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Holiday Vendor Fair Promises Delights



Downtown Dixon will be a bit crowded this coming Saturday as The Barn and Pantry hosts the third annual Holiday Vendors Fair from 9 am to 2 pm in the Frosty's parking lot across front the Dixon Police Department. Courtesy photo

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - We may not have our traditional Holiday Open House in downtown Dixon but it looks like we might have something better. The Barn & Pantry will be hosting its 3rd annual Holiday Vendor Fair featuring farmer's goods, a flea market, and craft vendors on Saturday, November 21, at 171 West A Street from 9 am to 2 pm in the heart of downtown Dixon.

This is an event that highlights many small entrepreneurs who enjoy making, creating, or selling homespun crafts and foods. The popular event can provide all your Christmas shopping in one downtown place--especially since the location is just steps away from other merchants like the new Uptown Collective and the ever-exquisite Dixon Florist.

To give you an idea of some of the offerings, there will be nearly 100 booths including wood working, candles, blankets, candy, jewelry makers, clothing boutiques, makeup consultants, apothecaries, music, books, pottery, canine accessories, home decor, fibers, floral

arrangements, baked goodies, wines and much more.

“We love bringing entrepreneurs together because we believe a rising tide floats all ships,” said owner Lindsey Hickman last year in a press release, “So what better way to celebrate our accomplishments than to gather everyone together for a gigantic shopping experience. It brings a whole new accessibility to shopping locally when you can do it all in one place like this.”

The vendors have received basic instructions for operating within COVID guidelines and Hickman has done the layout so that there will be one way routes that will encompass most if not all the asphalt parking lot on the Frosty's corner across from the Dixon Police Department.

“We're really glad to have this resource for us small folks to get to know each other and get to be known!” said Shar Agvateesiri, owner of Mother – A House Plant Boutique, who also has a retail shop at 350 West A Street. “This offers us some padding for the season to come. Hopefully it will be a success.” Agvateesiri hopes that there is

room for these in the future and said the support for small business during the pandemic is critical.

“The conversation comes down to support and I really worry about the survival ability [of] some folks,” she said. “We all thought this would be short-lived...” She talked about entrepreneurs needing to come together and share ideas and perhaps partner or cross market with others to help sales.

“Even millennials are getting tired of shopping online,” she said.

Here are some of the vendors planning to participate: Peach Jewel; Thirty One Gifts; Bling with Riss - Paparazzi Accessories; Gnomeland Felts and Crafts; Lipsense By Senegence; Integrity Alpaca's & Fiber; Color Street; Tres Chalk; Bella Jackson Studios/Spoonology; Mary & Martha; Scentsy; Portal Artesanal; Mary Kay Cosmetics; G.G. Rustic Designs; Buckin' Butter Bakery; Sofia and Liv Designs; Southern Touch Designs; Damsel in Defense; Made By Marcy; I will cut you Handmade Creations; J&M Herbals; Chloe and Elenore Mobile Boutique; Generation Fashion (includes

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Solano County COVID Rates Rise

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Back to outdoor dining...Effective this past Tuesday, many small businesses will be adversely affected by this past Monday's announcement by Solano County that we are moving back into the Purple Tier of Governor Gavin Newsom's 'Blueprint for a Safer Economy.' Thanksgiving advice was also given.

The move to purple, a more restrictive phase, was effective immediately due to an unprecedented surge in cases. Some indoor business operations and activities must close or reduce capacity. As of Monday, the county had 612 active cases and 36 people hospitalized. There have been 790 people who died from the virus in Solano County. On the 10th, the levels were too high to stay in the red.

“We urge residents to continue to be very careful about getting or spreading COVID-19, especially coming into the holidays,” said Solano County Public Health Officer, Dr. Bela Matyas. “Maintain 6-foot distance, wear a mask, wash hands frequently, and stay home if you are sick.” He said the climb in numbers is because of small gatherings.

“People are getting back together. We typically let our guard down when we're having family over,” he said in regards to Thanksgiving gathering concerns. A short embrace with a hug is okay but no kissing to minimize saliva being transmitted was one bit of advice he gave. Keep masks on except for actually eating the meal, staying less time together for visiting, and certainly not sharing food, he also advised. Gatherings are limited to three households.

The following businesses can open outdoors only with modifications: Restaurants, gyms and fitness centers; movie theaters; museums, zoos, and aquariums; places of worship, and family entertainment centers.

Retail and shopping centers may open indoors with a maximum 25 percent occupancy.

It was in August that Newsom announced the 'Blueprint for a Safer Economy,' which assigns a colored tier for each county to determine which activities are permissible as the state navigates through the impacts of the Coronavirus. The purple tier is for counties with widespread risk, the red is for ones with substantial risk, orange is for moderate risk and yellow is for ones with minimal risk.

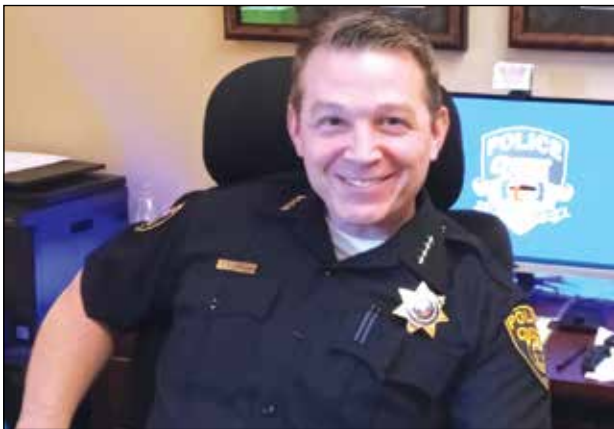
In regards to schools, if they were already open, they can stay open but if they have not yet opened, they must wait unless they get an elementary school waiver.

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Police Chief Thompson Leaving; Offers Advice for Next One

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Dixon Police Chief Robert Thompson will be leaving for his new post as Chief of Police for Laguna Beach, a small coastal community exactly the same size as Dixon, at the start of the new year. He cited the decision was made when faced with several complications in the family schedule including a 400-mile commute for his wife, college in southern California for their 19-year-old daughter, and childcare for their 5-year-old son. He swears he is leaving Dixon in good hands and is clear his move has nothing to do with politics but more of pandemic issues. With their



Chief Robert Thompson will be leaving Dixon for Southern California at the end of this year. Photo by Debra Dingman

favorite babysitter, their college-bound daughter going to campus, and his wife's company in Irvine not too thrilled with a 400-mile commute using up a travel budget, life had to change for them.

“Family first,” he said

simply as we sat in an organized Chief's office decorated with a moving slide show of his family and a wall of framed medals. “Childcare has been an issue,” he said, reminding that the 19-year-old and the 5-year-old are with the

same wife he said with a bit of humor. His wife has travelled for him to have his jobs and made sacrifices for his jobs so he sees it as his “turn to sacrifice” for her. She will be within a few short miles to her office once they relocate.

He believes most of the issues that faced Dixon when he got here in March of 2017 including a department that was understaffed and under-funded are now “fixed.”

