



Rotary Falling for Fall in Downtown

PAGE 3



PAGE 9



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PAGE 3

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PAGE 7

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Unsafe to Drink

Wildfires Threaten Rural Towns with Tainted Water



Homes destroyed by the LNU Lightning Complex Fire are interspersed with untouched homes above Lake Berryessa, a resort area and water supply reservoir, on Sept. 21, 2020. Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters

By Rachel Becker,
CALMatters

For more than a month after a wildfire raced through his lakeside community and destroyed his Napa County home, Kody Petrini couldn't drink the water from the taps. He wasn't even supposed to boil it.

And, worried about harming his 16-month-old, Petrini wouldn't wash his youngest son Levi with it. Instead, he took the extraordinary precaution of bathing him in bottled water.

Among the largest wildfires in California history, the LNU Lightning Complex fires killed five

people and destroyed nearly 1,500 structures – including whole blocks of the Berryessa Highlands neighborhood where Petrini's home stood.

Camped out in a trailer on his in-laws' nearby lot, the 32-year-old father of two, along with all of his neighbors, was warned not to drink the water or boil it because it could be contaminated with dangerous compounds like benzene that seep into pipes in burned areas.

When wildfires spread across California, they leave a cascade of water problems in their wake: Some communities have their drinking water poisoned by toxic substances. Others wrestle with ash and debris

washed into reservoirs and lakes. And many living in remote stretches of the state struggle with accessing enough water to fight fires.

Drinking water has been contaminated with hazardous chemicals after at least three California wildfires in recent years: in Santa Rosa after the Tubbs Fire in 2017, in Paradise after the Camp Fire in 2018 and now in parts of the San Lorenzo Valley burned by the CZU Lightning Complex Fires that began in August.

The cost of fixing the damage to water systems: up to \$150 million in just one small town.

Towns and water agencies also are

Continued on page 12

Veterans Seek to Surrender Dixon Hall

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - With a capacity of 300, the Veterans Memorial Hall at 1305 North First Street has been a popular venue for wedding receptions, Quinceañeras, birthdays, dances, classes, memorial gatherings, Bingo nights, and an annual weekend of Christmas trees and holiday cheer. Surrounded by flags and awards, their weekly dinners brought a steadfast group of patrons, mostly seniors, who especially enjoyed the laughter and teasing of local friends. But, for the last six months, as the pandemic ravaged America's economy, the American Legion Post 208 in Dixon has been silent.

"We are requesting the County to take the building back over," said Commander Wayne Holland at a recent meeting of veterans. The dozen men and women, some wearing leather 'Veteran Riders' jackets seemed surprised or indignant. Some seemed resolved. Holland and the Board have been struggling to pay bills and find solutions for months but hoped if they could open, they could recoup lost revenue to some degree.

With the COVID restrictions lingering, they are only able to have 50 people maximum inside but it costs hundreds to open for even a small group due to utilities such as water, electricity, and air conditioning.

"Our sewer is \$350 a month and that's doing nothing. The standard rate for all businesses that have oversized sewage drains are paying for waste management and it cost us a minimum of \$325 a month," Holland said. The group's certified letter to the County has been acknowledged and Dale Eyeler who handles Solano County properties has told them they will look into the situation to see what they can do.

Holland, who has lived in Dixon 40 years and in the Dixon organization 11 years, explained that other cities such as Vallejo, Vacaville and even Rio Vista have the benefit of various groups like the Vietnam Veterans, Disabled American Veterans, etc. so six or seven different groups all share the responsibilities, upkeep, and costs of one building.

"Though the group has 189 members who pay an annual membership of \$45 a year, many do not live in Dixon and are scattered all over," said Holland about the number of volunteers who might help more. "People are busy. The

Continued on page 3

Dixon Community Christmas Program Shifts into Gear



(L-R) A volunteer Travis Airman, Pam Murdoch, Gwen Morgan, Delia Venegas, Monica Sepulveda, Jasmine Mayo and Marina Carpio volunteer at the Cornerstone Baptist Church Food Pantry. Courtesy Photo

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - You won't be hearing much about the local version of the Toys for Tots this holiday but you will be hearing about the rebranding of it to the Dixon Community Christmas Program now

gearing up for its 54th year. "Under the umbrella of our local programs, was the Toys for Tots name and that is a trademarked name belonging to the US marines, so we can't use it anymore," explained Marina Carpio, Treasurer of the organization. "But

we also want to put it out there [that there is still] the community program... [that is] the Dixon Community Christmas Program. Everything is run completely in town."

After the original organizer, Ted Hickman, recently retired, new

leadership stepped in including Jack Caldwell as President, Mike Hamilton as Vice President while Leah Marlin is Secretary and Carpio is Treasurer. They have worked diligently to get legal paperwork updated, goals

Continued on page 3

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Saying “NO!” to Me

By Debra Dingman

Over the months of my favorite 24-hour work-out place being closed and then only outside and then the fires creating unhealthy air, I packed on the extra pounds that have been plaguing my life for 20 years that I had lost in El Segundo, walking to and from work and hiking to the beach two years ago. My grown children joke that every year my number one New Year’s Resolution is to “lose 20 pounds.” Sometimes I do – but they come back.

When my grown daughter accused me of over-emphasizing body looks to her daughters because my concerns about diet are constant, I had to put a clothespin on my tongue when they were around. It did, however, teach me to not talk about it so much. I think that subject was always an easy laugh with people as who doesn’t struggle with weight? Very, very few.

Just for background and because there is a reason for this obsession, I was an overweight child who became an obese middle school student. There’s a long story of how I got my weight off in high school and I wrote about it in my book so won’t reiterate here but it had to do with a boy.

Our culture is all about food and when the pandemic hit, I was shocked at how it became all about snacks. New grocery aisles were created and there were rows and rows of the worst snacks ever – you know,

like Cheetos. Don’t believe me, I took pictures of Sam’s Club because it was so shocking.

So now my youngest son is getting married in four months and I absolutely have to lose this weight. I had lost weight for my daughter’s wedding 15 years ago with the help of a program (no longer available) and love the slim Debra in all her wedding pictures. But, when my oldest son got married a few years later, I couldn’t get the weight off me and I remember feeling so conscientious about my looks that I had a hard time enjoying the wedding.

I refuse to be that person at the upcoming wedding. So, I’ve been desperate to find my inner strength after a visit to the doctor showed no tumor growing the size of a large Nerf ball in my tummy, no parasite making me hungry all the time, and no thyroid problem.

So far, I’m doing great. It’s been three days. I have had to say no to myself a zillion times. Sometimes, I get so hungry that I seriously cannot concentrate. I’ve eaten more fruit and vegetables than Pedrick Produce sells in a weekend. I have prayed every morning for special assistance from my heavenly father and if he has a few available angels to babysit me during the waking hours, that would be so helpful. I’m fine when I’m asleep.

I went to Starbucks this morning to have something really special. I am celebrating that I finally bought some new pants that I’ve been meaning

to do for three weeks and although I was terribly irritated with the Walmart clerk who wouldn’t let me use the dressing room, I took a deep breath, remembered it’s not her fault – nor the manager’s – and left peacefully. One of the biggest side-effects of me losing weight is running out of peace. I was also celebrating that I did the right thing: I managed my emotions. Maybe I can really do it this time.

I treated myself to a pour-over decaf with a little cream. I said “no” what felt like a 100 times while standing at the counter next to the glass case laden with yummy-everything but I did it. I said “no” and walked out with just the coffee. That felt so good – you know, like I’m in control.

Driving to Travis Credit Union yesterday, I passed Taco Bell. My steering wheel turned of its own volition and before I knew it, I was eating their delicious chicken quesadilla. But there was payback: my heightened sodium level caused severe thirst and I drank water all night. Made me very aware that I should have said “no.”

I took it as a Heavenly sign when my next door neighbors put out their like-new free exercise bike with a ‘free’ sign on it. Hubby helped me drag it indoors. I WILL USE THE DARN THING! (I’ve always felt I’m stronger if I said things out loud.) It’s now parked next to the couch so when hubby and I are relaxing with television in the evenings, I will have nnnnNO EXCUSE! I WILL RIDE IT! ★

Commissioner Hernandez-Covello Learning How the City Works



Loraine Hernandez-Covello marks her first year anniversary as a Park and Recreation Commissioner. Courtesy Photo

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - She really wanted to get on the Planning Commission because she was interested in projects that were being done in town but was happy to get started learning how the city works by getting on the Parks and Recreation Commission. After all, she’s the mother of two sons who enjoy sports. One is a high school junior who loves basketball and the younger one is really into bikes. Dixon parks offer both a bike park and basketball courts.

“My husband volunteered and coached a lot so that’s how we got to know a lot of the families here,” said Loraine Hernandez-Covello, marking her first year anniversary on the City of Dixon Parks and Recreation Commission. The commission’s purpose is to advise the City Council on all matters concerning public recreation including playgrounds, the pool, and recreational activities. They also make recommendations for the annual budget for the parks and recreation department.

“I’m one year in and still learning. It’s lots of problem solving,” she said. Most importantly, is to understand what the broader picture is, she explained. Those who serve on commissions quickly learn that their idea may not always be the best one. They serve our residents by listening and collaboratively deciding a best path.

“I think it’s good to work with people who don’t agree with you because it brings a higher level of learning,” she said. Hernandez-Covello might have an edge

on experience when listening to the public and discussing with fellow commissioners about needs for the City as her job is Advocacy and Communication Relations Director in the Office of the Chancellor at UC Davis.

“She brings forward a lot of good questions,” said fellow Commissioner Jocie Bair. “She reads her packet and does her homework. She’s perfect for a commissioner as she is creative, innovative, and wants to make an impact.”

“I love my job. There are always a variety of people,” she said about her 16-year stint at her Alma Mater. Her job is to “identify, engage and mobilize third party volunteer advocates to support UC Davis and UC budget and legislative priorities” according to the UC Davis website, but she also serves as the primary campus liaison to the university’s longest running support group, University Farm Circle, whose mission is to support the organization’s mission of friendship, enrichment, and scholarship.

On the local level, Hernandez-Covello served as PTO President for Dixon Montessori Charter School where the boys went to school. Her husband works for Ramos Oil and they chose to raise their family in Dixon because they’ve both lived in Dixon before and wanted to be close to their large families.

“I think it’s really important for people to get as involved as they can,” she said. Maybe because of her expertise, she does think the City could be more proactive in communications, though. “My motivation was understanding how our city works and moving onto the Planning Commission is definitely a future interest.”

