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# Dixon Independent Voice

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## Merry Christmas!



### Solano Community Corrections Partnership Seeks Committee Member

**Solano County News Release**

**FAIRFIELD, CA (MPG)** - The Solano Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) is pleased to announce the search for a dedicated and passionate individual to serve as a representative on the CCP as a committee member representing victims.

As part of our commitment to fostering a comprehensive and inclusive approach, we are seeking a representative to advocate for the rights and needs of victims within the criminal justice system. The selected individual will play a crucial role in ensuring that the voices of victims are heard and considered in the development and implementation of policies and programs.

Key Responsibilities of the Committee Member Representing Victims: Collaborate with CCP members to develop and implement victim-centered policies and programs; Provide insights/perspectives on the impact of criminal justice policies on victims/their families; Act as a liaison between the CCP and local victim advocacy organizations.

Individuals interested in this rewarding opportunity are invited to submit their interest, outlining their relevant experience and motivation for serving on the Solano CCP to TRobinson@SolanoCounty.com by or before January 12, 2024.

The Solano CCP is a collaborative effort aimed at enhancing public safety and improving outcomes for individuals involved in the criminal justice system. By bringing together key stakeholders from various sectors, including law enforcement, community organizations, and local government, the CCP works towards implementing effective strategies for offender rehabilitation and community reintegration. The CCP looks forward to welcoming a dedicated and enthusiastic individual to join us in our efforts to build a safer and more compassionate community through the Solano Community Corrections Partnership.

For more information visit the Solano County Probation Department's website at <https://www.SolanoCounty.com/Depts/Probation> and on social media @ SolanoProbation. ★

## JKMS Band Gets Extra Funds

By MPG Staff

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - While middle school students were clustered on a large stage at John Knight Middle School trying to rehearse a tune for their band teacher, Mr. Chris Lee, they got a nice surprise: checks totaling \$1,686 to help buy new instruments for the class. They all cheered.

The money is the result of Christmas Tree Lane, a silent auction featuring eight beautifully-decorated trees by women in the community who have become expert tree decorators over the last decade, who volunteered to provide their creations this year exclusively for the JKMS Band Program fundraiser.

"This morning I was absolutely amazed to see just how strongly the Dixon community came out to support John Knight Middle School's band program," said Lee. "Their donations are deeply



The morning class of John Knight Middle School Band, with teacher Chris Lee in far right of picture, very happy with the news of community donations for more instruments. Photo by Debra Dingman

appreciated and will allow the program to purchase more instruments. Thank you so much from my students and myself," he said with enthusiasm.

The event was a miniature version of the annual Festival of Trees that was organized by Debra Dingman when the larger event was cancelled just weeks before the event

and where the band was due to perform. Mr. Lee took over for long-time CA Jacobs music teacher, Steve Russo, who retired two years ago, and Lee continued the tradition of performing at the event.

"I hoped this event served as a 'space holder' for the decorators and that the Kiwanis Club's Festival of Trees will

return next year," said Dingman. "This version was still very meaningful, and we had a lot of fun with it. I'm thrilled with its success."

The volunteer tree decorators were Alicia and Wes Atkinson, Debee Lamont, Diana Davies, Dingman, Leah Marlin, Colleen Brown, Emily Krous, *Continued on page 5*



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# Life's too SHORT

## Christmas is a Season of Appreciation

By Debra Dingman

I read in my little book that seems to talk with God this morning: "Everything belongs to me. Most people think their possessions are their own but the truth is that you and everything you possess belongs to me." John 1:1-3. Maybe that is why Christmas always brings me deep feelings of appreciation...for my life, my home, my family just to name a few. While I might be thankful at Thanksgiving, Christmas reminds me of the fact that I could have nothing. Everything I have, I am blessed with.

For every reader, I wish you the sweetest of holidays. I pray for our community that is draped with red and green sparkles to be filled with joy and blessed with health.

I love thinking about my children and grandchildren, delighting them with specially chosen presents, and I'm so grateful they live close enough that we can get all together. But thinking about our parents, I want to send my 84-year-old dad and stepmom, as well as my hubby's parents, something sweet that shows my love and respect.

I wish I could find something perfect for my women friends of many years so they'd know how much they mean to me.

I think of all the time and introspection our pastor puts into his sermons, and I want to give a special offering. I want to give a little gift to our neighbors because I enjoy our friendships. I want to leave a gift for our postal clerk because whoever it is does such faithful work.

Scrolling through pictures and pictures of ideas on the computer, my mind grows numb. But I trudge on, because I want to give something to our advertisers to show

we appreciate their business. I have the greatest boss and I so enjoy my coworkers and want them to know I'm glad I get to work with them.

I even want to give a little something to our city councilmen and city staff for taking their job so seriously, and putting up with the unhappy campers that love to hassle every decision.

But, I'm getting older now, and I just can't think of those many gifts or run around shopping for them. I'm too exhausted to bake a zillion cookies like I have done in the past.

Yes, Amazon is particularly great for this task, but then I've learned just because it's on the Amazon website, it doesn't mean it isn't coming direct from some Podunk town with no return policy. Or worse, from another country where different fabrics or materials are used and don't resemble American products, so I've wasted my time and must return things.

But, I am grateful my fingers still work and that we get one special time each year to remember our humble roots: The place of nothing. So whatever we do have, we can share. Whatever we don't have, we can still give love, a smile, or some words of encouragement.

So I am going to send cards to as many as I can instead. I'm going to tuck my heart, soul, and mind into each one, and seal them with a warm thought and prayer. I will resume cookie baking for those who are close to me for next year. Just know if you are reading this, I appreciate you for taking the time, and I hope somewhere in this past year, I've given you a helpful nugget you can use in your life walk. ★

Merry Christmas to Everyone!

# Dixon News Briefs

MPG Staff

## Dog Blanket Drive

Last Day! Basalite Concrete Products is doing a blanket drive for the SPCA and local shelters through December 22.

If one would like to donate, they are accepting blankets, towels, or dry food. Anything helps!

Basalite's address is 605 Industrial Way in Dixon, and they are open Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., for drop off. (Thank you in advance from the Basalite crew.)

## Meatloaf Dinner

The menu for the Veterans Memorial Hall for Friday, December 22, is their famous meatloaf, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, and a roll. Cost is \$12, and pay at the door. Dinner starts between 5:30 and 6 p.m. at 1305 North First St. Treat a friend, have fun, and help keep the hall open!

## City Meetings

The City of Dixon Transportation Advisory Commission scheduled for this month was cancelled due to the holidays, along with the Dixon Parks and Recreation Meeting that was scheduled for Tuesday, December 26. The next City Meeting in the New Year will be City Council on Tuesday, January 2, at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 600 East A St. See CityofDixon.us website for more information.

## City Offices Closed

The City of Dixon offices will be closed on Monday, December 25, and Tuesday, December 26, and then again on Monday, January 1, for the New Year holiday.

## Senior Club Dues

If you're a returning member of the Dixon Senior Club, please update your address and phone with the Dixon Senior Club so they can update their membership directory for the new year. Dues can be paid at the Senior/Multi-Use Center during regular business hours, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., or can be mailed to the following address: Dixon Senior Club, 201 South First St., Dixon, CA 95620. The Senior Club is also recruiting new board members. If you're interested, please contact Membership Chairperson Barbara Long at (209) 304-2564 for more information.