“I didn't believe we had to have the highest paying (police department) but we couldn't be the lowest,” he said noting that he had the full backing of the council to make the Dixon Police Department the best in the county – a request that

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Jobs, Jobs, Jobs Available Everywhere

By Debra Dingman

My hubby and I ran a lot of errands over the weekend catching up on minor fix-it tasks, groceries, etc. and everywhere we went, I noticed there was a help wanted sign for entry-level positions. I spoke with a few of the managers like the one at Wienerschnitzel who needs help and is running a classified Help Wanted ad in our newspaper, that the problem is people can make more money on unemployment. Hmmm...I see a perfect opportunity for high school students here...

But there's jobs for higher up the ladder, too. Tractor Supply Company is looking for a full time Associate Store Manager. That means you do a lot of everything like cashiering, stocking, putting lots and lots of baby chickens in large aluminum tubs, and more. It's a fun job. Trust me. I know about this through a son who worked there for four years. He had a blast. Of course, he loves making people happy and their team became like family over the years so it was a win-win. You can find out more at www.TractorSupply.com. jobs or talk to Mike Morley at the Dixon store, 2000 North First Street.

Then I had a lengthy conversation with a postal carrier clerk who told us they were "desperate" for carriers and if we knew anyone, to please encourage them to apply. It is \$17 an hour to start and comes with a boat-load of benefits. Just go into our Dixon Post Office and tell them you're interested. They'll take it from there, he said.

When I was in the Police Department to interview our Chief, I saw the announcement for a newly created position of Police Services Analyst. Take a look at www.join Dixon pd.info for information on the Dixon Police Department, and here for a job description and application information: www.calopps.org/dixon/job-20057092

COVID Fatigue Grips Quietly In The Night

As usual, I wake up with crystal clear thoughts as if my mind has been rummaging through all of the past events and thoughts of my life throughout the night and then brought them succinctly to a conclusion.

This morning, my words flowed before even my eyes opened to the dark.

"I have changed," I told my beloved. "And I know exactly when it happened." I think I heard snoring but my words continued that I used to be a very happy person, serving the community through church, clubs, and organizations happily volunteering and hopefully making others feel appreciated and helping them enjoy life. That is all I wanted to do after doing all I could to raise a great family because that was the first priority.

Now, I feel serious, suspicious and maybe even bitter. Okay, world, I admit it. I've grown sour.

Not being able to attend meetings in person or attend wine strolls and Veterans dinners or arrange fun activities with our Kiwanis Club or with my family has changed my life dramatically. I admit struggling and living for Sunday's online church services and Wednesday's chat with Jamie Myers, a local minister's wife who shares uplifting messages on Facebook.

It is times like these when I miss the social interactions of friends and family - coupled with going to the store for a basic need and wearing a mask that my mood moves dark - causes me to go dark. Is it because my own breath is fogging up the lenses every few seconds so that I can't see clearly, that I can't think happy thoughts? Of course it is. This is what they call "COVID Fatigue." When you hear that term on the news, you'll know what you are experiencing.

"I'm over-thinking again, aren't I?" I asked my hubby. He rolled over but I thought I heard a half-whispered "Yes." ★

Votes Finalized: Slim Win for Steve Bird



Dixon's Mayor-elect Steve Bird. Courtesy file photo

By MPG Staff

DIXON, CA (MPG) - The final counts are in from the Solano County Registrar of Voters for the November 3 elections with Councilman Steve Bird garnering a slim win for Dixon Mayor - only 305 votes over incumbent Mayor Thom Bogue and only 611 votes from his fellow Council member Devon Minnema. Ted Hickman who has run for office a dozen times for various offices still held his usual 10% of the vote.

Dixon has population of about 22,000, and of those residents, 11,390

are registered voters with 9,196 casting ballots cast in the city-wide Mayor's election.

Kevin Johnson won for District 3 Council Representative and Don Hendershot won for District 4 Council Representative. James P. Ward was elected City Treasurer.

Interestingly, these results show that there will be plenty of people on the dais for at least the next two years to make sure Dixonites are in safe hands. Our new Mayor is a former police officer who retired from the Sheriff's Department. He will be joined by newly-elected District 4 Councilman Don Hendershot who is also in law enforcement. Together, they'll be serving with former Correctional Officer District Councilman Jim Ernest who represents District 2. Even Jim Ward, newly elected City Treasurer is a retired California Highway

Patrol officer.

What is it that makes people who serve in these occupations potentially great leaders? Communication skills, compassion and empathy, integrity, negotiation skills, eagerness to learn and mental agility. Dixon can only benefit if our newly elected leaders use these abilities to listen to the citizens and move forward.

Watch for next week's edition for more in depth articles on other winners.

Here's the total votes from Solano County ROV:

Dixon City Mayor- Steve Bird: 2,919; Thom Bogue: 2,614; Devon Minnema: 2,308; Ted Hickman: 909.

Dixon City Council, District 4 - Don Hendershot: 1,091; Jerry Castañon Sr.: 735; Logan Legg: 513.

Dixon School Board- Melissa Maseda: 5,273; David Bowen III: 4,402; Luke Foster: 3,497 ★

Holiday Vendor Fair

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Lularoe); Usborne Books and More; Aromatherapy Packs; Nicolemaricrochets; Patty's Eats N Treats; NNAS Electronics; DBA CraftyStorz; Jordyn's Gigi Crafts; Melaleuca the Wellness Company; Matilda Jane Clothing; PaperCut Pottery; Massaro's Market; Ragamuffing Goods &

Florals; MOTHER - A Houseplant Boutique; Sienna's Sweets Shoppe; Wolf Pack Woodworking; CorkiesBySteph; Origami Owl; Mama's Makin' It; Groovy Crossroads; Lithe; Pierce Custom Creations & Shelly's Door Decor; Tupperware; Stitches and Wishes; Mary Kay & Studio Pink; Perfectly Posh; Modern Gypsy Boutique; The

Final Sauce; Barrett's Balms; This & That Boutique; Erickson Ranch Jams; Dashing Dogs Boutique; Signature HomeStyles; Tagged with Love; Pineapple Company; Art & Design; Debbie's She Shack (LuLaRoe.)

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Hendershot, Johnson: Moving Up From Commissioners to Councilmen



Don Hendershot

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Don Hendershot and Kevin Johnson have served on the City Planning commission for several years together and now will serve the next four years as City Councilmen. Hendershot will represent District 4 which includes downtown, Country Fair and Valley Glen subdivisions. Johnson will represent District 3 which includes the CA Jacobs, Lincoln, Pitt School and Tremont School areas. Both campaigned on the need for civility and transparency on the dais.

“There needs to be a change in that Council,” Hendershot said. “I don’t get bullied. I do the research and make my own decisions. I lost six to one on numerous things (on the Planning Commission.) If you talk to the citizens with respect, you can have an open dialogue,” he explained. Hendershot has worked in law enforcement 32 years after eight years in the US Air Force so feels ready for the job because of his experiences, listening, and leadership skills.

“I will talk and listen to everybody,” he said. “If they have a phone,

they can contact me.”

He’s looking forward to meeting with City staff and learning what he can and can’t do but serving seven years on the Planning Commission will give him an instant boost in knowing proprieties.

“I know very well the Brown Act so that’s a plus,” he said. His number one goal is to get the Parkway Overpass built with getting a second Fire Station.

“I truly believe there’s got to be public funds available for that because it has to do with reducing response time,” he said adding that his family was one of the first to buy a home in Valley Glen and they were promised that overpass.

Hendershot and his wife have two daughters, one in high school and one in college.



Kevin Johnson

Johnson likes to look at the running of city council like being in a large family.