The Parks and Recreation Commission advises and makes recommendations to the City Council on all matters of public recreation and public park facilities, and also formulates/reviews the Master Plan for recreation that benefits the citizens of Dixon.

The Parks and Rec Commission meets at 7 pm on the fourth Tuesday of every month at City Hall Chambers, 600 East A Street, Dixon. Other commissioners are Mark Cooley, Charles King, April Seto, and Angelic Villalpando. There is an opening for a student representative. For more information, call the City of Dixon at (707) 678-7000. ★



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Veterans Seek to Surrender Hall

Continued from page 1

priority is not there and I didn't join until I was over 50 for the same reason of raising a family," he added.

"We have shut off everything we can including cable, wi-fi, etc. We are down to one freezer and one fridge and all coolers are shut down," said Leah Marlin, Women's Auxiliary Vice President and Hall Manager. She did give some good news: With shutting everything off, PG&E has been reduced from \$1,800 down to \$900 a month.

This building has been in the care of the local veterans for about ten years. It was in February of 1920 that a committee composed of local service men proceeded with the formation of a post of The American Legion in Dixon.

And this isn't the first time the county was asked to take it back. They received their Charter in 1920 and in 1924 their building opened. But, within ten years, the American Legion Memorial Building was sold back to Solano County due to the Depression.

"We've been promised every election that they are going to help us. Then they get elected and they look away," said Marlin with apparent frustration.

"My most optimistic hope is that they take over the building, let us meet there once a month, and let us have two Saturdays a year for fundraisers," said Holland. "It would take a big burden off but that being said, there'd be no Friday dinners. We don't have that many people that help. Hopefully, they would put a



Commander Wayne Holland leads an in-person meeting for the American Legion Post 208. The group is seeking County relief of their building and will not have any Veterans Day activities this year due to COVID-19. Photo by Debra Dingman

management person in there to rent it out."

Holland also announced that there would be no Veterans Day activities this year.

The heartfelt closing prayer at the meeting was said by Roger Schaller.

"Lord...You have always guided us. Sometimes outcomes have been favorable; sometimes not so favorable but with your guidance, we've always accomplished our goals...Amen." ★

Dixon Community Christmas Program Shifts into Gear

Continued from page 1

established, volunteers in place, and now, making sure everyone stays safe while the programs run well in their respective areas this year.

"There have been a ton of awesome people come on this past year and we're looking to continue the program and update it. It's been a wild year so it will be baby steps forward," she said referring to legal paperwork. "We will get a website up soon and would like to expand throughout the year to remind people what we do."

They are also working on some programs that will require modifications with the COVID restrictions. For example, they won't be able to allow children and families to go into a 'coat room' and choose what they want due to safety issues but

they will run a 'coat room' again in the future.

"We are still accepting coat donations," Carpio said. "The coat give-away will be changed to a one-on-one basis as we are still trying to keep people safe. We've worked long and hard and just had another meeting in regard to the safety of Santa and Mrs. Claus. The children will not sit on Santa's lap. We have to modify this year and it's hard and tough because you want everyone to have the chance to have a personal time with Santa." She's confident they will figure it out.

Right now, they are trying to figure out where they're going as the Dixon May Fair is not open to them but they do know for sure they will do the toys and meet up with Santa the week of Christmas.

Several groups have already promised

assistance such as 4-H, the American Legion Post 208 and Women's Auxiliary, DHS Key Club, and Kiwanis.

The first of what will most likely be numerous toy collections is this weekend, Saturday, October 17, 10 am to 6 pm. There will be a drive-through Holiday Toy Drive at 1305 North First Street at the Veteran's Memorial Hall.

People are asked to bring a new, unwrapped toy and/or canned food for the holiday food drive organized by volunteers of Cornerstone Baptist Church. Someone will be outside to collect toys or canned foods as one drives through the hall parking lot.

For more information, email: DixonChristmasProgram@gmail.com or call Carpio at (916) 838-0997. ★



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Solano Mobility Program Receives OTS Grant to Support Senior Population

By Vincent Ma, Solano Transportation Authority

SUISUN CITY, CA (MPG) - The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) has awarded the Solano Transportation Authority's (STA) Solano Mobility Program a Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program Grant, totaling \$110,000. The Grant will be used to promote pedestrian safety among Seniors/Older Adults, with the goal of engaging the community, sharing information, and collaborating with key city and county stakeholders to find solutions to make local roadways safer.

"With this Grant, the STA's Solano Mobility Program will be able to continue to support safe walking and driving especially in communities and neighborhoods with a high Senior population," STA Board Chair and City of Vacaville Mayor Ron Rowlett said. "The ultimate goal is to reduce the number of pedestrian and vehicle collisions in Solano County."

The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) is a state agency whose goal is to eliminate traffic deaths and injuries. OTS seeks to accomplish this goal by making available grants to local and state public agencies for programs that help them enforce traffic laws, educate the public in traffic safety, and provide varied and effective means of reducing fatalities, injuries and economic losses from collisions. This is the third grant that OTS will be partnering with STA on to improve safety in Solano County.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

For more information on the Office of Traffic Safety grant, please contact Debbie McQuilkin, Transit Mobility Coordinator at (707) 399-3231 or dmcquilkin@sta.ca.gov.

For more information about the California Office of Traffic Safety, go to: www.ots.ca.gov ★

Rotary Falling for Fall in Downtown



The Dixon Rotary Club has joined in the fun by participating in the Dixon United Methodist Women's 'Falling for Fall' Celebration with a display at the Pardi Market site, on the corner of First and A Streets. The thermometer poster depicts that Dixon Rotary has made over \$365,000 in contributions over the last seven years, mostly in Dixon, and the display highlights some events and activities that Rotary sponsors. The civic group hopes the display will stay up through Thanksgiving for enjoyment by the community. Photo by Nicholas Brown



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SCTA Voter Guide on Local Measures and Propositions

Update by Michael Nolan, SCTA President

SOLANO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Solano County Taxpayers Association (SCTA) was formed to secure, by lawful means, greater economy and efficiency in government; to stimulate the public interest in civic affairs; to effect reduction in taxes.

Celebrating the sixtieth (60) anniversary of the founding of SCTA we are taking this opportunity to inform the voters about Local Measures and State Propositions on the November 3, 2020 ballot that will affect the Taxpayers in Solano County.

Local Measures

City of Dixon: **MEASURE S - A YES** Vote will repeal the Water Rate Increased imposed by the City. A Yes Vote will restore the PEOPLE'S VOICE at City Hall. City leaders refused to listen to your concerns or responded to inquiries and they raised your water rates – without your consent using questionable practices during the Prop 218 protest process.

MESAURE T: - A YES Vote will allow Dixon VOTERS to ELECT the City Clerk. The current appointment process has been a DISASTER. It requires the City Clerk to serve at the pleasure of the UN-ELECTED City Manager. The City Clerk's office has been a revolving door of short term, out-of-town, excessively paid persons who were under the thumb of the City Manager. One was the spouse of a partner of the City Attorney's law firm. Another was a resident of Southern California hired only to "manage" the water rate Proposition 218 protests.

City of Suisun City: **MEASURE R – A NO** Vote will keep the Office of the City Clerk Elect-ed. As an elected official, the City Clerk is accountable to the people and does not answer to a city employee or even the city council. The public relies on true and accurate public records of government actions; as long as the City Clerk is only accountable to the people, they can count on independent recording and record management.

City of Vallejo: **MEASURE G - A NO** Vote will stop this proposed 34-cent sales tax that will bring Vallejo's sales tax rate to 9.125%, the highest for all but one Bay Area city. After bankruptcy, the Vallejo City Council asked voters for a ten-year 1% temporary sales tax increase to fund services, particularly police and fire. The voters generously agreed. Just four years ago, that temporary tax increase became permanent. Now the City wants to increase the sales tax another 3/4%.

The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association (HJTA), a statewide Taxpayer organization, is dedicated to the protection of Proposition 13 and the advancement of taxpayers' rights, including the right to limited taxation, the right to vote on tax increases and the right of economical, equitable and efficient use of taxpayer dollars. Working through the Legislature, courts and ballot initiatives, the tax-fighting work of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association has saved Californians billions of dollars. HJTA recommends the following vote on State Propositions.

Statewide Propositions

PROPOSITION 14 - VOTE NO. In 2004, voters approved \$3 billion for a publicly funded stem-cell agency, the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, to support research into new treatments and possible cures. The money has been spent, and the backers of Proposition 14 want voters to approve \$5.5 billion more. Proposition 14 fails to address issues of account-ability and oversight in the spending of previously approved public funds. These new bonds will cost taxpayers \$2.3 billion just in interest payments, drawing \$260 million out of the budget every year for three decades. Proposition 14 is not necessary and it's especially unwise at this time, when there are so many demands on taxpayers.

PROPOSITION 15 - VOTE NO. This is the treacherous "split roll" property tax, a direct attack on Proposition 13. Proposition 15 would repeal part of Prop. 13 and require reassessment to market value of business properties. It would raise taxes on supermarkets, shopping malls, office buildings, factories, movie theaters, hotels, restaurants, sports stadiums, warehouses, self-storage facilities, major retailers and other businesses where Californians work or shop. Those higher costs are passed on to consumers. Proposition 15 would raise prices, increase the cost of living and put countless jobs at risk as companies cut back or leave the state. The proponents of this measure are seeking to weaken Proposition 13, and we can guess why. They could come after homeowners next. Protect Prop. 13.

PROPOSITION 18 - VOTE NO. Proposition 18 would change the voting age in California to allow 17-year-olds to vote in primaries and special elections if they will turn 18 by the date of the next general election. While some states allow this, California is different than other states because under Prop. 13 and Prop. 218, tax increases must go on the ballot for voter approval. These proposed tax increases are frequently on primary and special election

ballots. Proposition 18 would allow high school students to vote on tax increases. This is unwise. The voting age in California should not be changed.

PROPOSITION 19 - VOTE NO. Proposition 19 takes away important taxpayer protections that have been enshrined in the State Constitution since 1986. That's when 76% of voters approved Proposition 58 to allow parents to transfer a home and limited other property to their children without an increase in property taxes. Proposition 19 eliminates Proposition 58 and a similar measure, Proposition 193, which gives the same protection to transfers between grand-parents and grandchildren if the children's parents are deceased. Proposition 19 would require property transferred within families to be reassessed to market value as of the date of transfer, resulting in a huge property tax increase for long-held family homes. The only exception is if the children move into the home within a year and make it their principal residence. This is a billion-dollar tax increase on California families.