## Unique Gift Idea

Give the gift that will last for years:



The Downtown Tree Lighting Festival was enjoyed by an estimated 3,000 people. The official tree stays lit during the evenings, and is picture-worthy. Photo by Nicolas Brown

A cake decorating course from Every Baking Moment, 143 North First St. in downtown Dixon. The course offers four 2-hour sessions for \$75 on Tuesdays: January 16, 23, 30, and February 6 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Students will learn to make icing and fillings: torte, fill, and ice a cake and will practice basic icing star- and round-tip decorating techniques. Participants do not bake in class as they do not have ovens, however, they will provide simple, step-by-step instructions for you to bake your best cake at home. For more information call (707) 693-0112, or visit their website at www.everybakingmoment.com.

## Hobo Beef Stew

The annual dinner and raffle at the Veterans Memorial Hall at 1305 North First St. in Dixon will be on Saturday, January 20, 2024. There will be fun, friendship, and lots of raffle prizes. The bar opens at 4:30 and dinner starts at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$12. Call Patti at (707) 592-0991, or inquire on Friday nights at the Veterans Hall.

## Schools' Winter Break

Students are out of school, and those who stay local are out on bikes, electric bikes and scooters, and afoot so please drive with greater awareness. The Dixon Unified School District will be closed for Winter Break through Monday morning, January 8. That goes for Neighborhood Christian School students and Valley of the Sacred Heart Academy, as well. ★

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# Fong Family Tells of Pardi Market History



Carl Fong and Nick Stacey pose together at a recent presentation at the Dixon Historical Society on the Pardi Market. Photo courtesy of DHS

By Kim Schroeder-Evans

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - This is the second installment of a three-part series.

The Dixon Historical Society was honored to have John Fong's oldest son, Carl Fong, speak about his memories of when his father John Fong had owned Pardi Market.

Uncle Bing (brother of John Fong's wife) started working in February 1969.

He "did everything." Uncle Bing worked in each department: cleaning, parking lot, and repairing refrigerators. Sometimes he would work until midnight as "the man that no one appreciated," Fong said in jest. Uncle Bing would deliver groceries, to unlocked or opened doors, and just put the customers' food in their refrigerators when no one was home. "They just trusted people," Uncle Bing said. Customers, on their way out of the market, would often say, "Hey John, taking two pieces of bread," and would walk out. John knew they'd be back to pay; everyone

was so trusting. Uncle Bing worked at the market from 1969-1975.

Uncle Bing came from Hong Kong, with a population of 3 million in 1968. He then came to Dixon when the population was less than 2,000, and there were no signal lights. Uncle Bing shared that Rainbow Market was also owned by a Chinese-American family, and Kim and Ned's restaurant was owned by another Chinese-American family. There have been many businesses owned by families of Chinese heritage here in Dixon since the late 1800s.

Bill Schroeder, Dixon Historical Society's vice president, stated that from long before the Pardi Market, from 1910-1920, the store's property was home to Mitchell's Grocery Store and the City Hotel. The Capital Hotel stood where the Shell Gas Station was located at one point on the corner of South First and East A streets. Bill also pointed out the picture on display of John Fong with the little girl at the register, Jeanette Carter, selling John the first ticket for the

upcoming raffle to benefit the Head Start program at the Dixon Migrant Camp.

Nick Stacey (accompanied by his wife Barbara) spoke about "Grandpa Pardi and the Pardi Market." He said that John had the best hot dogs. Nick would go every day to the market. He shared a fond memory: after fishing throughout the week, they didn't want to eat the sturgeon they caught so he'd bring it to John. John asked where the sturgeon head was, so they had to go back and bring the head so that John could make fish-head stew and would often trade for steaks. Mr. Stacey also shared the secret of the old Coke machine between the store and gas station. Lynn Dutra at the time was the lifeguard, and he compared his memories to the movie, The Sandlot, where the group of boys would go swim or play wiffle ball or football, then they'd run to the Coke machine and bang the top of it and a free Coke would come out.

Shane Taber, employee of Pardi Market from 1971-1975, attended the presentation, and Uncle Bing said it was good to see her. Shane started working there at 15, and remembered when Walter prepared food in the back and made the beautiful signs. Walter also made Chinese food for everyone to enjoy. Walter Lee was a good friend to Jerry Louie. Shane also remembered that John celebrated Chinese New Year and invited customers to participate.

Carrie Senecal shared fond memories about her grandmother working at Pardi Market. To this day, Carrie still has one of her grandmother's check stubs that was written in pencil. Look for Part 3, the last in the series, in the next edition. ★

# Dixon Charter School Top in County



Dixon Montessori Charter School.

Story and photo by Debra Dingman

**DIXON, CA (MPG)** - Dixon's Charter Montessori School rated "green," which is next to the highest performance rating in four categories on the California School Dashboard, outshining all other schools in Solano County, giving Executive Director Ben Ernest one great Christmas present.

"It's kind of a big deal and pretty cool. I even checked Yolo, and we're the only ones in the green in four categories," he said enthusiastically about the site that acts as the California communication tool for parents and educators by the California Department of Education.

"It shows how we're doing and how we're improving," he said.

The Dashboard helps inform local planning and educational partner engagement around local control and accountability plans, according to the site. The Dashboard also helps identify local educational agencies and schools in need of additional assistance under state and federal law.

The site uses a large database and considers English language arts and mathematics scores, but also rates things like chronic absenteeism and suspension rate behavior, teacher credentials, parent engagement, and school climate, which considers data related to how well schools are providing a healthy, safe, and welcoming environment., etc. It is broken down

by demographics and age, too. The report is updated annually.

Dixon Montessori Charter School's enrollment is approximately 447, with 24.4 percent socioeconomically disadvantaged and 6.7 percent English learners.

"I attribute the findings to our 'corroborative culture' between all the stakeholders — students, parents, and teachers — to do what's best for the students," Ernest said. He also attributed the funds brought in from the State that have helped them increase school enthusiasm and participation.

"[The funds] propped us up again from the learning recovery after the pandemic," Ernest reported. "We were able to hire coaches and they taught staff how to teach students and how to start an after-school sports program." Monies were also used to start an after-school drama class.

That 'culture' actually started with COVID, Ernest added.

"During COVID, our scores actually went up, which was opposite from everyone else," he said. "When it hit, we pulled everyone together, and even went out and delivered lessons including books and supplies to every student and kept school going."

For questions about the Dashboard, go to [Dashboard@cde.ca.gov](mailto:Dashboard@cde.ca.gov) or call (916) 319-0863. The school is at 355 North Almond St. ★

# Caltrans Releases Draft Project List for Public Comment

Caltrans News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Caltrans has released the draft 2024 State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) plan, the state's primary funding program for maintaining and preserving California's transportation infrastructure.

The draft, which features a new interactive dashboard detailing the location and specifics on approximately \$16 billion in projects, will be open for public comment through Jan. 19, 2024. The list of approximately 600 projects throughout the state includes approximately 100 carryover projects where Caltrans later added climate adaptation, additional safety protections, and bike and pedestrian elements. These projects had been developed before the state's adoption of the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) in 2021. The added elements were funded by approximately \$600 million from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

The 195 new projects being added to the SHOPP reflect planning work largely completed after CAPTI implementation. These projects, totaling \$6.2 billion, include many climate, safety and multimodal features within the overall "fix it first" framework established in Senate Bill (SB) 1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017.