“You never want to discourage a part of the family that you care about that their opinion is not valuable but there cannot be 20 thousand votes going to the ballot. We have been

given the responsibility to be that final vote and I like to think that I’m going to be able to impact the other four in getting that family together.”

Johnson sees advantages and disadvantages to experiencing owning his own businesses.

“I’ve been making ownership decisions 34 out of 37 years and I could implement it by 5 pm,” he said. “My biggest challenge is to slow myself down and work with the other four on the dais. That’s why I’m employing the family business philosophy.”

Johnson and his wife have six grown children and one still in high school. He has been a real estate broker for nearly two decades in Dixon.

“I think there is a desire for enhanced public participation,” he said. “We need to go slower on big decisions and I’m very hopeful that the council members are open to the transition toward that. The voting of yes for Measure S and Measure T, as frustrating as it is for me knowing the background for both, I take as the overwhelming need for better communication and need for transparency.”

“I tried to extract the positive and those are huge numbers (against both measures) and they are screaming we want to be more involved in the governance of our town. I think that is a wonderful thing,” he said. “I think we have a very good mix of very Dixon-based decision makers and I believe we are going to make very good decisions in building Dixon.”

Both men will be installed to the Council during the December 15 City Council Meeting. It is still being determined if that will take place inside City Hall.

Police Chief Thompson Leaving

Continued from page 1

came from City Manager Jim Lindley.

“I’ve hired almost everyone here and the department underwent an evolution from the ground up,” he said. There were protocols set, updated equipment purchased including body cams, improved all levels of technology, and accountability – explaining that there was “too much time between Chief Jon Cox and me....way too long.”

“We embraced a whole series of initiatives and it was exhausting but we won the race,” he said. “There is not a thing we did not touch. We have systems in place for tracing, built the fence, brought in a resource school officer, a canine patrol, created a completely paperless reporting system, and brought in a motorcycle. I’m very confident that we are well-positioned for the future. We have the right people in the right places.”

Some of his other achievements he discussed included improved outreach communications with the public – noting that their Facebook page was 2,000 when he first came and now it is at 10,000 but he also said he wished they had another ‘vehicle’ to use as he detests the “caustic and toxic environment” of that social media platform and why the department has set their site up with specific guidelines that it is “not a forum.”

“The officers are better trained, equipped, motivated, and there are more of them discovering crime versus reacting to it,” he added. “The crime was probably here all along but now we are finding it and making arrests.

He offered advice to the incoming Chief – whoever that will be.

“First, (the community) has to decide what they want Dixon to be. Dixon is growing rapidly and the Council is going to have to make some decisions. We enjoy an exceptionally low violent crime rate and this is a very safe community,” he said. The City has to find the right person and that right person just needs to come in and keep it all going, he said.

He sees Dixon as having basically two groups of people.

“There are a number of people who still think Dixon is a town with an 8,000 population,” he said. “The other group lives here and grocery shops here. They feel it is a safe place for the schools and parks and for their children. But, they don’t care. They really don’t care. They are not wrapped up in old grudges and fights.” So his second bit of advice was to get heavily involved in Dixon.

“Number one is to immediately ingratiate yourself into the community. There is no group too small to talk to. And, to listen to what the people want – not to dictate what they want,” he said. Number two is to be present.

“I went to the Grillin’ and Chillin’, the 4th of July, the high school graduation, the Tree Lighting, and everything I could. It is important to be at every single thing to have conversations with people and hear them. Their input matters,” he said.

“We want to thank Chief Thompson for his diligence and hard work,” said City Manager Jim Lindley, adding that the Chief’s replacement will “have some very large shoes to fill.”

Solano County COVID Rates Rise

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For more information, go to www.solanocounty.com/depts/ph/coronavirus.asp.

California public health officials also encourage everyone to consider these practices: Stay home if you have symptoms of illness or are high-risk; Maintain six feet of distance or more from those not in your household; Wear face coverings; Practice healthy hygiene habits; Organize small gatherings outdoors with a limited number

of guests; Stay local as much as possible; Get tested through your healthcare provider or at community testing sites if you were exposed to someone with COVID-19 or have COVID-19-like symptoms.



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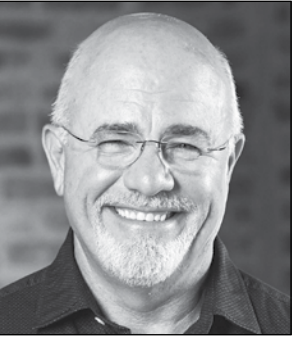


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Refinance in Baby Step 2?

Dear Dave,

My husband and I are on Baby Step 2, and we’ve paid off about \$30,000 in consumer debt since March. We were wondering if we should refinance our mortgage. Our current rate is 4.875%, with 28 years remaining on the loan. We found a 15-year refinance at 2.5%, which would raise our monthly payments about \$200, but we can handle that. We have \$150,000 in equity in our home and about \$207,000 left on the loan. What do you think we should do?

–Raye

Dear Raye,

You two have done a great job this year! I’m so proud of what you’ve accomplished and that you’re looking to the future.

Baby Step 2 wouldn’t be affected, except that your monthly mortgage payment will go up a little. I wouldn’t pay the refinance costs out of pocket, though. I’d roll them into the loan. You’d be saving more than 2% by locking in this crazy-low interest rate, and

Dave Ramsey Says

you’re knocking the whole thing down to a 15-year loan. I love all that. It’s definitely worth the extra \$200 a month to make it happen.

Think about it this way. You’re going to be saving more than \$4,000 a year with the interest rate reduction. You’re not going to see it in cash flow because of the \$200 increase in monthly payments, but over the scope of the loan, you’re going to be charged between \$4,000 and \$4,500 less per year for interest. All that money is going toward paying back the closing costs and reducing the principal built into the move from 28 years to 15 years.

Yes, you should do this!

–Dave

Which Comes First?

Dear Dave,

I just saved up my \$1,000 beginner emergency fund, and I’m looking at paying off my car and credit card debt – a total of \$3,400 – by the end of January. Before I started your plan, I took out a \$7,500 student loan to pay for my fall and spring semesters. I still have a year of school left, which will cost about \$10,000. Should I save up the money for my final year before attacking my student loan debt, so I don’t have to take out another one, or go ahead and begin paying it off?

–Emma

Dear Emma,

Well, it doesn’t make much sense to pay off the current student loan, then turn around and take out another one. Your first goal – after you get the credit cards and car paid off – should be saving cash to finish school. Once you’ve done that, start paying off the student loan.

Long story short, you’ve got to stop borrowing money. The idea of saving up to pay for things should be the default setting in your brain, Emma. Otherwise, you’re going to spend the rest of your life with car payments and other debt hanging around your neck. That’s not being responsible with your money, and it will keep you from saving for stuff that matters and becoming wealthy.

Stop. Borrowing. Money. I hope I haven’t been unclear.