PROPOSITION 21 - VOTE NO. Proposition 21 would change state law to allow radical rent control laws to be passed in cities that are already suffering from an inadequate supply of housing. In 2016, California's nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office issued a report that found that expanding rent control "likely would discourage new construction" by limiting the profitability of new rental housing. Under current law—the 1995 Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act—housing providers have the right to raise the rent on a vacant unit to market value after a tenant moves out. The same law also bans rent control on units constructed after February 1995 and on single-family homes and condos. Proposition 21 would repeal this law and allow unelected rent boards (or elected rent boards) to impose radical rent control and regulations, even on single-family homes.

PROPOSITION 22 - VOTE YES. In 2019, the Legislature passed, and the governor signed Assembly Bill 5, a law aimed at destroying the "gig economy" and forcing companies to stop using independent contractors as part of their business. Supporters said companies must put all workers on the regular payroll as employees, with control over their hours and wages. The Legislature carved out exceptions for many industries, but the ride-share and restaurant delivery industry wasn't granted an exception. Proposition 22 was put on the ballot by Uber, Lyft and DoorDash. It would create an exemption from AB 5 for the companies' drivers, while providing them with basic benefits and protections. Without this exemption, the companies would likely stop offering their services in California, depriving state residents of convenient and affordable transportation and delivery services.

PROPOSITION 24 - VOTE NO. In 2018, the Legislature passed, and the governor signed the California Consumer Privacy Act, which gave state residents more rights and control over how their data is shared when they go online. The CCPA took effect this year, and businesses have worked to learn the new legal requirements and comply with them. Proposition 24 is a new privacy law to replace the CCPA. It changes the rules before we even know if they're working well. Worse, it creates a new state agency to write and enforce regulations that have the effect of new laws, but that no elected official will vote on. This new agency will cost taxpayers \$10 million a year, but it will cost California businesses far more. Companies will be effectively forced to hire lawyers to review every technological change or upgrade in order to show the new agency that they are in compliance. This will be a great advantage to the largest companies, because many small start-up companies will not be able to afford the legal bills to file the compliance documents, or the cost of defending themselves from complaints, even meritless complaints. The regulatory burden will strangle technological innovation in California and protect tech giants while hurting small businesses.

PROPOSITION 25 - VOTE NO. Proposition 25 is a referendum on a state law, Senate Bill 10, that eliminated cash bail and replaced it with a system based on judging risk, specifically the risk that an arrested person poses to public safety and the risk that the person will fail to show up for a court appearance. Because opponents of the law qualified a referendum, SB 10 did not take effect. A "yes" vote is in favor of the law going into effect; a "no" vote means you do not want the law to take effect. Proposition 25 would result in immense new costs to counties. The new system of risk-based release instead of cash bail would cost taxpayers somewhere in the mid-hundreds of millions of dollars, according to the Legislative Analyst. It's not clear where this money will come from. This is a huge new cost at a time when counties are already struggling to meet their financial obligations. ★



They've Got Nothing on Judge Amy Barrett

The Supreme Court fight of the century is, so far, a fizzle.

The ratio of progressive outrage over the nomination of federal Judge Amy Coney Barrett to supposed reasons that the U.S. Senate shouldn't confirm her is completely out of whack – there's a surfeit of the former and almost none of the latter.

Barrett has received extraordinary testimonials from her colleagues and students, who say she is brilliant, conscientious and kind. The opposition has countered with a dog's breakfast of nonsense, including that her confirmation hearing can't be held in the middle of a pandemic – when the Senate has continued its business since the pandemic began.

Upon her selection, media outlets ran a spate of stories about her reported membership in a Catholic group called People of Praise, linking the group to the dystopian novel "The Handmaid's Tale." What Barrett's life and career have to do with the imagined misogynistic world of the novel was never clear

– she's a mother of seven who has ascended to the very top of her profession with the help of a supportive husband.

Barrett's social conservatism has been another line of attack. Her critics have fastened on the fact that she signed a statement in 2006 declaring her opposition to abortion. It's not news that Barrett is pro-life, nor should it be disqualifying unless progressives believe that anyone with a view counter to theirs on a hotly contested moral issue should be, on principle, excluded from the highest court.

It is not true, as has been widely reported, that Barrett said in that same statement that Roe v. Wade should be overturned (Barrett had nothing to do with an ad denouncing Roe that ran adjacent to the statement).

The group that organized the anti-abortion statement also opposes IVF, as commonly practiced, leading Democrats to conclude that Barrett does, too. Regardless, the Supreme Court obviously doesn't police the nation's fertility clinics.

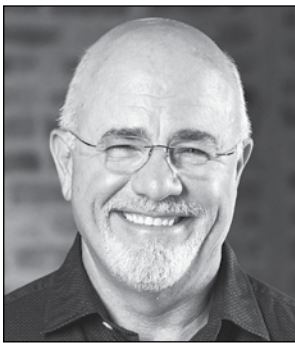
Barrett has also been portrayed as a threat to Obamacare, given that the court will hear an anti-Obamacare lawsuit shortly after the election. But the merits of the suit are so weak, it conceivably could lose 9-0.

It is alleged that Barrett would take a sledgehammer to precedent, but she wrote in a 2013 law review article that the Court's traditional approach to stare decisis "promotes doctrinal stability while still accommodating pluralism on the Court."

Since progressives haven't gotten traction with any substantive arguments against Barrett, they've been relying on dubious process arguments. Not only is it wrong, they charge, to confirm a justice so close to an election, it's a public health danger to do so now when three Republican senators have tested positive. As a headline in the online magazine Slate put it, "The GOP will still seat Amy Coney Barrett because entrenching minority rule is more important than human life." This is laughable. First, it's a long-standing norm that when the president and the Senate majority are of the same party, Supreme Court nominees get confirmed in an election year. Second, the Senate Judiciary has already been holding hybrid in-person and virtual hearings all year. There's no reason it can't do the same with Barrett.

At this rate, the Barrett confirmation is going to be the epic battle that wasn't.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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Dave Ramsey Says

Handling Debt Collectors?

Dear Dave,

Do you have suggestions on how to interact with debt collectors? Sometimes they are reasonable and easy to work with, but others are rude and pushy. Your advice would be appreciated.

– Paul

Dear Paul,

You'll run into all sorts of collectors, no matter what kind of debt you have. Occasionally they are friendly and understanding, while others can be downright mean and nasty. Whatever their approach is, you have to keep in mind they're all after one thing – your money.

Most debt collectors prey on a person's emotions and lack of confidence. If you don't know your rights, they can scare you by using bogus threats. Understand

what I'm saying here, Paul. If you have debt, you have a legal and moral obligation to pay it. At the same time, you need to calmly and confidently control these kinds of conversations. You might have made some financial mistakes, but that doesn't mean you should allow someone to abuse you.

When it comes to dealing with debt collectors, keep track of all the calls and emails. Write down the names of anyone you talk to and when they called. A record of all contact is important, and it will make it easier to report them if they violate the federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act. If the collector agrees to settle the debt, get it in writing and keep the document as proof in case they "forget" they made the offer.


Also, be completely up to speed on your accounts. Know what you owe, who you owe, and have a record of all the payments you've made. Knowing the facts gives you the upper hand in any situation. Don't be intimidated by debt collectors, either. Calmly explain your situation, the reason you're behind on the debt,

and how you plan to pay it off. Don't get emotional and let yourself get drawn into an argument or shouting match. If they insult you, or yell or curse at you – yes, this happens sometimes – hang up immediately.

Financial troubles like debt can make every aspect of your life feel messed up. If you want to get back on track, start living on a written, monthly budget, and attack your debts using the debt snowball system. It's not easy, and it takes discipline, hard work, and sacrifices, but it's worth it!

– Dave


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. ★



Publisher,
Paul V. Scholl

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Ask Toni

Have Cancer. . . Must Return to Original Medicare During Medicare Annual Enrollment!!



Toni King

PPO plan was like a Medicare Supplement. Boy was I wrong!

I need out Now!! I have been diagnosed with lung cancer and many of the cancer specialists and even the facility that specializes in proton therapy to help minimize my lung cancer tumor are out of network and this is costing me a fortune. Right now, I have an \$80,000 proton therapy bill which has not been paid.

I have been advised from my cancer facility to return to Traditional Medicare with a Medicare Supplement to help pick up my Medicare out of pocket, but when I called Medicare, they said I needed to return to Original Medicare. Please advise which Medicare plan to return to Original or Traditional Medicare? Signed ... Jerry from San Antonio, TX

Dear Jerry:

You will be happy to know that “Original Medicare” and “Traditional Medicare” are the same thing, but the medical profession knows Medicare as “Traditional” Medicare not “Original Medicare.”

Annual Enrollment Period will be your only time to make that change. It will be simple for you to enroll in Original/Tradition Medicare and a new Medicare Supplement/Medigap (without having to answer questions) only because this is your first year to be out of your Medicare Supplement/Medigap or your first year to pick a Medicare Advantage Plan. Medicare’s Annual Enrollment Period starts on October 15 th and ends at midnight on December 7th.

For you to disenroll from a Medicare Advantage company simply enroll in a Medicare Prescription Drug plan that fits your needs. You will automatically be out of your old Medicare Advantage plan and back to “Original/Traditional Medicare with a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan;

Toni,

Last year, I made a mistake when I retired and enrolled in a Medicare Advantage PPO plan because I understood from talking with retired co-workers and friends that this

apply for a Medicare Supplement/Medigap to pick up what Medicare does not pay for. What happens if you have health issues which can keep you from qualifying with a Medicare Supplement’s application. See the Medicare rules concerning this issue in the Medicare and You Handbook, which states:

“If you join a Medicare Advantage Plan for the first time, and you aren’t happy with the plan, you’ll have special rights to buy a Medigap policy if you return to Original Medicare within 12 months of joining.”

Below are the changes that a Medicare beneficiary can make to their Medicare plans during Medicare Annual Enrollment Period:

- Enroll in a new Part D Medicare Prescription Drug Plan, which automatically disenrolls you from a Medicare Advantage plan.
- Enroll in a new Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan when you have never been in Part D from the time you have been with Medicare.
- Change from one Part D Medicare Prescription Drug Plan to a new Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan.
- Enroll in a Part C Medicare Advantage Plan with Prescription Drugs
- Change from one Part C Medicare Advantage Plan to a new Part C Medicare Advantage Plan.
- Return to Original Medicare and purchase a Medicare Supplement and enroll in a Part D Medicare Prescription Drug Plan.
- Return to Original Medicare only and enroll in a Part D Medicare Prescription Drug Plan.
- Or Return to Original Medicare with no Part D Plan.

