 400 acres of almond trees. Federal and state water projects say they will provide little to no irrigation water to many agricultural customers, so farmers must calculate how much food they can grow with their limited supplies.

Projects Aim To Improve Water Forecasts

Measuring snow, and forecasting how much may be available for future water supply, has taken on increasing importance – and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation will invest \$2.5 million in improving its ability to assess the snowpack. One project looks at better ways to measure snow in the San Joaquin River watershed. Other research will employ satellite technology and artificial intelligence.

Rice Farmers Plant Fewer Acres

Lack of water will mean reduced rice production in the Sacramento Valley. This is the time of year when farmers plant rice, but analysts believe acreage will be down about 20% because of water restrictions. In some cases, rice farmers will leave land idle in order to transfer part of their water supply to users in other regions. Although acreage will be down, rice planting has proceeded smoothly due to favorable spring weather.

Sod Farms Adjust To Pandemic, Drought

For people who operate sod farms, the COVID-19 pandemic and the deepening drought have brought changes in business. The pandemic cut demand from schools and sports stadiums but brought an uptick in residential business. Drought prompts buyers to seek sod that uses less water, so growers have maintained a trend toward production of water-saving grasses. One grower says the previous drought had “a heavy influence” on what he markets now. ★



A TV Review by Tim Riley

“HACKS” ON HBO MAX

Remembering the late comedian Joan Rivers, known for an acerbic persona and self-deprecating humor, might be best option for understanding the modus operandi of Jean Smart's aging comic Deborah Vance in the HBO Max series “Hacks.”

In this ten-episode series, Deborah has thrived in a long career as a headliner in Las Vegas, the main draw at the Palmetto Casino where smug owner Marty (Christopher McDonald) now decides to give her coveted weekend nights to a youth-oriented pop group.

Softening the blow to her ego for losing the prime spot, the casino boss tells Deborah that Las Vegas will be designating a street in her name, to which she replies that it will “probably be a dead-end with an abortion clinic on it.”

A savvy businesswoman, Deborah, who once was the first female host of a late night TV show much like Joan Rivers, shares other similarities beyond stand-up routines, such as hawking merchandise on the QVC shopping channel. Deborah even shills for a pizzeria chain at a grand opening.

Meanwhile in Los Angeles, millennial comedy writer Ava (Hannah Einbinder) may also be facing the sunset of a once budding career when she gets “cancelled” for a joke tweet about the hypocrisy of a closeted senator.

Feeling entitled like so many of her peers, the self-absorbed Ava embarks on self-destructive behavior that includes an awkward intrusion into a former colleague's lunch meeting to ask for work and a later gratuitous hookup with a delivery man.

Ava shares the same agent Jimmy (Paul W. Downs) with the Vegas diva, and he comes up with the bright idea to send his young client on a trip to Sin City for a meeting with Deborah, which doesn't go well at all.

And yet, after barbs and insults are hurled between two comedians with an obvious generational gap, Deborah comes to realize in a moment of pragmatism that some tired old material might need a jolt of new energy.

Thus, with Ava taking up residency at a casino, the two disparate comedians on the opposite ends of a work ethic (Deborah had to fight to reach the pinnacle of success, while Ava feels the reward should come easy) embark on a rollercoaster journey.

Above all else, “Hacks,” an insightful comedy with biting sarcasm and a touch of humanity, is a showcase for the talents of its leading ladies, with Jean Smart especially shining more brightly than the Vegas neon.

“MIKE TYSON: THE KNOCKOUT” ON ABC

What do we know about former heavy-weight champion boxer Mike Tyson that

Riley Reviews

“HACKS” A DISCERNING COMEDY; “MIKE TYSON” THROWS PUNCHES

might draw our interest to a four-hour documentary series over two nights in “Mike Tyson: The Knockout,” scheduled for May 25 and June 1 on ABC?

For one, you wouldn't want to get in the ring with him, even now at his ripe middle age. We may learn how this ferocious fighter who won his first 19 professional fights by knockout acquired the reputation of “The Baddest Man on the Planet.”

We may remember many things that cast an unfavorable light on his character, including a nasty split with Robin Givens with an allegation of spousal abuse, a conviction of rape resulting in a prison stint, and biting off a piece of boxer Evander Holyfield's ear.

The first episode begins with Tyson's youth and his transition from a bullied kid who discovers his true power, which becomes the basis for the icon's standing for knockout power and intimidation of opponents.

Former trainers describe Tyson's time in and out of juvenile detention during the time legendary trainer Cus D'Amato guided the young boy from Brooklyn to the edge of his boxing dream of heavy-weight champion of the world.

Erstwhile opponents Michael Spinks and Buster Douglas sit down for interviews and discuss their fights against Tyson, including Tyson's win over Sparks to become the undisputed champion and Tyson's shocking first professional loss to Douglas who was a 42-to-1 underdog.

