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# Get Out of My Gas Tank



Will Californians ever strike a blow for lower taxes and gasoline prices? MPG stock photo

### Commentary by Merrill Matthews

Californians had the opportunity to get the government out of their pockets -- or, more accurately, out of their gas tanks. Not completely, but it's a start.

Last year the Golden State's legislature increased gasoline and diesel fuel taxes and vehicle fees. Proposition 6, on the November ballot, would have repealed those tax increases and required voter approval for future gasoline and vehicle fee increases. The measure failed to pass. Californians should have known better.

Last year's 12-cent-per

-gallon gasoline tax increase pushed the state's gas tax to 55.22 cents per gallon, the second highest in the nation after Pennsylvania. That's on top of the federal gasoline excise tax of 18.40 cents per gallon.

The stated goal of the tax increase was to raise about \$6 billion a year for road repair. But when it comes to gasoline and diesel taxes, what states claim and what they actually do can be two different things.

According to the Federal Highway Administration, California raised \$4.8 billion from the state's gas tax in 2016 -- before the additional 12-cent tax took effect. Nearly \$4 billion

went to "highway purposes." But \$578 million was redirected to mass transit and \$247 million was spent on "general purposes."

There's more. The state collected \$6.97 billion from motor vehicle registrations. And while most was devoted to highways, \$709 million was spent on mass transit and \$304 million, as well as \$408 million from toll revenues, was spent on general purposes.

So of the various California gasoline taxes and car fees, \$1.3 billion was redirected from road repair to mass transit and \$960 million for general purposes. Would Sacramento have needed

that 12-cent increase if it had funneled all of that revenue to road repair?

California is not alone. Nationwide, the FHA says that about 25 percent of gasoline taxes are redirected to mass transit and other purposes. And those other purposes vary significantly. For example, about 25 percent of gasoline taxes in Texas are redirected to public education.

Now, states are free to spend gasoline tax and fees however they choose. But it's duplicitous to impose a tax ostensibly for the purposes of road and highway building and repair and then redirect those funds to other purposes. And then

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## California Driver Cell Phone Use Up in 2018



By Tim Weisberg, OTS

More California drivers are using their cell phone behind the wheel, but less than previous years, a 2018 observational study by the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) and California State University, Fresno found.

The study, which was done between August and September of 2018, revealed fewer than five percent (4.52 percent) of California drivers were seen picking up and using their cellphones, compared to less than four percent (3.58 percent) in 2017. As part of the study, surveyors examined driver behavior at 204 locations across 17 counties statewide.

The 2018 numbers are three percent less than 2016 (7.6 percent), a year before the most recent cell phone law went into effect.

"Our goal is to end distracted driving, and there's still work to be done," OTS Director Rhonda Craft said. "This observational survey gives us an idea on where we stand getting drivers' attention away from their phones and where we still have work to do."

Other key findings from the study include:

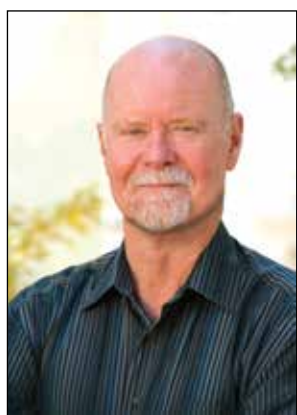
- Cell phone use was more than 8 times higher (5.55 percent) among drivers with no passengers versus with at least one passenger (less than one percent).
- Cell phone use was higher on local roads than on freeways or highways.
- The most common cell phone use by drivers was to perform a function on the phone. This could be anything from texting, email, GPS, using an app or social media.
- Less than two percent of drivers were observed using their phone with a child passenger.

Under the 2017 hands-free cell phone law, drivers are not allowed to hold their phone for any reason. The phones must be mounted on the dashboard, windshield or center console.

The mounted phone can only be touched once with the swipe or tap of a finger to activate or deactivate a function. If cited, drivers face a \$162 fine for a first offense and at least \$285 for a second offense.

Since the first cell phone laws went into effect more than 10 years ago, the OTS has been urging people to put down their phones and focus on the road.

# John Lescroart to Speak at Dixon Women's Improvement Club



By Shirley Humphrey

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - The Dixon Women's Improvement Club will host Davis author, John Lescroart, at its February 20 club meeting. The meeting will be held at the Methodist Church at 209 North Jefferson Street and will start at 1:00 p.m. The club has arranged for the Avid Reader in Davis to sell books. John will autograph books for buyers, just before the meeting and during a recess around 2:30.

The public is invited to attend. If you would like to attend, e-mail Donna Armstrong at: d\_armstrong@sbcglobal.net. This

will ensure that we have enough seats for everyone.

John Lescroart is the author of twenty-eight novels, eighteen of which have been NY Times Bestsellers. Libraries Unlimited places him among "The 100 Most Popular Thriller and Suspense Authors." With sales of over twelve million copies, his books have been translated into twenty-two languages in more than seventy-five countries, and his short stories appear in many anthologies.

John's first book, SUNBURN, won the Joseph Henry Jackson Award for Best Novel by a California author. DEAD IRISH, THE 13TH JUROR, and THE KEEPER were nominees for the Shamus, Anthony, and Silver Falchion Best Mystery Novel, respectively; additionally, THE 13TH JUROR is included in the International Thriller Writers publication "100 Must-Read Thrillers of All Time." HARD EVIDENCE made "The Complete Idiot's Guide

to the Ultimate Reading List." THE SUSPECT was the American Author's Association 2007 Book of the Year. THE MOTIVE was an Audie Finalist of the Audio Publishers Association. THE MERCY RULE, NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH, THE SUSPECT, and THE FALL have been major market Book Club selections. John's books have been Main Selections of one or more of the Literary Guild, Mystery Guild, and Book of the Month Club.

**John Lescroart's just released book is Rule of Law: A Novel (Dismas Hardy)** In this electrifying new novel, attorney Dismas Hardy is called to defend the least likely suspect of his career: his longtime, trusted assistant who is suddenly being charged as an accessory to murder.

Dismas Hardy knows something is amiss with his trusted secretary, Phyllis. Her out-of-character behavior and sudden disappearances concern Hardy, especially when he learns

that her convict brother, a man who had served twenty-five years in prison for armed robbery and attempted murder has just been released. Things take a shocking turn when Phyllis is suddenly arrested at work for allegedly being an accessory to the murder of Hector Valdez, a coyote who has been smuggling women into this country from El Salvador and Mexico.

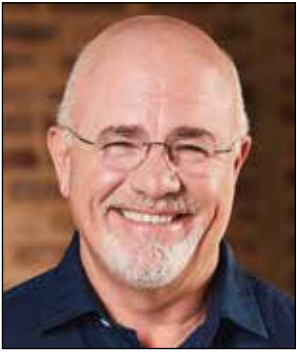
That is, until recently, when he was shot to death on the very same day that Phyllis first disappeared from work. The connection between Phyllis, her brother, and Hector's murder is not something Dismas can easily understand, but if his cherished colleague has any chance of going free, he needs to put all the pieces together. Proving that he is truly one of the best thriller writers to come down the pike, John Lescroart crafts yet another whip-mart, engrossing novel filled with shocking twists and turns that will keep you on your toes until the very last page. ★

47¢

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# Dave Ramsey Says Get Out of My Gas Tank

right now. History says you stand a fair chance of coming out with less than you put in if you don't leave the money invested in the stock market alone for at least five years. The market cycles up, and the market cycles down. This really isn't a big problem if you're going to put your money in there, and leave it alone for 20 years or more. But three to five years? The historical data says you've got a reasonable chance of actually losing money.

So, I probably wouldn't invest if you're going to be gone in five years or less. Instead, when you're settled and have a career in your home country, I'd advise looking into how you can invest there. You might even want to do some research, and find out if you can begin investing there now.