• **Reader Alert:** Do not forget there is a penalty for not enrolling in a Part D Medicare Prescription Drug plan when you first become eligible.

• **Toni Says Medicare Annual Open Enrollment Online Zoom Webinar** begins Thursday, October 15th at 4:00pm. Online reservation link is available 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 the Toni Says Medicare column readers at www.tonisays.com. ★

Proposition 15 Is A Small Business Issue!

National Federation of Independent Business Press Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Should it pass in November, Proposition 15 would be the largest tax increase in California history, but would it work as advertised? Most definitely not, argue two public policy veterans in the second in a series of NFIB podcasts established to give its small-business-owning members the full picture of the issues impacting their solvency.

Rex Hime, president of the California Business Properties Association, says the proposition will do little for education while having manifestly negative consequences for California’s economy, and John Kabateck, NFIB’s California state director, explains why Prop. 15 is a small-business matter and takes issue with proponents’ arguments that it’s not.

Hime also provides a brief history of the previous attempts to undo the property tax protections put in place 40 years ago with the passage of Proposition 13.

To listen to the half-hour podcast and hear the first podcast on Paycheck Protection Program loans with special guest James Beckwith, president of Five Star Bank visit www.nfib.com/content/news/california/nfib-california-launches-podcast-series/

Keep up with the latest on California small-business at www.nfib.com/california For more than 77 years, NFIB has been advocating on behalf of America’s small and independent business owners, both in Washington, D.C., and in all 50 state capitals. NFIB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, and member-driven association. Since its founding in 1943, NFIB has been exclusively dedicated to small and independent businesses and remains so today. For more information, please visit nfib.com. ★

Councilman Candidate Left Out of Voter's Guide



Jerry Castañon, District 4 City Council Candidate

By Debra Dingman

DIXON, CA (MPG) - It's a fact that not everyone takes the time to read their Voter Information Guide that costs thousands of dollars to print and mail to every registered voter but candidates do pay a fee to get across to the voters their qualifications, their goals, or why they feel they are the best candidate for the spot.

That cost pales in comparison to the options candidates have to get their word out. Costs of signs, direct mail fliers, and newspaper advertisements are high and dollars have to be sought from

supporters.

So when District 4 City Council Candidate Jerry Castañon discovered his message was missing, the phone calls were intense. First, Assistant Registrar of Voters John Gardner said they had been mailed and it wasn't until more phone calls were made that the Registrar of Voters Tim Flanagan discovered material was also missing for Benicia and Vallejo.

"It was kind of tough for me," said Castañon. "Time is precious and they did send an additional insert to District 4 but it was eight days later. But, that didn't remedy the issue." He wondered how many people will have both papers when they go to vote, for example.

"This was huge; bigger than one can think of," he said. Ultimately, the Registrar of Voters offered to refund the cost of the candidate's statement in addition to calling and emailing the voters. Castañon knew he had to stay focused on his campaign. Other candidates are Don Hendershot and

Logan Legg.

Since his heart attack a couple years ago where he was without a heartbeat for eight minutes, he feels his priorities are straight and what he wants to do for his community are clear.

"There's a lot of things I need to do--like the Parkway Overpass. I have a lot of contacts in construction and there are grants and bonds..." His wife expressed concern about him taking on the stress of council duties again but he thinks he's better equipped now.

"I really believe I have been given a second chance. I'm blessed and I'm grateful. I don't sweat the little things anymore. I know I can do it and I believe that very strongly," he said.

Even though he was still on the ballot, the news that he'd been left out of the Voter's Guide nabbed him on the front page with his photo in Solano newspapers. With 3,008 registered voters in his district, that might be the break in the clouds. ★

Farm Bureau Releases Voter Guide

By Dave Kranz, California Farm Bureau Federation

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Reiterating its strong opposition to a ballot initiative that would establish a split-roll property tax, the California Farm Bureau Federation has announced positions on the other statewide measures to be decided this fall. The CFBF Board of Directors released a Voter Guide for the Nov. 3 general election.

Farm Bureau was among the first organizations to oppose Proposition 15, which would create a split-roll property tax to reassess and raise taxes on commercial and industrial property. Although its proponents claim agriculture would be exempt, the measure would allow reassessment of agricultural facilities and improvements such as barns, dairies, orchards, vineyards and processing plants.

“In the middle of a pandemic that has severely disrupted our food-production system, Proposition 15 would impose a new tax burden on family farms and ranches,” CFBF President Jamie Johansson said. “Ultimately, those higher costs to the food system would lead to higher food prices. Make no mistake: A tax on farms is a tax on everyone.”

Among its other ballot positions, Farm Bureau emphasized public safety by supporting Proposition 20, which would increase penalties for certain theft-related crimes, and opposing Proposition 25, which would abolish the state’s cash-bail system.

Theft, vandalism, trespassing and other crimes remain chronic and growing problems in rural California,” Johansson said. “By passing Proposition 20 and rejecting Proposition 25, voters have an opportunity to reinforce protection for rural and urban communities alike.”

Here Is The Full List Of CFBF Ballot Recommendations:

Proposition 14 – Stem Cell Research Bonds	Neutral
Proposition 15 – Split-Roll Property Tax	NO
Proposition 16 – Affirmative Action	Neutral
Proposition 17 – Voting by Paroled Felons	NO
Proposition 18 – Voting Age	NO
Proposition 19 – Taxes on Homes, Inherited Property	Neutral
Proposition 20 – Criminal Penalties	YES
Proposition 21 – Rent Control	NO
Proposition 22 – App-Based Drivers	YES
Proposition 23 – Kidney Dialysis Clinics	Neutral
Proposition 24 – Consumer Privacy	Neutral
Proposition 25 – Cash Bail	NO

The full Voter Guide may be downloaded from the CFBF website at www.cfbf.com/voterguide.

The California Farm Bureau Federation

works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of nearly 34,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of nearly 5.6 million Farm Bureau members. ★

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VOTE November 3



FOR THE LOVE OF

BOOKS

By Amy Shane

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



Riley Reviews

DISTURBING “NEXT” TECH TREND;
ABC PRESS TOUR NOTES

A Film and TV
Review by Tim Riley

“NEXT” ON FOX NETWORK
Don’t we have enough paranoia with the coronavirus pandemic that we need not start fretting about artificial intelligence thinking for itself in ways that may prove detrimental to our sanity, let alone existence?

Many rely on Alexa (doesn’t she sound condescending sometimes?) for useful information, like Derek Jeter’s career batting average or what is today’s weather in Istanbul.

FOX network’s new fall series “Next” postulates an advanced first true digital assistant that is actually interactive, and in the words of one techie “uses cognitive architecture” and “rewrites its own code.”

Interestingly, the series opens on a black screen with a warning from the Elon Musk quote: “With artificial intelligence, we are summoning the demon.” The billionaire industrial designer views A.I. as an existential threat to humanity.

“Next” has its own eccentric mega-rich tech inventor, John Slattery’s Paul LeBlanc, whose growing paranoia on top of a degenerative disease, has resulted in him being forced out of his Silicon Valley company by his scheming younger brother Ted (Jason Butler Harner).

Even though out in the cold from his own creation, Paul issounding the alarm about a malevolent A.I. system, known as“neXt” that poses a threat to human existence.

The tech billionaire brings his concerns to FBI agent Shea Salazar (Fernanda Andrade), who heads up the agency’s Cybercrime Task Force in Portland, Oregon. At first, Salazar is unconvinced that LeBlanc’s worry should be taken seriously.

Suffering from a hereditary disease that causes paranoia and mental decline, LeBlanc remains brilliant about technology in extraordinary ways, but his brusque and often volatile behavior often undermines his credibility.

For her part, Salazar may well be coping with dark secrets that may emerge at some point. Her family life is also troubled because 8-year-old son Ethan (Evan Whitten) is being bullied at school.

The Salazar household, including the agent’s husband Ty (Gerardo Celasco), discovers that their home version of Alexa, known as “Iliza,” turns ominous with private talks with Ethan, prodding him to take violent action and how to access a handgun.

Salazar’s cyber team, including expert hacker and former white supremacist CM (Michael Mosley) whose presence is resented by co-worker Gina (Eve Harlow), is reeling from an attack wiping out critical case files.

For a thriller, there’s plenty happening in “Next” that is suspenseful, with murders needing to be solved and an invisible enemy that must be vanquished.

ABC VIRTUAL PRESS TOUR

The ABC television network came late to the party in holding its own virtual press tour to tout some new fall programs and a return of certain series that adapt to the pandemic situation.

Visionary storyteller David E. Kelley has created the thriller series “Big Sky,” slated for a debut on November 17 th , that is adapted from a series of books written by author C.J. Box.

“Big Sky” follows private detectives Cody Hoyt (Ryan Phillippe) and Cassie Dewell (Kyle Bunbury), who join forces with Cody’s estranged wife and ex-cop Jenny Hoyt (Katheryn Winnick), to search for two sisters who have been kidnapped by a truck driver on a remote Montana highway.

When they discover that these are not the only girls who have disappeared in the area, they must race against the clock to catch their captors before it’s too late.

While a preview of the series is not yet available, writer and showrunner David E. Kelley did not want to give away plot details, noting that “a big part of the series are the twists and story turns that we take.”

Kelley divulged a tantalizing morsel in observing that what the audience will “notice is we come out of the box as a thriller and as we proceed from episode to episode, we will cultivate a real investment in the characters.”

“The Conners” returns on October 21 st in an all-new season that follows the family continuing to grapple with parenthood, dating, financial pressures and aging in working-class America.

John Goodman’s Dan, the family patriarch, is still trying to catch up on delinquent mortgage payments and avoid a potential eviction, while the Lunch Box is closed for everything but takeout and delivery.

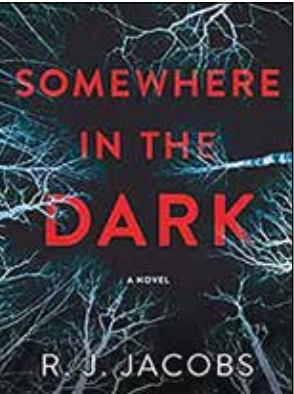
Darlene (Sara Gilbert) and Becky (Lecy Goranson) are both forced to search for additional income at the newly reopened Wellman Plastics plant, the same place where George Clooney played a foreman in the first season of “Roseanne.”