The SHOPP covers four fiscal years (FY 24/25 through 27/28) and funds roadway and bridge rehabilitation or replacements, along with safety improvements, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, operational improvements, and climate adaptation projects.

For increased transparency, Caltrans incorporated the interactive dashboard to allow the public to map, search and download all the proposed projects, including significant details on the project scope.

"Caltrans is focused on maintaining and improving the state's transportation network so that it is safer, more reliable and more climate resilient," said Caltrans Director Tony Tavares.

"We are also committed to transparency to ensure the public has the opportunity to be engaged before we move forward with projects."

In line with the "fix it first" philosophy, the SHOPP's primary focus is fixing and maintaining the state highway system. Along with keeping the state highway system in a state of good repair, the SHOPP also includes additional objectives, such as improving safety for all road users; increasing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure; ensuring projects are equitably distributed in rural and urban centers and throughout all socioeconomic sections; and providing for climate adaptation.

Proposed funding includes:

\$8 billion to improve more than 6,000 lane-miles of pavement; \$3.2 billion to repair and upgrade 80 bridges and tunnels; \$900 million for safety improvements; \$666 million to upgrade drainage systems by repairing more than 58 miles of culverts and diversions; \$604 million for 1,400 new and improved signals, signs, ramps, and metering systems; Nearly \$400 million to make infrastructure more resilient to the impacts of climate change. The prior SHOPP had no dedicated investment for climate resiliency; \$280 million for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure; \$173 million for improved highway/interstate signage and lighting.

Interested parties are encouraged to review the draft SHOPP online dashboard at [projectbook.dot.ca.gov](http://projectbook.dot.ca.gov). The website includes a link to submit online comments on the draft SHOPP.

Building on the SHOPP transportation efforts, the 2023 State Highway System Management Plan (SHSMP), released earlier this year, lays out the future objectives for SHOPP projects. The 2023 SHSMP is organized to incorporate more climate-friendly elements into maintenance projects and presents a performance-driven, integrated management plan for California's state highway system's needs, investments, and performance for the 10-year period spanning through June 2033. ★

# New Report Projects Massive \$68 Billion Deficit

California State Senate Republican Caucus News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) announced this morning that California has a projected \$68 billion budget deficit through the next fiscal year, a sharp but entirely predictable turnaround from surpluses Governor Newsom bragged about just last year. This deficit will have significant consequences for education funding and other programs, as economic reality brings legislative Democrats' overspending and overpromising back down to earth.

The Vice Chair of the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee, Senator Roger Niello (R-Fair Oaks) offered his reaction to the LAO's announcement:

"Despite all warnings that it was unsustainable, California's tax-and-spend majority increased state spending by \$116 billion over the last six years, nearly doubling the general fund budget in that short time. Republicans cautioned that this level of spending would lead to greater deficits, and it would be more prudent to show restraint. Unfortunately, the majority party ignored those warnings, enacting a budget in June that already projected a \$14 billion deficit, even before the LAO's new report

revised the deficit to \$68 billion."

Senate Minority Leader Brian W. Jones (R-San Diego) added, "Governor Newsom and Democrat lawmakers turned a \$100 billion surplus into a \$68 billion deficit in just 2 years. Even more alarming, the five-year deficit forecast is an astounding \$155 billion, thanks to the overspending Democrats jammed into the last few budgets. California built up significant budget reserves under the requirements of a bipartisan 2014 initiative, but Democrats have managed to outspend even what the reserves can cover.

"During my first budget cycle as an Assemblymember in 2011-2012, California operated with a \$143 billion budget. Fast forward to the 2023-2024 budget cycle, Democrats' spending soared the budget to a staggering \$311 billion! In a mere decade, our state's budget has more than doubled in size, an exponential surge, while the financial capabilities of Californians certainly haven't undergone such a monumental increase as many struggle to afford to even stay in the state.

"Hopefully, the supermajority will see it is time for a more realistic budget strategy, instead of throwing money at a laundry list of projects that sounds nice on the national television debate stage." ★

WE SUPPORT FIRST RESPONDERS



# A Budget Rollercoaster

By Alexei Koseff, CALMatters.org

With tax revenues in a free fall comparable to the Great Recession and the dot-com bust, California faces a projected \$68 billion budget deficit next year that will require spending cuts and reserve funds to close, state finance officials said today.

The new estimate from the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office, released as Gov. Gavin Newsom finalizes his January budget proposal, reflects a substantially delayed tax-filing period this fall where collections came in far below what lawmakers expected when they adopted a spending plan over the summer.

This projected deficit would be a record for California. But officials noted that it is partly because the budget has grown so much in recent years — the most recent was more than \$300 billion — and that the state has closed similar or worse spending gaps, by percentage, in the past.

Legislative analyst Gabriel Petek cautioned that California is better prepared to respond to the situation than during the economic recession 15 years ago, because it has since built several multibillion-dollar rainy-day funds, though the state is also looking at a structural deficit of about \$30 billion annually going forward.

"I go with the word 'serious.' A serious budget problem," Petek said during a briefing with journalists. "I would stop short of calling it a crisis."

H.D. Palmer, a spokesperson for Newsom's Department of Finance, said the administration will have different numbers when the governor presents his 2024-25 spending plan next month, but Newsom is preparing to address a significant deficit.

"Both the Governor and the



A California Analyst predicts a \$68 billion deficit. Gov. Gavin Newsom unveils his revised budget proposal for 2023-24 during a press briefing at the state Natural Resources Agency in Sacramento on May 12, 2023. Photo by Rahul Lal, CalMatters

Legislature have a substantial challenge before them in closing a very large revenue gap in this budget," Palmer told CalMatters. "The IRS, with the best of intentions, created a situation this year that is entirely new territory."

Severe winter storms prompted the federal government to delay the income tax filing deadline for most Californians from April until November, and the state followed suit, giving an incomplete picture when legislators and the governor crafted the budget this summer.

It already accounted for a \$30 billion deficit, after two years of record surpluses driven by economic recovery and federal aid related to the coronavirus pandemic. But those collections were ultimately another \$26

billion below estimates — a drop of 25% from the prior year — digging a financial hole wbased on money the state committed in its spending plan.

This year looks weak as well, according to finance officials. California has been hit particularly hard by inflation, which pinched the housing market; a stock market downturn, affecting capital gains; and a drop in investments in the tech industry, which has pulled back on initial public offerings. Overall tax revenues are projected to be \$58 billion below assumptions in the multi-year budget window.

Though the Legislative Analyst's Office estimates that tax revenues will begin growing again next year, the recovery is likely to be slow, opening up long-term funding shortfalls that

could affect essential programs in future years.

"There are enough options available to address this immediate problem," Petek said. "Our high-level suggestion to the Legislature is just to be judicious about reserves because there's a lot of uncertainty ahead, so preserving some of that resilience would be helpful."

His office recommended that Newsom declare a fiscal emergency, allowing the state to dip into as much as \$24 billion of its rainy-day funds, and that legislators pull back on one-time spending allocations that have not yet been distributed, potentially saving \$10 billion or more that had previously been set aside for transportation, environmental and education programs.

Petek also suggested that

California could cut the deficit by nearly \$17 billion over the next three years by recalculating its constitutionally-mandated funding obligation to schools and community colleges, known as Proposition 98, based on the lower revenues. Though this would decrease the state's base education funding over the long term, Petek said the immediate effects could be offset with reserves.