## Designate a percentage

Dear Dave, I'm debt-free except for my home, and I have a small business with revenues of around \$100,000 annually. About half of that is profit, and I typically pay myself 40 percent of the bi-weekly revenue. I'm in the media business, and I need to upgrade some equipment. At what point do I put back a little more money, or pay myself a little less, to make

this happen?

— Luke

Dear Luke,

I know what you mean, man. We're in the media business, too, and around my office it seems like we buy more and newer technology every day. Really, it's like a black hole. You could throw money into it the rest of your life, because practically the very moment you open the box it's obsolete.

We finally decided to designate a percentage of our revenues to equipment replacement. Something is always being replaced, but this way we've got a limit and we've got something set aside to make our technology needs happen. It's like the envelope system. If the envelope's empty, we have to stop buying and put off whatever it is until the cash is available again.

I hope this helps!

— Dave

*Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including The Total Money Makeover. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 13 million listeners each week on 585 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.* ★



Last year's 12-cent-per-gallon gasoline tax increase pushed the state's gas tax to 55.22 cents per gallon, the second highest in the nation.

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whine that the state needs even more money for infrastructure.

Another problem: gasoline taxes are some of the most "regressive," meaning they hit lower-income folks harder than they do higher income.

Liberals tend to strongly oppose regressive tax structures; they prefer a "progressive tax system" -- one that imposes higher rates on higher-income people.

Yet many of the states with the highest gasoline

taxes -- e.g., California, Washington, Pennsylvania, New York, Illinois, etc. -- can be some of the most left-leaning states.

Put bluntly, high-gas-tax states don't have a revenue problem. They have a spending problem. Had California utilized all those gasoline- and car-related tax revenues for road building and repair -- nearly \$2.3 billion -- it wouldn't have needed to raise the gas tax.

States need to be held financially and politically accountable for spending

decisions. If they claim they need a gasoline tax increase in order to repair the roads, that's what they should use the money for. But they won't unless voters hold them accountable.

Californian voters failed to do that this November. Other states should learn from their mistake.

*Merrill Matthews is a resident scholar with the Institute for Policy Innovation in Dallas, Texas. Follow him on Twitter @MerrillMatthews. This piece originally ran in The Hill.* ★

# Tipsy Tow, The Real Super Bowl MVP Returns

## Special Release from AAA

To help drivers and their vehicles get home safely after the Super Bowl festivities, AAA Northern California is offering its Tipsy Tow service on Super Bowl Sunday. The service will start at 6 p.m. on Sunday,

Feb. 3 and runs through 6 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 4.

"AAA wants motorists to plan ahead for a safe ride home if they are planning on attending a Super Bowl party where alcohol is involved," said Michael Blasky, spokesperson for AAA Northern California. "But if your plans fall through, we

encourage drivers, passengers, party hosts and restaurant managers to take advantage of our service, as driving while intoxicated is never a winning play."

Tipsy Tow provides a free ride home and vehicle tow of up to 10 miles for any driver, not just AAA Members. For

mileage beyond this, motorists are charged a standard towing rate. To use the service, anyone who wants to ensure a safe ride home for an impaired motorist should call 1-800-AAA-HELP (1-800-222-4357) and state that they need a Tipsy Tow.

Services will not

be provided to motorists requesting a tow to another drinking establishment, repair facility or any other location other than their home or a hotel if the motorist is, or plans to become, a guest. Other services not covered include requests to start a vehicle, flat tire change, gas delivery, taxi

service and requests to transport more than two people with the vehicle.

AAA estimates that a first-time DUI conviction can cost a motorist more than \$10,000 in fines, penalties, legal fees and increased insurance costs.

Learn more at AAA.com. ★

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 www.tedhickman.com

# MUSINGS

By Mike Ceremello



## Project "Blue Book"

Some of you know I was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio where I met and married my first wife, Linda. After I got out of the Navy I was going to school at the University of Dayton and working as the editor of the Community Times Newspaper in Huber Heights, Ohio. We lived about the same distance from Wright Paterson AFB as we now live from Travis AFB.

Linda's dad was a career USAF officer attached to the \*SAC wing at Wright Pat and we were actually married in the Chapel on the base in 1964... all of this leading up to our neighbors. Many worked at the base as both military and civilian, just like here... The big difference we had a couple of military neighbors in the apartment next door who worked in a small secret section of the base called "Operation Blue Book." Nobody at that time really knew what they did and they were tight lipped about it and even though I had press credentials for the base you couldn't get within a mile of where they were supposed to be, (there were serious armed guards), or the SAC (\*Strategic Air Command) facility. We "knew" about this closely guarded secret and rumors

ran amuck, but of course everything was done with plausible deniability. The young officers did tell us they worked for "Blue Book" and I could never figure out back then why the hell the AFB base needed as whole special section of service people pricing used cars... you know me I hinted and probed and asked but they would only smile and say their work was classified. On time they did hint if people knew what they knew there could be wide spread panic and that was why it was so important to keep things hush-hush. That's as close as I got to a hint of what they were doing. The point being? Yes, the show now on TV's History channel is indeed based on a real life government department set up to cover up and deny any reports of UFO sightings and blame them on "swamp gas", clouds, weather balloons, or birds, etc.

Watch the HISTORY Channel's new drama series 'Project Blue Book' which is based on the true, top-secret investigations into Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) and related phenomena conducted by the United States Air Force from 1952 to 1969. ★

## American Political Chess

So the longest government shutdown is now temporarily over. I must live under a rock because I noticed nothing different.

Some have said this just proves that government is too big and wasteful. I will admit I didn't take a flight during this time, not that I believe the TSA does anything worthwhile with their politically correct non-profiling of those who belong to the offending perversion which is jihadist Islam.

Others say "Boo Hoo ... Eight hundred thousand people were under financial hardship". Shuffling paper and creating road blocks for productive people who actually provide useful products is hardly high on my list of honor.

The President again took heat from both sides and the complicit media. The big question put forth after Trump reopened the government was "Who Won?" Now you didn't really expect to get an honest answer from either side with a stake in this dog and pony show? Let me see if I can sort this out for you.

You had Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer celebrating like they had won a substantive victory. Nancy said she wouldn't appropriate a single dollar for a wall. Both she and Schumer had voted to build a wall in 2006 with some of it already constructed. Guess she forgot that part. So it really isn't a wall she opposes as much as the guy who wants to finish it to protect our citizens.

Pelosi also said she didn't want Trump to give the State of the Union speech until the government was reopened. Now that it is, she still doesn't want it to happen on Tuesday. Evidently Nancy is confused as to who is president and what office she holds in her semi-lucid moments.

Do you remember when Reagan gave amnesty to two million illegal aliens with the Democrats saying they would secure the border under that condition? For those of you who didn't know or have forgotten, lying and being in the Democrat party seem to go hand in hand. Now Nancy is caught in yet another lie.

Let's admit that Nancy and Chuck did not alter their position and they forced the President to back down, even if only temporarily. This is a modest victory if only for the next three weeks. Gloating may become choking before this is over.

Speaking of liars, Kevin McCarthy, the minority leader of the House, couldn't seem to recall that this shutdown was Trump's and that Trump was more than willing to call it that. I will give him kudos in not backing down while on Meet the Press but really dude, get a clue.

Ann Coulter was attributed with calling Trump "a wimp" and Laura Ingraham also expressed her disappointment. Coulter can hardly be taken seriously since she felt Mitt Romney was a solid Republican

presidential candidate. Ann probably thinks Gavin Newsom falls into the same category based on looks instead of substance.

Of course the media loved all of this because they could add to the spin and make this all about Trump losing. The addition of Roger Stone's indictment was just the cherry on top of the sundae. We should probably look at that briefly to see if finally a scintilla of evidence has been found validating the Mueller Russian collusion investigation.

Once again, Mueller has chosen to indict someone for lying to Congress but only those on the right side of the aisle. However this is a far cry from proving election rigging collusion. The whole predicate of this situation has been laughable and ludicrous from its inception as the American public wasn't swayed to Trump by any Russian propaganda and the Russians did not physically change any votes.