As a production in progress during the pandemic, showrunner Bruce Helford told critics that while there are rigid protocols on the stage, “the family doesn’t wear masks or social distance amongst themselves” because they are in quarantine in the house.

The seventh season of “black-ish” takes us to the beginning of the global pandemic for the Johnson family with stories that address such topics as systemic racism and the movement for social justice.

As a first responder, Tracie Ellis Ross’ Rainbow Johnsongets praise for her work but soon discovers someone in her house is breaking the quarantine lockdown rules, while Anthony Anderson’s “Dre” Johnson tries to convince everyone that he too is an essential worker. ★

October’s Thrills Continue



Somewhere In The Dark
by R.J. Jacobs;
Crooked Lane Books,
adult reading audience

Jessie Duval has a horrific past, one marred with neglect and abuse. The only item she had to get her through part of it was the music of Shelly and Owen James, and they instantly became her safe haven. When she was finally rescued, Jessie sought after Shelly and Owen’s comfort, following them on their tour. Yet, what seemed innocent to Jessie quickly looked like stalking, and one evening everything turned horribly wrong, once again changing her life.

Jessie has now put that all behind her, and she has turned around her life. Until Shelly James turns up murdered, and Jessie becomes the prime suspect. Now, Jessie will have to go back into the darkness of her past in order to discover who killed Shelly, before she becomes the scapegoat. In this thrilling high-

stakes read, *Somewhere in the Dark* will wind around its reader’s hearts, taking them on a story of neglect, fear, longing, and murder. R.J. Jacobs takes his readers on an emotional journey that deeply intertwines a psychological mystery with the layers of one’s psyche. With a main character that will leave readers with tears and hope, and enough twists and turns that they will find themselves propelled to read this until the early hours of the morning. This book is a must-read for fans of mystery, thriller, psychol-



ogy, and second chances. **Magic Dark and Strange**
by Kelly Powell;
McElderry Books,
young adult

Catherine Daly has the magical power to awaken the dead, giving their families answers and closure. However, this gift only lasts for one hour, subsequently stealing one hour from Catherine’s life. It’s not the stolen hour, the

darkness, or waking of the dead that is unpleasant; it’s the back-breaking work to dig up their graves, but Catherine doesn’t mind; it is money after all. Then one night, she is asked to dig up a grave by her boss, not to raise the dead, but to retrieve a sacred timepiece. Yet, instead of finding a timepiece, she discovers the body of a teenage boy who instantly comes back to life, and not in ghostly form, but human. Now, without a timepiece to return to her boss, Catherine, and new-found friend, Guy must race to find the missing timepiece, discover what ancient magic can bring back the dead, and figure out how everything relates before the magic leads to dangerous consequences.

Set in the style of a Victorian mystery, *A Magic Dark and Strange* will take its readers in a dark and stylized story that delivers soft echoes of Sherlock Holmes. Kelly Powell writes a story with a gentle tempo that isn’t too dark or scary, with a set of characters that will make any reader want to get behind. Unique and enchanting, this story’s magical current is perfectly suited for fans of mystery, magic, and the Victorian period while also being suitable for the younger side of the young-adult reading audience. ★

Another Vague Decree from Newsom



By Dan Walters
CALMatters

Gavin Newsom is fond – overly so – of declaring “big hairy, audacious goals” and doing something that implies he’s striving to achieve them.

However, he’s been compelled to devote virtually all of his time to managing crises this year: the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a recession as he shut down businesses to battle infection, a state budget deficit caused by the recession, record heat waves that overwhelmed the state’s power supply, and wildfires of historic proportions.

Managing crises is essentially a reactive process while Newsom fancies himself a proactive striver and doer, not unlike, it should be noted, Jerry Brown in his first stint as governor four decades ago.

Newsom began the year in characteristic form, devoting virtually his entire State of the State address to homelessness and a chronic shortage of housing.

“After decades of neglect and inadequate responses, we are putting our entire state government on notice to respond with urgency,” Newsom declared. “We need a new approach. In the budget I just submitted, I proposed a new California

Access to Housing Fund, and, with it, a whole new way of investing in homeless solutions.”

He also declared “a commitment – right now, this year – to major reform that will eliminate red tape, and delays for building critically needed housing – like affordable, multifamily homes – especially near transit and downtowns.”

Never mind. Within days of delivering that speech, Newsom issued his first emergency order on COVID-19.

Newsom is now trying to return to a proactive mode by issuing sweeping executive orders on climate change that make headlines, but really are no more than declarations of lofty intent.

The first declared that California will ban the sale of vehicles powered by internal combustion engines by 2035, but the order only directed the Air Resources Board to explore how that might be done.

The second, issued last week, directed state agencies to devise ways to “protect” 30% of California’s land and coastal waters by 2030 to reduce greenhouse gases and promote biodiversity, boasting that California would be the first state to adopt the “30-by-30” program being advocated globally.

“Once again, California is taking on the mantle of global climate leadership and advancing bold strategies to fight climate change,” Newsom said. “The science is clear that, in our existential fight against climate change, we must build on our historic efforts in energy

and emissions and focus on our lands as well.”

But what does “protect” actually mean?

Newsom’s order basically enacts a piece of legislation, aptly named Assembly Bill 3030, that passed the Assembly this year but died in the Senate Appropriations Committee without a vote.

It had an extensive airing in the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee, whose staff raised the definition question, to wit:

“It is a complicated task to determine how much of the state’s land, water, and ocean resources are already protected, in part because there is no one uniform definition of ‘protection’ in state law. These and similar terms can represent a sliding scale depending on the types of restrictions and allowable uses, including the degree of human access.”

In fact, the meaning of “protect” varies greatly even among its advocates, as the staff report detailed.

That lack of specificity is why those who catch fish, farmers, hunters, housing developers and others opposed the bill. They saw it as carte blanche for state agencies to issue restrictive land use rules.

So Newsom gets another headline attesting to his “bold strategies,” but as with his decree on cars, we won’t know, perhaps for years, whether it has any concrete meaning.

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

By Jenny Tan,
Yolo County

WOODLAND, CA (MPG) - The Yolo County Parks Division is excited to announce that the Knights Landing Boat Launch has reopened as of Friday, October 9. The site had been closed since July 27 and was expected to remain closed until October 30, however, construction crews were able to finish three weeks early. Construction of the project was funded in part by a \$1.45 million grant from the California Wildlife Conservation Board.

New improvements at the Boat Launch include: a gangway and boarding float centered in the middle of the ramp to allow put-ins and take-outs on both sides; permanent vault restroom; water well and hook-ups for a park host; chip sealed parking lot; ADA parking stalls and walkways; rip rap along the bank of sycamore slough and the boat ramp; entrance sign; and landscaping. An upgraded security camera system will be installed shortly as well as an interpretive panel sign highlighting migratory fish found near

Knights Landing. The Parks Division is still awaiting final permit approval from the State on the new vault restroom, in the meantime portable units will be available for the public to use.

“We had a small window of time to construct this project,” said General Services Director Kevin Yarris. “State and Federal permit requirements limited in-water construction activities to August 1 through October 15. We are thrilled that our contractor was able to finish ahead of schedule so that the public can again enjoy this space.”

Day use parking fees are \$12 per vehicle and can be purchased at the automated pay station. Annual passes may be purchased at the Parks Division Office at 120 West Main Street, Suite D, Woodland, CA 95695 every Monday and Tuesday between 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. or by calling (530) 406-4880. Discounted annual pass rates are available for seniors (65+) and Yolo County residents. There is no parking fee for vehicles displaying a disabled parking placard. Those that enjoy

bank fishing at the site will have to wait approximately four weeks to allow for successful habitat restoration and seeding to take root.

Additional information about the project can be found on the Yolo County Parks website at: www.yolo-parks.org. Questions about the project can be directed to: (530) 406-4880 or yolocountyparks@yolocounty.org. Connect with the Yolo County Parks Division on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/yolocountyparks.

Yolo County Parks is a division of the General Services Department and maintains approximately 2,000 acres of parks and other open spaces throughout Yolo County, including access to creeks and boat launches. The Yolo County Parks Division operates and maintains the Knights Landing Boat Launch facility on behalf of the State of California Department of Fish and Wildlife under a long-term lease agreement. Yolo County Parks aims to protect natural resources and improve quality of life for Yolo County residents and visitors alike. ★

The Capitol Annex Project Debate

Story by Shaunna Boyd

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - California’s State Capitol Complex is comprised of the historic West Wing, with its iconic dome, and the adjoining Annex building, which houses the offices of the Governor and most of California’s lawmakers. The Capitol also hosts millions of visitors each year. But the existing Annex has many health and safety deficiencies such as inefficient heating/cooling systems, failing plumbing, outdated electrical systems, and lack of fire sprinklers. Stairways, elevators, and exit doors are also undersized, and the building is frequently overcrowded—which has become an even greater concern during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Capitol Annex Project – overseen by the Joint Rules Committee (JRC) – plans to demolish the current Annex and replace it with a modern energy-efficient and ADA-compliant building. The project also includes an underground parking structure and an underground visitors center. The vision of the project, which is spearheaded by JRC Chair Assemblyman Ken Cooley, is to create a Capitol that is welcoming, engaging, and inspiring.

But Public Accountability for Our Capitol (PAC) – a group of preservationists, environmentalists, and fiscal responsibility advocates – believes the project is too expensive, lacks transparency, and will cause significant damage to Capitol Park’s historic trees.

PAC members Richard Cowan and Paula Peper each resigned from their seats on the Historic State Capitol Commission (HSCC) in protest over the Capitol Annex Project. The HSCC is responsible for reviewing any development or improvement of the historic State Capitol and advising the Legislature on such projects. Both Cowan and Peper have stated that the HSCC was denied information about the project, which Cowan characterized as “shrouded in secrecy.”

The members of PAC don’t dispute the need for improvements to the Annex, but they believe that it is possible and more cost-effective to repair and improve the existing building. Cowan said, “We think the project could be re-planned to avoid damaging Capitol Park and its trees, avoid the destruction of a historically recognized building, satisfy all the valid health and safety concerns, and save hundreds of millions of dollars that are needed to address climate change and economic recovery.”

Instead of an open public engagement process, Cowan said that stakeholders invited to participate in JRC meetings about this project



The design plans for the Capitol Annex Project aim to highlight views of the iconic dome of the State Capitol's historic west wing. Photo provided by Assemblyman Ken Cooley

had to sign non-disclosure agreements (NDAs). “So much for transparency,” said Cowan.