That option, in particular, could encounter stiff resistance in the Legislature. Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, a Hollister Democrat, released a statement last week, when it became clear that tax revenues would be substantially below estimates, committing to a budget that "protects classroom funding."

Newsom and lawmakers are also likely to confront months of tremendous pressure from advocates arguing that their priorities should be protected in any budget solutions. Statements started rolling out mere minutes after the Legislative Analyst's Office published its report.

"California leaders have stepped up before to prioritize Californians who are struggling to get by and they must continue this in 2024," said Pete Manzo, president & CEO of United Ways of California.

Republican legislators chastised their Democratic colleagues for continuing to make new spending commitments in recent budget cycles even as it became clear that the economy was increasingly shaky.

"Hopefully, the supermajority will see it is time for a more realistic budget strategy," Senate Republican Leader Brian Jones of San Diego said in a statement, "instead of throwing money at a laundry list of projects that sounds nice on the national television debate stage." ★



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# Chasing Joy

with Jeff Myers



## Emmanuel

Commentary by Jeff Myers

What's your favorite Christmas gift you ever received? For me it was my high school letter jacket when I was 16 years old.

There wasn't a lot of money for gifts in my family growing up, but my parents usually still found a way to make things special. I wanted a letter jacket. They knew I wanted it, but I'm not sure I even asked for it. I knew the price would be more than Mom and Dad were spending. Christmas morning came and I was absolutely stunned when I opened the package that contained the crimson jacket with black leather sleeves. (Go Houston Tigers!)

As cool as that jacket was, there's a Christmas gift that's way cooler! "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). Matthew 1:23 (NIV)

If you're a Christian, you know that God came near to humanity as the Christ-child. So, yeah, literally "God with us." But Emmanuel continues to ripple through time into our present-day lives. God shows up in our day-to-day life and walks with us at all stages of our journey. Whether times are great for you or times are difficult... God with us.

Scripture often uses some topographical terminology to describe these highs and lows of our lives. When we feel fully alive and close to God, we're on the mountain. When God feels distant or we're struggling, we're in the valley. Mountaintop experiences feel

almost miraculous. We wish our faith felt that high all the time. In those times we feel and see God move in ways that are undeniable. But the valley is MEH [indifferent, uninspiring, apathetic] at best and devastating at worst. Don't lose heart in the valley. It doesn't necessarily mean anything is wrong; it's just real life.

If you've been married for a while, you know this. Most of us had great weddings and better honeymoons. However, at some point later in life we find ourselves wishing things could feel the way they felt in the beginning. But the wedding isn't the marriage, and the honeymoon isn't quite the marriage, either. The marriage is a life with ups and downs, laughs and cries, sickness and health, richer and poorer, etc... You still get to experience some great mountains, but you also learn to appreciate the stability of the valley.

Jesus will lead you to mountains and he'll walk beside you in the valleys. He's with you. He'll never leave you or forsake you. Scripture teaches us that even if we're faithless, he will always be faithful! So enjoy the mountains, but keep praising the God of the valley, too.

That's the meaning of Christmas. God was with us and he's still with us. This holiday season

lean into the Spirit of Emmanuel. We may enjoy God on the mountaintop, but trust me, we really get to know him in the valley.

Merry Christmas!  
Jeff Myers is Lead Pastor of Living Hope Church in Dixon, CA ★

## DWR Announces Initial State Water Project Allocation of 10 Percent for 2024

DWR News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - On December 1, 2023, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced an initial State Water Project (SWP) allocation forecast of 10 percent of requested supplies for 2024. The SWP provides water to 29 public water agencies that serve 27 million Californians.

The December 1 initial water supply forecast is the first allocation of the new water year and is based on current reservoir storage and an assumption of very dry conditions. So far in October and November, storms have not brought as much rain and snow.

"California's water year is off to a relatively dry start. While we are hopeful that this El Niño pattern will generate wet weather, this early in the season we have to plan with drier conditions in mind," said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. "California's water supply continues to benefit from our aggressive efforts last season to capture record rain and snow melt in our reservoirs and groundwater basins."

The initial SWP allocation forecast is looking ahead to 2024 and only applies to water deliveries in the year ahead. The allocation is calculated based on October and November precipitation, dry soils, runoff, and storage in Lake Oroville. It has no bearing on current water supplies or water captured in 2023. Most reservoirs in the state remain above average for this time of year.

### Highlights of California's Water Supply Storage

Last winter, a total of 3.5 million acre-feet of water was captured in SWP reservoirs. The SWP delivered 2.7 million acre-feet in allocated water plus an additional 400,000 acre-feet of supplemental water to SWP contractors in 2023;

To date, Lake Oroville, the SWP's largest reservoir, is at 133 percent of average.

San Luis Reservoir, jointly operated by the SWP and Central Valley Project, remains at 109 percent of average. Water stored in San Luis also includes water from 2023 being stored by water contractors for use in future dry years;

In coordination with the Metropolitan Water District (MWD), DWR provided water to fill up Diamond Valley Reservoir for the first time in three years. The facility is a critical part of the Southern California water delivery system;

California was also able to redirect excess storm water for groundwater recharge. DWR has estimated more than 3.8 million acre-feet of recharge capacity in 2023, including more than 1.2 million acre-feet of groundwater recharge permitted by State agencies, 390,817 acre-feet of flood water recharged using the Governor's Executive Orders, and millions more acre-feet of managed and naturally occurring recharge.

It is not uncommon for the initial allocation forecast to be low following very wet years. For Water Year 2018, the initial allocation was 15 percent following an 85 percent final allocation in 2017. Water Year 2020 started with a 10 percent initial allocation following a 75 percent final allocation in 2019. Both 2017 and 2019 were very wet winters. More historical data on SWP allocations is available at [water.ca.gov/programs/state-water-project/management/swp-water-contractors](http://water.ca.gov/programs/state-water-project/management/swp-water-contractors).

As the winter progresses, if California sees an increase in rain and snowfall, the allocation forecast may increase.

Each year, DWR provides the initial SWP allocation by December 1 based on available water storage, projected water supply, and water demands. Allocations are updated monthly as snowpack, rainfall, and runoff information is assessed, with a final allocation typically determined in May or June. ★



### Almond Farmers Remain Optimistic Despite Recent Challenges

California almond growers have faced tough economic conditions in recent years as production costs soared while earnings plummeted. Yet the Almond Board of California maintains that the long-term outlook for the tree nut remains positive, even as the industry struggles through some growing pains. At the recent 2023 Almond Conference in Sacramento, industry leaders said changing times and shifts in consumer behavior mean the sector will need to evolve and innovate to remain competitive and drive global demand for the state's 3.5-billion-pound crop.

### Shannon Douglass Becomes First Woman to Lead California Farm Bureau

Shannon Douglass, a diversified farmer from Glenn County, has been elected as the new president of the California Farm Bureau. Douglass, who served three terms as first vice president, becomes the first woman to head the organization, which was founded in 1919. The election took place at the organization's 105th Annual Meeting Dec. 1-6, in Reno, Nevada. Douglass is an owner of Douglass Ranch in Orland, which raises cattle and grows walnuts, corn and forage crops. She succeeds Jamie Johansson, a Butte County olive and citrus fruit grower who served three terms as president.

### Farm Bureau Joins Coalition Backing Tax-Reform Initiative

The California Farm Bureau has endorsed a 2024 ballot initiative that would give voters the final decision on approving new local and state taxes. The Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act is backed by a coalition that also includes the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, the California Business Roundtable, the California Business Properties Association and other supporters. The new measure would require all new taxes passed by the California Legislature be approved by voters and would reaffirm a two-thirds voter approval for all new local special tax increases.