Julian Assange of Wikileaks stated on Sean Hannity's show that the Russians did not give him emails from the DNC. So accusing Stone of asking Assange if there was going to be more leaks detrimental to Hillary has nothing to do with Russia. As dirty as politics is, I have a hard time believing anyone can be naive enough to think that political opponents never sling personal mud.

The final piece of this puzzle is the Donald himself. He has stated he doesn't see himself as having capitulated. Trump didn't win as he didn't get the \$5.7 or \$7.1 billion for his border wall from Congress. Trump didn't lose as the fight isn't over and a three week deadline has been established. Trump did however expose his hole card.

Trump again handed more rope to Nancy and Chuck. They now have three weeks to come up with an agreement to close our southern border. They won't do it and it will become even more obvious to those who can still think that border security for them starts at Cape Horn.

When they don't give Trump the money, Trump will close the government again. He has already found \$10 billion which he can redirect using the National Emergency Act of 1976. The Ninth Circuit will add to their legacy of lunacy by finding the Act which others have used as not valid for Trump. Trump should keep the 25% shutdown going until he has the funding either through the Act or by congressional action but I would think it is egotistical enough to think I can surmise his strategies beforehand.

All of this is very entertaining but not what kept me up at night. My worry, and I have relatively few, is that the progressive communist Left which seems to have taken over my parent's Democrat party will continue on their destructive

path to the ruin of our Nation.

The hate underlying the topics I have just discussed is poisonous. I have likened their increased taxation to theft which it truly is. There is no free education or free Medicare for all. Theft under the imposition of jail time is hardly charitable, fair, or right. It is tyranny.

Now we have the spawn of Bernie Sanders along with Pocahontas Warren both promoting marginal tax rates of 70% or higher just to fund their view of what is "fair" or "moral". Others are now pointing out what I have observed and reported for years, that these supposed leaders will feather their nests while the rest of us plebeians have to settle for less because, after all, we aren't the beautiful people.

We see what has happened to Venezuela thanks to Hugo Chavez and his version of Marxist central government rule. Excuse me but how many of us attempt to migrate to Russia, Cuba, Venezuela, mainland China, or other People's Utopian Republics? If Bernie Sanders thinks Russia is a great place to get married, why does he stay in America attempting to bring the US standard of living down to communist levels?

The more I thought about this subject, the more I have to wonder why these countries haven't improved their quality of life. Why hasn't any socialist or communist country surpassed America in industry or economically? Education seems to be about the only area the US has failed and that would be for two reasons: 1) the communist infection of our teacher ranks with the goal of dumbing down students, 2) so the US can't compete.

There used to be a phrase in the 1940's that however General Motors goes, so goes the economy of America. I believe however Donald Trump's presidency goes, so goes the fate of America. This Nation is sick and those in charge are proving to not only be the swamp, but the inmates running the asylum. The rest of us our pawns are here only to be milked or stolen from to suit their purposes.

My parents survived the Great Depression which was caused by the Federal Reserve and those in government who just like today believed they are so much smarter than the rest of us. The Depression is what the progressives think is utopia because we can each share each other's equality of misery.

No one has won or lost ... yet. If Trump loses, we all lose and America will continue down its path to extinction.

As usual, only those in power will live as we all desire to live. The rest of us get table scraps. ★

## Speaking of hunting this/last week ...



Snipes. Photo by Ted Hickman

A certain age group will remember going on "snipe hunts" paper bags and all, and then being lead to believe there was no such thing. Sorry to disillusion you but snipes are real (unlike the plural of the

word I just used) and are among the best eating of all game birds. They are little and very fast and are incapable of flying in a straight line and the limit is a generous 7 per day (yeah, right!). You think you are a decent duck or pheasant shooter, clay or trap, then try snipe hunting and you may find out you ain't all that great of shot. They can make the best trap shooter look bad. It's a good sport when duck hunting sucks, as it does now, and provides another table fare which can't be bought, and is a delicate tasting dark meat which is made for the bar-b-cue. The season ends next week and any pasture land with cattle and wet ground will probably hold a cadre of these little missiles if you want to try your luck. ★

## ... More Things for Thought!

- Rabbits were long considered to be vegetarians.....until one was spotted with a hare in his salad.
- I have finally attained that age where every conversation I have seems to start with a discussion of the weather.....and ends with a litany of my latest aches and pains.
- Egomaniac is a rather strong term... I'd prefer to think of myself as more of an ego fanatic.
- I'm now on year 3 of the '7-day ab challenge'.
- Local youths are challenging bicyclists to attempt to set a speed record for climbing the old oak tree on Pedrick Rd and then, when you're high in the tree, stealing your bike.... and i don't think they timed me for the record, either.
- Scientists are trying to prove that "gusts" of wind are just trees... silently farting.
- A lot of people live paycheck to paycheck and that's nice... i however live paycheck to credit cards to old used amazon gift cards to diverted utility payments to change found in the couch to help from relatives.
- I waited seven days before i buried the cat... i wasn't sure if she'd used up all nine lives.
- I'm thinking about asking out Jeff Bezos ex-wife.
- I bought the "Sounds of the Amazon

- Rainforest" CD but it wasn't as relaxing as I'd hoped. The first half was birds chirping and monkeys howling... the rest was all bulldozers and the whine of chainsaws.
- As an optimist, i always believe my most spectacular failures are still ahead of me.
- I predict that the next super-plague that will devastate mankind.... will be hatched in Golden Corral's chocolate fountain.
- If people aren't supposed to count their chickens before they hatch.... how do they know if they've put a dozen eggs in the carton?
- I ate too much Mediterranean food... and now i falafel.
- How come when our phones fall we panic... .but when our friends fall we laugh?
- "They're OK, i guess".....a depressed Tony the Tiger.
- There are "retirement homes" in Japan for senior dogs so that they can receive the care they need readily during their final years... in retirement i plan to move to Tokyo and live as a Dalmatian.
- I know one thing for certain and that's when one is on their deathbed and looks back on their life... no one wishes they'd eaten more celery.
- Salad is the decaf of food. ★





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# For the Love of Books



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## The Vanishing Stair

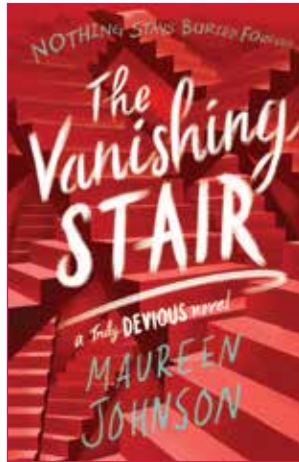
A Book by Maureen Johnson

**Book Jacket:** All Stevie Bell wanted was to find the key to the Ellingham mystery, but instead she found her classmate dead. And while she solved the murder, the crimes of the past are still waiting in the dark. Just as Stevie feels she's on the cusp of putting it together, her parents pull her out of Ellingham academy.

For her own safety they say, she must move past this obsession with crime. Now that Stevie's away from the school of topiaries and secret tunnels, and her stranger and endearing friends, she begins to feel disconnected from the rest of the world. At least she won't have to see David anymore. David, who she kissed. David, who lied to her about his identity-son of despised politician Edward King. Then King himself arrives at her house to offer a deal: He will bring Stevie back to Ellingham immediately. In return, she must play nice with David. King is in the midst of a campaign and can't afford his son stirring up trouble. If Stevie 's at school David will stay put.

The tantalizing riddles behind the Ellingham murders are still waiting to be unraveled, and Stevie knows she's so close. But the path to the truth has more twists and turns than she can imagine- and moving forward involves hurting someone she cares for.

**Review:** Stevie Bell has always dreamt of solving the Ellingham mystery. So when she was accepted into Ellingham Academy, Stevie knew that she was going to



◆ Publisher: Harper Collins  
 ◆ Hardcover, 376 pages  
 ◆ Intended audience: Young Adult  
 ◆ Rating: ★★★★★

have the adventure of a lifetime. However, she never expected there to be an actual murder that needed to be solved. With her determination and expert detective skills, Stevie solved the case, resulting in her parents pulling her from the Academy.