When asked about the NDAs, Assemblyman Cooley said that such agreements are standard in the post-911 world when discussing security issues in closed sessions. He also disputed the idea that the project has eschewed public input, stating that aside from those few closed sessions concerning security briefings, all the JRC meetings are open to the public. When he became JRC Chair in 2017, he moved quickly to launch a comprehensive website to share information about the project with the public. “We’ve been very public about the whole process,” he said.

PAC’s concern about the project’s impact on Capitol Park trees was based on the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), released in September 2019 and updated in January 2020, which outlined the project footprint. Based on that footprint, PAC estimated that over 100 rare and historic trees could be at risk.

At a JRC meeting on September 9, 2020, Assemblyman Cooley revealed a detailed design plan with three potential styles for the Annex building (square, circular, or double-T). Cowan noted that the recently released plans deviated significantly from the EIR, with the parking garage location moving from the east lawn to the south between L and N streets. Cowan acknowledged that the new location would disrupt fewer trees, but he feared it could still endanger the trees in the Civil War Grove, “which is sacrosanct.”

When asked about the potential loss of 100 trees, Assemblyman Cooley said, “I

couldn’t bear that.” He described the historic and memorial trees as “irreplaceable” and explained that safeguarding the trees is one of the primary goals of the design process.

The Capitol Annex Project has been in the works since Arnold Schwarzenegger was Governor, and initially the Department of General Services planned to create two new buildings in Capitol Park. But when Assemblyman Cooley took over as JRC Chair in 2017, he fought against that plan, because the design would have destroyed many historic trees, including the Civil War Grove. Assemblyman Cooley said he is committed to safeguarding the trees and vistas of the park. He explained that the construction footprint outlined in the plans is just a rough estimate of the area and not a specific blueprint: “We’re not going to disturb all that ground.” Protecting the historic trees is such a high priority that Cooley said the new parking garage design even has a “notch” designed to safeguard a tulip tree.

The Legislature originally approved \$755 million from the general fund for the Capitol Annex Project. Assemblyman Cooley suggested additional authority be given to the JRC to authorize lease revenue bonds in case the government ended up needing those funds, “if the economy stumbles.” That stumble came this year. Due to the recent economic crisis caused by the pandemic, the Governor’s office has asked that those funds be returned to the general fund – and that the JCR pause the plans for the visitors center. As the project moves forward, the plan is to pursue the authorized

lease revenue bonds to fund the Annex and parking garage.

PAC has voiced concern that the interest on the lease revenue bonds will increase the overall cost of the project by approximately 30%, money they believe is better spent on investing in the economic recovery. Cowan also said that the JRC decided to demolish and rebuild the Annex without conducting a study to determine the cost of restoration.

But Assemblyman Cooley views the project as a way to stimulate economic recovery by creating a variety of jobs in the area over the life of the project: “It would put people to work.” And for Cooley, the reasons to move forward with a rebuild over restoration have been clear since the planning study was completed almost three years ago. The study found that the existing structural system of the Annex “limits the ability to provide new large hearing rooms or auditoriums with column-free view paths and appropriate ceiling heights.” The study also found that a consistent floor plan that is easy to navigate for both visitors and staff is impeded by the “current building footprint and column bay spacing.”

Cowan said he is “absolutely not persuaded” by those arguments against restoration. Further, for a project based on a need for more space, PAC was surprised to see that each of the three potential Annex designs feature large open-air galleries with skylights looking up to the Capitol dome. While Cowan acknowledges that the designs are beautiful, he still argues that a new building is not necessary.

PAC also believes it is shortsighted to build a large underground parking garage at a time when transportation is changing rapidly. As concerns about climate change increase, Cowan said California should be looking to the future. The idea of an underground parking garage “is not who we are. It’s not how we lead,” he said.

But for Assemblyman Cooley, the improved energy-efficient Capitol Complex will be a symbol of California’s “positive, hope-filled outlook.” The Capitol Annex Project started before Cooley’s tenure as JRC Chair and will conclude after his term ends, so he said the project isn’t about what he wants. As Chair, he reports to the JRC. He said it’s his job to bring all the information and all the options to the members so they can make the best decision for the people and the future of “The People’s House.”

To find out more about the project or submit a comment, visit <https://annex.assembly.ca.gov/>. ★

DIXON POLICE LOG

Persons listed in this log from the Dixon Police Department are considered innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law. Only activities deemed significant by the Police Dept. are included.



Saturday, October 3, 2020

1207 – Agency assist for Sacramento Police Department for a stolen vehicle that may be in the area of Walmart. Officers located the vehicle in the area. Daniel Armando Roa (22), of Sacramento, was taken into custody after a short pursuit and transported to the Solano County Jail where he was booked for Possession of Stolen Property, Resisting Arrest, Evading and Driving on a Suspended License.

1316 - Agency assist for Dixon Fire Department in the 200 block of East B Street.

Sunday, October 4, 2020

0326 – Warrant arrest report was taken in the 2500 block of North 1st St. Officers contacted (5) Tyisha Edwards (32) of Pittsburg. A records check revealed Edwards had an outstanding \$80,000 felony warrant out of Alameda County. Edwards was arrested and transported to the Solano County Jail.

0742 – Report of a vehicle burglary in the 400 block of Calmace Drive.

123 – Report of a vehicle burglary in the 400 block of La Esperanza Drive.

1400 – Report or a vehicle burglary in the 600 block of Calmace Drive.

Monday, October 5, 2020

0445 – Officers responded to an audible alarm in the 1400 block of Ary Lane. Officers discovered a broken window to the business. It is unknown if anyone entered the building.

0700 – Vandalism reported at Northwest Park.

2011 – Report of a stolen vehicle in the 1300 block of West H Street.

2253 – Report of domestic violence in the 600 block of North First Street.

Tuesday, October 6, 2020

0700 – Suspicious person reported in the 400 block of North Adams Street resulted in the arrest of Daniel Figueroa (44) of Dixon for possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia and a probation violation. He was cited and released from the police department.

0814 – Report of graffiti at Hall Park.

0830 – Report of graffiti in the 200 block of North Lincoln Street.

0942 – Report of graffiti at Northwest Park.

0952 – Neighbor dispute reported in the 600 block of West F Street.

1040 – Report of graffiti in the 400 block of Gateway Drive.

1427 – Confidential report in the 100 block of East Broadway Street.

1907 – DPD Dispatch received a stolen trailer LPR hit and located the trailer in the 900 block of Mayfair. As a result of the investigation, officers arrested Steve Ramos (7/15/1977) of Dixon for possession of stolen property.

2130 – Battery report in the 1300 block of Hawthorne Court.

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

0115 – Officers located an abandoned stolen vehicle in the 400 block of Ellesmere Drive.

1144 – Pedestrian stop in the 100 block of Dorset Drive resulted in the arrest of Ryan Smith (28) of Klamath Falls for two outstanding misdemeanor narcotics warrants. He was cited and released

1800 – Officers contacted two subjects in a stolen RV, pulling a stolen motorcycle in the 1300 block of Commercial Way. Officers arrested Anthony Bravo of Vacaville for two counts of possession of stolen vehicles. Officers also arrested Bailey Russell of Fairfield for several outstanding warrants. Both were booked into the Solano County Jail.

1857 – Officers responded to the 800 block of Elm Street and placed one subject into protective custody for a mental health evaluation without incident.

1935 – Officers responded to a report of a stolen vehicle in the 200 block of East Dorset.

CLG NEWS UPDATES

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

DNI declassifies Brennan notes, CIA memo on Hillary Clinton 'stirring up' scandal between Trump, Russia – Source said Brennan's handwritten notes were taken after briefing Obama on the matter | 06 Oct 2020 | Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe on Tuesday declassified documents that revealed former CIA Director John Brennan briefed former President Obama on Hillary Clinton’s purported “plan” to tie then-candidate Donald Trump to Russia as “a means of distracting the public from her use of a private email server” ahead of the 2016 presidential election, Fox News has learned. Ratcliffe declassified Brennan’s handwritten notes – which were taken after he briefed Obama on the intelligence the CIA received – and a CIA memo, which revealed that officials referred the matter to the FBI for potential investigative action. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence transmitted the declassified documents to the House and Senate Intelligence Committees on Tuesday afternoon. “Today, at the direction of President Trump, I declassified additional documents relevant to ongoing Congressional oversight and investigative activities,” Ratcliffe said in a statement to Fox News Tuesday.

New England Journal of Medicine says people refusing MANDATORY coronavirus vaccines should be severely punished, locked in their homes and fired from their jobs | 06 Oct 2020 | The *New England Journal of Medicine*, the same fake science rag that committed total fraud to dishonestly smear hydroxychloroquine and protect the interests of vaccine companies, is now saying that all human beings must be forced to take mandatory [deadly] vaccines. Those who refuse should face severe punishment, the NEJM insists, and insidious measures should be pursued to make sure no one can challenge the punishments in a court of law. Source: Ensuring Uptake of Vaccines against SARS-CoV-2, October 1, 2020, N Engl J Med 2020; 383:1296-1299 “[B]ecause of the infectiousness and dangerousness of the virus, relatively substantive penalties could be justified, including employment suspension or stay-at-home orders for persons in designated high-priority groups who refuse vaccination,” says the NEJM paper.

Telemundo Deletes Twitter Poll following VP Debate After Kamala Gets Crushed by Pence 74% to 26% | 08 Oct 2020 | Following the vice presidential debate between Democrat Kamala Harris and Vice President Mike Pence in Salt Lake City Wednesday evening, Telemundo News posted a poll on Decision 2020 – “Who won the debate?” Pence mopped the floor with Kamala winning 76% to 24%. This was too much for those at Telemundo, so they deleted the poll. It’s gone.