Dave Ramsey is a seven-time #1 national best-selling author, personal finance expert, and host of The Dave Ramsey Show, heard by more than 16 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. ★

Social Security Matters About “Registering” for Social Security and Medicare



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I have a big 65th birthday coming up mid-March and would like your advice on registering for Social Security and Medicare. I am now unemployed, but I am seeking another gig to get me to age 67 before taking Social Security. **Signed: Wondering Senior**

Dear Wondering: You do not need to “register” with Social Security in advance. You don’t need to do anything with Social Security until you are ready to claim your benefits. Since you were born in 1956, your full retirement age (FRA) for Social Security purposes is 66 plus 4 months, and that is when you will be entitled to 100% of the benefit you’ve earned from a lifetime of working. But you can, if you wish, also wait beyond your FRA to get an even bigger benefit. For each month you delay after your FRA you’ll earn Delayed Retirement Credits of .667%, which is 8% additional benefit for each year you wait. That can continue up to age 70 when your maximum benefit will be reached. In your case that would mean an age 70



benefit 29% more than your FRA benefit amount. But whenever you’re ready, you can apply for Social Security online at www.ssa.gov/retire (you must first create your “My Social Security” account to apply online).

Medicare is an entirely separate program and, unless you have “creditable” employer healthcare coverage from a new job, you should enroll in Medicare a bit prior to your 65th birthday (“creditable” coverage is a group plan with at least 20 participants). This would be during your Medicare Initial Enrollment Period (IEP), which is a 7-month window starting 3 months before the month you turn 65 and ending 3 months after the month you turn 65. If you don’t enroll in Medicare during your IEP and enroll later, and if you didn’t have creditable employer healthcare coverage after age 65, you will be subject to a late enrollment penalty, which will permanently increase your Medicare Part B (and Part D) premiums.

Medicare Part B is coverage for doctors & outpatient services, and Part D is prescription drug coverage, both of which require a premium; Medicare Part A is hospitalization coverage which is free if you’re eligible for Social Security. If you have “creditable”

employer coverage when you turn 65, you can simply delay enrolling in Medicare Part B until your employer coverage is about to end, or until after it ends during an 8 month Special Enrollment Period during which you can enroll in Medicare Part B without penalty. But for Part D prescription drug coverage, you must enroll in a private plan within 63 days of your 65th birthday, or the end of your employer drug coverage, or you will incur a Part D late enrollment penalty for enrolling later. And remember that Medicare late enrollment penalties never go away – they are recurring for the rest of your life.

The bottom line is this: you don’t need to pre-register for either Social Security or Medicare. You can simply enroll when you are ready for benefits to start (keeping in mind that for Medicare, you must have “creditable” alternative coverage after age 65 to avoid late enrollment penalties).

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation’s staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadviser@amacfoundation.org. ★

Parole Board Denies Release of Sex Offender

By Krishna A. Abrams, Solano County

VALLEJO, CA (MPG) - On November 12, 2020, a Board of Parole Hearing was held virtually for Inmate Johnny Ray Harper who is serving a 64-year sentence at California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation’s (CDCR) San Quentin State Prison. The Board denied Inmate Harper’s request for parole.

Between March 1, 1991 and December 21, 1992, Inmate Harper committed several forcible sexual acts against a 12-year-old family member. When the child finally reported the crimes to her mother, Inmate Harper held a gun to the child’s head, shot into the ceiling of their house, and told the child’s mother she was lying. Later, the child told her mother she was not lying and they reported the crimes to the Benicia Police Department. Inmate Harper was arrested by Benicia Police Department and prosecuted by the Solano County District Attorney’s Office.

On June 1, 1995, a Solano County jury found Inmate Harper Guilty of Continuous

Sexual Abuse of a Child Under the Age of 14, Lewd Acts Upon a Child Under the Age of 14, and 7 counts of Forcible Sex Acts on a Child Under the Age of 14. At the judgment and sentencing held on July 6, 1995, after considering Inmate Harper’s heinous acts and their life long impacts they would have on the victim, the Court sentenced Inmate Harper to 64 years in state prison.

This was Inmate Harper’s first parole hearing. He was being considered for early release as an elderly parolee due to his age of 61 years. Solano County Chief Deputy Sharon Henry vehemently opposed the release of Inmate Harper, arguing not only that he currently poses an unreasonable risk to public safety, but that he had not done any programming to garner insight into the causative factors of his abhorrent sexually violent behavior. Inmate Harper testified at his parole hearing in support of his request for release. The Parole Board denied Inmate Harper’s request finding that he is currently dangerous and poses an unreasonable risk to the community if he were to be released. ★

Parole Board Denies Release of Violent Offender

Office of Solano County District Attorney


SOLANO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - A Board of Parole Hearing was held virtually for Inmate Dante Washington, who is currently serving a 25-year sentence at California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation’s (CDCR) California Healthcare Facility. Finding that Inmate Washington still posed an unreasonable risk to the community, the Board denied his request for parole.

On December 31, 2003, Inmate Washington approached a gentleman getting out of his father’s BMW in the city of Berkeley, California. Inmate Washington grabbed the victim by his collar, pointed a gun at his head, and demanded his car keys and wallet. Fearing for his life, the victim gave Inmate Washington the car keys and his wallet. Inmate Washington unlocked the car, got inside, and sped away. The victim called 911, and Berkeley police officers were able to locate the stolen BMW on Interstate 80, however Inmate Washington was able to elude the officers. Two days later, Inmate Washington was spotted on the freeway in Solano County in the stolen BMW. He refused to comply with officers’ commands to pull over, and instead drove at speeds of 100 mph, cutting off numerous vehicles and jeopardizing the safety of all those on the freeway. Inmate Washington continued to drive dangerously until he

crashed the car.

On November 18, 2004, a Solano County jury found Inmate Washington Guilty of Carjacking, Vehicle Theft, Assault with a Deadly Weapon, and Felony Evading of a Police Officer. The jury also found true the allegation that Inmate Washington Used a Firearm during the Carjacking. Inmate Washington was sentenced to 19 years in state prison. In 2011, while serving his sentence, Inmate Washington was convicted of Battery on a Non-Prisoner and sentenced to an additional 6 years in prison, increasing his sentence to 25 years.


Recent changes in the law regarding Youthful Offender Parole Rights allowed Inmate Washington the opportunity for an expedited parole hearing, as he was 19 years old at the time of the crime. Solano County Chief Deputy Sharon Henry opposed the release of Inmate Washington, arguing that he still posed an unreasonable risk to public safety, in that he was at high risk for committing future violence and had continually engaged in violent behavior while incarcerated. Inmate Washington testified at his parole hearing in support of his request for release. The Parole Board noted that Washington continued to show anger and hostility during the hearing and denied his request for parole, finding that he continues to pose an unreasonable risk to the community if he were to be released. ★



**Publisher,
Paul V. Scholl**

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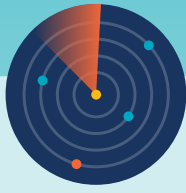
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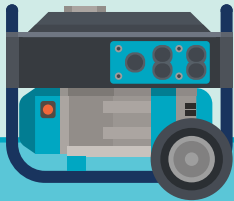
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More High-Dollar Ballot Measures in 2022



By Dan Walters
CALMatters

Much has been said and written about the hundreds of millions of dollars spent for and against the dozen statewide measures on this month's ballot.

Big money? Yes, but it was really just chicken feed, because the stakes in those ballot battles were infinitely greater.

Take, for instance, Proposition 15, a battle between a union-led coalition that proposed the measure, and a business coalition. Had Proposition 15 passed, it would have generated roughly \$10 billion a year for schools and local governments. That's about 66 times as much as the one-time spending for and against the measure.