However, as fate would have it, Stevie gets a second chance, but it comes at a cost. Armed with a new set of tasks, on top of trying to solve the Ellingham mystery, Stevie is excited to head back. Luckily, the school is just as she left it, and her friends are more than thrilled to get her back. With the Ellingham mystery still needing to be solved, and David constantly on her mind, Stevie is going to need to hunt for more clues and elicit help.

However, solving the case proves harder than she thought when those she cares about are put in danger; but this time the search for truth

is hers, and nothing will stop her. Can Stevie finally solve the riddles left behind, or is the Ellingham murder more than she can handle?

Much like the first book in the series, Truly Devious, The Vanishing Stair is a fast-paced mystery that will leave readers with the desire to race through the chapters, while trying to solve the mystery. With its vintage chapter interludes from the 1930s and quick-witted, female, main, character, readers will fall in love with the Nancy Drew turned-modern-vibe.

Maureen Johnson does it again, but this time readers are left dangling off the edge of a whole new cliff, with riddles that are sure to make her readers ponder the answers for hours. This unput-down-able series, takes readers from attic rooftops to tunnels below the ground, all while posing the question; "What is always on a staircase but never on a stair?"

With the addition of new characters, new murders, and interchanging chapter timelines, the storyline's twists and turns, will take readers just to the edge of discovery and yank them back, leaving them waiting in agony for the conclusion. Be careful, readers will fall, hard and fast for this one, and Maureen Johnson knows how to dangle the carrot in front of her readers, moving them forward with only snippets of a bread crumb trail. A series that is not to be missed, the final book in the series will have to be one that is filled to the brim with answers. ★



# Riley Reviews

"THE KID" ARTHURIAN TALE COMES ALIVE; "BLACK MONDAY" ON TV

A Film and TV Review by Tim Riley

"THE KID WHO WOULD BE KING" Rated PG

The legend of King Arthur comes alive in the modern world when the titular hero of "The Kid Who Would Be King," a 12-year-old British lad, stumbles upon the Sword in the Stone at a demolition site.

One thing to know about this kid-friendly adventure is that, aside most notably from Patrick Stewart appearing as Merlin the Magician and Rebecca Ferguson as the sorceress Morgana, the central characters are mainly children.

For reasons that are seemingly unrelated to Brexit or not, the United Kingdom is in a state of division and chaos, as newspapers blare headlines of impending war and its unthinkable consequences.

The country's savior is an unlikely school kid named Alex (Louis Ashbourne Serkis), who along with his nerdy best friend Bedders (Dean Chaumoo), is bullied by classmates Kaye (Rhianna Dorris) and Lance (Tom Taylor).

Fortune as well as a heavy burden fall upon Alex's shoulders when, in the course of being chased, he happens upon the Excalibur sword and manages to extricate it from a concrete block at a construction site.

A confluence of events, and not just that he has devoured books on King Arthur, convinces Alex that he's the Chosen One, in other words the once and future king, even if Britain's Royal Family is already well-established.

The fun part is when the young Merlin (Angus Imrie) shows up disguised as an awkward, socially inept new student at Alex's school, and fitfully reveals his magical powers in ways hilarious and weirdly offbeat.

When the young Merlin

sneezes, he often turns into an owl or becomes his older self (the Patrick Stewart version), adding gravitas to Alex's mission to save England from the army of undead knights that rise up out of the ground seeking to snatch the Excalibur sword.

The villain is, of course, the evil Morgana, who has been trapped for centuries in a tangled web of vines but now rears her ugly head at the prospect of snatching the Excalibur so that she might plunge England into darkness. Alex and Bedders, our intrepid heroes, are spurred by young Merlin, recharging himself by devouring chicken nuggets, on a journey to Stonehenge as a gateway to the island of Tintagel, which is linked to King Arthur and ground zero for the clash with Morgana.

Just as King Arthur united his foes, Alex and Bedders form a tenuous truce with Lance (shades of Sir Lancelot) and Kay, as the quartet of classmates come under the tutelage of young Merlin for the eventual showdown with the dark side.

Alex and his own Knights of the Round Table make their last stand at Dungate Academy, enlisting the student body for a climactic showdown of good versus evil.

With an army of heroic kids, "The Kid Who Would Be King" plants its flag firmly in the camp of entertainment for adolescents. In that respect, the themes of courage and honor resonate for some energetic fun.

"BLACK MONDAY" ON SHOWTIME

Shades of "The Wolf of Wall Street" and Gordon Gekko, and just about any film about Wall Street or with its name in a film title, are all you really need to know about Showtime's dark comedy series "Black Monday."

The title refers to the stock market crash of October 19,

1987, and how things evolved over the period of one year preceding this financial calamity, as told from a comically cynical point of view.

The first scene is jarring in that it starts with the day of the crash, when a red Lamborghini limousine parked in front of the Stock Exchange becomes the landing pad for an apparent suicidal window jumper.

Flash back to one year earlier and Don Cheadle's Maurice "Mo" Monroe, acting pretty much like his immoral management consultant in "The House of Lies," runs an outsider brokerage firm called the Jammer Group.

Fueled by massive amounts of cocaine and an inflated ego, Monroe manages his motley crew of traders as if they were all residing in the fraternity of "Animal House," where the high spirits of John Belushi and Tim Matheson and the rest run amok.

In other words, and to an even greater extreme, the Jammer Group's traders are foul-mouthed boors who would run over their own mothers to scam clients and execute big payoff trades.

Standing out in this group of sexist sharks is the lone female Dawn (Regina Hall), almost equally crude as the guys, but also Monroe's ex-girlfriend who just might be the brains, if not the voice of reason, of the whole operation.

Then along comes Andrew Rannells's Blair Pfaff, a naïve newcomer who has put together a trading algorithm that could be revolutionary. He's quickly marked for victimhood by the manipulative two-faced Monroe.

"Black Monday" is full of swagger and brutal satire as it mercilessly mocks the brokerage world. It's also crude, indulgent, outrageous, offbeat and darkly funny, almost as if the script was penned by David Mamet. ★

### The Spats



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### BY AL SCADUTO



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### CLUES

- ACROSS  
 1. Bird hangout  
 6. Loquacious person's gift?  
 9. Columbus launcher  
 13. Nebraska's largest city  
 14. Not a thing  
 15. Hispaniola republic  
 16. Shmear holder  
 17. Brouhaha  
 18. Court call  
 19. \*Gaga and Cooper hit  
 21. \*The Recording \_\_\_\_  
 23. \*Drake's "Nice \_\_\_\_ What"  
 24. Doe's mate  
 25. \*Best New Artist, 1983: \_\_\_\_ at Work  
 28. Aquarium show star  
 30. \*Why don't you just meet me in the \_\_\_\_  
 35. Line of symmetry  
 37. Itty-bitty bit  
 39. Unwelcome message on computer screen  
 40. Roll call call  
 41. \*Reputation" artist  
 43. "The Bridges of Madison County" state  
 44. Implant  
 46. Delhi wrap  
 47. Politicians, for short  
 48. Isaac of science fiction fame  
 50. \*Grammy Hall of Fame's "Sixteen \_\_\_\_"  
 52. Sodium solution  
 53. French Riviera city  
 55. Trigonometry abbr.  
 57. Danced to Miami Sound Machine in 1985  
 61. \* \_\_\_\_ Center  
 65. Bay window  
 66. Poor man's caviar  
 68. Home to BYU  
 69. Dished out  
 70. Three strikes  
 71. Like yesterday's meal  
 72. '80s sitcom "Who's the \_\_\_\_?"  
 73. \* \_\_\_\_ Robinson," 1968