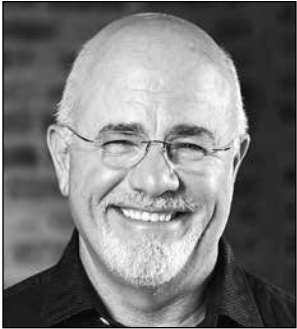
The second episode continues with Tyson's conviction and prison sentence for raping 18-year-old Desiree Washington, reviewing the cultural conversation that ensued throughout the trial as the public grappled with ideas of victimization and the fall of a hero.

Tyson's defense attorney James Voyles and special prosecutor Greg Garrison reflect on the trial nearly 20 years later. Tyson's release from prison and his highly anticipated and celebrated re-entry into society are examined.

“Mike Tyson: The Knockout” puts viewers ringside for a main event that chronicles the former champion's climb, crash and comeback, and an ABC press release touts that this primetime event “will examine some of the most pressing questions about resilience and reinvention.”

Executive producer Geoffrey Fletcher claims that “in addition to being an inspiring story of the perseverance and hard-won growth of one extraordinary person, Mike Tyson's life and career are also relevant to the important collective self-reflection finally occurring in America.”

A bit of puffery may seep into the production team's assessment of this documentary's import, and so any final judgment must rest until we see for ourselves. ★



More than any Amount of Money

Dear Dave,

My husband and I are both 29, and we have good jobs that allow us to bring home \$100,000 a year combined. Recently, we began talking about starting a family. We live on a budget, but we still have about \$15,000 in credit card debt and student loans we're working hard to pay off. Do you think couples should wait until they are debt-free to have children?

– Missy

Dear Missy

You and your husband are chipping away at your debt, and that's a good thing. It sounds like you two are determined to get it paid off and take control of your finances. You're also making pretty good money, so keep up the good work!

Ok, so the truth is kids

Dave Ramsey Says

can be expensive. From medical costs and diapers, to childcare and beyond, it costs money to raise a family. But here's the thing: If you let money alone, or the perfect financial situation, determine whether you have kids or not, you may never have them. Now, would it be easier from a financial standpoint only to wait on having kids until you're debt-free and there's a huge pile of cash in the bank? Sure, it would. But children are worth more than any amount of money. If you love each other and want to be parents, and you're mature adults in every other area, don't let this debt stop you.

A child isn't going to derail your journey to financial peace. Having kids might cause you to press pause for a while on some financial matters, or slow your pace a little bit, but as long as you both stay focused and determined to manage your money wisely, chances are things will work out fine.


Just don't make the mistake lots of parents do – especially first-time parents. Many of them think they have to run out and

buy a new, “safer” car, spend a fortune on a fancy crib, or buy all things baby from some overpriced boutique. Do you get what I'm saying, Missy? Why buy a brand-new, \$400 stroller, when a friend or relative has a perfectly good, barely used one they're willing to give you?

It's easy to get carried away spending for a baby. But children will be just fine as long as they have food, clothing, shelter – and most importantly – loving, caring parents. God bless you two!

– Dave

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




Publisher,

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Crossword Puzzle on Page 8

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

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Sudoku Puzzle on Page 8

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

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All Legal Ads Published by Messenger Publishing MPG

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Crossword Puzzle Solutions on Page 8

CLUES

ACROSS

- RPM gauge
- Have a bawl
- "Neutral" capital
- Paella pot
- Mend, healthwise
- Deadly snake of south-eastern Asia
- Multicolored horse
- Estimator's phrase (2 words)
- "The Addams Family" manservant
- "Northernmost European capital
- One of British Isles
- EUR, pl.
- Ensign, for short
- Pieces of glass, e.g.
- Vacuum cleaner alternative
- the land of the free...
- Oxygenate, as in lawn
- Insane, in Spain
- Just harvested, e.g.
- A in IPA
- Church song
- Tiny amount
- Military marksman
- Fake tooth
- Devoid of liquid
- Jet setters' vessels
- Address abbreviation
- Sports stadium
- Japan's highest mountain
- \*Capital that hosts Nobel Prizes
- Sophia \_\_\_\_, Italian actress
- Genesis twin
- Curved molding
- Tequila source
- Non-permanent office worker
- Like dental surgery
- \*Capital on a fjord
- Possesses
- Big top

DOWN

- Unit of pressure named after Torricelli
- Post sun-bathing relief
- Wallace & Gromit modeling material
- Desire
- Aussie gas station
- Desert wanderer's hope
- Alexander Alexandrovich \_\_\_\_, Russian poet
- \*Also the capital of European Union
- James \_\_\_\_, Jones
- Paddy grain
- To the \_\_\_\_ degree
- Fish voice after a pep rally
- "A Fish Called Wanda" actor Kevin
- Judea, alt. sp.
- Mama sheep
- \*Bulgarian capital and actress Vergara's given name
- Long-necked bird
- Rocky ridge
- Pas
- Hunt illegally
- Audience's approval
- Frolics
- "Atlas Shrugged" author Ayn
- Cassius Clay
- \*Balkan capital and 1984 Olympics location
- Practical joke
- Canine command
- Eyeball washing vessel
- Offer two cents
- Collusion
- Away from harbor (2 words)
- Drifts
- \*London was famous for these pea soup particulars
- Russian mountain chain
- Comedian Rogan
- Shrek, e.g.
- Not fatty
- Patty \_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ Tzu