Other than the scale, there was nothing unusual this year about the lopsided risk-reward aspect of major ballot measures, and it will fuel another round of conflicts two years hence. There are at least four high-dollar ballot measures headed for the 2022 ballot:

MICRA – In 1975, Jerry Brown signed the Medical Injury Compensation Reform Act or MICRA, placing a \$250,000 cap on damages for what were called “pain and suffering” in medical malpractice lawsuits.

Consumer advocates and

personal injury lawyers have attempted numerous times in the Legislature to modify the law, contending that it protects bad medical care providers and short-changes their innocent patients. Providers and their insurers have turned back each challenge, saying that removing the cap would raise medical costs.

A measure already qualified for the 2022 ballot would adjust the cap for inflation retroactively to 1975, probably increasing it to well over \$1 million, and eliminate it for “catastrophic injuries.” The outcome could have multi-billion-dollar impacts and thus will mean multi-million-dollar campaigns.

PLASTICS – A certain-to-qualify measure would reduce or eliminate single-use plastic packaging through regulation and a tax.

California recycler Recology is the chief sponsor of the initiative, which would continue a crusade, also supported by environmental groups, that stalled in the Legislature thanks to fierce lobbying by a packaging industry coalition led by South Carolina-based Novolex.

As the battle shifts to the ballot, the Recology group will portray plastic packaging, particularly items used for takeout food, as environmental despoilers. The industry will counter that using plastic packaging is cleaner than the alternatives, particularly during a pandemic.

SPORTS WAGERING – Another virtually certain 2022 ballot measure also continues a contentious issue the Legislature failed to resolve – whether

legal sports wagering should come to California and if so, who should benefit.

A legislative measure would have given Indian tribal casinos and some horse racing tracks authority to take bets on sporting events, but the politically powerful casinos opposed it because it would also have sanctioned new forms of gambling in non-tribal card rooms, impinging on the tribes' monopoly.

A tribal coalition's pending ballot measure mirrors the failed legislation except for its card room enhancements. It's uncertain whether the card rooms will try to mount an opposition drive but billions of gambling dollars will hinge on the outcome.

FLAVORED TOBACCO – Despite stalling on other issues, the Legislature did pass a ban on flavored tobacco products, which have been criticized as luring young men and women into tobacco use.

“It will be a point of deep pride and personal privilege as a father of four and as someone who's had many, many family members die at the hands of the tobacco industry to sign that bill,” Gov. Gavin Newsom said.

The legislation was a defeat for the tobacco industry, which is fighting back with a referendum that would repeal the new law, just as this year's Proposition 25, sponsored by the bail bond industry, erased a law that eliminated cash bail for criminal defendants.

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

CLG NEWS UPDATES

Provided by Citizens for Legitimate Government (CLG) See legitgov.org

Federal Election Commission Chair Calls Election ‘Illegitimate’ Due to Voter Fraud – ‘The law is not being followed, making this an illegitimate election.’ | 12 Nov 2020 | Trey Trainor, the Chairman of the Federal Election, stated during an appearance on Newsmax this Thursday that he “does believe there's voter fraud taking place,” and confirmed that the refusal to allow poll watchers to observe the ballot counting process - among numerous other irregularities - does indeed constitute an “illegitimate election.” “I do believe that there is voter fraud taking place in these places,” Trainor said. “Otherwise they would allow the observers to go in.” “When you have claims of 10,000 people who don't live in the state of Nevada having voted in Nevada, when you have the video showing where people are either duplicating a spoiled ballot right there, or they're in the process of just marking a ballot that came in blank for a voter, that's a process that needs to be observed by election observers,” Trainor said. The FEC Chairman added that poll observers are legally allowed to be present during the counting of ballots, and if they are refused entry to a place where the vote is being tabulated then “the law is not being followed, making this an illegitimate election.”

Michigan Witness: GOP Poll Challengers Were Assaulted at TCF Center trying to Protect the Vote – **GOP challengers were prevented from seeing ballots** – **Witness says: ‘The most crooked thing I’ve ever seen’** | 12 Nov 2020 | Absentee ballots from Wayne County/Detroit were supposed to be counted by 8:00 PM on election night last week, but a 3:30 AM delivery of what witnesses have described as 50-61 boxes of ballots puts into doubt the validity of the surprising election results. That surprise brought a commanding Trump lead of 300,000 votes for Michigan's 16 electoral votes into a 120,000 vote deficit after votes from Wayne County were counted. Ann Rudisill went down to the counting area after hearing that a large batch of suspicious ballots had arrived in the middle of the night. Rudisill noticed a total lack of security at the TCF Center when she entered. “There was no sign in sheet. There was nothing. Maybe a hundred of us walked in there.” She described poll challengers as being purposefully prevented from being able to review the ballots as they were being counted on Wednesday, the day after the election, by poll workers and Democrat Poll Challengers. “I was completely unable to see the ballots.”

Pennsylvania court: Secretary of state lacked authority to change deadline 2 days before Election – **Judge ruled ballots that were previously set aside should not be counted** | 12 Nov 2020 | A Pennsylvania judge ruled in favor of the Trump campaign Thursday, ordering that the state may not count ballots where the voters needed to provide proof of identification and failed to do so by Nov. 9. State law said that voters have until six days after the election – this year that was Nov. 9 – to cure problems regarding a lack of proof of identification. After the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that mail-in ballots could be accepted three days after Election Day, Pennsylvania Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar submitted guidance that said proof of identification could be provided up until Nov. 12, which is six days from the ballot acceptance deadline. That guidance was issued two days before Election Day. “(T)he Court concludes that Respondent Kathy Boockvar, in her official capacity as Secretary of the Commonwealth, lacked statutory authority to issue the November 1, 2020, guidance to Respondents County Boards of Elections insofar as that guidance purported to change the deadline...for certain electors to verify proof of identification,” Judge Mary Hannah Leavitt said in a court order.

Trump Lawsuit Alleges Rampant Violations at Detroit Vote Counting Center | 11 Nov 2020 | President Donald Trump's reelection campaign sued Michigan in federal court late on Nov. 10, alleging pervasive violations of election laws at a vote-counting center in Detroit. The lawsuit is accompanied by 234 pages of sworn witness affidavits which describe how Republican poll challengers were prevented from having adequate access to observe the counting process in violation of Michigan's election code. The witnesses detail a battery of problems with the handling, processing, and counting of the votes, including instances in which election officials ignored their challenges.

Analysis of Election Night Data From All States Show Millions of Votes Either Switched From President to Biden or Were Lost - Using Dominion and Other Systems | 10 Nov 2020 | Tonight we have obtained an unaudited analysis of data available for all the states looking for system glitches and other oddities in vote counts related to the Presidential race only. Last night we reported on another so called system ‘glitch,’ this time in a county in Wisconsin. Evidence was provided to us that showed that the vote totals for Rock County appeared to be switched between President Trump and Joe Biden. 9,516 votes were eliminated from President Trump and moved to Joe Biden. This 19,032 vote difference when corrected would eliminate Biden's lead in Wisconsin. ★

CONVERSATIONS

By Loran Hoffmann and Shirley Humphrey

Follow the Money

Two days before the election, the following appeared on Dixon 411 Political, “Is Steven C Bird the only candidate receiving donations from a builder with future projects in Dixon? Please explain Lewis Investment LLC donation if you would Mr. Bird... Is this to push project funding on the people of Dixon for a political promise??”