For Solutions See Page 6

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72					73				74			

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		9						7
7		6	5	8				4

For Solutions See Page 6

- DOWN  
 1. Ugly crowds  
 2. Wet nurse  
 3. Indian music  
 4. Elf's perch  
 5. Inciting call to a hunting hound  
 6. Bite like a beaver  
 7. A hand  
 8. Swell up  
 9. Persian backgammon  
 10. Adjutant  
 11. Type of cell  
 12. Well-ventilated  
 15. Deli offering  
 20. Florentine iris  
 22. Tucker of "Modern Family"  
 24. Fill to satisfaction  
 25. \*Fall Out boy's album  
 26. End-of-semester events  
 27. Nimbus, pl.  
 29. Hang out till these come home?  
 31. Type of coffee maker  
 32. Salivate  
 33. Humble  
 34. Make blank  
 36. Appear to be

38. Bushy do  
 42. Color lightly  
 45. \*Childish Gambino's name  
 49. \*What nominees do  
 51. Like lathered hands  
 54. Read-only memory device  
 56. Aerosol can emanation  
 57. Toothy groomer  
 58. Three-ply dunker  
 59. Lice eggs  
 60. \*Bee \_\_\_\_, multiple awards winner  
 61. Series of reps, pl.  
 62. "Laughing on the inside" text  
 63. Fifty-fifty  
 64. \* \_\_\_\_ of the Year  
 67. Partaker's pronoun





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FREE ESTIMATES

## 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.



### Friday, January 18, 2019

- 0032 Death investigation 600 block South Almond Street.
- 1500 Vandalism 1200 block of Stratford Avenue.
- 1700 Vandalism 600 block of West D Street South.
- 1830 Suspicious Circumstances via telephone.

### Saturday, January 19, 2019

- 0104 Disorderly subject 1400 block Ary Lane. Jack Catanese (59) of Redding was arrested for public intoxication and booked into the Solano County Jail.
- 0149 Traffic Stop 100 block East C Street. Arianna Ernst (22) of Dixon was arrested for an outstanding bench warrant and booked into the Solano County Jail.
- 1028 Vehicle tow in the 600 block of North Almond Street.
- 1320 Grand Theft reported in the 600 block of Wiegand Way.
- 1345 Vandalism in the 1300 block of Stratford Avenue. 1830 Warrant Service 600 block Martin Court. Erica Price was cited and released on an outstanding bench warrant.
- 2230 Traffic Stop North First Street at East Dorset Drive. Kenneth Hoover (23) of Fairfield was cited and released for displaying false registration.

### Sunday, January 20, 2019

- 0827 Suspicious person Pitt School Road and I80. Chelsi Colter (27), Transient, was arrested for Possession of Stolen Property, Carrying a concealed Dirk/Dagger, Possession of Methamphetamine, Possession of Drug Paraphernalia and Probation Violation. She was transported to the Solano County Jail.
- 1027 Vehicle vandalism reported in the 400 block of South Adams Street.
- 1032 Burglary reported in the 8500 block of Pedrick Road. Multiple tools and equipment were taken.
- 1039 Court order violation reported in the 100 block of Pegoad.
- 1415 Theft reported in the 200 block of East Dorset Drive. Jason Wade (36), of Transient, was placed under arrest by loss prevention for Shoplifting. He was also arrested for Possession of Drug Paraphernalia and Probation Violation. He was transported to the Solano County Jail.
- 1810 Vehicle burglary reported in the 600 block of Hansen Court.

### Monday, January 21, 2019

- 0613 Stolen vehicle reported in the 900 block of Newgate Way.
- 0954 Found bicycle reported in the 1100 block of Pitt School Road.
- 1024 Industrial accident in the 1000 block of Vaughn Road.
- 1358 Vandalism reported in the 1000 block of Business Park Drive.
- 1517 Flag down in the 1300 block of West H Street for a vehicle vandalism.
- 1757 Assault reported in the area of West H Street and Avon Court. RP said an HMA threw a bag of feces at him.
- 1945 Robbery reported in the 400 block of Gateway Drive. Victim reported that two males wearing masks approached her in the parking lot and pointed a gun at her, demanding her purse. They took the purse and then fled the area in an unknown direction driving an unknown description vehicle.

### Wednesday, January 23, 2019

- 0530 Vehicle burglary reported in the 300 block of Madden Court.
- 0830 Suspicious circumstance in the 600 block of Rossi Drive. Daniel FigueroaRios (44), of Dixon, was placed under citizen's arrest for prowling and additionally charged with a probation violation. He was booked into the Solano County Jail.
- 1257 Shoplifting in the 200 block of East Dorset Drive. Brenda Ferrara (62), of Oregon, was placed under citizen's arrest by loss prevention for shoplifting. She was cited and released.
- 1311 Graffiti reported in the 900 block of Newgate Way.
- 1419 Physical altercation reported in the 300 block of West Chestnut. David Hernandez (28), of Dixon, was arrested for Battery and a PRCS Violation. He was transported to the Solano County Jail.
- 1435 Parking violation in the 1300 block of West H Street resulted in a vehicle tow.

### Thursday, January 24, 2019

- 0011 Vandalism 100 block Dorset Dr.
- 0038 Domestic Violence 1300 block North Lincoln Street. Jabari Mason (24) of Dixon was arrested for domestic battery and booked into the Solano County Jail.
- 0050 Domestic Violence 1500 block Valley Glenn Drive.
- 1342 Pedestrian stop in the 400 block of North Washington Street resulted in Vicente Toledo-Ruiz, (53) of Dixon being arrested for Public Intoxication. He was transported and booked into the County Jail.
- 2316 Traffic Stop 2600 block Plaza Court resulted in Donald Vaninwagen (46) of Orangevale being cited and released for displaying false evidence of registration. His vehicle was towed for being expired over 8 years.

## DIXON FIRE LOG

The Dixon Fire Department's mission is to proudly serve, protect, and enhance the safety of the community and our citizens.



### January 23, 2019

- 0140 Medical, 415 McKenzie
- 1429 Medical Aid, 300 Block W Chestnut
- 1759 Fire Alarm, 1855 Whiting Ct
- 1817 Debris Fire, 4494 Putah Creek Rd

### January 24, 2019

- 0238 Lift Assist, 575 S Jefferson #18
- 0320 Medical, 4985 Midway Rd
- 1759 Medical, 455 East A St
- 2009 Vehicle Accident, Fry/Clark
- 2136 Lift Assist, 450 Ellesmere #91

### January 25, 2019

- 0106 Medical, 1395 N Lincoln #214
- 0909 False Alarm, 1275 W H St
- 0923 Medical Aid, North First@ R/R tracks
- 1593 Medical Aid, 7860 Judy Ln
- 1723 Medical Aid, 1565 Ingrid Dr
- 1809 Medical Aid, 540 Devonshire Dr
- 1927 Medical Aid, 193 Heritage Ln #213K

### January 26, 2019

- 0954 Veg Fire, 5516 Weber Rd

### January 26, 2019 (Cont.)

- 1830 Veg Fire, Charlotte Ln Allendale
- 2131 Medical, Midway//Robben
- 2248 M/A Station Cover, FRF STA41

### January 27, 2019

- 0443 Train vs Auto, Fox @ RR Tracks
- 0731 Medical, 810 Sievers Way
- 1633 Illegal Burn, Pedrice Rd s/o Creek
- 1717 Vehicle Fire, S113@ Cook Ln
- 1827 Public Assist/Investigate, 425 Lynd
- 1916 MVA, W80 W/O Kidwell

### January 28, 2019

- 0050 Medical Aid, 575 South Jefferson
- 0113 Medical, 8535 Bulkley
- 1155 Medical, 360 E Mayes
- 1824 Traffic Accident, Porter Rd/Midway
- 2214 Medical Aid, 575 South Jefferson #7

### January 29, 2019

- 0007 Medical Aid, 575 South Jefferson #5





# Brundage to Return as River Cats Manager for 2019



By Daniel Emmons, Sacramento River Cats

**WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento River Cats, in conjunction with the San Francisco Giants, are excited to welcome Dave Brundage back for his third season as manager of the River Cats for the 2019 season.