### Sacramento County Teacher Wins Agricultural Educator Award

A Sacramento-area teacher who created a garden and horticulture program to introduce students to agriculture has been honored with the Outstanding Educator Award, presented by the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom. Kevin Jordan, a science and horticulture teacher at Leo A. Palmeter Junior and Senior High School in the Sacramento County community of Arden-Arcade, received the award at the 105th California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Reno, Nevada. Jordan was also named the 2023 Teacher of the Year by the Sacramento County Office of Education. ★

## JKMS Band Gets Extra Funds

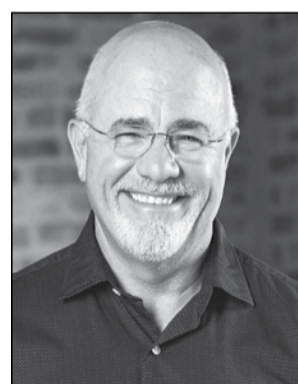
Continued from page 1

Marge Litsinger, and the United Women of Faith from the Methodist Church. The tree themes ranged from elegant winter snow and Holy Nativity, to children's favorites such as Candy Land and Snoopy.

"We were very happy to help out the students with our trees," said Lamont, who worked with Diana Davies to produce two of the trees. The friends have been decorating trees since the beginning of the local event.

"It was a good cause," she added. Another fundraiser for the band has just been initiated, Lee announced.

"We launched a fundraiser at our Winter Concert last night to purchase a bunch of new method books," he said. "If you know anyone who might be interested in helping out, here it is: Books for the Avid Reader | DonorsChoose project by Mr. Lee." For further information or questions, or to make a contribution for the band, call John Knight Middle School at (707) 693-6350. ★



### Don't Be Afraid To Start Small

Dear Dave,

I'd like to slowly start a business online while working my regular job. But even though I'm in pretty good financial shape, I don't have much money left at the end of the month. I have no debt except for my house, and I also have nine months of expenses in my emergency fund. How can I start my business without borrowing the money?

- Kristin

Dear Kristin,

I like where your head is. Start and run your business with cash. Period. Even if it takes a little while to get

## Dave Ramsey Says

things off the ground. That should be a guideline for every entrepreneur.

But guess what? You may have more money on hand than you think. You're a little heavy on your emergency fund right now. I recommend people have three to six months of expenses set aside for emergencies. You could back your emergency fund down to six months of expenses, and move the extra over to an account designated for your business. After that, grow it slowly each month until you have enough to open your doors. You'd be surprised how much cash will pile up, even if you save just a little bit at a time.

The big thing, Kirsten, is don't be afraid to start small. Don't despise humble beginnings. Some of the best and most successful companies in America started as micro-businesses or cottage industries. I literally started my company

on a card table in my living room. It's easier and safer in a lot of ways. So, I love the wisdom you're showing by wanting to keep your full-time job while starting the business online.

So, yeah. Take three or four months of expenses out of your emergency fund, and move it to a designated business account. Watch your budget carefully, and keep spending to a minimum. Above all, don't take your business into debt. Grow it at the speed of cash. The best, most successful businesses don't outrun their money and other resources!

- Dave

\*Leadership and small-business expert Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored eight national bestselling books, including *EntreLeadership*, and is a host of *The Ramsey Show* and *The EntreLeadership Podcast*. ★



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# Made It Home for Christmas

*A brother calls from Alaska  
another calls collect  
A sister calls from south L.A.  
As we guess who's calling next*

*As we grow a little older  
each one's sure to realize  
how Dad and Mom worked and saved  
to put presents before our eyes*

*Our family spans the world now  
spreading all that we have learned  
from cold showers every holiday  
to every Christmas we have earned*

*Christmas Day is changing  
We're getting older every year  
but its warmth abounds in memories  
and in wishing you were here*

*So from Mom and Dad's prayers go out  
to our families and their youths  
to their hopes and dreams of doing well  
and in living Christmas truths*

— Paul V. Scholl



## Riley Reviews

“MAY DECEMBER” EXPLORES A SEX SCANDAL;  
“ARCHIE” ON BRITBOX

### A Film and TV Review by Tim Riley

#### “MAY DECEMBER” RATED R

Anyone remembering sex scandals of the late Nineties (not involving Monica Lewinsky) may recall the tabloid fodder story of Mary Kay Letourneau, a 35-year-old teacher convicted of child rape in a sexual relationship with a sixth-grade student.

The Netflix film “May December” is an unsettling reminder of a case of pedophilia that should not be normalized under any circumstance. The characters here are fictional, with the Letourneau story merely a twisted premise for a fraught history of predatory scandal.

Natalie Portman’s Elizabeth is a Hollywood actress preparing for some method acting by exploring first-hand the story of the older woman Gracie (Julianne Moore) having an affair outside her marriage with a 13-year-old co-worker at a pet store.

The child who had sex with Gracie in the store’s stockroom is now 36-year-old Joe (Charles Melton). The scandal happened more than 20 years ago, and even though Joe and Gracie are married and living in Savannah, Georgia, the couple may never escape the opprobrium of the townfolk.

Embedding herself with the family, Elizabeth took interest in the script of an indie film to take the starring role, thinking aloud that in Gracie she sees “a woman with a lot more to her than I remember from the tabloids and our cultural memory.”

Elizabeth sits down with Gracie’s ex-husband Tom (D.W. Moffett), and discovers that to this day he has not gotten over the shock of being married to a then 36-year-old woman having an affair with a seventh-grade student.

As the affair led to pregnancy, Joe and Gracie have three children, the oldest being Honor (Piper Curda) coming home from college with a chip on her shoulder, while the younger twins Mary (Elizabeth Yu) and Charlie (Gabriel Chung) are about to graduate from high school.

“May December” moves at a laborious pace, seemingly entreating the viewer to savor the dialogue and parse the words for hidden meaning, while figuring out whether the emotions and feelings of the characters reveal some sort of truth.

Throughout the movie, it seems all too often that family members from Gracie and Joe to their three children say things are “fine” when one senses the expression cloaks a deeper sense of anguish bubbling under the surface.

As the film closes with Elizabeth on set with a young lover, I am at a loss on the symbolism of the garden snake she holds, but then the supposed edgy, dark

humor also doesn’t resonate in a meaningful way for me. Viewers will need to arrive at their own suppositions.

Even though the focus is apparently Natalie Portman’s Elizabeth analyzing the essence of Julian Moore’s Gracie for her film role, “May December” belongs in great part to Charlie Melton’s Joe, a man-child at a crossroads in processing the reality of life.

#### “ARCHIE” ON BRITBOX

The four-part series “Archie” on BritBox is about the life of Hollywood leading man Gary Grant, who was born in Bristol, England in 1904 with the given name of Archibald Alexander Leach.

Tracing his troubled childhood in a family living in extreme poverty, Archie’s story as a child had to deal with his father’s adultery and the loss of his older brother John that tore the family apart and sent his loving mother into a downward spiral of grief and depression.

At fourteen, Archie auditioned for the music hall act of the Bob Pender Troupe, a band of acrobats, stilt walkers, clowns and comedians after seeing them perform at the Bristol Hippodrome.