Donation: <https://www.cityofdixon.us/.../View/16469/460-Filed-10-20-20>

Future project: <http://lewisretailcenters.propertycapsule.com/.../dixonma...>

With a little more research, one finds that Hendershot and Bird each received \$1,000 from Lewis LLC. Then, two candidates won the election – Bird is now mayor and Don Hendershot won Councilman District 4. In addition, Bird received substantial donations from unions.

If you go to the second url noted, there is a conceptual site plan for a development of over 100 new sites at North First and North Lincoln Streets. This appears to be what was known as the “Duffel Property” which was previously brought to the Dixon Planning Commission. Recollection is that the proposal was turned down because of objections from neighbors.

Currently, the Homestead property is being built. This development will consist of about 1200 houses to be built over the next 5 years. During the hearings on this proposal, it appeared that this project will take all of the Measure B allotments over the next few years, but we will contact Mr. George Osner, City of Dixon interim Planning Director, and provide an update on Measure B allotments. Plus, Measure B has requirements on infrastructure.

One of the biggest problems in Dixon now is traffic, resulting from difficulty getting to the new high school. The old high school is being renovated for a Junior High School. The new junior high school will result in more traffic going to East A and First Streets. Because the junior high has not been completed, the residents of Dixon have not faced the additional traffic going to and from the junior high school. In addition, residents have not moved

into the Homestead Project so we do not know how many will have school children.

The proposed Lewis development has not been approved so we do not know if it will be built. Although the project website might lead one to think that it has been granted approval, the engineering department indicates that the project is still in the conceptual stage.

How much influence will Lewis Investment LLC have? It is possible that deals may have or will be hammered out in the backrooms. This way council members will not be forced to debate in front of people.

If a proposal comes forward from Lewis. Investment LLC, it should be reviewed by board and commissions, the need for more housing on top of the Homestead Development should be discussed during the general plan meetings, and a comprehensive review of how 100 more houses off First Street will affect the current traffic jam during morning and afternoon school hours.

The council should ask for a month by month report on the progress being made on the Parkway Boulevard Overpass, a ten-year projection on the number of school children to be added to the city should be prepared, and a 10-year projection on Measure B allotments

As discussed last week, if there is a hazardous waste accident at the train tracks those homes on the other side of tracks may be difficult to reach.

Developers and entrenched special interests should not be allowed to pull the strings. This would allow unions and special interest groups to shape the city in their image.

\$1,000 donations are not large, but these do have the possibility of impacting our town. Curiously, Lewis LLC only gave donations to two candidates. These two candidates won. Plus, the candidate running for District 3 is a real estate professional. Two plus the unopposed candidate constitute three votes which can approve any project.

Be active. Read the proposed General Plan!! Be prepared to ask questions. Follow the money! ★

Farmer's Rice Cooperative Agrees to Buy Bunge's California Rice Mill

By Brandon Harder,
Farmer's Rice Cooperative

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Farmers' Rice Cooperative (FRC) announced that it has agreed to buy Bunge's facility in Woodland, California, which operates as Pacific International Rice Mill (PIRMI). The sale is expected to be finalized by the end of 2020 subject to customary closing conditions.

PIRMI's assets include the rice milling, drying, and storage facilities in Woodland as well as well established product brands. The mill employs over 60 experienced management and operations team members who are expected to join FRC and continue serving their valued customers.

Farmers' Rice Cooperative is a grower-owned marketing cooperative established in 1944 with annual sales averaging \$250 million. Specializing in premium quality japonica sushi rice, FRC is owned by hundreds of farm families located throughout the Sacramento Valley. FRC's corporate office is based in Sacramento, CA with production facilities located in West Sacramento, Colusa, and Sutter

Counties. FRC currently employs over 200 employees throughout Northern California.

Rick Rhody, FRC President and CEO, commented, “We are excited about the opportunity to add the PIRMI facility, high profile brands, and dedicated employees to the FRC family. FRC will provide the same values and culture to the PIRMI facility that its growers, employees and customers have been accustomed to. Our commitment, resources, and industry knowledge will only enhance the products, services, and value provided to all growers and customers. The acquisition is also an opportunity to enhance FRC's value-added businesses including stabilized rice bran, flour milling, sake rice, and extruded products. The synergies gained by this acquisition will enhance shareholder value and provide FRC members the value, stability and long-term growth vital to members success and their ability to 'Own Their Future!'”

For media inquiries please contact Farmers' Rice Cooperative at (916) 923-5100 You can also learn more about FRC at www.farmersrice.com ★



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FOR THE LOVE OF
BOOKS
By Amy Shane

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

November Cover Love

For The Love Of Books – Cover Love is a monthly look at upcoming titles that are so amazing, intriguing, or enchantingly beautiful that readers will not be able to wait to get their hands on them. As Fall leaves start to burst their radiant autumn covers, readers will be able to get swept away with this fall’s newest fantasy releases.

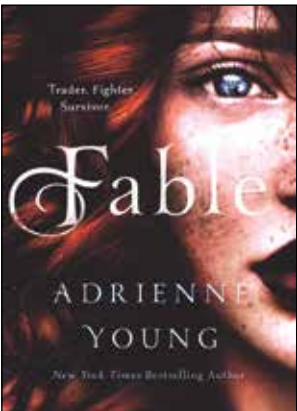


Night Shine
by Tessa Gratton;
McElderry Books

As an orphan girl of the palace, Nothing is able to move about unseen by everyone but her one true friend Kirin. As heir to the throne of Empire Between Fire Mountains, Kirin has to be careful of those he allows near to him, but Nothing is different, their friendship blossomed the moment they met as children, and he trusted her over everyone else in his life. Then Kirin is kidnapped, and only the prince’s bodyguard and Nothing know that he was taken by the evil Sorceress Who Eats Girls. While no one believes them, Nothing knows the secrets that lie hidden within the walls of the palace. Now, it is up to Nothing and the bodyguard to brave the forest filled with demons and

dark magic in order to find her only true friend. However, the journey is ensnared with magic, demons, spirits, self-truths and inner-perspectives, and the cost for Kirin’s freedom is far greater than she ever expected.

From the very first pages, Tessa Gratton encapsulates her readers within a fantasy world of an evil sorceress, a prince, a girl who feels that she is her namesake, a friendship that withstands the test of time, and all-encompassing love. Intriguing her readers to the very core with statements like, “A heart has many petals.” Gratton’s, *Night Shine* promises a seductive fantasy that will breathe magic all on its own accord.



Fable
by Adrienne Young;
Wednesday Books

For Fable, living and surviving by the sea’s

bounty is the only life she has ever known. Daughter of a famous trader, Fable was brought up learning how to live, work, and survive on the sea. But, when her mother drowns, she is left stranded on an island filled with thieves. Fable learns to survive on five rules and the skills her mother taught her to try and get off the island and reclaim what is rightfully hers. When Fable finally has her opportunity to set sail in search for her father, she quickly realizes that this adventure will be so much more than she bargained for.

For, people are like the sea; secrets, lies, and truths can be pulled under and carelessly tossed upon the shore forever ensnared and unable to discern the difference.