Joe Biden doubles down on court packing: ‘You’ll know my position’ after the election – | 08 Oct 2020 | Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden is remaining silent on whether he supports a move by many progressives to expand the number of justices on the Supreme Court if the Democrats win back the White House and take control of the Senate in November’s elections. Asked Thursday by reporters if he supports such a move, Biden once again refused to answer, saying “you’ll know my position on court-packing the day after the election.” The former vice president once again described the question as a distraction to what he termed the main issue – the push by President Trump and the Republican majority in the Senate to quickly move before Election Day to confirm Amy Coney Barrett, a conservative federal appeals court judge nominated by Trump to succeed liberal-leaning Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Trump: Pentagon Leaders Want War to Keep Contractors ‘Happy’ | 07 Sept 2020 | President Donald Trump said Monday that top Defense Department leaders want to keep waging wars in order to keep defense contractors “happy.” At a White House news conference Monday, Trump repeated his claim that the story [source-less story alleging Trump made disparaging comments about U.S. troops] was a “hoax” and said: “I’m not saying the military’s in love with me. The soldiers are.” However, he added, “The top people in the Pentagon probably aren’t because they want to do nothing but fight wars so all of those wonderful companies that make the bombs and make the planes and make everything else stay happy.” ...Defense Secretary Mark Esper, whom Trump appointed, was defense contractor Raytheon Co.’s chief Washington lobbyist before he became Army secretary in 2017. ★

CANDIDATE FORUM

QUESTION 7: FOR ALL CANDIDATES INCLUDING THE CITY TREASURER. “The city of Dixon spends more than one million dollars annually on legal services contracted through Churchwell White LLP of Sacramento. That is an expenditure of nearly \$48 per man, woman, and child living in Dixon. Does a city with a population of 21,000 require a range of legal services that annually exceeds a million dollars and do you believe this is a fiscally responsible arrangement for the city of Dixon?”



THOM BOGUE
Candidate for Dixon Mayor

First an understanding needs to be acquired regarding our City Attorney's office. What we get is not just a single individual, but an entire firm which specializes in most areas of law. From civil litigation, to land use and water law. All the areas covered by his firm we use as a city.

A categorical breakdown of cost for the current year 2019-2020: General Municipal \$368,024.00 (our annual contracted amount), Enterprise

Funds \$43,097.00 (meeting State Mandated Water and WasteWater requirements), Litigation & Potential Litigation \$132,659.00 (Covers Lawsuits), Pass-Throughs (Developers actually pay this to review documentation) \$190,577.00. Total cost from the General fund is \$500,683.00, a \$202,142.00 drop over the last 2 years due to decreased litigation and municipal charges. Sounds like alot to us commoners, but in reality isn't considering how much we would have spent in hiring a general in-house attorney, who would then have to farm out most of this in addition to his/her salary and benefits.

So what am I prepared to do about this? Nothing, as we get a pretty good bargain for our dollar. Others will say hire a general in-house attorney, but they will not consider the outside referral cost.



STEVE BIRD
Candidate for Dixon Mayor

Chose not to participate



DEVON MINNEMA
Candidate for Dixon Mayor

The executive staff of this city (the city manager and city attorney) are out of control. For the last four years, I have tried to sound the alarm and because of that many Dixonites today are aware of the situation and calling for change.

On a fundamental level, it is unwise and inappropriate to have an outside firm as the city attorney. The City of Dixon should

hire a staff attorney and farm out select tasks as it did for decades. In hindsight, then-councilman Castanon's 2013 proposal to hire Churchwell White is one of the worst Council decisions in recent history and one I have sought to reverse during my time tenure on the council.

Due to the political dynamic, I can only hope that the new council is open to this proven concept, however if not, we must have a mayor willing to hold executive staff accountable.

As Mayor, I will act as a check against the executive staff's power by communicating frankly and frequently with the public. If this does not correct their behavior and limit costs, further action will be investigated when a new majority is elected.



TED HICKMAN
Candidate for Dixon Mayor

Disqualified from participating



JERRY CASTANON
District 4 Council Candidate

Chose not to participate



LOGAN LEGG
District 4 Council Candidate

The city Attorney's financial standing far exceeds what is necessary to efficiently and effectively operate for a town the size of Dixon. When looking at our funds holistically, we are

struggling. Minimizing the burdens of excessive city salaries that are above contiguous larger towns analogous positions is something that needs to be addressed. I believe that the current standing where the city of Dixon spends over seven figures on an outsourced non-elected non-internal entity is a disservice to the residents of Dixon. I think there should be some renegotiation and if that doesn't seem like a viable route, then as always we must pursue alternatives so that our budget, already strained from multiple variables, can be re-evaluated.



DON HENDERSHOT
District 4 Council Candidate

Chose not to participate



KEVIN JOHNSON
District 3 Council Candidate

LEGAL SERVICES: After individual Salaries/Compensation Plans, it seems the “most discussed” fiscal number within our city budget is... **LEGAL SERVICE EXPENSE.** **Let me comment on a local Urban Legend...** Saying that our Legal Fees “Annually Exceed a Million Dollars” would seem to indicate that from year to year, year-end and year-out, our City spends over \$1M

on Legal Services. This is simply not correct... Going back 10-Years, only Fiscal Years 2018/2019 incurred Legal Expenses in excess of \$1M. Full transparency of our Legal Expenses must also include an adjustment for PASS THROUGH Legal Fees (Legal Fees REIMBURSED by Developers/Applicants). After adjusting for reimbursed Legal Service Fees, the totals for the last 3-years **FY 2018: \$839,672 / FY 2019: \$860,672 / FY 2020 \$543,781.** Is this still too much for City the size of Dixon? **More analysis is required.** Legal Fees paid for litigation is included within these expense numbers. Cost of Litigation is a variable cost annually that were specifically higher in Fiscal 2018/2019. **The Net Cost of our Legal Expenses should not be \$1M annually.**



JAMES P. WARD, JR.
Candidate for Treasurer

In response to legal services contracted, I spoke to some citizens in Dixon and they seem to think there are excessive fees; however. I have been told they are comparable to other size cities within our region. I personally think that not everything our city attorney reviews is required to go through the city attorney, which could possibly reduce legal fees to the city. And I think the firm could be a

little more transparent in its charges and show an itemization of the time devoted to each case, some prevailing rates, the time and labor cost of each case, etc.

I am sure in some cases when an attorney must defend a city as an entity, it is a long and arduous undertaking. I believe one must ask if the city attorney and firm is competent, which I do believe is and that the skill and standing of the attorney representing us is sufficient. I see no reason to doubt that currently. I just add that I see too much mere modicum of charges and I think more detail would avoid the doubt!

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Got News ??

Crossword Puzzle on Page 10

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

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CLUES

ACROSS

- Capital of Ghana
- Paris in Tour de France
- Wild ox of India
- Admiral's group
- "Mele Kalikimaka" wreath
- Julian Barnes' "The _____ of an Ending"
- Telephone company
- Acronym in a bottle
- Birth-related
- *Set briefly on fire
- *Separate solids from fat in melted butter
- *Crusty dessert
- Uncouth person
- Westminster broadcaster, acr.
- Coffee break spot
- *Scald quickly in boiling water
- Like desert
- Like Civil War reenactment battle
- *Like old chips
- Delhi dress
- Subculture language
- *Good or bad it emanates from stoves
- "As the World _____"
- Like Jekyll and Hyde's personality
- This over matter?
- Encryption device, a.k.a. _____ machine
- Practice in the ring
- Low-_____ image
- Competitive advantage
- NBA coach "_____" Rivers
- Dissolve browned food bits with liquids
- *Thicken by simmering
- Love, to Catherine Deneuve
- Pigeon sound
- Pianist's exercise
- Resembling a fish
- Hawaiian Mauna
- Smart candy?
- Tire swing holder
- Bruin legend Bobby
- *Yummy reward

DOWN

- Back of the boat
- Staff symbol
- Text messenger
- Short version
- Like number 1 to hydrogen
- Besides
- Opposite of paleo-
- '70s music genre
- Wheel in grandfather clock
- _____ perspirant
- Defender of skies
- Count on
- Grows angrily
- What lighthouse does
- Williams sister's return
- On account of
- *Turkey action
- Hitler's Eva
- Wisp clouds
- *Incorporate an ingredient
- Niels Bohr's study object
- Rock bottom
- Star Wars attacker
- Shepherds' flocks
- Sound at door
- _____ sack
- Clearing in the woods

Crossword Puzzle Solutions on Page 10

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
13						14				15				
16						17				18				
	19					20			21	22				
			23				24							
25	26	27		28		29			30		31	32	33	34
35			36		37			38		39				
40					41			42		43				
44				45		46				47				
48				49		50				51		52		
				53		54			55		56			
57	58	59	60					61			62	63		
64						65	66			67			68	
69						70				71				
72						73				74				