Lean and athletic, Archie learned the art of stilt walking, and when the troupe went on tour to the United States, teenage Archie was intoxicated by the land of opportunity. Believing he had no family to return to in England, he decided to stay in America to try to make his way in show business.

With no thoughts of acting, a chance meeting with the comedian George Burns helped him find his first footing on the acting ladder and a contract with a movie studio who felt he needed to change his name, and Cary Grant was born.

The drama intercuts with scenes from 1961 when at the height of his fame, living in Benedict Canyon, Los Angeles, the legendary actor (Jason Isaacs) was breaking all box office records, but desperately unhappy in his private life.

With two failed marriages behind him, Cary began to woo an actress he’d seen on a TV show, Dyan Cannon (Laura Aikman). Thirty-three years his junior, Dyan didn’t initially fall for his charms, turning down his attempts to meet, because she didn’t feel they could ever be a match.

Dashingly handsome, suave, and sophisticated, Cary continued to pursue her, with introductions to his famous friends, until they eventually wed in Las Vegas in 1965. The marriage didn’t last long but the couple had a daughter.

With the blessing of Cary Grant’s daughter, Jennifer Grant, and ex-wife Dyan Cannon, the pair serve as Executive Producers of “Archie.” Dainton Anderson, Calam Lynch, and Oaklee Pendergast pay young versions of Archie Leach. ★

FOR THE LOVE OF  
**BOOKS**  
By Amy Shane  
BOOK REVIEW & SPECIAL EVENTS EDITOR • ✉ amy-shane@att.net • 📷 amy\_fortheloveofbooks

## 12 Days of Christmas with Quarto Publishing

Quarto Books is here for all your gift-giving needs, with twelve days of gift-giving for book lovers of all ages.

Quarto Books starts the gift-giving season with the Queen of Country in *Dolly Parton’s 100 Remarkable Moments in An Extraordinary Life* by Tracey E. W. Laird. Step inside the life and times of Dolly Parton through the last seven decades as she has entertained audiences worldwide. From country music to film star, Dolly Parton has captivated audiences with elegance, grace, and humor. A visual exploration of photographs and nostalgia, this book is the perfect gift for any fan who wants to know more and celebrate the life of one of Entertainment’s most iconic women.

Explore the sport that has swept the nation in *Play Pickle Ball: From the Local Court to the Pro Circuit, An Insider’s Guide to Everyone’s Favorite Sport* by Sydney Steinaker. An informative and entertaining guide that will introduce newcomers to the sport to terminology, techniques, and rules of the game while also delivering advice from the pros for even the seasoned players.

Celebrate the National Park lover on your list with *National Parks of the U.S.A. A Jigsaw Puzzle*. This 500-piece puzzle is a beautiful display of art and nature.

For the Foodie on your list, *Brilliant Bites 75 Unique*



*Small Bites for Any Occasion* by The BakerMama Maegan Brown. It’s love at first bite in this celebration of bite-size snacking. From party bites to breakfast, the beauty of food is explored, from tempting treats to eye-catching displays. Whether you love party planning or want to turn heads at the next Holiday party, Maegan Brown has you covered. With full-color pictures and easy-to-follow directions, anyone can spin kitchen magic.

Saturday Am delivers Manga-inspired comics for teen audiences. Morganne Walker’s *Soul Beat* is the story of a promising boxer willing to step in under any circumstance; however, the hero can also attract the wrong type of attention, especially if it is from the Devil himself. Now Dante is caught in the crossfire between good and evil, and he will have to figure out what side he stands for once and for all.

Follow the story of Amanda Gorman and the hills she had to climb to be America’s first Youth Poet Laureate in, *Little People Big Dreams: Amanda Gorman*. Amanda’s inspiring story will be a shining example to everyone who reads it.

Bring classical pieces to life with *The Story Orchestra I Can Play*, illustrated by Jessica Courtney-Tickle. Anyone can easily play classical pieces of music as they match the colors on the piano keys to the song and words. This giant board book is the perfect way to celebrate classical music while also introducing young readers to the joy of playing piano.

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# Dare to Live Without Limits

by Bryan Golden

## Wishing Won't Make It So



Everyone wishes for good fortune and a problem free life. Yet many people are disappointed with their situations. Is wishing effective or is it overrated? The answer is yes to both. So what's the catch?

Wishing alone is unproductive. If you want results, wishing must be followed by action. Wishing without action is as ineffective as leaving your car in neutral. Without being in gear, revving the engine at full throttle will make a lot of noise but won't move you an inch.

Whenever you were told to wish for what you wanted, you were given only half the story. People who pin their hopes on wishes coming true are invariably disappointed. They are disheartened when their wishing fails to generate results. Even wishing really hard isn't dependable. True, some wishes will come true on their own, but these are few and far between.

As much as patience may be a virtue, wishing and waiting is of no avail. Those who passively wait for wishes to materialize will be waiting for a very long time. Again, without the infusion of action, wishing yields little, if any, results.

Now that I've pointed out the limitations of wishing, let me emphasize that wishing is an essential component of reaching your goals. Wishing puts seeds of desire into your mind. This process is the foundation of all achievement. Your mind, the most powerful tool known, will go to work nonstop to find a way to transform your wishes into reality.

Your mind is prepared to create an action plan for you. But without understanding the importance of following a wish with action, you will not benefit from your mind's work. If you are not looking for an action plan, you won't release the full power of your mind to find one.

Instead, you will be restricting the awesome capability of your mind to merely contemplating wishes. It's as if you are at the controls of

a high-performance jet, capable of supersonic flight, but are content to confine your travel to taxiing around the airport. Even though your jet is capable of taking you to any destination, you never even leave the ground.

Here's how to make wishes come true. Start with a wish, any wish. Don't limit yourself by only wishing for what you think is possible. The infinite power of your mind only recognizes restrictions you impose on it.

Next, imagine the wish coming true. How would you feel? How would you act? Maintain your mental focus on your wish. Don't just give it passing attention. The more you concentrate on your wish, the more you energize your mind to find a path to it.

Now you are ready to formulate an action plan. This will be your road map to bring you to your wish. Your plan will consist of specific steps you need to take, one by one, to reach your destination. Every journey, regardless of the length, is nothing more than a series of steps.

Once your plan is in place, you need to take action. This requires effort. Stay motivated by reviewing your wish daily. Remind yourself how you will feel when it comes true. Each day you should take another step, no matter how small.

Don't give yourself a time limit. You never know how long it will take to get your wish. As soon as you stop, you guarantee your wish won't come true. Once your wish comes true, you won't care how long it took.

Although wishing won't make it so, wishing combined with action, produces amazing results. Go ahead and wish, and then get moving. May you make all your wishes come true!

*NOW AVAILABLE: "Dare to Live Without Limits," the book. Visit [www.BryanGolden.com](http://www.BryanGolden.com) or your bookstore. Bryan is a management consultant, motivational speaker, author, and adjunct professor. E-mail Bryan at [bryan@columnist.com](mailto:bryan@columnist.com) or write him c/o this paper. ©2023 Bryan Golden ★*

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**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENTS**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 2023-001747  
 The following persons are doing business as: Quick Quack Car Wash, 220 Dorset Court, Dixon, CA 95620.

VIP Fund IV, LLC, 6020 West Oaks Boulevard Suite 300, Rocklin, CA 95765.