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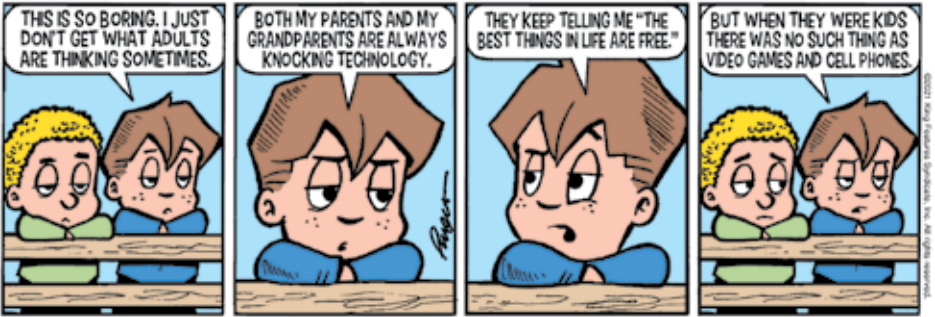
5				1		7
7		2	6			
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7		6		3		
			4			
	1		7			5
8	3				2	
			7	3		9
6		1				3

Solutions on Page 8

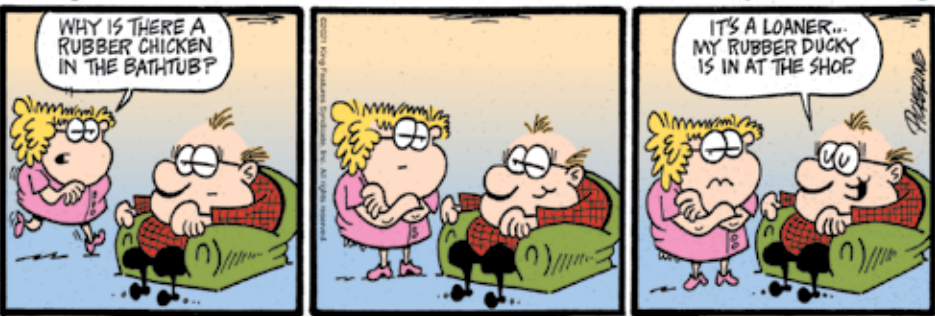


WEEKLY COMICS

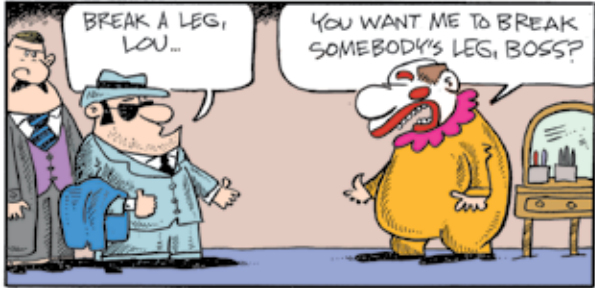
Amber Waves



The Spats



Out on a Limb



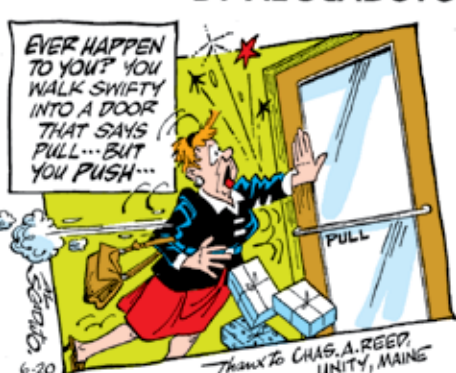
by Gary Kopervas



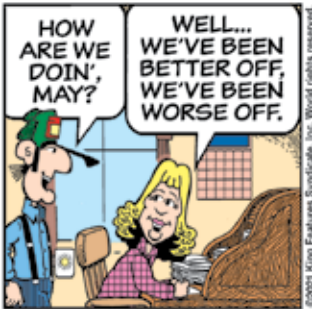
THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



BY AL SCADUTO



R.F.D.



by Mike Marland



LAFF-A-DAY



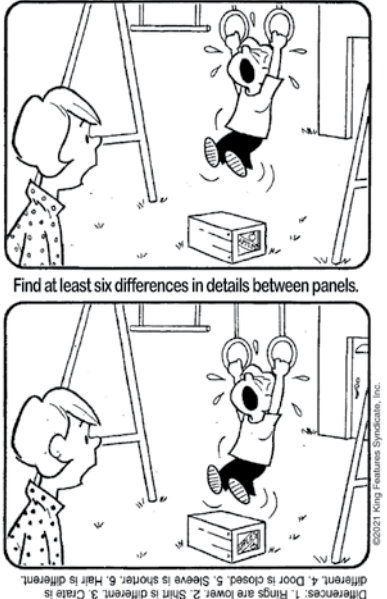
Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTIHOFF



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