Brundage will again be joined by Damon Minor, who will return for his fourth season as the River Cats' hitting coach, and pitching coach Steve Kline, who will enter his second season in Sacramento. One of two newcomers for 2019 will be fundamentals coach Jolbert Cabrera. The training staff will be made up of athletic trainer David Getsoff and strength and conditioning coach Andy King who are each returning for their second season. Lastly, the staff will welcome Hiro Sato, who will also serve as athletic trainer in Sacramento.

An Oregon native, Brundage joined the River Cats in 2017 and has compiled a 119-162 record in his two seasons at the helm in Sacramento. Before coming to the River Cats, the veteran manager spent the previous four seasons with the International League's Lehigh Valley IronPigs. In 2016, Brundage led the IronPigs to an 85-58 record, the second best mark in all of Triple-A baseball.

Brundage, 53, made his managerial debut in 1995 with the Riverside Pilots

(Seattle Mariners Class A-Advanced) but has spent most of his managerial career at either the Double- or Triple-A levels. Prior to his four seasons with Lehigh Valley, Brundage helmed the Richmond/Gwinnett Braves for six seasons from 2007 through 2012. He made his Triple-A debut in 2006 with the Pacific Coast League's Tacoma Rainiers. Brundage has a career record of 1,490-1,477 (.502) in 21 seasons as a manager including a 912-943 (.492) mark at the Triple-A level.

Drafted in the 4th round of the 1986 Amateur Draft out of Oregon State University, Brundage spent 10 seasons as a player in the minor leagues with the Phillies and Mariners organizations.

Minor, 43, returns to the River Cats for his fourth season as hitting coach. In his third year with the team, Minor worked closely with Triple-A newcomers and top Giants' prospects Steven Duggar, Chris Shaw, and Aramis Garcia as they prepared for their Major League debuts.

A former Giant, Minor was drafted by San Francisco in 1996 before making his Major League debut in 2000. In 136 games over parts of four seasons, Minor hit .232 with 13 home runs. He set a career-high in 2002 when he played in 83 games and slugged 10 home runs, helping the Giants claim the National League pennant. While in the Giants farm system, he compiled a .277 batting average with 179 home runs and 648 RBI across nine seasons.

Kline, 45, returns to the River Cats for his second season as pitching coach. Kline joined the Sacramento staff following three seasons with the Double-A Richmond Flying Squirrels and nine seasons overall with the organization. In 2018, Kline helped develop Giants' prospects Andrew Suarez, Dereck Rodriguez, and Ray Black before each were called up to the big club in San Francisco. Kline led the Giants Double-A affiliate to a league-leading 3.12 team ERA in 2015.

Kline completed his 11-year Major League career as a lefty reliever with the Giants in 2007. All told, he appeared in 796 MLB games with five different organizations. The Pennsylvania native was an 8th round selection by the Cleveland Indians in the 2003 draft out of the University of West Virginia. He set the single-season record for appearances by a left-hander (89) in 2001 while with St. Louis, and led the National League in games played as a pitcher for three consecutive seasons (1999-2001).

Cabrera, 46, comes to the River Cats coaching staff as fundamentals coach following managerial stints with the San Francisco Giants' Class-A Short Season affiliate Salem-Keizer Volcanoes in 2017, and Single-A affiliate Augusta GreenJackets in 2018.

The Sacramento River Cats are the Triple-A affiliate of the three-time World Champion San Francisco Giants. For more information about the River Cats, visit [www.rivercats.com](http://www.rivercats.com). ★

# Sacramento Keeps On Fooling Us



Commentary by Jon Coupal, HJTA

"Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me," so the saying goes. Unfortunately, California voters have been fooled (aka lied to) so many times by our political leaders that perhaps they have come to expect it. For a politician to actually keep his or her word is now the exception, not the rule.

And it's not just voters who get fooled. Interest groups and other officials are often snookered by those with more political power. Several recent displays of this political behavior show beyond any doubt that promises made in Sacramento have an extraordinarily short shelf life.

The first example deals with California's one-of-a-kind "cap and trade" law, a market-based regulatory system for incentivizing reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Under this program, impacted industries must pay for emitting greenhouse gases by purchasing credits at auction. The program was set to expire in 2020, but in 2017 there was a big political push to extend "cap and trade" in a way that would impose another huge cost to refineries and utilities, which would then pass those costs to California drivers, truckers and electricity customers.

Surprisingly, many industries forced into the "cap-and-trade"

auctions supported the extension. They did so because they were threatened by Gov. Jerry Brown, environmental extremists and powerful regulators that if they didn't, they'd be hit with an alternative program run completely by the government bureaucrats at the California Air Resources Board. Taxpayer groups, small-business interests and most Republicans opposed the extension because it would further raise California's already sky-high cost of living. In addition to the cost, there was nothing in the political deal that guaranteed CARB wouldn't move forward with punishing regulations anyway.

Regrettably, the "it could have been worse" argument persuaded a handful of Republican legislators to vote for the cap-and-trade extension. And, true to form, the taxpayers' predictions have come true. CARB has adopted a regulation relating to a "price ceiling" that will increase the cost of the cap-and-trade program by an additional 60 percent. Today's gas prices and electricity costs will seem like a bargain compared to what they will be in a few short years under this new regulation.

The next example deals with the promises made regarding Senate Bill 1 in 2017, which imposed a huge increase in the car and gas tax. An effort to repeal those taxes with Proposition 6 failed at the ballot in November when the interests which benefit financially from the tax overwhelmed the repeal advocates with tens of millions of dollars in deceptive ad campaigns as well as illegal campaign activity.

The politicians who favored the tax hikes promised that money from SB 1 would be used to fix California's crumbling roads. But now, Gov. Newsom has said he would like to hold

back those funds from local governments that fail to approve enough housing projects, typically high-density, transit-oriented housing projects.

If local transportation funds are held hostage until local governments genuflect to state-imposed mandates on housing, that would expressly violate the promises made to voters that the state's transportation woes would finally be addressed.

A third example of a deal about to be broken involves beverage taxes. Before the 2018 election, the American Beverage Association spent several million dollars to gather signatures for an initiative that would have required a two-thirds majority for approval of any and all new state and local taxes in California. The proposal was strongly supported by taxpayer groups and the business community at large. But the ABA made a deal with Gov. Brown to remove the initiative from the ballot in exchange for a new law that would ban state and local beverage taxes for 13 years. Although the beverage-tax ban was passed, the deal will almost surely be broken. Supporters of beverage taxes have already proposed a ballot initiative, and the law can always be changed by a new crop of legislators who never met a tax they didn't like.

There is an object lesson here. Political deals made in Sacramento are born to be broken. In light of this, it would behoove those who still believe in free enterprise, limited government and property rights to simply advocate for that which is right and decline to sit down and negotiate away our freedoms. Because all these deals have one thing in common – taxpayers always lose.

Jon Coupal is president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association. ★

## Thank A Veteran Today

### Crossword Puzzle on Page 4

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

### Sudoku Puzzle on Page 4

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

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**Make It Fun and It Will Get Done!**  
 The Secret to Being Organized  
**Pam Young's Corner**  
**Be Careful What You Wish For**

I'll start my column with, *no one was injured*, because the story I'm about to tell, could have you shaking your head and stressing over what happened.

It all started with my longtime desire to have a 16 foot Noble Fir, Christmas tree (the ones with the spaces between the branches) in our living room. One day, in early December, my friend Joy told me her friend has a tree farm with really, really tall Noble Firs and they have the spaces between the branches. She said the tree farm sort of got away from him and now the trees are way too tall for the average home. In fact the trees are twenty years old so they're all at least 25 feet tall!