Date filed in Solano County: November 8, 2023. The Registrant commenced to transact business under the above business name on: N/A

This Business is conducted by: A Limited Liability Company. NOTICE: In Accordance with subdivision (a) of section 17920 A Fictitious Name Statement generally expires at the end of five years from the date on which it was filed in the office of the county clerk, except as provided in subdivision (b) of section 17920, where it expires 40 days after any change in the facts set forth in the statement

pursuant to section 17913 other than a change in the residence address of registered owner. A new fictitious Business name statement must be filed before the expiration November 7, 2028. The filing of this statement does not itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business, and professions code.)  
 Publish: December 1, 8, 15, 22, 2023  
 QUICK 12-22-23

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 2023-001877  
 The following persons are doing business as: Acorn Financial Solutions, 2625 Ascot Drive, Fairfield, CA 94534. Sievers Enterprises, Inc., 2625 Ascot Drive, Fairfield, CA 94534. Date filed in Solano County: December 4, 2023. The Registrant commenced to transact business under the above business name on: N/A

This Business is conducted by: A Corporation. NOTICE: In Accordance with subdivision (a) of section 17920 A Fictitious Name Statement generally expires at the end of five years from the date on which it was filed in the office of the county clerk, except as provided in subdivision (b) of section 17920, where it expires 40 days after any change in the facts set forth in the statement pursuant to section 17913 other than a change in the residence address of registered owner. A new fictitious Business name statement must be filed before the expiration date on December 3, 2028. The filing of this statement does not itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business, and professions code.)  
 Publish: Dec 15, 22, 29, 2023 Jan 5, 2024  
 ACORN 1-5-23

# SCOE and SCC Team Up to Host Solano County VEX Robotics League

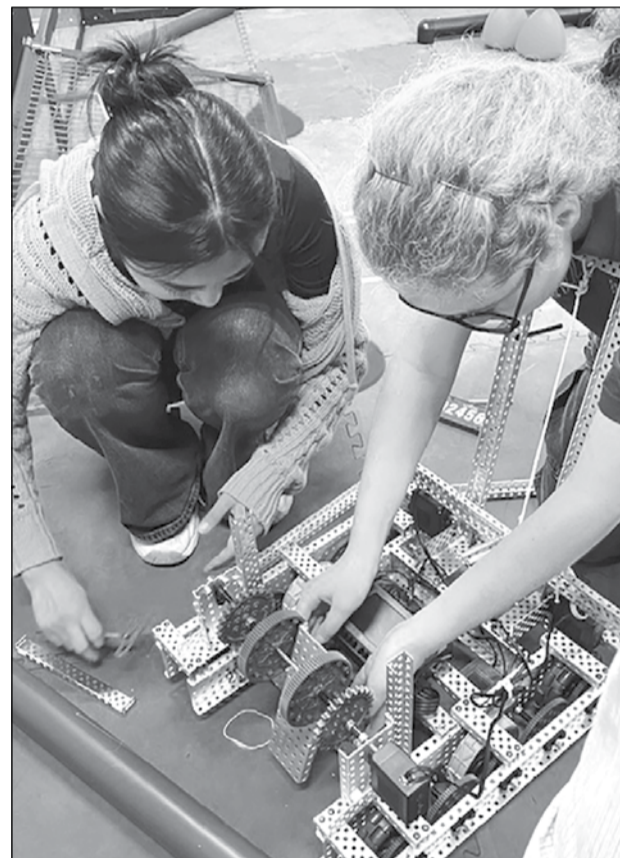
**SCOE News Release**

**FAIRFIELD, CA (MPG)** - Solano County Office of Education (SCOE) and Solano Community College (SCC) have partnered together in hosting a VEX robotics league for Solano County students, with the latest competition happening Friday night, December 15th at Solano Community College.

The Solano County VEX Robotics League is open to all VEX Robotics teams in middle and high school in Solano County. Ten teams representing Golden West Middle School in Travis Unified School District, Rodriguez High School in Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District, Vacaville Christian School and the Solano County Girls Who Code Club have competed in the competitions; the competition series includes four separate events with the final competition being held in January.

"Robotics competitions empower students to be creative, collaborate with peers, build problem-solving skills, and gain experience in STEM subjects. We are pleased to create opportunities for Solano students that have real-world applications through our partnership with SCC," remarked Solano County Superintendent of Schools Lisette Estrella-Henderson.

VEX Robotics is a program and competition



A closeup of the girls robotics team which could qualify to compete at the VEX state championship. Photo courtesy of SCOE

system for elementary through university students. Solano County Office of Education partnered with Solano Community College on the VEX league to boost interest and opportunities in STEM for local students following a decline of local robotics programming during the COVID pandemic. The partnership brings competitions closer to local students and helps reduce costs for local teams.

As teams head into the final round, the Girls Who Code Team Solano is looking to defend their current first place spot, with Vacaville Christian on their heels

in second, followed by Rodriguez HS Bumble Bots and Golden West's RoboStangs. Parents, teachers and community members are invited to watch the remaining competition on January 27, 2024, from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm at McCormack Hall in the Solano County Fairgrounds. Winners in the Solano County league may qualify to the VEX state championship.

For more information about the Science and Engineering Fair, contact Lilibeth Pinpin, Director of Innovative Programs and Student Success, at [lpinpin@solanocoe.net](mailto:lpinpin@solanocoe.net) or 707-399-4439. ★

# Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



Well, Kings fans, the In-Season Tournament is over, and our Sacramento Kings gave it a good run.

Were it not for the New Orleans Pelicans, the Kings might well have played in the final game.

For many fans around the NBA, we're still waiting for a complete explanation as to how the whole thing works. For me, it's been a bit of a head scratcher. It seemed very much like crowning the NBA winner for the first quarter of the season, and I for one had a hard time making sense of it.

When I first heard of the In-Season Tournament, my first thought was why. For years I've heard rumblings and concerns about the intermittent lack of effort that certain teams would bring on a given night, and it seemed as though this was the NBA's way of curbing some of the lackluster play in the early-season play.

But we have three quarters of the season to go. If this is really the reason for this experiment, what is the plan moving forward?

Given the enormous salaries NBA players have today, it seems incomprehensible that further incentive is needed to get 100% effort. For certain, there is a modicum of players that simply go through the motions, and isn't this a coaching and management issue?

I'm glad the Sacramento Kings don't have this problem. Every game I'm amazed at the energy and enthusiasm this group of players brings to the hardwood, and without a doubt, this IS the best game in town!

I don't think I really have a problem with the In-Season Tournament. I just wish I had a better understanding of how it came about, and what the powers that be are actually thinking. Perhaps I'm being naïve that we should expect such transparency from the NBA, but it would certainly be refreshing.

No question, professional sports as we

have known it is in the changing business. The major leagues have implemented a pitch clock, pitchers no longer have to throw four pitches outside for a batter to get a walk, and they are even putting runners on base to start an inning, just to speed up the game.

The old adage, "nothing stays the same," appears to be alive and well, and that is not to say that all changes are bad. I'm old enough to remember when the NBA implemented the three-point line, and it was without a doubt one of the best changes ever made.

True, the Kings didn't win the In-Season Tournament, but as of this writing they have a 12-8 record and are in sixth place in the western conference. I can remember, not long ago, when Kings fans would have danced in the streets for a start like this, and with a fortuitous bounce here and there our record could easily be two games better.

Sabonis, Fox, and Monk have been the night-in and night-out standouts without question, and many are wondering how Malik Monk can get more time on the floor. The same can be said for Trey Lyles. Trey was out for a number of games due to injury, but like his Kentucky teammates, his presence is felt whenever he takes the floor.