The high seas once again open up to an intense, lush, and elegant story of female empowerment in *Fable* by Adrienne Young. Fall into the world ruled by the sea, wild, merciless, and unpredictable while exposing the dangerous vulnerability of love. This story cuts into its readers like a sharp knife, getting deep within their skin before they are even aware, delivering a story that is sure to sweep them away. ★



A Film and TV Review by Tim Riley

“MOONBASE 8” ON SHOWTIME

Showtime’s “Moonbase 8,” a six-episode series that one could easily watch in one sitting without having to even take a bathroom break, offers a wry, offbeat take on astronaut training in the remote Arizona desert.

Nothing about Robert “Cap” Caputo (John C. Reilly), the ostensible team leader, and his colleagues, Michael “Skip” Henai (Fred Armisen), and Scott “Rook” Sloan (Tim Heidecker), will have you thinking about “The Right Stuff.”

These would-be astronauts are in a training competition with other camps in a simulated lunar environment for aNASA mission to be the first to experience habitation on the Moon.

As an aside, fans of the Kansas City Chiefs may be thrilled that one of their Super Bowl champions has been picked for a quick tryout to determine if a civilian might adapt to an outer space experience, but don’t too excited about it, for reasons not to be revealed here.

“Moonbase 8” might be a cathartic release from the ongoing need for many to self-isolate during the pandemic, if only for the absurdity of witnessing these astronauts being tested to determine whether they not only survive but thrive in the ultimate seclusion of Moon-like conditions.

The barren Arizona desert may be the closest thing in America to simulate the lunar landscape that allows NASA to rig a base camp in a modular building intended to sustain life in a harsh environment.

The real challenge for the three astronauts-in-training is coping with the mundane daily routine as if they are actually 238,900 miles from Earth instead of being stuck in a huge sand trap.

The series begins with the group celebrating their 200 th day at the simulated moon base where the mail delivery brings them a \$100 gift card from Harley-Davidson and Cap gets a notice that the City of Honolulu has booted his car.

Consistent with John C. Reilly’s comically stereotypical characters, Cap is played for a borderline juvenile goofball with a sense of desperation of how much he needs to succeed.

A helicopter pilot from Hawaii, Cap needs to turn his life around after failing at marriage and business, owing a ton of debt, and hoping to erase his image as a deadbeat father when he proves his worth as an astronaut.

A legacy candidate and apparently more cerebral than his crewmates, Skip is the son of a famous astronaut who went to the Moon, but he’s obviously not cut

out to follow in his father’s audacious footsteps.

The quiet one is Rook, a deeply religious person with a wife and twelve kids who gather for frequent video chats and who fervently believes that his mission is to spread the Gospel in outer space.

As a group, these hopeful astronauts are wholly inadequate at managing scarce resources. They are about to run out of a monthly water supply in a barely a week, and their system that converts urine into potable water fails to eliminate the foul smell.

Meals in the compound consist of unappealing dehydrated food, a sore point driven home when they meet a crew from a nearby SpaceX camp where the trainees get to enjoy catered street food that includes Thai, Sicilian and Vietnamese cuisine.

The deadpan humor of the series hinges most importantly on the odd personality quirks of the crew. Adept at playing the buffoon, John C. Reilly’s incompetent Cap blusters his way through any obstacles while being self-aware of his inadequacies.

For his part, Skip comes across as pretty much a variation of the sketch characters perfected by Fred Armisen during his time with “Saturday Night Live” as well as with the idiosyncratic “Portlandia” series.

The pious Rook is so persistently bland and unaware that one has to wonder how he is either oblivious or indifferent to the presence of another man during the video chats with his family.

What all three wannabe astronauts have in common, aside from dreams of space travel and a measure of self-respect, is how awesome they are in their own mediocrity in search of achieving their goals.

One of the funniest scenes is when Cap flails about in trying to say what the acronym of NASA actually stands for.

Odd moments like this reveal the subtle humor that is endearing to the series.

As far as watching half-hour comedy episodes goes, “Moonbase 8” might not be the “Must See TV” in the way that concept was once the hallmark of NBC’s marketing campaign, but enjoying the wry humor of the show would not be a bad way to consider streaming the series for an evening.

Showtime has released the premiere episode for free online sampling, as well as on streaming platforms. Amazon Prime Video offers the first episode to its members.

Of course, there’s the 30-day free trial offer if you feel like getting hooked into a Showtime subscription, or just take the gamble you’ll remember to cancel before the deadline. ★

Ask Toni

Turning 65 with Cancer ... Is Medicare Advantage Right for Me?



Toni King

my medical bills now being paid because I have met my deductible.

I receive my care from a major cancer center in my area and my chemotherapy with my radiation treatments to start in December.

Do I enroll in Original Medicare with a Medicare supplement and get Part D, go with a Medicare Advantage plan, or stay with my current COBRA plan until it ends in about 15 months?

If you could help me sort this out, I would greatly appreciate your help.

Thanks, John from San Diego, CA

Hello John:

Recently, I had a phone call from a frantic daughter, who was trying to help her father who had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and he had chosen a Medicare Advantage HMO when he turned 65. Now her father must wait until Medicare’s Annual Enrollment Period from October 15 to December 7 th to make a change back to Original/Traditional Medicare because MD Anderson is not in that Medicare Advantage plan’s HMO network. She must hope that she can find a Medicare Supplement that will accept her father due to his medical condition. She is not sure if he will pass the medical underwriting.

I have great news for you, John, because you are turning 65 in January and there is a special enrollment time called Medicare Supplement/Medigap open enrollment. As I have said before, this is the best time for someone to purchase a Medicare Supplement/Medigap because the open enrollment lasts for a 6-month period beginning the first day of

the month in which you are 65 or older and have just enrolled in Part B for the first time.

During the Medicare Supplement/Medigap open enrollment period, you may enroll in a Medicare Supplement/Medigap Plan and not have to answer any health questions to be accepted by any Medicare Supplement Plan.

If you decide not to keep your COBRA plan, you do not have to worry about your medical care being taking care of with the Medicare Supplement/Medigap, but after the 6-month window, you will have to submit to a complete underwritten application for a Medicare Supplement. You may not qualify for a certain policy or it may cost more, if there are other health issues including the cancer after this 6-month window.

I have been advised by many healthcare professionals that some of the newest healthcare and cancer procedures are not readily approved by Medicare Advantage plans, but these procedures are generally approved with “Original or Traditional Medicare.” These healthcare professionals must fight every day to get the care many desperately need when they have a Medicare Advantage plan. Talk to your medical professional who knows your health situation when making your Medicare plan choice, even if you are someone with a serious health condition, such as heart problems, Alzheimer, MS, end stage renal disease and the list could go on and on...always talk to those that know your health situation.

There are specific Medicare rules when changing from a Medicare Advantage plan to a Medicare Supplement. Call the Toni Says Medicare Hotline at 1/832-519-8664 to have your Medicare questions or concerns answered, or visit the Medicare Annual Enrollment webinars which explain what Medicare is and how to properly find your Medicare Part D plan at www.tonisays.com.

Toni King, author of the Medicare Survival Guide® is giving a \$5 discount on the Medicare Survival Guide® Advanced book to Toni Says® Medicare column readers. ★



Wildfire Smoke Reduces Grape Crush

A combination of lighter yields and smoke damage could reduce the California winegrape crush by 15% or more, according to a grape growers’ cooperative. Analysts had expected the winegrape crush to be smaller – but then wildfires in some regions exposed grapes to smoke that made them unmarketable. The Allied Grape Growers cooperative estimates as many as 325,000 tons of winegrapes may have been rejected due to smoke exposure.