Trees are like humans. The trees you buy from the Boy Scouts are about five to nine years old. A ten foot tree is like a thirteen-year-old and in those ten years following, it has a growth spurt to rival what must have happened to Shaquille O'Neal. Terry said our ceiling is 22 feet so we could easily accommodate a 16 footer and we'd just cut off as much base as we'd needed to in order to have a 16 foot tree in the living room. I was excited by the prospect.

I had no idea what an adventure we were about to dip our Christmas toes in!

Kristi, my bonus daughter, was out here from Boston and her best friend from high school, came up from Sacramento for a few days to play with Kristi while she was with us. Terry and I got the idea to take them with us to

get our tree and they both jumped at the idea.

It was a beautiful, brisk, winter afternoon as we wound through the thick forest from the main road on the long driveway to the farm. We were greeted by frisky horses and a quartet of "welcoming" dogs.

We learned as we walked with Jeff, the owner, that he doesn't want to sell Christmas trees and that's why he hasn't since he planted those 20 years ago. But since his friend Joy told us about him and his trees, he felt obligated. In spite of the obligatory nature of the transaction, Jeff was gracious and enthusiastic about taking us up into the hills to the tree farm part of his 160 acres (which are mostly panted in blue berries).

Picking out a tree wasn't as easy as it would be on a ten-year-old crop at a tree farm. This crop had created a dense forest that would require a compass if the buyer were to venture deeply into the choices. Jeff left us to shop and went back to the barn to get his ATV, to carry our choice back to our waiting pickup.

The adventure starts back at our house, with the four of us raising the tree into its stand and discovering our ceilings aren't 22 feet like we've thought, but rather the highest point is 18 feet. We also put the tree on a stage that's one foot high. In other words, a 16 foot tree on a one foot stage puts the top of the tree one foot from the ceiling...but wait! The angel (which we cleverly put on the tree before we raised

it put another foot on the Christmas production.

The angel's head was smack up against the beam in our ceiling and she was so high up you had to guess she was an angel because that's what people put on the top of their Christmas trees. I was embarrassed by the tree in our living room and Terry could read my disappointment. We decorated it all evening as I resigned myself to the old cliché *Be careful what you wish for...*

After sleeping on my disappointment, Terry woke up and said, "I have a solution!"

The girls and I were by the fire enjoying our morning coffee, discussing the pros of this Griswold Christmas tree. "What?" we asked in unison.

You three will stand on the stage and hold onto the tree and I'll take my chainsaw and cut three or four feet off, pull that part out, and you'll let the tree down into the stand and you'll have the right sized tree for the living room.

Believe me, this is not something I'd recommend, IN FACT DO NOT DO THIS, but perhaps that angel had a hand in the operation, for we came out of it with our kneecaps intact and the tree of my dreams moved into place.

For more from Pam Young go to [www.cluborganized.com](http://www.cluborganized.com). You'll find many musings, videos of Pam in the kitchen preparing delicious meals, videos on how to get organized, lose weight and get your finances in order, all from a reformed SLOB's point of view. ★

# Calling on Newsom to Fund Californians with Developmental Disabilities

By Justin Turner

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - On January 30, Assemblyman Devon Mathis (R-Visalia) called on Gov. Newsom to support Californians with developmental disabilities and their caregivers by permanently dedicating savings from the closure of developmental centers to increase pay for service providers.

As California transitions from residential to community-based care for people with developmental disabilities, the state is expected to see substantial cost savings. While Gov.

Newsom's budget proposal diverts that money to pay for other state programs, Republicans want to provide a secure source of funding for some of the most vulnerable people in the state.

"People with developmental disabilities shouldn't be penalized with less funding just because we're providing services more efficiently," said Mathis. "We need to invest in these Californians and the dedicated people who care for them."

Gov. Newsom's first budget proposal would provide caregivers for

Californians with developmental disabilities a minimal funding increase, while counting \$21.6 million in "savings" from the closure of developmental centers. Republicans believe that with a surplus of more than \$21 billion, there is something seriously wrong with Democrats' priorities if they can't find 0.1 percent of that revenue to care for this vulnerable population.

Assemblymember Devon J. Mathis represents the 26th Assembly District

Source: Office of Devon Mathis ★



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# CONVERSATIONS

By Loran Hoffmann and Shirley Humphrey

## The Video Tells The Story

The January 22 city council meeting public hearing on the proposed city water district rate increase is difficult to describe. There was some drama at the meeting. We thought about summarizing it for you, but decided you really need to see what happened and hear the discussion. To view the meeting, go to the city web site and look under "agendas" for the meeting.

As background, a "Public Hearing" is a formality for certain proposed actions designed to allow the public to provide "testimony" on the issue. Participant remarks are recorded for the public record. Sometimes public hearings are required by law, and other times the City Council may use them to gather information that will help them make decisions.

Unfortunately, it is fair to say that showing up at government meetings is one of the most painful and annoying experiences on Earth, but you have to suck it up—because if you have a problem with increasing taxes, increased water rates, ugly buildings, the sewer system, or any number of other local policy issues that impact your day-to-day life, you are pretty much required to face the city council.

At the January 22 public hearing, several individuals

made cogent comments, one man prepared a poem on the situation. The Solano County Taxpayer's Association spokesperson asked the council to put the decision off for a couple of weeks so more discussion could be held and to make sure that all the ratepayers were aware of the coming rate increases.

It was obvious that the rate increase will cause people financial pain. Some made really good comments, but it is impossible to get across much information in 3 minutes. The council does not always use the 3-minute limit, but at this hearing, the mayor tried to adhere to the 3-minute time limit. A few people said they are on limited incomes and will have to move away from Dixon.

A few people stated that they had not received the notice of the pending increase in water rates and wanted to have time for more discussion. The city had provided confusing information about the number of parcels in the water district—starting out with around 5,000 parcels and later settling on just over 2,700 parcels.

At one point in the process, the city clerk told ratepayers that protests would not be accepted from any group. This later turned out to be a mistake, but it created confusion.

The agendas of City Council meetings are, by law, made publicly available. They can be found at City Hall, on the city's website, and at the library. But, the workshops which were held before the hearing were not posted on the city web site. When one woman said that she had not received a notice and only found out about the rate increase/workshops in the Independent Voice, (the only locally owned newspaper) the councilman from District 1 stated that he used Facebook for the announcement because he did not have time to walk up and down the street to knock on doors.

With the new district system, one would imagine that the councilman used the voter registration list to contact registered voters in his district when he was a candidate for re-election three months ago. Seems like he promptly forgot about the list so he did not advertise the workshops to all of his constituents.

Transparency seems to be a problem with this council as it was with past councils. What is being hidden from those ratepayers that will have their water bills tripled? Are the two proposed wells identified for the Northeast quadrant included or excluded.

Watch the video. ★

## Volunteers Needed to Help Repeal the Water Rate Increase

By DIV Staff

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - After the approval of the proposed water rate increase a group of ratepayers decided to proceed and collect signatures for a Referendum

The group must collect 10% signatures of registered voters in 30 days from the January 22, 2019 when the council approved

the Resolution to proceed with the increase. If they collect the required signatures the Dixon City Council can repeal the water rate increase or place it on the ballot. This grassroots group is all fired up and their goal is to collect more than the required signatures. They are asking for volunteers to help them succeed. E-mail to

staff@independentvoice.com if interested to volunteer to collect signatures in your neighborhood. Signatures should be turned in to the City by 5:00pm on Thursday February 21, 2019.

More details and additional information will be provided on the next issue of the Independent Voice. ★

## Dixon Events - February 2019

### DWIC Scholarship Grant Dinner -2019

Proceeds from the annual event provide local students with scholarships and educational enrichment activities.

Dixon Women's Improvement Club invites you to bring your family and friends to the third annual Scholarship Fundraising Dinner at Bud's Bar & Grill, 100 North First Street, Dixon, CA.

On MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11th FROM 5:00-8:00PM.