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

Solutions on Page 10

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Sudoku Puzzle on Page 10

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


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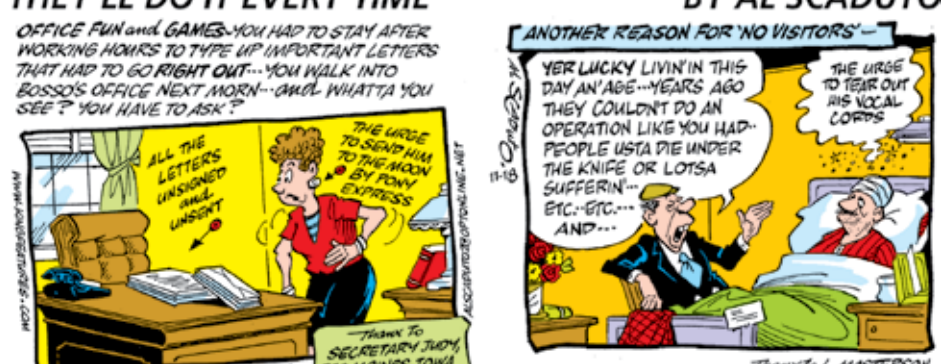
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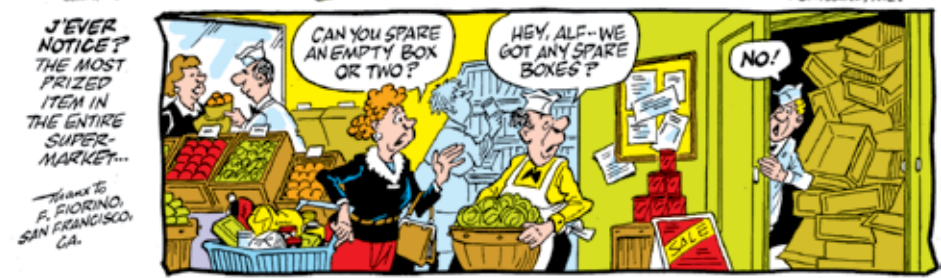
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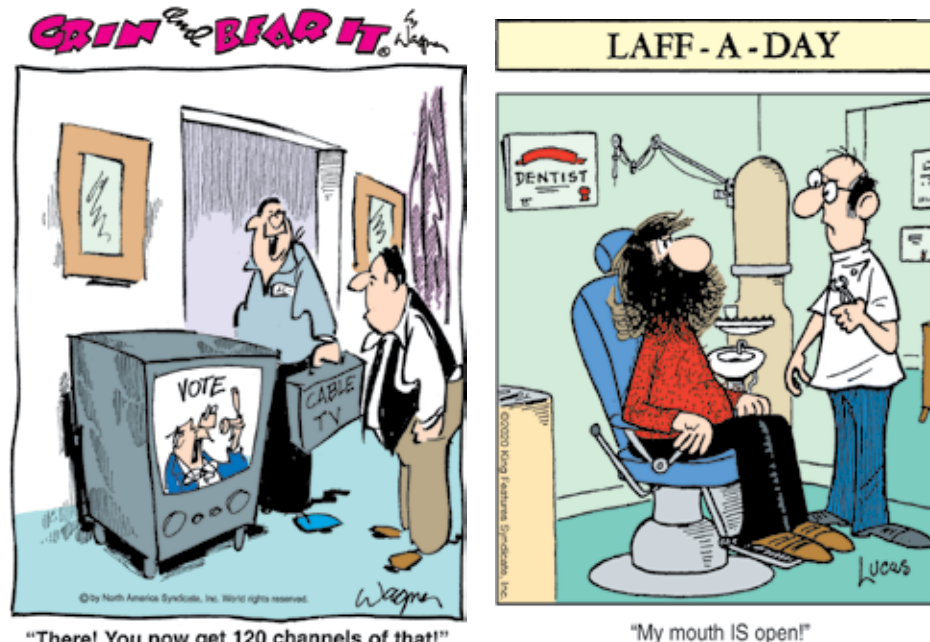
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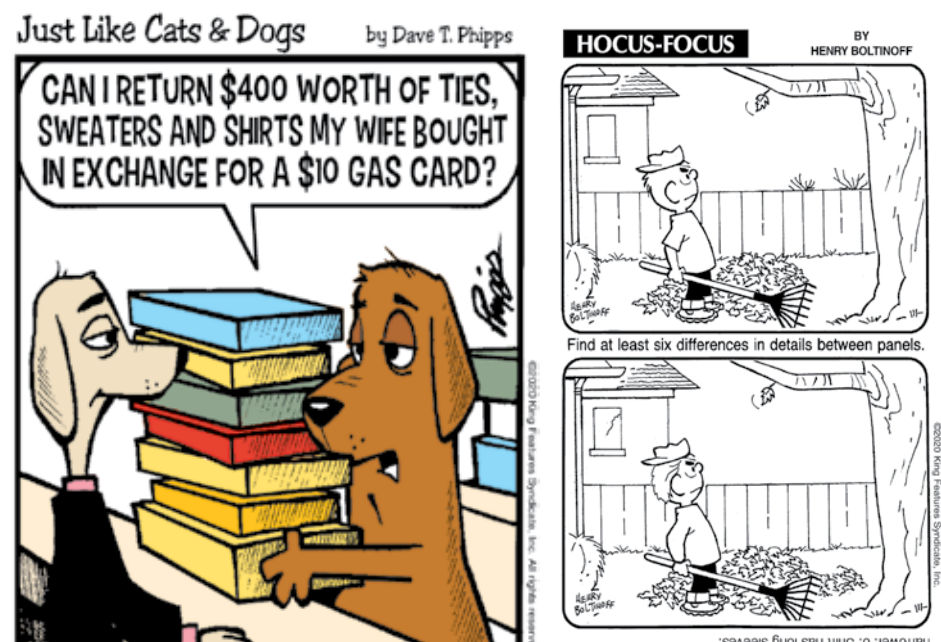
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Unsafe to Drink

Continued from page 1
grappling with advice to give residents in fire-ravaged areas, who are confused by warnings that seem to continuously change about whether their water is safe.

In a state plagued by water shortages, rural California has suffered a cascade of water woes in the wake of wildfires that is likely to happen again and again.

The problems now encountered in California are far beyond the scope of regulations protecting drinking water, said Darrin Polhemus, deputy director of the State Water Resources Control Board's Division of Drinking Water.

"The Safe Drinking Water Act doesn't have a clause like, 'This is what you do in a fire when a community is completely burned to the ground,'" he said.

"It's safe to bet that with this year's fire season the way it is, winds picking up and the magnitude of fire that we've got, we're going to see more (water) systems like this," said Daniel Newton, assistant deputy director of the state water board's Division of Drinking Water. "The number of fire impacts I am starting to hear throughout the state is staggering," he added.

The threat to water in the West doesn't stop when the flames go out. Roughly two-thirds of its water supply flows from forests that can burn. And uncontrolled conflagrations can increase erosion and pollutants that rush into the lakes and reservoirs supplying Californians with water. Researchers project that fire could more than double the sediment clogging a third of Western watersheds by 2050.

The first clues that fires could contaminate pipes with chemicals came in the fall of 2017 in Santa Rosa, where the Tubbs Fire had destroyed roughly 3,000 homes and commercial buildings.

Soon after residents returned to the remaining houses, Santa Rosa Water received a complaint: The water smelled and tasted strange, according to city memo.

Testing revealed contaminants, including benzene as high as 40,000 times the state's limits, according to a recent study led by Andrew Whelton, an associate professor of civil, environmental and ecological engineering at Purdue University.

Long-term exposure to benzene, a component of crude oil and gasoline, is a well-proven cause of leukemia, and immediate, high exposure can cause dizziness and stomach ailments.

The source of the contamination, the city's investigation concluded, was the wildfires. Burned plastic piping can release benzene and other chemicals, as can homes going up in smoke. Water systems depressurized during fires may suck in those compounds, which then soak into plastic pipes and coat metals and other materials.

The damage can linger for years because cleaning it up requires removing poisoned pipes and extensively flushing the system, according to Whelton.



A sign warning residents not to drink the water is posted along Steele Canyon Road at the entrance to Berryessa Highlands on Sept. 21, 2020. Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters

"There is no good approach," Whelton said. "The rudimentary approach of just flushing water is there because nobody's really developed better solutions."

Napa County engineering manager Christopher Silke, who also oversees the private contractor

plumbing intersect, and retrofit meter boxes to allow flushing but prevent backflow from the burned properties.

Although drinking water is uncontaminated with benzene and similar chemicals so far, Silke pledged to continue monitoring.

he said.

As California heads into the rainy season, the threats to drinking water will be amplified. Rains may extinguish wildfires, but they can also wash contaminants into water sources.

"Every drop of water in a water-

"If you took a coffee filter, and tried to make several batches of coffee with that filter, what's going to happen then? It's going to plug up," he said. It's the same with turbid water.

Producing 100,000 gallons of drinking water from the murky lake can churn out about 40,000 gallons of sludge, he said. And that puts a bigger strain on the wastewater treatment plant, as well.

Silke has designed a \$180,000 treatment step to help the mud and silt settle out of Berryessa Highlands' water. The cash-strapped water district is looking to California's Office of Emergency Services for help.

Petrini worries that the wreckage of his home will be among the debris tumbling towards Lake Berryessa this winter if the clean-up process continues to lag.

"Rains are coming soon," he said. "And if we don't get our lots situated, it's going to cost us tens of thousands of more dollars just to get them regraded after the hills start sliding down on themselves."

"It's very common that in rural parts of California that water is difficult for us," said Daniel Berlant, an assistant deputy director with CalFire, the state's firefighting agency. "I've been on a number of fires, where communities – even communities you would think are more urban – that just because of the amount of water being used, the water supply and the pressure goes down."

It's why CalFire sends water tenders that can carry water to wildfires, engines are equipped with pumps to pull from lakes and pools and helicopters can swoop in.

Jennifer Clary, California director of the advocacy group Clean Water Action, said "it's virtually impossible to build a potable water system that can also fight megafires." Building a distribution system that is too large can allow the water to stagnate in pipes, which allows disinfection byproducts to accumulate, she said.

Stanford's Ajami said the key will be rebuilding with resilience. "If you're going back to build these communities, do you really want to build them the way before?" she said. "Isn't this a new chance to revisit our planning and development practices?"

For Whelton, that means updating building codes to require concrete water meter boxes rather than flammable plastic ones, and valves that prevent water flowing back from burned houses into the public water system.

The state, too, is working on developing its playbook for water systems to ensure they're prepared to immediately flush pipes, isolate burned neighborhoods and test for contaminants.

But getting ahead of the flames is an uphill battle, said the water board's Polhemus. "We need the fires to quit, before we can even catch our breath."

Rachel Becker is a reporter with a background in scientific research. ★



American Canyon CERT members Michael Tadewald, left, and Mary Tabbert unload cases of water at Berryessa Highlands' fire department on Sept. 21, 2020. Thousands of gallons of water have been distributed to residents since early September. Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters

operating Berryessa Highlands' tiny water district, hopes that his team's quick action saved the community's water system from a similar fate.

After the fire, the lines serving burnt properties were capped, leaks were fixed and the system repressurized and flushed. The district issued a warning to boil the water before drinking it because of potential bacteria.

But two weeks later, the state warned of the potential for contamination with chemicals like benzene, and told the district to change the warning to caution against drinking or boiling the water. The notice the district issued said that people may also want to limit showering and hot water use.

Silke immediately sent out orders to pull out the water meters where public and private

"This is public health," he said. "We need to be vigilant."

Stefan Cajina, north coastal section chief of the water board's drinking water division, said that drinking water officials usually reserve issuing stricter guidance around showering and bathing for when they know for certain the water is contaminated. But "that has turned out to be a really confusing and uncomfortable message for the public to hear," Cajina said.

Now the state is considering reversing that approach to recommend water systems start with more stringent cautions, and scale them back as test results show the water is safe.

"Bottom line, water systems may want to be told what to do in these situations, and we do our best to provide solid guidance, but they are ultimately responsible,"

shed basically is moving towards that outlet," said Newsha Ajami, director of Urban Water Policy at Stanford University. "And if they're not cleaned up, all those pollutants and contaminants and toxins can end up in our water system."

All that material can challenge downstream treatment plants to cope with the added mud and altered water chemistry, and it may fuel algal blooms. But adding chlorine to treat the water can kick off chemical reactions with all the additional organic matter to form disinfection byproducts linked to health problems, including bladder cancer.

In Napa County, Silke has encountered increased sediment repeatedly in Lake Berryessa after previous wildfires, and he's bracing for problems at the treatment plant in the months ahead.

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