Applications Continue For Pandemic Aid

With markets for crops and farm commodities continuing to fluctuate due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, farmers have another month to apply for federal aid to help offset some of the losses they have suffered. Applications for the second round of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program end Dec. 11. The current program offers aid to farmers of a wider range of crops that have seen prices drop and supply chains disrupted by the pandemic.

Pecan Farmers Forecast Market Growth

It’s still a fairly small crop in California, but farmers and marketers say they foresee growth for pecan production in the state. Markets for pecans have been hampered this year by the pandemic and international trade tensions, but farmers say they expect long-term growth for pecans as a snack nut as well as an ingredient. This year’s pecan harvest is well underway in the northern Sacramento Valley and begins this week in the San Joaquin Valley.

Biological Control Aims At Invasive Coastal Plant

Tiny flies appear to be establishing themselves in an invasive weed along the California coast. Agricultural scientists describe that as a hopeful sign that could allow biological control of the weed, known as Cape-ivy. Native to South Africa, Cape-ivy already covers more than half a million acres in the state. Researchers say the flies will act as a natural enemy to the weed, and will attack only the Cape- ivy. ★




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UC Davis Equestrian: Jessie Weisinger — First Things First

By Jason Spencer,
UC Davis Intercollegiate
Athletics

DAVIS, CA (MPG) - Jessie Weisinger still remembers the first horse she ever rode. She was three-and-a-half years old and took a pony through its circular paces at a local carnival. From that point on, she was hooked.

“I can honestly say I don’t remember what made me first fall in love with horses as I got the bug when I was quite young, but I am guessing it is the same way I feel about them now: they bring a sense of calmness out in me,” Weisinger said. “There is something about their big, brown, kind eyes that look into your soul that just gets to me. As soon as the ride ended, I kept asking to go again and again and again.”

Then came a pony of her own, Junior, who was a gift at age five. In third grade, Mariah, was born – a horse that she and her mother, Jackie Highfill, bred, raised, and trained. The two were joined at the bit, competing at the local and national levels through middle and high school, road-tripping to College Station for her collegiate career at Texas A&M and, then, traveling across the state of Texas teaching horsemanship clinics and the basics of riding to scores of young kids – including a future National Collegiate Equestrian Association first-team All-American in Avery Ellis – during their many summers together.

“I learned tons from her,” Weisinger remembered fondly about her favorite companion. “She passed away at the age of 28 and she was truly one in a million.” All those experiences have been a labor of love for Weisinger, who also seems to have a “thing” about being first.

She was a pioneer as a student-athlete as a member of Texas A&M’s first-ever equestrian team in 1999. Later, as a senior, she helped lead the Aggies to the school’s first of 12 National Collegiate Equestrian Association national titles – which just so happened to be the first-ever NCEA national crown.

Now, holding the reins of a different group of Aggies, she enters a busy third year at the helm of the first-ever equestrian team at UC Davis, a challenge she readily accepted.

“First as an emerging sport within NCAA there are not many head coaches who oversee a full team, meaning both western and jumping seat,” Weisinger said. “The opportunity to be in that group amongst some very successful coaches is an honor in itself.

“Secondly, I have been in the horse business for many years



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as an exhibitor, horse show manager, trainer, and also a collegiate assistant coach. I have learned different skills from each of those jobs that I felt would help me develop a successful and strong program from the ground up.”

Announced as one of two new sport offerings by the university in the April of 2018, the former Texas A&M assistant, who also won back-to-back national titles as a coach in 2017 and 2018, traded the maroon and white of her alma mater for Aggie blue and gold three months later and immediately got to work, charged with the daunting task of building a program from scratch.

“We were all just overly excited to be a part of the first Division I equestrian team at Texas A&M and I felt the same way taking the reins of this new program,” Weisinger said. “We knew there was going to be a ton of work if we wanted to be successful, but we were willing to put in the energy and effort and it is the same thing here.”

While other teams were preparing for competition, Weisinger was just getting started. Even though UC Davis had an established equestrian club on-campus, her roster was empty, she had no equipment, she had no assistant coach and, more importantly, she needed horses with her program’s debut against Delaware State looming a mere six months away.

A social media campaign ensued and the community responded with donations. Some

of the newest “student-athletes” on campus went by the names of “Tom,” “Eden,” “Cappo,” “Pee Wee,” “Flash,” and “Olaf,” as the Aggies’ stable grew to 11 horses that first season (and now number 27 heading into the 2020-21 campaign).

The department also built partnerships with the world-renowned UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, which provide medical and leadership support from some of the top experts in their respective fields, and worked closely with Campus Recreation, which operates the UC Davis Equestrian Center.

With assistant coach Jill Humphrey in the fold and a roster quickly coming together after a series of tryouts, the Aggies were off to the races, handing Weisinger her first victory as a head coach in that debut against the Hornets.

An emerging sport in the eyes of the NCAA, UC Davis is one of 16 Division I programs that compete as part of the NCEA as a member of the Eastern College Athletic Conference, joined by four other Division II programs and four more Division III schools.

After learning the ropes during the 2019 campaign, the Aggies tripled their win total and earned their first-ever national ranking during a shortened 2020 season against a schedule that featured six nationally ranked squads. UC Davis won three of its final four

meets last year and entered the 2020-21 season as the No. 10 team in the nation.

“We knew we had a plan. We knew we wanted to be at this number of horses this year, this many at the next, this many student-athletes, and we’re meeting our goals,” Weisinger said. “With where the team is and how well we’re doing, we’re further along than anyone thought. It’s not only that we’re competitive, it’s how much we’ve come together as a program, how unified and bonded we are, and how much each of the student-athletes support each other.

“Obviously, in a few years, we’d love to bring home a conference championship and everybody would love to win a national championship but, if we just continue on the path that we are on, continue to recruit great riders, and make this team the best it can be, I think we will be there before we know it.”

However, wins and losses aside, she hopes that her student-athletes leave their time at UC Davis with that same love she felt on that pony at the carnival.

“As a student-athlete you gain a large family of peers who have your back no matter what,” Weisinger said. “As a coach I love getting to watch everything unfold. You get to see the student-athletes as they grow from their freshman to senior years both in the arena and outside of it.


“I love it when light bulbs click on as they figure

something new out with each horse and to see the partnerships they create with each animal. I love seeing the team cheering for each other at practice and competitions. It truly is an amazing sport. After all, what other sport allows you to work with another living being as your equipment?”

ABOUT UC DAVIS: With the addition of equestrian and women’s beach volleyball in 2018, more than 700 student-athletes represent the fifth-ranked public school in the nation on one of 25 intercollegiate athletics teams.

UC Davis, a national leader in Title IX gender equity and leadership, is centrally located between San Francisco, Lake Tahoe, and the Napa Valley; and offers an unrivaled student-athlete experience that features the ideal combination of elite academics, Division I athletics and personal growth.

Ranked annually in the top 10 in diversity and students’ social mobility, UC Davis is uncommonly committed to preparing student-athletes for life after graduation with Aggie EVO – an innovative student-athlete outcomes program that helps young women and men develop passions, gain real-world experience, and enjoy a successful launch to full-time employment or graduate school. Through Aggie EVO, Intercollegiate Athletics provides unmatched resources and a vast network of working professionals to ensure post-graduation success for its student-athletes. ★



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