Dinner tickets are \$25 each plus gratuity. Entrée: Prime Rib or Tri-tip, Salmon, Chicken, or Pasta or Vegetarian dish along with salad, bread, garlic roasted red potatoes, and a non-alcoholic beverage. Ticket holders who want to enjoy their dinner at their own home can call Bud's at 707-678-4745 AFTER 4:00pm on February 11th to order their meal TO GO or for DELIVERY. Please include the time for meal PICK UP or DELIVERY when placing your order by phone. Delivery is limited to the city of Dixon. There is no additional charge for this service.

A RAFFLE will be held which will include beautiful one-of-a-kind handcrafted items made and donated by our members, themed baskets, plus travel and entertainment

opportunities. Those who pick up their meal or have it delivered will have an opportunity to purchase raffle tickets as well when they receive their meal. Raffle tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 tickets for \$5. Please contact Treasurer, Mary Lou Batchelor at 707-678-9317 for dinner tickets or more information. Dixon Florist & Gifts, Cyndee's Place, and B's Gallery also have tickets available.

Women's Improvement Club, established in 1899, is dedicated to the "improvement, beautification and promotion of the best interests of Dixon community." During its many years of service to this community a Carnegie Library and thousands of dollars in scholarships along with school and community grant have been provided.

Last spring the Club gave a \$1,000 scholarship to Alyssa Dyer to attend Sacramento State University; as well as providing \$500 grants each to TEAM DIXON, Anderson Elementary School After School Enrichment Program, Gretchen Higgins Elementary School Art Supplies, and CA Jacobs Music Department for instrument repair and replacement.

We are looking forward to seeing you at Bud's and appreciate the support of the community in our fundraising efforts. Treat yourself to an "early" Valentine's dinner! ★

### Sip and Guild

Thursday February 7, 6PM

Dixon Hardware & Lumber 150 N. First St. Has Cupid struck? Join us for some Valentine fun. In this class you will learn the techniques of using Amy Howard Milk Paint & Antiquing Glaze to personalize a beautiful photo frame. Using gold leaf will add a little glam to your champagne

glasses. Materials for the project are included along with a packet of your choice of gold, silver or copper gilding sheet. All you need to add is the perfect photo and the bubbly. Bring a friend! We'll share some wine, cheese & laughs together.

Class fee is \$40.00. For more information call Stacey at Dixon Hardware & Lumber 678-5521 ★

## Pruning and Care of Roses

By Darrell Schramm, UC Master Gardener, Solano County

Darrell spoke at the Dixon Women's Improvement Club in September where he shared the 'Enchanting History of Roses' and provided color photos and growing tips on a wide variety of roses. The following article appeared in the Winter issue of "Seeds for Thought", the UC Master Gardeners newsletter.

"Despite pale, afternoon sunlight from a sun hanging low in a cloudless December sky, the air is cold. I don my hat, jacket, and gloves, then step outside. Collecting my two-bladed secateurs, long-handled pruners, and pruning saw, I next briefly sharpen my clippers (secateurs) and loppers (long-handled pruners). It's time to begin pruning most of my 225 roses.

Most?" you might ask. "Why not all?" The answer is that not all roses require pruning. Most people grow only modern Hybrid Teas, Floribundas, and/or dwarf patio roses, and, yes, those invariably need to be pruned, so we'll begin with them.

But first a word, or 88 words, about why we prune. To prune is to shorten, to reduce. If you wish only a few large Hybrid Tea blooms, especially as an exhibitor at rose shows, then you must prune hard, prune close, that is to say five or six inches from the ground. If the plant is an established Floribunda, prune an inch or two higher. Such severe pruning generally reduces the life of the roses, encouraging fat, woody crowns (the base of the plant) which can lead to rotting and suckering. But your roses, though fewer, will be larger.

On the other hand, if you grow roses to decorate or perfume the garden or to fill vases, that is, if you desire quantity, not size, prune the Hybrid Teas and Floribundas moderately or even lightly. By moderately I mean cut the stems back to half their length. Light pruning cuts back the canes by a third or so. Light pruning is done mostly with very vigorous plants such as 'Peace', 'Distant Drums', 'Black Magic' and their ilk, or climbers.

The pruning cut itself should be at a slight angle about one centimeter or a quarter of an inch from the bud-eye or node. More than a half inch above this node invites dieback. Sharp clippers are essential; do not force them

to cut through a thick cane; for that use your loppers.

Regardless of the pruning technique or the kind of rose, remove all dead, damaged, or diseased wood (the three D's). Of course, this also applies to roses that require no pruning. If the cut surface is brown, cut back farther to where the cut is white. Remove all stems thinner than a pencil as well as any branches that cross and rub against each other. Try to produce an open-centered bush for good air circulation as a way to prevent fungus. Break or cut off all suckers. Only healthy and ripe canes should remain.

Other classes of roses, however, have different pruning needs. In general, remove most of the old wood and weak wood, erring on the side of generosity. Growth and profusion of flowers depend primarily on root action, which in turn depends on the foliage to stimulate and sustain root chemistry. Accordingly, heritage/antique roses are rarely reduced to the extent of modern roses. And some should not be pruned at all.

A woman in one of the rose societies to which I belong asked me if I would like to have her rose 'Daybreak'. Immediately I accepted, already owning three or four Hybrid Musks. These roses grow in pretty clusters, usually on climbing stems. My 'Cornelia' has grown into a fig tree, its small nosegays of pretty pink and yellow flowers the size of pea coat buttons adorning the tree attractively. I asked her why she did not want 'Daybreak'. "It just doesn't bloom," she said. I asked her if she had pruned it. "Of course!" she replied as though the answer should be obvious.

"But it's a Hybrid Musk," I told her. "They resent pruning. It takes as much as three years, maybe four, for it to bloom again if you prune it. Deadheading and removing the three D's.

DO NOT prune *rugosas*, *spinosissimas*, or *wichuranas*, nor miniatures nor ground cover roses. But do remove any obvious dead wood. Also, do not spray these roses with anything stronger than water.

Roses in pots need a pruning much closer than those in the ground—except for Hybrid Perpetuals and Hybrid Bourbons. Prune these down to two eyes. Keep in mind that roses in pots require more water and nutrients

than roses in the ground.

In the 1990s several organizations including the Royal National Rose Society of England tested what came to be called the "Easy Care Method" of pruning roses. Simply cut all bushes to half their height, quickly, with either secateurs and loppers or a hedge trimmer. The angle of the cut is ignored as are weak and twiggy growth, which is left on the bush. It came as a surprise to the testers and gardeners alike that the bushes were no less healthy and the flowers sometimes larger than and as numerous as those pruned in the traditional method. Roses are forgiving.

Once the pruning has been completed, toss a tablespoon of Epsom Salts (magnesium sulfate) around the foot of the rose bush. It aids the plant in using nitrogen, sulfur, and phosphorus and encourages growth of new canes from the crown. Then spread a three-inch layer of organic mulch or sterilized steer manure around the base of the roses, to within a few inches of the crown (the base of the plant). This covering keeps the soil moist during the dry seasons, reduces weeds, discourages blackspot, and improves the structure of the soil.

In early spring fertilize the roses with a plant food high in nitrogen. Usually I use fish emulsion or feather meal, but sometimes I make a 32 gallon container of alfalfa tea and pour a gallon or two around the base of each plant. (Add a gallon or somewhat more of alfalfa pellets to 30 gallons of water; allow it to sit for three to five days, stirring it vigorously at least once a day. Some rosarians also add a cup or two of molasses. You'll need a lid. The smell isn't pleasant.) Roses in pots should be fertilized every four to six weeks, their access to food and water being limited. Do deadhead the spent flowers to encourage more bloom.

I mentioned at the beginning that I've begun pruning in early December. The traditional time for pruning has been January through early March, but with climate change, certain roses have been flowering much earlier than usual, bud-eyes emerging as early as late November and early December. Consequently, I've begun pruning earlier, so far to no detrimental effects. My one concern is that should a winter frost strike, it could kill any new growth on the pruned roses. ★

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