If there is an area of concern, it may be found in the substitution patterns. It seems to vary from game to game, and fan favorites like Davion Mitchell at times find themselves out of the game entirely. Last season, Davion was typically the first player off the bench, and his intense defense literally brought the crowd to its feet. Is this a matchup issue, or does coach Brown believe players like Chris Duarte and Keon Ellis bring more to the table.

Your thoughts are welcome and I'd like to hear from you. Send your comments to [vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com](mailto:vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com).

Stay tuned for another edition of Kings Korner next week. ★

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# COMICS & PUZZLES

The Spats



by Jeff Pickering



Amber Waves



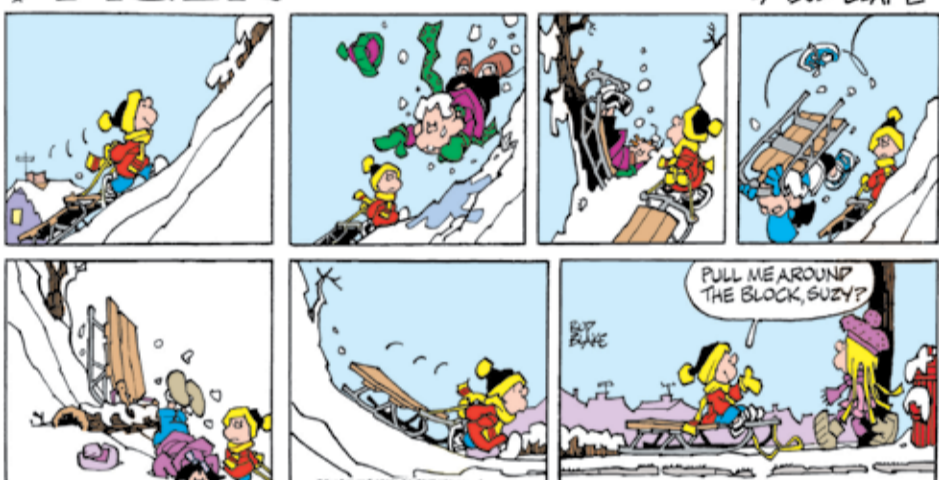
by Dave T. Phipps

Out on a Limb



by Gary Kopervas

TIGER



by BUD BLAKE



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



GRIN and BEAR IT

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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# Biggest Lifelike Dinosaur Event Roars into Sacramento

## Jurassic Quest News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - North America's most popular interactive dinosaur experience is BACK, BIGGER and BETTER than EVER! Sacramento-area families can walk among the nation's biggest herd of photo-realistic dinosaurs when Jurassic Quest® opens at Cal Expo Center for one weekend only Jan. 12-14.

Loved by millions, only Jurassic Quest can bring families memories this BIG! Walk through 165 million years of the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods to learn about the creatures that ruled the Earth! In addition to life-like dinosaurs, Jurassic Quest's classic experiences for the whole family include some of the largest rideable dinosaurs in North America, live dinosaur shows, interactive science and art activities including a fossil dig and real fossils like T-Rex teeth, a triceratops horn and life-size dino skull, a "Triceratots" soft play area for our littlest explorers, bounce houses and inflatable attractions, photo opportunities, and more.

New this year! Jurassic Quest is bringing more hands-on activities, education and fun. This evolution, Jurassic Quest includes an expanded Excavation Station and more Jurassic-themed rides and inflatables. Even our animatronic herd has expanded to include fan favorites, the Utahraptor and Giganotosaurus. In addition to "The Quest," a self-guided scavenger hunt style activity where budding paleontologists can become Jr. Dinosaur Trainers, Jurassic Quest has launched a new video tour that's already getting "roaring good" reviews from families and features our star dino trainers: Safari Sarah, Dino Dustin, Prehistoric Nick and Park Ranger Marty (available onsite and on your phone



Bronco Brian partners with velociraptor JoJo for a fun day of adventure at Jurassic Quest. Photo courtesy of Jurassic Quest

via QR code)! All expanded activities are included with general admission. New attractions launching in winter include kids facing off with the notoriously fast Jurassic Quest Utahraptors for "Raptor Run" races, and "Rope-a-Raptor," where experienced "BrontoBusters" help kids lasso stray dinos to get them back to their pens.

The Jurassic Quest herd of animatronic dinos – from the largest predators to playful baby dinos – are displayed in realistic scenes with some that move and roar, allowing guests to experience them as they were when they roamed Earth millions of years ago. Jurassic Quest works in collaboration with leading paleontologists to ensure each dinosaur is painstakingly replicated in every detail, from coloration to teeth size, to textured skin, fur or feathers, drawing on the latest research about how we understand dinosaurs looked and moved. Families also have the unique opportunity to meet the babies,



Tyranno Tony makes sure Tyson the T-Rex gets whatever keeps the baby happy. Photo courtesy of Jurassic Quest

hatched only at Jurassic Quest: Cammie the Camarasaurus, Tyson the T-Rex and Trixie the Triceratops.

Advance purchase online recommended to ensure desired date and availability at [www.jurassicquest.com](http://www.jurassicquest.com), or tickets are available on-site, and include a 100% ticket guarantee that in the event of a show cancellation or postponement for any reason, ticket purchases will be automatically refunded for the full purchase amount.

General admission tickets include access to the dinosaur exhibits, arts and crafts activities, and dinosaur shows. There are rides and activities that require activity tickets available on site, or guests can upgrade to the Kids Unlimited Ticket (the best value for children ages 2-10). Entry is free for children under age 2. Guests can walk through the dinosaur experience at their own pace, and strollers are permitted. Socks required for inflatable attractions. Some venues may have wheelchairs for use, but please contact the venue in advance to make arrangements.

Admission: Tickets available online (Standard, Senior and Kids pricing available)

General admission includes live shows, arts and crafts activities, and dinosaur exhibits. Tickets for individual activities available on-site. Free entry for children under 2. **KIDS UNLIMITED TICKETS:** Includes admission, plus unlimited access to stationery and walking dinosaur rides, fossil dig, and dinosaur themed inflatable attractions (Note: maximum weight for rides is 140lbs.). Location: Cal Expo Center (1600 Exposition Blvd., Sacramento, CA) Hours: Friday, Jan. 12: 9am-8pm / Saturday, Jan. 13: 9am-8pm / Sunday, Jan. 14: 9am-7pm

For more information and tickets visit [www.jurassicquest.com](http://www.jurassicquest.com). ★

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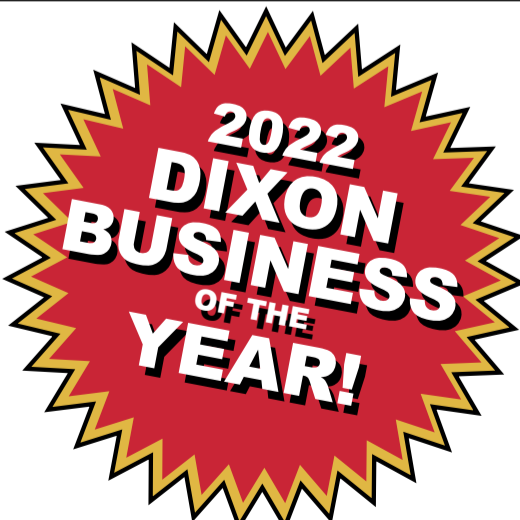
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